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Hamlet's Transformation

An Application of Stanislav Grof's Holotropic
Theory to Adolescents Who Are Experiencing
Grief and Loss

Peter Bray

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ABSTRACT

This thesis extends Stanislav Grof's work on psycho-spiritual transformation by considering whether adolescents can experience what he and Christina Grof (1989, 1990) have called 'spiritual emergency' (SE). Grof contends that the human psyche, when stimulated by new material originating from loss experiences, may spontaneously reorganise itself. This process either unfolds gently as spiritual emergence or overwhelms the individual as SE. This thesis examines Grof's holotropic theory, using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an illustration, to establish theoretically how SE might be experienced and observed in an adolescent. Hamlet's powerful responses to the death of his father, the loss of his inheritance and the remarriage of his mother are explored via Grof's extended cartography of the human psyche and a close analysis of Hamlet's soliloquies. As counselling verbatim, the soliloquies provide an important opportunity to discuss how significant experiences of loss have the potential for developmental transformation in adolescence.

The possible incidence of SE in adolescence raises questions about how we identify, understand and support young people undergoing this process of transformation. In addition to analysing Hamlet's experiences in the light of Grof's theoretical framework, the thesis discusses the broader literature on grief and loss and the work of a range of other developmental, spiritual, transpersonal and integral psychologists and philosophers. The thesis engages Grof's ideas critically and assesses their relevance for adolescent counselling practice and counsellor education in the New Zealand context.

This thesis challenges some widely accepted views among counsellors and educators. It argues for the acknowledgement and identification of the SE experience and recommends that further research be conducted with adolescents. It concludes that an understanding of the deeper dimensions of personal experience can assist professionals to be more effectively engaged with young people throughout their educational journeys.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to Freddie, Ben and Brigitte, whose sudden passing initiated my journey, and to Jen and the children whose love and encouragement have kept me honest.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BPM Basic Perinatal Matrix
CBT Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
COEX Systems of Condensed Experience
F Folio
LSD Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
NOSC Non Ordinary States of Consciousness
NZYSPS New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy
Q1 First Quarto
Q2 Second Quarto
SE Spiritual Emergency
SEN Spiritual Emergency Network
TOM Theory of Mind
WHO World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses a very important question for those of us who work with adolescents. Transformation, which is broadly defined here as personal and developmental dimensions of learning (Karpiak, 2000), is a necessary part of development for adolescents and may often be accompanied by experiences of loss. Sometimes these experiences may prove difficult, in some cases carrying an individual into, hitherto, uncharted areas of awareness. Consequently, this thesis seeks to extend existing notions of grief and loss as well as human development by discussing what occurs when adolescents are confronted with life changing situations that create loss but also produce what Stanislav Grof has described as a Spiritual Emergency (SE).

It is suggested by Grof that loss of a loved one and the subsequent changes to future expectations caused by such losses may be significant enough to tip the balance in a psyche that is ready to transform, and it is through this process of transformation that SE may be present. In Grof's (2000a) typology of SE there are at least twelve different varieties, some of which derive from his research into hallucinogens. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the term SE is used as a stipulative definition that specifically describes an altered state of consciousness that can occur at the same time as an experience of loss.

Grof's general description of the SE process is that it is a disruptive but positive shift in consciousness brought about by the psyche's transformation. As it makes these developmental adjustments, the psyche temporarily and powerfully attracts and submerges the newly developing and dominant adolescent ego at a time when it would normally be seeking separation. During this process SE is caused by the ego returning to the deep sources of the psyche before it can resume its own separate development and is experienced by the adolescent as an influx of non-ordinary material, or *holotropic* phenomena. Such experiences, when viewed from the perspective of Grof's holotropic theory, call into question the belief that all

mental phenomena are exclusively based in the brain and originate from mental impairment. Accordingly, SE as a characteristic of psychic transformation cannot be 'treated' effectively using conventional medical interventions that seek to suppress this naturally indefatigable process as it has a distinctly non-organic origin. This research is concerned to create an accessible vocabulary and a meaningful context in which SE in adolescence may be usefully and safely discussed, examined and supported.

Professional experience and anecdotal evidence suggest that counsellors in New Zealand schools have difficulty in understanding 'normally' developing young people who present with unusually powerful and vivid imaginative experiences that are linked to situations which have caused them loss. These experiences can be misdiagnosed by mental health professionals or misunderstood by counsellors as incidents of poor mental health, manifestations of risk-taking, or an active imagination framed by personal loss, even in cases where in all other respects the individual appears mentally healthy. Furthermore, the dynamic of adolescent development can disguise the presence of SE unless the professional is aware of its possible existence. Consequently, challenged in their worldviews, counsellors can be forced into a position of having to make difficult ethical decisions about aspects of their counselling practice which will require them to seek additional support, training, and supervision. Certainly, adolescent spiritual experiences within the context of loss, development and healing are, it is suggested here, productive areas for further research.

Although Grof's (1993, 2000a) general theory provides explicit accounts of a wide range of transpersonal and transformational experiences, research undertaken by Grof and others does not specifically include adolescents and SE is not associated with any particular age, gender, or culture. However, Grof's conviction that crises share potential for transformation is not new. His work builds on ancient cultural traditions, draws upon the work of Jung, extends Maslow's (1964) work on *self-actualisation* and explores difficulties that accompany spiritual awakening first recognised by Assagioli (1993). Washburn's (1995) theory of *regression in the service of transcendence* also

complements Grof's holotropic theory and indicates a possible model for adolescent transformation and further *individuation* in adolescence. Wilber's (2000) contention that SE may occur at any stage in human development also supports the research here.

It is significant that the language used to describe the new knowledge and experience acquired in cases of SE draws heavily upon that usually associated with traditional spiritual beliefs and cultures. This may suggest that through the process of SE adolescents are, for a brief period in their lives, establishing connections with a rich source of collective unconscious experience. It is suggested in this thesis that school counsellors, mental health professionals and caregivers in New Zealand need support in assisting young people and their families to manage the experience of SE, and that in order to do so SE needs to be fully researched and recognised as a process of transformation which may occur in normal adolescent development. Furthermore, this thesis argues that there is a strong likelihood that incidents of SE will occur for young people who have experienced significant personal losses.

Single Case Methodology

William Shakespeare's character of Hamlet in the play of the same name is a notable example of a case where an adolescent experiences grief and loss, and at the same time whose inner and outer management of holotropic phenomena can be described as a spiritual emergency. Thus, presented as a single case illustration, Hamlet's experiences are central to this thesis. Single case methodology is also used in Part Two to provide a very clear way of generating a new hypothesis about adolescence and SE that may later be subject to a more rigorous examination and further research (Barlow & Hersen, 1984). Hamlet's case is an accessible starting point for the investigation of a single unique event (Neimeyer & Hogan, 2001), which may not be replicated in an artificial laboratory situation (Bell, Staines, & Mitchell, 2001), and whose in-depth study may well suggest avenues for future

exploration with further cases (Yin, 1998), while still retaining the objective of thoroughly describing Hamlet as a single individual (Neimeyer & Hogan, 2001). Thus, the analysis of this case will be used to both illustrate Grof's theory of SE and to build a theory that has clear implications for education and counselling with adolescents.

Case study research has a particularly strong tradition in the methodology of psychoanalysis, and has been theoretically influential in informing the work of almost every form of psychotherapy and counselling (Corsini & Wedding, 1995). The interpretation of case studies is an often controversial area of psychological debate (Bell, Staines, & Mitchell, 2001), yet still continues to provide the clinical basis for the experimental study of single cases (Barlow & Hersen, 1984). The methodology used in this thesis will be sympathetic with this tradition and consistent with the characteristics of the type of systemic single case study research categorised by Horowitz (1982, in McLeod, 1994). Horowitz reduces research designs to three types. One type of design is a 'descriptive study', which involves the careful observation and classification of 'what one finds' within a single case. The thesis will be a descriptive study but as it concentrates on the theoretical implications of the case material it will incorporate what Yin (1989, in McLeod, 1994) calls a 'theory-building structure'. The design will follow the logical sequence of connecting Grof's data to the research question and to its conclusion (Yin, 1998). Thus the approach will be to consider the implications of Grof's SE in Hamlet's case and subsequent parts of this research will reveal new elements of the theory as it is being constructed.

In the critical analysis of *Hamlet*, there is an assumed consistency between the analysis of literary works and the methodology of this case study, which is further discussed below. The aim of both is to reveal the structures and functions of the unconscious (Armstrong, 2001). The researcher's engagement with Hamlet will be conducted through a close analysis of his soliloquies. The analysis will adopt a linear design by a progressive use of psychological and philosophical close analysis of the text (Holland, 1998) employing seven soliloquies to serve as clinical verbatim. Each soliloquy will

be examined against Hamlet's observable behaviour and its disclosure of unconscious structures set within the context of the play's world and contemporary theory. One clear advantage of using the soliloquies in *Hamlet* is that the research method does not involve any intrusion into a young client's life through the counselling process (McLeod, 1994). Hamlet is not required to answer questions about his experiences, and the text already provides fully recorded, reported and self-reported observations.

Hamlet as a Case Illustration of Spiritual Emergency

It is important to state at the outset that although the text of *Hamlet* is to be used, and the subject Hamlet proposed as a descriptive study, this thesis is not primarily a work of literary criticism. It provides a vehicle to discuss certain fundamental ideas of transpersonal psychology and its value lies more in helping to understand adolescent SE and less in understanding the literary qualities of Shakespeare's play. However, the methodology employed in this thesis to illuminate a psychological issue rather than a literary one does follow in the tradition of psychoanalytic criticism. Consequently, it is necessary to note some of the precedents employed by psychoanalytic method as they are applied to the use of Hamlet as a case study here.

Since its foundation a little over a century ago, psychoanalysis has always given a privileged place to literature. Some of the key concepts of psychoanalysis such as Oedipus complex, sadism and narcissism are taken from literature, and many of the case studies published by Freud exemplify this single case approach (McLeod, 1994). Indeed, Holland (1998), Armstrong (2001) and others have suggested that works of literature have anticipated the work of psychoanalysis. Consequently, there is an understanding here that there is a relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, which illuminates and assists both to understand and effectively reveal the human condition. Traditionally, psychoanalysis has sought this understanding by assuming an objective reality around creatures of fiction. As the social psychologist Cooley suggests, for example,

Hamlet is real to the imaginative reader with the realest kind of reality... What, indeed, would society be, or what would any one of us be, if we associated only with corporeal persons and insisted that no one should enter our company who could not show his power to tip the scales and cast a shadow?
(Cooley, 1922, p. 122)

Jones' (1949) famous psychoanalytic reading of Hamlet speculates about the 'latent meaning' of Hamlet as a child and in his defence explains that 'No dramatic criticism of the personae in a play is possible except under the pretence that they are living people, and surely one is well aware of this pretence' (Willbern, 1997). Nonetheless, in accepting the fictional designation of Hamlet this thesis will not bypass the character of Hamlet and only analyse the language and metaphor of his soliloquies to 'yield understanding of its creator' (Sharpe, 1950, p. 244). Jones' single case approach to Hamlet is useful because it invites the researcher to discover what Nuttall (citing Morgann, 1963) identifies as Hamlet's 'latent meaning' alongside the pretence of dramatic personae. Nuttall notes that literature, as an interpretation of reality, must admit to an area of 'latent meaning'. Indeed, for Lacan, the real psychological dimension of *Hamlet* does not lie in its creator's purpose or Hamlet's behaviour but in the language with its hidden, latent meaning and affinities to the language of dreams and the unconscious which often surpasses the apparent meaning (Holland, 1998). Lacan's emphasis on the unconscious in Hamlet's language provides a necessary key to fully understanding his usefulness as a case illustration of SE.

Hence, this research, in admitting the dimension of latent meaning, will investigate the language of Hamlet's soliloquies through Grof's transpersonal lens. As Holland suggests, Hamlet is himself aware of the ambiguous nature of his own speeches as well as of the feelings that drive them. Indeed, Nuttall's suggestion that psychoanalysis' acceptance that human consciousness has an area of latency that is peopled with mythic creatures and symbolic representations of reality, supports the fact that literature has strongly influenced Freud and others. He observes, 'Freud is the allegorist, Shakespeare the psychologist' (p.177). In addition, admitting Hamlet as a case illustration provides this discreet thesis with the same immediate, free and privileged access as those shared by notable psychoanalysts such as

Freud, Jones, Rank, Eissler, Holland, Lacan and Kristeva, and psychiatrists such as Conolly, Bucknill, Kellog and Turek (Bynum & Neve, 1985).

Another important point expressed in the play's dialectic between reality and appearance, and surface and depth, is Hamlet's self-conscious belief that whatever is happening to him is stranger and deeper than is presented by his mourning. Significantly, while acknowledging the importance of grief and loss, this thesis also addresses a far deeper transformation. Indeed, in the play, Claudius' description of Hamlet's transformation as a dual process involving exterior and inner change suggests that this transformation is so great that Hamlet is no longer recognisable as the same young man. He even conjectures that Hamlet does not recognise himself.

Something you have heard
Of Hamlet's transformation – so call it,
Sith nor th'exterior nor the the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from th'understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of ... (*Hamlet*, 2. 2. 10)

Claudius' intuitive remarks reveal that what is occurring in Hamlet is 'more' than just a reaction to 'his father's death'. Likewise, this thesis takes a similar position that transformation is a central issue, particularly for Hamlet and in *Hamlet*.

Hamlet, therefore, serves the purpose of this thesis as an illustration of an individual in a transformational state of SE but he is not consciously presented here as an objectively real, complete and detailed psychoanalytic case study. In the spirit of Plato (Jowett, 1968), since 'imitation has been proved to be thrice removed from the truth' (p. 387) *Hamlet* is regarded as an imitative representation of nature and human behaviour in a *mimesis* of tragedy. Readers of *Hamlet* can recognise the psychological and moral struggles that the main character undergoes and, to this extent, some reference to a world of experience beyond the relationship between the signifiers and the signified is inferred. This is, of course, not to argue that Hamlet is a real person. What is read or heard resembles, or imitates what may be thought about. It is in this

sense that Hamlet is referred to here as a 'mimetic character'. In the same way the relationship between works of fiction and psychology may also be defined in this instance in terms of 'mimesis' and 'mimetic character' (Paris, 1974, 1991).

Paris (1991), for example, adopting Scholes and Kellogg's (1966) taxonomy of character, which recognises the 'latent meaning' implicit in a mimetic character's motivational life, describes Hamlet as a 'complex and inwardly intelligible' 'mimetic character' (p. 8). Thus, although *Hamlet* the play and Hamlet the character do not present the truth of adolescent SE they do provide a way of commenting upon it. The problem of reality in this argument as it bears on accepting Hamlet as an appropriate case illustration is eloquently summed up by Allen's (1986) analysis of the reality of responses to fiction. Even though *Hamlet* is not a presentation of facts, true statements can be made about what happens in it and beliefs directed towards those events can be true or false. Allen suggests that 'once we realize that truth is not confined to the factual, the problem disappears' (p. 6)

By the same token, the fact that Hamlet is a fictional character who lacks objective reality does not impair his usefulness as an illustration of adolescent SE. Nuttall (1983), working in the field of English Literature, even contends that Shakespeare's work is the 'greatest example of realism'. He argues that conceptions of realism in art change and that language does not directly correspond to reality. Nuttall takes the position that the metaphysical notions of style and form can preclude reference to reality and may presume that reality is itself a fluid social fiction. Thus reality may contain elements of truth and fiction and *vice versa*. Furthermore, Nuttall maintains, with Auerbach (1968), that presence of a marked style is incompatible with *serious realism*. Nuttall's contention is that *Hamlet* is both naturalistic and realistic because Shakespeare's plays 'are not founded on artificial rules of dramatic composition but simply on the world itself' (p. 66). Nuttall states, 'the word *reality* can be legitimately used without apologetic inverted commas and that literature may represent the same reality' (p. viii).

Paris (1991) also argues that a modern observer may not be able to make Shakespeare's mimetic achievement more intelligible by viewing him in the light of Renaissance psychology, or by learning what Shakespeare's conception of Hamlet was because, he adds somewhat cryptically, 'The great artist sees and portrays far more than he can comprehend' (p. 9). This too has a resonance with the work of this thesis as it suggests that the achievement of Hamlet as a mimetic character is comprehensive enough to serve equally the needs of its original and modern Elizabethan audiences. In fact, to paraphrase Bynum and Neve (1985), more has been written about Hamlet than of many people who have lived real lives, he has become part of world culture, and the literature about him knows no ordinary national or linguistic barriers (p. 290).

Thus purposefully limited in its comments about the nature of creativity and imagination in literary criticism, or Hamlet's or Shakespeare's genius as a 'species of disease', or whether Hamlet is a special case for pathological interest, this thesis accepts the fact that *Hamlet* is a work of considerable realistic achievement. Furthermore, it accepts that Hamlet as a mimetic character has a motivational life imbued with a 'knowledge of reality' (Paris, 1974, p. 232), which in this particular case illustrates an adolescent's experience of SE, about which true statements can be made and true and false beliefs can be directed.

Summary of this Thesis' Objectives

This thesis has a number of fundamental objectives and these are outlined here. The thesis seeks to show that:

- 1) The unique features of Grof's holotropic theory and associated practices, particularly concerning the experience of SE, have much to contribute to the project of formulating a new model of the processes, characteristics, and direction of adolescent development and to the theories and practices of education and counselling. The value of Grof's approach is that it

emphasises the need to recognise the important role of spirituality in modern, secular, pluralistic, liberal democracies.

- 2) There are significant theoretical links between the processes outlined in Grof's cartography of the psyche, which incorporates the biographical, transpersonal, and perinatal dimensions of experience, and those processes of adolescent loss described by post-modern grief and loss discourse.
- 3) Understanding of adolescent functioning, grief and loss and theories of adolescent development may be extended by further investigating the possibility and significance of the SE experience when it occurs in adolescence.
- 4) Counsellors and educators can more effectively support young people by understanding that their experiences can include positive transformational crises with influential transdimensional features. That these have significant implications for their practice and beliefs specifically concerning the areas of spirituality and human development.
- 5) By bringing about a respect for and acknowledgement of adolescent clients' spiritual lives, counsellors and educators may be assisted in contributing to a model of human development that will help them to anticipate, identify and assess, understand and support adolescents with losses that indicate a crisis with a spiritual dimension.
- 6) An application of Grof's holotropic theory to Hamlet both as a text and as a character can provide a framework within which adolescents' spiritual development, and grief and loss, may acquire new meaning and speak relevantly to the experiences of adolescents in general.
- 7) There is still work to be done to raise awareness, and promote research, about the importance and commonality of all types of loss experiences to adolescents.
- 8) Emerging patterns of research from different disciplines, whose common interests are adolescents, can be connected and synthesised in order to co-construct robust theories of adolescence that will broaden understanding and appreciation of adolescent experience and behaviour, particularly in the wake of multiple losses.

- 9) The tradition and standard of high profile and well-researched support for young people is maintained.

Thesis Structure

The thesis has been divided into four major parts followed by a conclusion which includes recommendations for future research.

Part One, 'Transformation in Adolescence: Education, Development and Holotropic Theory', outlines the theoretical territory to be explored. It establishes the vocabulary and the methodology to be used and the area of concern. Chapter 1 considers the role of transformation in education and its links to adolescent spirituality and development within a New Zealand context. It argues that adolescent transformation has implications for education and establishes a context for discussing the question later in the thesis in terms of developmental and transpersonal theories. Chapter 2 suggests that transpersonal psychology has much to contribute to the notion of spiritual experience and personal development in adolescence. It discusses the unique work of Maslow, Wilber and Washburn and particularly the models they use to illustrate transformation, and examines them in the light of normal adolescent development and adolescent mourning in preparation for Part Three. Chapter 3 specifically deals with a thorough examination, review and discussion of the work of transpersonal psychologist Stanislav Grof whose holotropic theory advanced over the last half century is central to this thesis. It is particularly concerned to discuss the clinical implications of Grof's model of SE, and how individuals are diagnosed, enabled to understand, explore, inwardly transform and outwardly manage this often severe disruption to consciousness in the service of profound development. In preparation for the case application of Grof's theory, Chapter 4 examines the use of Hamlet as an illustrative study of SE, discusses his journey as a mythic model of ritual transformation in adolescence, and makes suggestions about Shakespeare's experiences of loss. Finally, Hamlet's non-ordinary state of consciousness is assessed along side a brief examination of the forces that drive his psyche

and then Grof's model of the inner cartography of the psyche is applied to Hamlet's experiences.

Part Two, 'Hamlet's Transformation: A Study in Spiritual Emergency', provides a comprehensive single case illustration of SE. The case is presented chronologically soliloquy by soliloquy and maps Hamlet's holotropic journey through the play. Chapter 5 provides an introduction to the full analysis given in the next three chapters and concerns itself with the role of psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism in the analysis and illumination of Hamlet's character and the function of Hamlet's soliloquies. It concludes by placing Hamlet in his context as an adolescent primarily preoccupied with loss. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, Hamlet's seven soliloquies are presented for holotropic analysis beginning with a conventional psychoanalytic and literary *biographical* reading and then extended by separate analyses of the *transpersonal* and *perinatal* dimensions of Hamlet's experiences. Thus, the chapters describe Hamlet's experience in terms of a holotropic state of consciousness and the soliloquies are used to demonstrate an understanding and explanation of Hamlet in all three of the domains found in Grof's extended cartography of the psyche. As all aspects of Grof's cartography overlap one another and are unified by influential systems of Condensed Experience (COEX), which are deep memory constellations formed while still a foetus, the readings are offered separately to show how the conscious and unconscious components may be considered independently as parts of a more homogenous whole. Similarly, Grof does not claim his model of Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPM), a structure which mirrors biological birth and provides access points to the complex dimensionality of the psyche, to be a stage process. However, in the interests of clarity Hamlet's experiences are presented chronologically to the reader. Chapter 6 covers the first two soliloquies which appear in Act I of the play. The first soliloquy illustrates some pre-episode functioning and a transition stage between Grof's first and his second BPM and the second soliloquy is firmly embedded in the latter. Similarly, in Chapter 7 the third soliloquy indicates a further transition between BPM II and III while the fourth and fifth are clearly resonant of BPM III. All of these soliloquies appear in Act III of the play. Chapter 8 establishes Hamlet's

positioning in BPM III with the sixth soliloquy and finally looks at soliloquy seven in Act IV as a clear transition between BPM III and IV. Consequently, Hamlet may be viewed in Act V as having some of the experiences consonant with BPM IV. Thus Chapter 9 acts as a conclusion to the analysis of Hamlet's SE by drawing together the threads of his holotropic journey and by providing three conclusions to his experience. Each offers a uniquely different perspective and together they provide an original analysis of trans-dimensional transformation.

Part Three, 'Adolescence', examines a number of current theories about grief and loss from a holotropic perspective and applies them to adolescence. It suggests that there are significant connections to be found between the processes of grief and loss, and normal adolescent development. It also confirms that the process of transformation found in spiritual emergency is similar to that found in grief and loss responses and that both processes are common to adolescent development. Chapter 10 discusses a number of influential theories of adolescent development alongside the management of unanticipated, traumatic life events for adolescents. These events, it is supposed, usually complicate normal development but it is suggested here that their initial disruption should give way to a more sensible and enhanced view of the world. This discussion develops the material presented in Part One and in the case analysis. The application of Grof's holotropic theory to three significant grief and loss models in Chapter 11 provides insights into the inner experiences and the development of adolescents that can support the work of counsellors. This contributes to the analytical interpretative methodology of the case illustration by looking at current grief and loss theory from a holotropic perspective that emphasises the transformational aspects of the processes. It suggests that current theory may be broadened to acknowledge the SE experience as a facet or facilitator of the loss experience, which has important implications for the work of counsellors and educators. Chapter 12 seeks to summarise what has gone before by examining SE as a developmental or organising process that mediates grief and loss in normal adolescent development.

Part Four, 'Counselling', broadly discusses the implications for counsellors and educators of acknowledging the different dimensions of consciousness implicit in the holotropic process model by considering a strategic approach to enhancing protective factors around adolescent SE. It also discusses how counsellors in New Zealand schools may be identified as a first point of contact for students who may be experiencing SE, and while critiquing Grof's contribution to counselling adolescents who may have SE, it examines implications for present practice and future research in counselling. Consequently, Chapter 13 discusses a collaborative strategy for managing SE for New Zealand's 'at risk' youth and how effective school counsellors might be in responding to young people with SE. Chapter 14 examines how holotropic theory can contribute to such a strategy, and what the limitations of such a model are when applied to adolescents. Finally, Chapter 15 argues the case for potential care providers to understand SE by beginning with a brief summary of some of the key arguments in this thesis and ending with a discussion of their implications for counselling practice and research. It suggests how New Zealand counsellors might be trained to deal with incidents of SE in adolescents and considers the protective and risk factors around SE for New Zealand youth.

Finally, 'Conclusions and Implications for Future Research', identifies the outcomes of the study and their implications for future research. It also outlines a process model for adolescent transformation during development and makes recommendations as to what might be done to acknowledge transformative processes in schools, within the counselling profession and amongst those concerned with adolescent mental health.

The literature confirms that managing loss is part of adolescent development and is also responsible for initiating changes in an individual's understanding of the world. Similarly, a psycho-spiritual crisis, like SE, depends upon a number of interconnecting experiences, including loss, which is ultimately expressed as a totally unique transformation event for each individual coloured by conscious and unconscious knowledge. This research, therefore, provides an opportunity to discuss a theoretical model of SE as a

transformative process in adolescence, and to understand the characteristics, process, management and outcomes of this uniquely personal experience.

PART ONE

TRANSFORMATION IN ADOLESCENCE: EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT AND HOLOTROPIC THEORY

CHAPTER ONE

TRANSFORMATION, SPIRITUALITY AND EDUCATION

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the concept of human transformation by broadly discussing it in relation to education, mystical and spiritual states of consciousness and the notion of 'lived' spiritual experience. The notion of spirituality is characterised by its breadth as well as its depth. Transformation in education, for example, through its synthesis of 'new paradigm biological and physical sciences' (Karpiak, 2000, p. 2) with traditional eastern and western value and belief systems is connected to both spirit and reason. This particular way of regarding transformation suggests that it is a significant educational experience as well as an important part of the adolescent developmental process.

The chapter begins with a comment on secondary education in New Zealand, which is followed by a general discussion of spirit and education using Grosch's (1999) illustration of the relationship between philosophy and theology. This concept of transformation in education is then followed by a consideration of how it might be generally related to religious, spiritual and mystical experience. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the applications of transformation for education. It is intended that this will provide a starting point and establish a context for further explorations of the question in terms of transpersonal and developmental theories later in the thesis.

Secondary Education

Spirit and Religion in Education

The significant growth of interest in issues evoked by the word 'spirituality' has resulted in an important and interesting discussion on the nature of spirituality as

a 'lived' and transforming experience. However, this interest has also been complicated by a general misunderstanding amongst educators as well as seekers of spirituality as to how presently absent spiritual value and experience might be recultivated. The debate on education in Western Europe and North America, for example, has been about the nature and potential of religious education in the secondary sector (Thatcher, 1999; Wright, 2000). Alternatively, in many capitalist societies throughout the world, freed from the restraints of religion, there has been an upsurge of interest in spirituality as both a topic for investigation and a lifestyle (Gotz, 1997; Tisdell, Tolliver & Villa, 2003). Alexander (1997) has suggested that this new interest in spirituality is due in large measure to the failure of the 'enlightenment project' to provide a satisfying vision of the good life and the success of what he calls the 'emancipation project'. He claims that it is not so much the decline of religion but the advancement of the socio-economic programme of free market capitalism, especially in North America, which has provided the growing middle and upper classes with the resources and time to ponder their spiritual plight. Over the past half-century, he suggests, these tendencies have been reinforced by the rise of an analytic philosophy of education, which has not only banished religion but also values from the realm of legitimate philosophical discourse on education. Thus, Alexander observes, new interest in spirituality and spiritual education marks an important turn in educational thought away from economic instrumentalism and epistemology and toward an understanding of education as celebrating a vision of the good life.

New Zealand, unlike England or America, maintains that education should be 'free, secular and compulsory' (*Education Act*, 1877). This is exemplified by the absence of the world's religions in the New Zealand curriculum in contrast to the unique position accorded Maori culture and spirituality in education (*Education Act*, 1989), and under the *Treaty of Waitangi* (Ludbrook, 2003). Generally, adolescent spirituality is not formally acknowledged within the curriculum as New Zealand's pragmatic stance on education has made a distinction between what it regards as religious - an issue of curriculum and policy - and what it defines as spiritual or mystical - a personal issue of identity and culture. It is not surprising that, viewed from this secular perspective, adolescent spirituality is defined and

confined to the practice of religion. Thus, the spiritual or mystical dimensions of young people's lives, circumscribed by notions of religion and morality, are more generally thought to be arranged within the family and/or formal religious structures. However, adolescents do bring the spiritual aspects of their selves to school, and what adolescents experience at school and how their spiritual selves are perceived, is vitally important to the way in which they engage with and are benefited by their education. This research is particularly concerned to explore the unique and diverse lived spiritual experiences of adolescents, rather than religion *per se*. Thus, the aim is to broaden discourse on spirit in adolescence, as a critical component of educational practice and thinking, and focus upon spiritual development and change in adolescence as a process of positive transformation in education.

The Reintegration of Spirit and Reason

It is important to this question to recognise that there is a tradition of partnership between spirit and reason which has broadly influenced subsequent notions of western educational theory and practice and in its present form continues to do so.

With the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ a schism occurred in Christianity between philosophy and theology. Grosch (1999) describes this as a distinction made between '*theologia*' (Talk of God) and '*philosophia*' (Love of wisdom) and he links it to what he claims is the presently distorted understanding of the nature and scope of spirituality. Briefly, Grosch argues that Christianity's colonisation of *theologia* is responsible for 'a contemporary lack of understanding when it comes to matters spiritual', which has subsequently dominated western thinking (p. 181). Perhaps, Christianity's compromising acceptance of reason while refusing to allow its superiority as arbiter may have been responsible for what Grosch regards as the opposition between philosophy and theology. Jordan (1987) in supporting this view argues that the philosophy of the medieval period was only allowed to exist where it was supported by the Roman Catholic Church as an adjunct to theology,

claiming that theology's dispute with philosophy began well before the Middle Ages.

Significantly, Grosch suggests revisiting and reclaiming the original dialogical position for the good of future educational thinking. He argues, after Hadot (1995), that modern education's acceptance of this past distinction has restricted spirituality to the discreet province of theologians and those interested in religion and claims that spirituality no longer appears to have a place in education proper. The difficulties caused by this rift are observable in the weakening of western religion, particularly in its spiritual content, the rise of new ageism, and the stimulation and growth of interest in the liberating spiritual doctrines of eastern religions and philosophy (Thatcher, 1999). In support of his argument, Grosch asserts that the latter have not suffered the same distinctions between reason and spirit, and subsequent ossification, making them more satisfying and intriguing. However, it might also be argued that the similar schisms that occurred in Islam and in Judaism between reason and spiritual faith and belief did not suffer the same fate as Christianity because reason was not allowed to exist as a detrimental influence upon faith or belief. Grosch's example of the Vedanta schools of eastern philosophy confirms this as it describes an explicitly pluralistic and inextricable connection between *theologia* and *philosophia*. In general terms, there is no separation between the spiritual element and the reasoned, logical accounts of the world and an individual's place in it.

In order to account for the present position, Grosch gives two reasons why this rift between philosophy and theology has been maintained. The first, he suggests, is due to the rise in pre-eminence of science and logic, theology has become, citing Wittgenstein, 'purely mystical, about which nothing could be said, or only of religious significance, about which much could be said, but none of it of any philosophical significance.' (p. 182). The second is that the decline of interest in traditional theology has led to an increase in secularisation due, in part, to the prevailing view that standard modes of religious belief and practice are either a form of social control or irrelevant to life. However, the apparent paradox of spirituality in its secular representation, confounding the classical law of opposites, has prevailed and begs further discussion. Furthermore, Grosch

suggests that the legacy of the enlightenment has seen the decline in serious moral and intellectual engagement with religion that has led to a void filled largely by the empirically-based and secular culture of mainstream psychology.

Grosch's view may well be tempered with the knowledge that there is a tradition of theologians in Islam, Judaism and Christianity also producing works of pure philosophy. However, his assertion that earlier differentiation might be reviewed to strengthen reason and spiritual belief in the service of education is timely. The suggestion to formally reintegrate philosophy and theology so that educational philosophy may reclaim or at least acknowledge its spiritual roots is confirmed by what Aristotle maintains is its purpose, which is to render intelligible and understandable the enigma of the cosmos. A key part of this rendering is 'talk of God', which Grosch contends is also a spiritual proposition. Thus, progress in intellectual inquiry might best be accomplished within this framework of an all-encompassing spiritual attitude toward philosophy and theology. Here Grosch draws attention to the two forms in which ancient inquiry was undertaken,

A belief in the necessity of engaging in some set of individual exercises which would guide both minds and bodies; and a basic humility and reverence born out of reason, because reason attempts to fathom the mysterious relationship that exists between self and others, and between self and the cosmos. (Grosch, 1999, p. 182)

Spirituality and Education in New Zealand

It might be argued that spirituality in New Zealand education, unencumbered by an English Education Act that sees religious education wedded to performance, has the freedom to accommodate any position that it wishes over spirituality. New Zealand society, a melange of ethnic and spiritual diversity, in many respects resembles the western model, tolerating diverse aspects of spirituality from those traditional beliefs acknowledged in the *Treaty of Waitangi*, to those of consumerist, commercialised, new age spiritualism (Clifton, 1999). However, as noted above, although widely tolerant and celebrating cultural difference, New Zealand's legislation for schools has shied away from completely accepting the diversity of culture in its fullest definition. Generally, human beings express their

spiritual natures in an enormous number of forms, forms that are forever changing and that reflect the growth and transformation of a rich and increasingly heterogeneous and highly mobile society. To acknowledge the spiritual lives of people, expressed both individually and collectively, is a way of embracing and codifying these diverse forms.

By making distinctions between spiritual and secular experiences religion is confined to the church, the temple, the mosque, the hall and the home and not the classroom. Distinctions like these have diminished the students' rights to make choices and help to support the difference that Grosch is at such pains to see resolved. Such a view also sets up tensions between those whose particular belief system and spirituality is strong and those who are presently unaware or lack education about spiritual living. Thus, distinctions are made between the ways in which individuals experience and engage with spirituality in a life with and a life without spirituality. Again, it is not suggested that state education should provide the means to achieve spiritual experiences but it should be prepared to respond to the possibility of them occurring for adolescents in its care. It is argued here that an education that denies the notion of spirituality, as a lived experience, is one profoundly guilty of a form of reductionism that suggests that education has nothing to do with spirituality and that adolescent spirituality, for example, has nothing to offer education. This chapter argues, therefore, for an education that at least philosophically acknowledges its roots by acknowledging spirituality as a component of human development and as a broad dimension of adolescent experience.

Education and Transformation

The notion of spirituality as a lived experience and the notion of adolescent transformation and its influence on perception are widely recorded by developmental and counselling literatures (Balk & Corr, 2001; Blos, 1979; Fowler, 1981; Jung, 1911/1956) and the broad discourse on transformation is also familiar territory to educational philosophy. By way of example, Karpiak (2000) and Zigler (1999) have both demonstrated the importance of transformation as

an educational orientation and champion the desirability of incorporating pre-modern, traditional, and new sciences into existing social and educational theories.

Karpiak claims that in the past decade 'transformation' has evolved as an educational orientation that involves personal and developmental dimensions of learning. She suggests that new science and closely related evolutionary theories point to wider possibilities and new practices in transformative education. Following Dewey, Karpiak defines transformation as 'the reconstruction of consciousness through experience', noting that transformation is also described as 'an aspect of religious experience' (p. 1). In her review, the term also appears as a 'worldview construction', a psychological process in transpersonal psychology, and amongst adult educators it is described as 'growth of complexity'. Significantly, she observes that the concept of transformation is implicit in the work of developmental theorists who have detailed stages of growing complexity, in moral development theories as stages in faith development, and within forms or constructs such as 'meaning-making', 'ways of knowing', and as a 'spectrum of consciousness'. Karpiak is also concerned to confirm the place of transformation within the theoretical frameworks of new paradigm physical and biological sciences through their concepts of 'emergence', 'complexity', 'chaos' and 'evolution'.

Karpiak recognises that current educational models have been built around the worldview espoused by classical science and the dominant influence of reason, a view describing the world as 'characterised by objectivity, reliability, prediction and control' (p. 2). She claims, however, that contemporary science has shaken belief in the certainty of science and, by implication, models and theories of education. Karpiak cites Prigogine and Stengers' (1984) theory of chaos in nature to support her claim that transformation, like creation in the natural world, has a forward momentum. She also draws upon general systems theory and its evolutionary process development, arguing for a more fully integrated worldview that is consistent with 'growth, development and transformation' (p. 3). Karpiak claims that human beings are what might be defined as 'open systems' in constant interaction with the environment and that a comparatively small or

subtle trigger can propel the system out of its current structure. At such a time, although this system has a tendency to maintain itself in a stable state, it may also have the capacity to either collapse into chaos or rise to a new, higher order. The process is called 'order out of chaos' or alternatively 'order through fluctuations' and is recognised by Karpiak as the 'capacity to transform' (p. 4). The contribution of transpersonal psychology, which is generally concerned with transformation as development towards ever higher states of being or consciousness is discussed further in the next chapter. Also, detailed in Chapter 3 is the work of Grof, which suggests that for an individual who is in a state of spiritual emergence, the temporary experience of chaos may be a necessary part of the process that enables consciousness to unfold.

Karpiak, while agreeing that new sciences' assertions that conceptions of the physical world be extended is inspirational, cautiously indicates that it is 'still speculative' (p. 5). However, she does concur that they make an original and major contribution and provide new perspectives and a different set of lenses with which to view the world, which in time may 'rekindle' imaginative approaches to human development and education.

Similarly, Zigler (1999a) notes a transition, and thus a transformation, in recent social and educational theory that is critical of contemporary 'critical theory' and postmodernism. As examples, he uses two works by Wexler, *Critical Social Psychology* and *Holy Sparks*, both published in 1996, which discuss the growing interest in mind-body theory, education and research. Wexler's former work generates a 'critical theory' discourse and the latter adopts a 'postcritical philosophy' position, as defined by Polanyi (1964). Zigler notes that Wexler's discussion shifts from factors of power, class and cultural hegemony in social and educational theorising and analysis in the former, to an understanding of the spiritual dimension of human nature in the latter. Significantly, he identifies spiritual integration as the vehicle for social transformation and allies Wexler's methodology, especially his reclamation of pre-modern systems of belief, as congruent with Polanyi's post-critical philosophy.

Zigler, like Grosch and Karpiak, also contends that pre-modern belief and spiritual traditions might remedy what he and Wexler consider to be the shortcomings of postmodernism by reassessing 'the role of the spiritual dimension of human life' (p. 402). He suggests that by seeking the necessary approval of science, spirituality becomes legitimised and scientific method as a gatekeeper determines which 'spiritual technologies' have the greatest claim. For example, Grof's (1985, 1993, 1998, & 2000a) holotropic theory, because it is nested in science, is uniquely positioned to offer an original perspective on self-actualisation and the experience of spiritual and mystical phenomena that occur in developmental transformation. Grof's work is central to the research question of adolescent spirituality to be addressed in this thesis. His theory is presented in Chapter 3 and his ideas influence every part of this research.

Zigler (1999b) also considers the implications of the application of Polanyi's concept of 'tacit knowledge' to spiritual understanding, pedagogy and development. Zigler, in supporting Polanyi's claim that the spiritual domain is 'largely defined by the tacit dimension of knowledge' (p. 164), suggests that tacit knowledge may form more than just the basis for human judgement and decision making. Realistically, however, without the support of reason or science, acknowledgement of the role of the unconscious in, for example, education in the present culture of objectivism is a very difficult concept to accept. Nevertheless, Zigler outlines its possibilities. His spiritual epistemology describes an education that is spiritual, by which he means one which appreciates a sense of wholeness or integration in our 'subsidiary awareness'. Zigler's extension of Polanyi's concepts also has important implications for teacher education. Drawing upon Hadot's philosophy, it distinguishes between what the teacher does in the classroom and what he or she brings to it, suggesting greater emphasis be placed on teacher self-examination and self-understanding. However, a teacher's active involvement in personal spiritual development is not the same as the teacher's teaching it as a subject. Zigler does not go as far as to suggest that curriculum be changed to reflect spiritual development of staff but tentatively suggests that this might be done in teacher education. He cites the model of healthy human functioning proposed and developed by Maslow (1968, 1970), a mentor and colleague of Grof. Using 'self-actualisation' as a template, Zigler

suggests that teachers might model personal development to their students in order that students tacitly learn the value of development. The practical implications and possibilities of this are discussed further in much greater detail in Part Four of this thesis

Mystical and Spiritual Experience

There is no denying that the enigmatic natures of mysticism and spirituality have ever been a preoccupation and puzzle to the adolescent mind. Such prescience of the unknowable suggests its prevailing fascination and influence. However, although the mystical and the spiritual may be synonymous they are not identical. It is important that a comment is made at this point about the terms 'mystical' and 'spiritual' used in this thesis.

Mystical Experience

Deikman (2000) suggests, in his review of the literature, that there can be difficulties in using the term 'mystical' in a discussion. For example, James (1901-2) uses the term 'mystical states of consciousness' to encompass a spectrum of experiences, from the non-religious to the most religiously profound. However, there are clear differences between mysticism and religion. A distinction that Deikman (1983) raises is that most religions tend to associate the sacred with a deity, whereas mysticism associates the sacred with the unrecognized Real Self of each human being, which resonates, with the work of psychotherapy and developmental theory. Also difficulties of association have historically arisen because religion and mysticism both engage with a perception of the sacred. However, the work of mystics has traditionally taken place within a religious context but remained distinct from the activities of everyday religious practices.

Underhill (1990) asserts that mysticism is a science, 'the science of ultimates, the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else, and that the mystic is the

person who attains to this union, not the person who talks about it' (p. 72). However, Deikman (2000) also observes that even though consciousness has become a legitimate subject for research, mysticism because of its association with religion is still regarded as incompatible with science. He notes that mysticism is too often regarded by science as 'an enemy of the search for objective truth, not to be credited as a discipline through which knowledge of reality can be gained' (p.1). Nevertheless, he gives examples of scientists like Newton, who was 'haunted by the sense of the transcendent', and Einstein's belief in the reality of the mystical to support his argument:

The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the source of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religion.

(Einstein, in Deikman, 2000)

Clearly, a tacit dimension of knowledge is at the heart of the matter and it is called mystical because it is considered beyond the scope of language to convey. Similarly, Grosch (1999) cites Wittgenstein's succinct statement (1922) to describe the ineffable and tacit existence of the mystical dimension, which suggests that 'there are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical' (p. 188).

In Steiner's work, for example, the individual and the culture of the original experience are interdependent (McDermott, 2004). For Steiner the place of every 'religious' experience in the evolution of consciousness, including the particular language, universal psyche, or 'folk-soul', of the people, religious beliefs and practices, and many other influential factors contextualise the essential meaning of each experience. Forman (1997), on the other hand, suggests that certain mystical experiences may escape the ordinary constructive processes of language and belief, 'Through a process akin to forgetting, one may be able to let go of one's concepts and conceptual baggage and come to an experience that is both nonconceptual and not shaped by concepts and beliefs' (p. 2). Mystics come to this innate capacity through a process of letting go of the ego and the

conceptual system. Mysticism is therefore the expression of an inherent connectedness but this innate capacity is separate from all sensation, perception and thought and thus separate from the culturally 'trainable' aspects of human experience (Forman, 1997).

In contrast, Hollenback (1996) tends to generally support Steiner's contention that there is a universal pattern for mystical experience, and that religious culture determines to a large degree the core of mystical experience. However, with one reservation he suggests that not all the universal insights of mystics may be essentially similar (p. 607). Similarly, Underhill (1990), supporting the view that mystics are not 'spiritual anarchists', suggests that as 'faithful sons of the great religions' they may not be limited by the influence of any one religion. Hollenbeck too concedes that not all types of mystical experience may be culturally conditioned, as they seem to originate from a source beyond consciousness and bypass this cultural conditioning. Here he cites clairvoyance, telepathy and precognition (p. 130), the three experiences that Grof and Grof (1989) report as originating from non-ordinary sources and which are active in SE (p. 18). Hollenback's definition of 'mystical experience' also emphasises the connection between the mystical transformation of consciousness and the recollective act (p. 130), and his description of 'mysticism' as a process of 'dramatic metamorphosis' advances the importance of access to unconscious dimensions of the psyche. He sees it as a 'waking consciousness caused by simultaneously focusing the attention and quieting the mind, together with the responses in both thought and deed that it generates' (p. 2).

In psychological terms, Deikman (1976) in a review of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry's (GAP) report *Mysticism: Spiritual Quest or Psychic Disorder?*, also makes the important distinction that mystical experience is not a lower level sensory-emotional experience but an experience that goes beyond concepts, feelings, and sensations. He states that the report mistakenly positions the diagnoses of more lurid forms of sensate experience, or disorders, alongside mystical experiences, completely missing the point that mystics acquire direct knowledge of reality in a manner which transcends sensate experience. Mystical literature, Deikman observes, 'stresses that sensate experiences are not the goal

of mysticism; rather, it is only when these are transcended that one attains the aim of a *direct* (intuitive) knowledge of fundamental reality' (p. 1). His suggestion that mystical experience involves the intuitive reception of knowledge that transcends sensible experience aligns him with the transpersonal theory detailed in the next chapter. For example, Deikman notes that a lower level sensory-emotional experience (untrained-sensate) might enable an adolescent to attain a mystical state as he matures in which he has a knowledge and understanding of fundamental reality. Untrained-sensate refers to phenomena that are phenomenologically indistinguishable from those experienced in a trained-sensate state, and may occur in any individual not regularly engaged in meditation, prayer, or other exercises aimed at achieving a religious experience (Deikman, 1963).

In his later work Deikman (2000) proposes a functional understanding of mysticism as one that unites the effects of 'serving-the-task' in service experiences with the classical mystical literature. He enlarges his previous argument by discussing the universality of mystical experience across both time and cultures, concluding with James' (1901-2) comment that 'There is about mystical utterances an eternal unanimity which ought to make a critic stop and think' (p. 2). In this discussion about theology and mystical experience Deikman observes that the difference between mystics' experience and theological dogma is the reason why mystics have been a perpetual problem for traditional religion. This conflict, he suggests, 'attests to the fundamental nature of the mystics experience. It feels ultimate, beyond the domain of the sensory and the rational, more real' (p. 7). That is not to say that the experience is one of isolation or a product of the ego.

Deikman (1983) concludes by making the case for a significant connection between mystical tradition and modern counselling and psychotherapy. He argues that in the West, concern within the mystical tradition with the very problems that modern psychotherapy has been unable to resolve is often overlooked 'This is unfortunate because the mystical emphasis on self development makes it consonant with modern psychotherapy' (p. 3). This important point is also more fully discussed in Part Four of this thesis.

Finally, James' (1901-2) influential work provides the most useful and eminently sympathetic description of what is 'mystical'. He indicates the importance of keeping the definition of mystical states of consciousness non-judgemental, which is appropriate for a thesis that has counselling adolescents at its heart, by suggesting that all mystical experiences, whatever their influence, should be equally recognised as available states of consciousness.

As a rule, mystical states merely add a supersensuous meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness... by means of which facts already objectively before us fall into a new expressiveness and make a new connection with our active life. They do not contradict these facts as such or deny anything that our senses have immediately seized.

(James, 1901-2, Lecture XVII)

So that there is no debate over what defines the superiority of one form of consciousness over another, he insists that mystical states, like rational forms of consciousness, be understood as incorporating both pleasure and pain, as well as truth and deception. It is James' general notion of 'available states of consciousness' that guides the discussion that is central to the subject of this thesis.

Spiritual Experience

In the spirit of Alexander's and Grosch's comments above, this thesis adopts Gotz's (1997) description that spirituality connotes a quality of lived experience as distinct from a mode of knowing, which is identified more with mystical experience. Spiritual living involves reflection and may include profound cognitive interests but invites involvement in the service of and with others. Deikman (2000) infers a significant link between spirituality and mysticism. In his work with social service providers, and here teachers may be included, he indicates that through the provision of service, individuals experience a different organisation of consciousness, which is responsive to connectedness. He observes that through that connectedness the individual experiences a different, larger sense of self. Echoing Underhill's sentiments, he suggests that spirituality is possible when consciousness is refocused from the disconnected aspect of reality to a mode of consciousness responsive to its connected aspects. Thus,

spirituality as a lived experience according to Deikman is expressed through a belief in the world, but the goal of mysticism is defined as a facility to overcome factors that make it 'difficult to experience that world, not just to believe it' (p. 11).

However, Gotz (1997) maintains that spirituality also involves some sense of self-transcendence, not necessarily toward a god or higher power, but certainly beyond the narrow, selfish confines of ego. He also contends that this experience is birthed in the knowledge that human nature involves a radical openness or what he calls 'a radical non-coincidence with itself' that is 'the ground of hope, humility, and growth, but also of moral evil' (p. 1). Furthermore, he claims, spirituality entails the pursuit of the highest values commensurate with one's particular calling, personality, culture, and religious orientation. Thus it would be found in the actualisation of the highest ideals of a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Shinto, Buddhist, Anthroposophist, or Humanist life.

By taking this position Gotz also reclaims traditions of the past by suggesting that in the West the Christian distinction between soul and body has reinterpreted the Platonic distinction between the intelligible and the sensible. More specifically, spirituality defines the quality of a life of spirit, and spirit itself, thus defined, consists in the 'radical openness or self-transcendence' characteristic of human nature. 'It is the basic possibility of a true human existence in time' (p. 1). It is spirit that ultimately makes human beings undefinable and questionable, and consequently not 'complete'. In this sense adolescents, like all human beings, are poised on the verge of a journey or a quest for self-actualisation. In unifying the tripartite division between spirit, soul, and body Gotz states that,

Spirit, then, is not mere interiority, as is often supposed based on the Platonic-Judaeo-Christian model. Neither is spirit primarily what is opposed to matter as eternity is opposed to time... spirit and temporality are inextricably twined, for the very existing of spirit *is* the temporalization of human becoming. (Gotz, 1997, p. 2)

Finally and freely adapting Gotz, spirituality describes the ecstasy of spirit; spirit passing beyond itself in the free actualisation of all human potentialities. In this sense it is germane to the notion of learning and vocation, and understandable

as a call to access the most fundamental aptitudes that both students and their teachers possess whilst in pursuit of a lived spiritual life.

Individual Transformation and Education

In conclusion, it is suggested that adolescents have spiritual lives that could be subject to transformation, and that there exists a tradition in education which accepts the relationship between education, adolescent spirituality and transformation. Plato, in *The Republic*, stresses that the highest goal of all education is knowledge of the Good, and that the Form of Good provides the ultimate standard by which the reality of everything that has value is apprehended. Thus, if one of the key goals of education is the development of a young person then reflection on the nature and purpose of 'a good life' is an essential component. A good life is attained by assisting adolescents to think about, manage and understand transformation in themselves and the world, which has the power to transform the way they experience it, and the way they will behave. This philosophical reflection must also include acknowledging the vivid interplay between material and immaterial states of consciousness. However, it is also suggested that, even if a broader understanding of adolescent development in education is acknowledged as necessary, then further discussion leading to training and future research might still be limited by prevailing beliefs around the place of spirituality and mysticism.

Certainly, if educationists were able to attach the same importance to the inner transformation of students, regarding subjective and unconscious learning, as it does to objective and conscious learning, then an important position might be recovered. To do so, traditional models of belief would need to be integrated with new spiritual technologies. Thus, the new curriculum, as it recognises transformation and modelled on a broader new science perspective, would no longer simply transmit what is known but would also recognise that there is much that is not known. *In extremis*, this might suggest that new models of education abandon mind-body dualism completely and reconstruct themselves around the holistic models of eastern and western traditions, or take an evolutionary turn.

Nonetheless, the issues raised by transformation in the service of development, in seriously extending the concepts of consciousness, challenges educational thinking to consider alternative models and to explore existing methods of support for young people. There are, of course, limitations and implications to this and these are discussed in future chapters. However, the envisioned transformation that Gotz, Grosch, Karpiak, Wexler and Zigler anticipate may well be accomplished by a return to these original discourses if accompanied by a broad dialogue on the roles of spirituality and mysticism in education, which are distanced from the debate on religious education. At present, the understandable preoccupation with a measurable consciousness and the function and revelation of reason has, in effect, reduced the adolescent to a programmable learner. Consequently, transformation in educational terms is likely to reflect that reduction, limit the possibility of what may be learned and match it to a readily measurable performance. The difficulty of a spiritual notion of transformation in education is that it is totally subjective and defies this kind of reductionism and limitation.

A form of education that regards transformation as part of adolescent experience and acknowledges adolescent spirituality must be more effectively positioned to recognise the individual educational and spiritual transformation of its students. Equally, a philosophy of education that acknowledges and embraces the experiential aspects of personal transformation and the broader dimensions of human experience may also be said to be reclaiming its tradition. Finally, a willingness of educational leaders at all levels to personally explore the intrinsic possibilities of the spiritual domain with the rationale of scientific method, and respectfulness, must ultimately honour this aspect of lived experience in education in the future.

The next chapter will consider transpersonal psychology's particular view of development and its interpretation of personal growth, and the way in which the experience of inner transformation can be usefully applied to the field of adolescence. An overview of the literature of transpersonal psychology and adolescent spiritual development will include a discussion of those aspects of the following theories that most correspond to Grof's notion of SE: Maslow's (1964)

'peak experience'; Wilber's (2000) developmental structuralism; and Washburn's (1994,1995) dynamic-dialectical model. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of Blos' and Washburn's theories of 'regression' in adolescent development and will link them with processes of adolescent loss and mourning.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT: PERSONAL GROWTH AND INNER TRANSFORMATION

What is so exciting about the transpersonal enterprise is the unprecedented access to the entire range of the world's wisdom traditions. For what the world's spiritual traditions provide is the collected result of thousands of years of research (using that word in its widest sense) on the possibilities of human growth. (Cortright, 1997, p. 39)

Introduction

Transpersonal, meaning 'across or beyond the individual person or psyche', is the designation given to the study of religious or spiritual experiences that involves assumptions not part of traditional scientific methodology (Sundberg & Keutzer, 1984, p. 441, in Greenwood, 1995). More recently Wulff (1997) has usefully defined current transpersonal theory as an 'expanded context for a form of psychotherapy that adds authentic spirituality to the usual goals of healthy functioning.' (p. 617). Transpersonal psychology is described as the 'fourth force' within the discipline of psychology, succeeding those of behaviourist, psychoanalytic and humanistic psychologies. The definition supersedes Maslow's third force humanistic psychology and Assagioli's work on psychosynthesis (Washburn, 1998). According to Walsh and Vaughan, (1984) Maslow found humanist psychology inadequate to explain or account for extraordinary states of consciousness. Therefore, transpersonal psychology provided a way of looking at religion that reintegrated the sacred, an 'intrinsic core', with its more human values. The outcome of bringing this core into the realm of humanist science, especially in the work of this thesis, has been to facilitate a wider discussion of subjects that before were identified as exclusively pertaining to religions or personal religious experiences such as Grof's (1989,1990) SE, or Maslow's (1970) 'peak experiences'. Vich (1988, in Wulff, 1997) explains that Maslow began to use the word 'transpersonal' in his

correspondence with Grof in, or around, 1967. Wulff (1997) suggests that the emerging discipline was to provide Maslow with an opportunity to heal the split between what he considered to be the sacred and the profane.

The first part of this chapter considers Maslow's 'peak experiences' as an aspect of transpersonal psychology that supports Grof's work on spiritual emergence and SE. As a term that is commonly understood amongst transpersonal theorists 'peak experience' bears many of the attributes, outcomes, and characteristics of SE and in many ways the terms, as this thesis hopes to show, are interchangeable. Also included in this chapter is the grand synthesising theory of Wilber that mainly derives its influence from eastern religions and cultures. The final part of this chapter will discuss Washburn's psychological developmental work, which discusses adolescent psychospiritual development in terms of object relations according to his dynamic dialectical model. In addition, both Wilber and Washburn make unique contributions to the subject of 'regression' in adolescent development that helps to advance the argument about the possible occurrence of spiritual emergence and SE during adolescence. The chapter concludes with a discussion about regression in the service of development and its implications for adolescent mourning. Grief and loss in adolescence is an important subject for this thesis and it will be considered in greater depth in Part Three.

The Transpersonal Contribution

Abraham Maslow's 'Peak Experience'

And since almost everyone I questioned could remember such experiences, I had come to the tentative conclusion that many, perhaps more, people are capable of temporary states of integration, even of self-actualization and therefore of self-actualizing creativeness. (Maslow, 1987, p. 101)

Grof has extended Maslow's (1958, 1964, 1970, 1987) contribution to psychology on 'self-actualisation' through 'peak-experience', by further defining the terms that describe crises that share both potential for personality growth and transformation. In their detailed typology of Non Ordinary States of

Consciousness (NOSC) experiences Grof and Grof (1990) include episodes of 'unitive consciousness', or 'peak experiences'. Both of these demonstrate a notion of renewal that can be applied to a far fuller cartography of the human psyche, which includes perinatal and transpersonal dimensions, and both of which may be aspects of an adolescent's SE. As Grof observes,

Because of the general benign nature and the positive potential of the peak experience, this is a third category of spiritual emergency that should be least problematic. These experiences are by their nature transient and self limited. There is absolutely no reason why they should have adverse consequences. (Grof, 2000a, p. 158)

Using the common language of 'peak experience' Maslow hoped to create a construct or framework whereby the inner mind might be studied more objectively and thus become universally more accessible. Like Grof's use of the term SE, Maslow gives individuals a way of relating subjective experience and the opportunity to compare it with the subjective experience of others.

... very many, people, including even very young children, can in principle be taught in some such experiential way that peak-experiences exist, what they are like, when they are apt to come, to whom they are apt to come, what will make them more likely, what their connection is with a good life, with a good man, with good psychological health, etc. To some extent, this can be done even with words, with lectures, with books. My experience has been that whenever I have lectured approvingly about peak-experiences, it was as if I had given permission to the peak-experiences of some people, at least, in my audience to come into consciousness. That is, even mere words sometimes seem to be able to remove the inhibitions, the blocks, and the fears, the rejections which had kept the peak-experiences hidden and suppressed. (Maslow, 1970, pp. 88-9)

Maslow is generally acknowledged as one of the founders of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology. He identified a hierarchy of needs within people. As lower needs were met, higher needs emerged, taking the individual on a journey of increased 'self-actualization'.

In these states of being, the person becomes unified; for the time being, the splits, the polarities, and dissociations within him tend to be resolved; the civil war within is neither won nor lost but transcends. In such a state, the person becomes far more open to experience and far more spontaneous and fully functioning... (Maslow, 1987, p. 100)

Daniels (2002) suggests that Maslow's own interest in the transpersonal derives from his investigations into the experiential and motivational characteristics of exceptional, 'self-actualising' people. In particular, Maslow became interested in the nature and consequences of mystical-type peak experiences, or moments of highest happiness and fulfilment, that were reported by many self-actualisers. However, as Wulff (1997) observes, Maslow discovered that peak experiences can also occur in the lives of people who are not self-actualisers, even in the lives of those who are 'despicable', but he notes that Maslow claimed that they are rare and lack cognitive content. Otherwise, they signal temporary admission into the ranks of the self-actualizing and are moments of a person's highest maturity and greatest fulfilment (p. 608). High plateau experiences then replace the initial period of peak experience, providing the individual with greater insight and a life of deep experience.

According to Maslow, peak experience involves a special mode of transcendent cognition that he terms Cognition of Being, or B-Cognition that exhibits qualities of, for example, exclusive attention, holistic perception, self-forgetfulness, and receptivity. He also notes that in B-Cognition the world is perceived in terms of universal values, or B-Values, such as truth, goodness, beauty, unity, 'aliveness', perfection, justice, order and meaningfulness. As a result of these experiences a person's values and goals are often transformed or 'metamotivated' by the universal B-Values rather than by self-interest. Moreover, so passionate is the commitment to the B-Values that these become defining qualities of the self. In this way the person identifies the 'highest self with the highest values of the world' (Maslow, 1973, p. 327) and thereby begins to lose the distinction between self and non-self. Washburn (1995) notes that Maslow has consistently defended the view that spiritual experience is a higher potentiality of human experience, a potentiality that inherently belongs to us as a biological species (1970, 1971). In a synthesis of the developmental and the spiritual, Maslow concludes that human developmental realisation is ultimately a spiritual realisation.

Maslow (1970) presents a list of characteristics, formerly assigned to religious contexts, to encompass all varieties of peak experience, whatever the context. He describes how the experience tends to be unifying, noetic and ego-

transcending, giving a sense of purpose and integration to an individual. He considers peak experience to be ultimately therapeutic as it increases an individual's empathy, free will, self-determination and creativity. Most importantly Maslow (1970) goes on to suggest that peak experiences be studied and cultivated in order to teach and encourage those in our culture who 'have never had them or who repress or suppress them' (p. 179), to find a path to personal fulfilment, integration, and growth. In terms of the protective factors in adolescence Maslow suggests that there are obvious benefits derived from a peak experience:

It is my strong suspicion that even one such [peak] experience might be able to prevent suicide, for instance, and perhaps many varieties of slow self-destruction. (Maslow, 1970 p. 75)

Many of the outcomes of peak experience are similar to those of the transformational crisis of SE described by Grof and Grof. For example, Maslow regards 'unitive consciousness', one of the categories of SE, as only one of the many characteristics of peak-experience. Also Maslow suggests that paradoxically, those with the strongest identity tend to be the ones who are 'able to transcend the ego or the self and to become selfless, who are at least relatively selfless and relatively egoless'. (p. 67). Since there are schools of thought that suggest that adolescence is either a time of 'identity crisis' (Erikson, 1963), or a time when identity is perhaps at its strongest (Bird & Drewery, 2000) peak-experience in adolescence is quite possible.

With regard to the question of 'regression', Maslow (1970) argues for the human tendency toward growth, or 'good conditions' rather than regression. He does not seem to be suggesting that regression is wrong but rather he argues that growth is more 'naturalistic'. He proposes an alliance between education, marriage, the family and therapy, to promote individual growth. Whilst in agreement with the trend toward 'good choices', Maslow points out that the 'child', and he doesn't define the age, is 'now-bound' and that good choices are often mediated by and dependent upon more abstract thinking adults, and supportive and brotherly humans in general. In short, he suggests that individuals are all interdependent (pp. 97-102).

In arguing that the B-Values are genuinely universal, rather than simply cultural, implies for Maslow a biological potentiality and therefore part of what he terms our 'organismic inner core' or 'Real Self'. In his humanist and biologically reductive approach Maslow accounts for many types of transpersonal experience. However, his own emphasis is on the personal and transpersonal 'heights' and as a result he tends to ignore the role of the unconscious and of spiritual crises such as the *Dark Night*, the developmental and healing potentials of SE, and the positive developmental aspects of the process of regression.

One of the difficulties of Maslow's theory of self-realising individuals who have peak-experiences is that it does not incorporate specific developmental theory across the life span. Although his data are collected from adolescents and adults recovering memories from adolescence he does not mention the adolescent experience specifically. Paradoxically, although Maslow advocates education as a means of making available his theories to a wider audience he is not too clear as to how that might be done with adolescents. His model claims that the peak experience is open to all human beings irrespective of gender, race or situation, and seems to emphasise two types of persons, those who use the peak-experience for self-realisation, personal therapy, fulfilment and growth, and those who deny and repress the experience. In his narrow and rather elitist definition he seems to be indicating that self-actualizers are also high achievers and that those who are not have in some way failed.

Ken Wilber's 'Integral Development'

Wilber, too, discussing the developmental aspects of spirituality tends to reinforce this argument by supporting the developmentalist view that all 'structures' of consciousness generally unfold in a developmental or stage-like sequence and that 'true stages cannot be skipped'.

No true stages in any developmental line can be skipped, nor can higher stages in that line be 'peak experienced.' A person at preoperational cannot have a peak experience of formal operational. A person at Kohlberg's moral-stage 1 cannot have a peak experience of moral-stage 5. A person at Graves's animistic stage cannot have a peak experience of

the integrated stage, and so on. Not only are those stages in some ways learned behaviors, they are incorporative, cumulative, and enveloping, all of which preclude skipping. (Wilber, 2000a, p. 3)

However, Wilber, in extending Maslow's theory and clarifying Grof's, also suggests that peak experience need not be limited to higher developmental stages but that the only limiting factor is the way in which an individual is able to interpret it. The interpretation and depth of experience is then dependent upon the structures or stages of consciousness that have already developed in the individual. Superimposing Wilber's (2000d) observations on children onto adolescence, Wilber suggests that spiritual experiences will tend to be temporary experiences, because development has not occurred to the point where these direct experiences can be 'continued in an unbroken and enduring fashion' (p. 1). However, he notes that this does not dilute their authenticity even though they are moulded by the adolescent's current developmental stage; it only means that they are passing, not permanent. It is also important to note that the memory of these experiences often lasts a lifetime, and so do some of the positive effects, but rarely the actual states themselves. Wilber also observes that no matter how truly authentic the spiritual experience is, further development will usually increase the depth of that initial experience.

Wilber (2000c) defines his notion of 'integral development' as a 'continuous process of converting temporary states into permanent traits or structures' (p. 1), and in that integral development, no structures or levels can be bypassed, or the development is not, by definition, integral. Thus peak experiences can be viewed as temporary leaps forward to higher states of consciousness before these states become permanent. In his discussion of states of consciousness he concludes,

Evidence strongly suggests that a person at virtually any *stage* or level of development can have an altered *state* or peak experience - including a spiritual experience. Thus, the idea that spiritual experiences are available only at the higher stages of development is incorrect. States themselves rarely show development, and their occurrence is often random; yet they seem to be some of the most profound experiences human beings ever encounter. Clearly, those important aspects of spirituality that involve altered states do not follow any sort of linear, sequential, or stage-like unfolding. (Wilber, 2000a, p. 2)

Wilber proposes that there are four types of mystical experiences that he calls 'gross unity' (nature mysticism), 'subtle unity' (deity mysticism), 'causal unity' (formless mysticism), and 'nondual unity' (integral mysticism) and that they can occur at any stage of human development, including those of bardo (or the near-death and afterlife states), prenatal, perinatal, infancy, and childhood. The reason he gives for their apparently universal accessibility is that all four of these experiences are variations on the four great states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, sleeping, and nondual ever-present awareness, and that all four are present in humans even in the prenatal period, and certainly in infancy and childhood. The important point being made here is that all of these available states of consciousness (James, 1901-2) have access to the unconscious.

The importance of these three or four natural states is that every human being, at no matter what stage or structure or level of development, *has available the general spectrum of consciousness* - ego to soul to spirit - at least as temporary states, for the simple reason that all humans wake, dream, and sleep. In a *peak experience* (a temporary altered state), a person can briefly experience, while awake, any of the natural states of psychic, subtle, causal, or nondual awareness, and these often result in direct *spiritual experiences*. (Wilber, 2000d, p. 2)

Therefore, as Wilber also explains in his *Integral Psychology* (2000c), by combining the ideas of developmental levels with states of consciousness an individual at any level or stage of development can have an authentic peak experience, a non-ordinary state of consciousness experience, or a SE. The only limitation is that any interpretations of these kinds of experiences in adolescence are subject to the parameters of the young person's development.

Summarising Wilber's 'Developmental Structuralism'

Development is evolution; evolution is transcendence...and transcendence has as its final goal Atman, or ultimate Unity Consciousness in only God. All drives are a subset of that Drive, all wants a subset of that Want, all pushes a subset of that Pull - and that whole movement is what we call the Atman-project: the drive of God towards God, Buddha towards Buddha, Brahman towards Brahman, but carried out initially through the intermediary of the human psyche, with results that range from ecstatic to catastrophic. (Wilber, 1996, p. 1)

Wilber is, perhaps, the most widely known and most influential of those working in the field of transpersonal psychology today. He is chiefly noted for his proposition that all psychology and all spiritual traditions are seen as at least partially right (Cortright, 1997). Rather than saying some are wrong his grand perennial philosophical paradigm provides an integrating structure in which all partial and complementary truths about human consciousness may co-exist.

Wulff (1997, p. 617) summarises Wilber's (1977, 1981, 1995) work as efforts to delineate a multilevel 'spectrum of consciousness' and to construct a model of humankind's evolution toward 'integral Wholeness and Spirit' (Wilber, 1981, p. 11), which to Wulff illustrates,

... the bold tendency among some advocates of the transpersonal orientation to equate considerable diversity of psychological and religious concepts (the latter (Wilber) primarily from the East) and to order them according to some syncretic and all-embracing vision of reality.

(Wulff, 1997, p. 617)

In Wilber's theory the mind and society are compound structures containing two dimensions comprised of horizontal surface structures and vertical deep structures. The tensions between these dimensions provide the motive power for 'evolution of consciousness' both for the individual and society. As a hierarchical evolution, or 'holoarchy' (1993, p. 57), meaning increasing orders of wholeness, it incorporates and then transcends previous lower structures. The model moves, therefore, from rational states of 'prepersonal' to 'personal' and finally to 'transpersonal'. Initially these three states or stages combined Piaget's model of cognitive development with Wilber's nondual interpretation of the perennial philosophy. If the adolescent has developed naturally through the prepersonal stage much of what is represented in the three parts of Wilber's personal stage should apply. In which case, the adolescent moves from 'rule/role mind' (Piaget's concrete operational thinking) to 'formal-reflexive' (Piaget's formal operations) to 'vision-logic' (derived from Bruner and Arieti's hypothesised step beyond Piaget). Wilber especially incorporates Erikson's writing on identity vs. role confusion in the personal stage. However, in Cortright's (1997) review of Wilber's work he states that identification of a number of pathologies, in association with the

personal stage, is in reality another way of describing neurosis, and he questions Wilber's division of the personal as stretching it far beyond its actual significance.

Wilber's typology allows for nine general levels or waves of consciousness, each of which has a corresponding fulcrum that occurs when the self identifies with that level, and each fulcrum has these three basic subphases, which are fusion, transcendence and integration. This typology of twenty-seven major self pathologies ranges from psychotic to borderline to neurotic to existential to transpersonal. For example, at Wilber's transpersonal stage of development, Cortright (1997) reflects that the self has gone as far as it can go and now it emerges into the spiritual world (p. 69). At this point Wilber places nine pathologies, one of which is specifically SE and a further two that bear similar characteristics. Wilber's term for SE is 'spontaneous' and he suggests that treatment consists of 'riding it out' under the care of a trained person, or engaging the process by taking up a spiritual discipline. 'Psychotic-like' and 'pranic disorders', which is kundalini awakening in its early stages, provide for a third of pathologies at fulcrum 7, and there are two further fulcrums at this stage.

Cortright (1997) has pointed out that while Wilber's theory is elegant and integrates psychology and spirituality extremely well it has a few limitations. Aside from its subtle denigration of theistic-relational traditions as merely a step on the way to the 'real goal', Cortright states that, for our purposes, fulcrum 7 does not accurately reflect spiritual unfolding. He argues that although some mystics experience psychic phenomena (fulcrum 7) many others do not. In terms of the three realms described in Wilber's model Cortright simply notes,

Spiritual realization can begin with any one of these three realms and proceed in any order to one or both of the other two. In the spiritual domain a single invariant sequence of development does not appear to exist. Thus, these three spiritual realms cannot properly be called stages.

(Cortright, 1997, p. 73)

'Evolution' is only one half of the process, in which Wilber implies matter ascending into spirit. Using a ladder paradigm, Wilber describes the path of development as a level-by-level ascent up a hierarchy of psychic structures, such as moral structures, self-structures and cognitive structures. Many

transpersonalists advocate this model (Daniels, 2002). Neatly summarised by Washburn, this holoarchy of structures of the psychic level

... are merely potential until development reaches the level to which they belong, at which point they come actively into play, subsuming and reorganising preceding or lower structures and thereby asserting themselves as the new governing structures of the psyche. Level-by-level this process continues until development reaches the ultimate structural level, integrates the full range of human experience within a universal unity in which consciousness and reality completely coincide.

(Washburn, 1994, p. xiii)

The other half, 'involution', is seen as a reverse process with spirit descending into matter. On this point there seems to be no clear distinction between Wilber's ladder and Washburn's spiral paradigms.

In describing the work of the horizontal structure Wilber uses the term 'translation' in which he refers to the uncovering of distortions at a particular level of human consciousness. Work in the vertical structure, which he terms 'transformation', can begin once the distortions are cleared. For example, he proposes the notion of 'evolutionary transformation' as the mass movement from reason and reductionism to a level that includes both, and at the same time transcends them, through an integrative consciousness.

Wilber usefully notes that a major deficiency in conventional psychology is the tendency to confuse lower states of consciousness with higher states of consciousness, which he calls the 'pre/trans fallacy'. Transpersonalists, according to Wilber, can make the mistake of being unable to see the difference between pre- and trans-rational. An example of this is when a pre-personal state, a return to magical thinking with undue reliance on a charismatic religious leader, is mistaken for a transpersonal state, or when childhood is romanticised by likening the consciousness of an infant to that of a mystic, or when an adolescent in the search for identity espouses spiritual ideas without experiencing or integrating them. However, as Grof and Grof (1986) have pointed out, Wilber is not a clinician but instead comes to psychology as a theoretician. His division of pathology is symmetrical but does not make clinical sense. Indeed, Cortright (1997) goes so far as to say that 'The middle third of the spectrum' and the one

which concerns this thesis the most is 'a purely imaginary, nonexistent structure' (p. 73) that has not found support in clinical literature.

Wilber's *A Theory of Everything* (2000b), by emphasising the 'pre/trans fallacy', takes the view that there is a very real distinction between regression and progress, which can only take place as an individual climbs upwards in his or her integral development. Wilber argues that since all natural developmental transitions are movements of ascent to higher levels of inclusive wholeness and that new and higher structures are articulated without losing touch with previously articulated structures, then movement that does not conform to this pattern is abnormal and uneven. Despite acknowledging that repression and dissociation can occur during developmental stage transitions, Wilber holds that this is pathological, not the pattern of normal development. He makes these points about normal development in almost all of his works. This imposition of a constricting and authoritarian one-way approach could arguably be regarded as too inflexible, especially given what we know about the apparently random characteristics of occurrences of peak-experience, NOSC, and SE.

More recently Wilber (2000a) has clarified his model regarding linearity and answered the criticisms levelled at it.

There is an enormous amount of theory and research on modularity (both pro and con), although it is generally accepted in the psychological literature. According to this body of research, a person can be at a relatively high level of development in some lines (such as cognition), medium in others (such as morals), and low in still others (such as spirituality). Thus, *there is nothing linear about overall development*. It is a wildly individual and idiosyncratic affair (even though many of the developmental lines themselves unfold sequentially). The most common criticism of my model is that it is linear, a view I have not held for twenty years.

(Wilber, 2000a, p. 2)

A difficulty with Wilber's theoretical position is his absolute assumption that truly transpersonal growth and spiritual realisation can occur only after existential and neurotic issues are worked through. In a sense it seems to fall into the same elitist trap as Maslow's self-realisation theory in assuming that spirituality only emerges at the top of the spectrum as opposed to anywhere along it. However, Wilber (2000a) now freely admits that non-ordinary states themselves rarely

indicate consciousness development, and that their occurrence is often quite random as 'important aspects of spirituality that involve altered states do not follow any sort of linear, sequential, or stage-like unfolding' (p. 2). Whilst he agrees that they seem to be some of the most profound experiences human beings ever encounter he still regards them as products of 'uneven spiritual development' (p. 3).

Unfortunately, a superficial reading of Wilber's initial model tends to relegate those with a psychotic condition to the bottom of the ladder and the well adjusted to the top. Correspondingly, it might just as well be said that adolescents who exhibit risky behaviours could not possibly hope to achieve any true level of spiritual development or receive spiritual experience because of their immaturity and circumstances, now or perhaps in the future. This is clearly ridiculous as evidenced by history that is rich in individuals who might be described as both psychotic and spiritual. However, Wilber seems to be suggesting that this is a misinterpretation as his newer model allows for both variations of normal spiritual development and fractured spiritual development. Wilber explains that this misunderstanding has occurred because partial or fractured development is taken as the paradigm of natural and normal spiritual development and that students and teachers alike are asked to repeat the fracture as evidence of their spiritual progress.

The fact that many contemporary writers equate spirituality predominantly with altered and nonordinary states (which is often called without irony the fourth wave of transpersonal theory); the fact that lines in general can develop unevenly (so that a person can be at a high level of development in some lines and low or pathological in others) - and that this happens more often than not - have all conspired to obscure those important aspects of spiritual development that do indeed show some stage-like phenomena. My point is that *all* of these aspects of spirituality (four of which I mentioned and will elucidate below) need to be acknowledged and included in any comprehensive theory of spirituality-and in any genuinely integral spiritual practice. (Wilber, 2000a, p. 3)

It is, perhaps, a limitation of transpersonal theory in general to suggest that spiritual development and psychological development can be integrated into one continuous process. A further deficit of the transpersonal view, as Washburn (1994) indicates, is that this theory derives its position from the assumption that

all human development is ultimately aimed at attaining spiritual fulfilment, and that consequently human nature can only properly be understood from a spiritual standpoint. Indeed, Wilber (2000a) himself has begun to insist that his integral psychology be removed from the umbrella of transpersonal psychology, as he now believes that transpersonal psychology is too specialist to become truly integral. However, transpersonalists are indebted to Wilber for boldly providing a theory that can be so passionately responded to by both its supporters and detractors.

Michael Washburn's 'Dynamic-Dialectical' Model

Washburn (1988, 1994 & 1995) synthesises several disciplines including religion and philosophy, which he uses to connect Jungian thought specifically to the transpersonal field. A philosopher by training, he explains the philosophical assumptions and thoughts of Jung and locates them in a Western, theistic relational model that interprets the perennial philosophy similarly to the Eastern, nondual tradition of Wilber (Cortright, 1997). Washburn (1988) is guided by the paradigm that human development follows a spiral course of departure and higher return to origins, which is found in the psychoanalytic, Jungian, depth-psychological tradition. This also, incidentally, appears to have been a major influence on the early work of Grof (1975, 1985 & 1988). In this paradigm the ego emerges from the deep sources of the psyche. The ego then separates itself from these sources during the first half of life, a time of ego development and dominance, and then returns to the deep sources of the psyche in the second half of life to be come integrated with them on the higher, transegoic, level.

Washburn (1994) appears to challenge Wilber's model by proposing a different approach to the subject of transcendence. Washburn (1988, 1995) also proposes dialectic between the 'dynamic ground' and the ego by suggesting that rather than moving inevitably to ever higher levels of consciousness we are constantly in the dialectical tension created by the opposition of the ego. This tension is represented by the essentially material nature of the ego striving toward the spiritual represented in the dynamic ground, which is essentially spiritual but

which contains a material or negative potential. Wilber's model therefore advocates the dissolution of the separate self into identity with Buddha-nature or Brahman. Washburn proposes that transcendence does not eliminate the self but transforms it into a higher unity

Thus in Washburn's (1988) 'spiral-to-integration' model, transcendence occurs as the ego separates from the ground, represses the knowledge of the union, develops mentally, and then from time to time reaches back beyond the original repression to get in touch with the ground. Originally, according to Washburn's theoretical position, the psyche exists as a dynamic, nonegoic core or ground of potentials, both preegoic and transegoic. With the emergence of the ego, the non-egoic core becomes repressed, leading to a fundamental separation between ego and dynamic ground. Transpersonal developmental process involves the reconnection and integration of the ego with the nonegoic core, leading to a psycho-spiritual regeneration and redemption. The key process in transpersonal development is regression. In his later work Washburn (1995) refined this U-turn calling it 'regression in the service of transcendence', and refers to this process as bipolar as it involves the egoic pole of the personality returning or regressing to its pre-egoic origins in the unconscious or nonegoic pole of the ground. Wilber (Washburn, 1995), has challenged this U-turn towards origins as 'profoundly incorrect' in the context of perennial philosophy and modern developmental theory (p. 134). In Wilber's theory such reversals are dangerous for individuals or groups and impossible once the great mass of human consciousness has moved on to another level, but both actions may be appropriate for the theorised levels on which they are occurring. In his defence Washburn (1995) suggests that Wilber's model, a ladder, does not accommodate the transpersonal potentials of the deep unconscious in the course of development as his own spiral model enables the ego to separate from its source and ultimately return to it. Washburn (1996) also asserts that in prohibiting regression 'Wilber is left with no alternative but to hypothesize that we are somehow reconnected with these potentials without having to return to them' (p. 8). Whilst Washburn is not openly critical of Wilber's model, maintaining that they are in effect both consistent, he suggests that his is more fitting to a Western audience and that Wilber's more appropriate to Eastern thinking.

This thesis is particularly concerned with Washburn's (1995) 'egoic stage', or the stage of the 'mental ego', which is the second phase of his triphasic model. This stage is the longest, extending from latency through adolescence and early adulthood, and is overlooked as a stage, Washburn contends, by most developmental theorists. Washburn regards adolescence as a period of experimentation, 'a flight from nothingness to something', driven by guilt. He concurs with Erikson that adolescents are primarily concerned with searching for identity. Nevertheless, he contends that this begins through an exploration of the inner world rather than the outer, which was a feature of the 'latency stage'. Adolescence is therefore a time when there is a separation from perceived parent domination that is also mirrored internally by the separation from the representative of the parental high ground the superego. There is also a reassessment of the ego-ideal that seems to be created for the parent rather than for the newly emerging self. During this stage the ego is in control and the ground is mostly dormant, controlled by the ego.

Washburn tends to regard adolescence as simply a transitional stage between the early dualism of the latency period and the mature dualism of early adult life. Consequently this stage incorporates the dualistic structures of 'primal repression and primal alienation'.

The stresses applied to primal repression and primal alienation weaken these bases of the mental-egoic system without, however, radically undermining them – except in pathological cases. Accordingly, once the adolescent process is complete, and new forms of nonegoic latency and interpersonal object constancy emerge. Early adulthood is thus a new and more mature form of dualism. (Washburn, 1994, p. 124)

However, Washburn does indicate that the dynamic upsurge of adolescence charges the ego making it the centre of gravity of the psyche, which disrupts the cathetic equilibrium of latency. As a result the ego withdraws pre-existing object cathexes, which he characterises as adolescent indifference to the world. The ego like the adolescent is both infused and turned in upon itself. The ego inflates and introverts, making it sensitive to narcissistic self-absorption.

As the withdrawal of object cathexes causes the adolescent to experience this alienation, the upwelling of energy into the ego causes the adolescent

to experience a heightened, almost voluptuous self-consciousness. The inner world of subjectivity is lit up and amplified, and the adolescent becomes introspectively self-absorbed. In extreme cases this self-absorption can become almost solipsistic in its inwardness. As the teenager's outer world is divested of charge and significance, the teenager's inner world is invested with charge and significance.

(Washburn, 1994, p. 126)

Kohlberg and Gilligan (1972) contend that, in extreme cases, the inner world for adolescents can become more real than the outer,

The external is no longer the real, 'the objective', and the internal the 'unreal'. The internal may be real and the external unreal. At its extreme, adolescent thought entertains solipsism or at least the Cartesian cogito, the notion that the only real thing is the self.

(Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1972, p. 157)

Washburn contends that the inner subjective realm provides a certain refuge in an uncertain world, and suggests that this inner realm is most like the adolescent's true self, the authentic core of selfhood – the place behind the masks.

It is an argument of this thesis that within this rich inner realm of adolescent introspection, the fantasies and the ideals supported by the ego are picked up by the ground and worked upon beyond the conscious field of the ego. Jung's 'shadow' may perhaps provide a key access way from the ground to the ego and back again. The ego's discarded objects have significance to the ego even when they are lost to the ground and these objects, still important to the ego, retain a reference to it. Somehow the ego recognises that part of it is missing and that that part is unknowable. Perhaps, like the adolescent, the ego mirrors internally not just the parental separation but the separation of that which is worth keeping and that, which is to be discarded. Drawing upon holotropic and grief and loss theory, if the ego has a point of reference, like a memory of the object or as part of a system of condensed experiences (COEX), it may become a transitional object for the ego. Thus its absence creates a transitional potential that bridges the gap between what the ego is conscious of and what the ground has claimed. In normal development or uneven and traumatic developmental situations, the ego may seek to complete or reconnect with what has become fragmented. It

attempts to arrest the forward thrust of the developmental process by seeking to regress it by searching for and calling back into being lost objects that momentarily reactivates the power of the ground. Thus a connection is made through which the ego becomes aware of the unconscious and a gateway is created and opened to the transcendent. As in *déjà vu*, an object that has significance to both the ground and the ego may resonate with both. As an example, death is a powerful conceptual object that the ego cannot ignore or explain and it is also one which may reside simultaneously in the instinctual archetypal unconscious of the ground and within the conscious field of the ego.

Washburn (1995) suggests that transpersonal development generally begins around midlife when the mature ego has completed its own developmental tasks. This is a limitation of Washburn's work, as he tends to ignore the possibility of transpersonal development over half the life span. Washburn indicates that when the power of the dynamic ground breaks through in the third phase of his model it awakens and manifests itself directly within the field of the mental ego's experience and typically takes the form of the 'numinous'. Generally, the mental ego, he suggests, is irresistibly drawn to the numinous and such numinous experiences only occur initially in the late mental-egoic stage or mid-life transition (p. 126). However, Washburn also notes that during the mental-egoic stage, which corresponds to latency, adolescence, and early adulthood, the ego functions develop independently of psychodynamic influences. It is at this stage that the power of the dynamic ground, as energy of the unconscious, works invisibly through cathexes and projections, ideas and feelings, and transferences, to affect the ego.

According to Washburn (1995) in its largely dormant state the power of the ground, unknown to the mental ego, is investing in the objects of the unconscious drives such as archetypes, complexes, desires, and fears. These objects become charged with the power of the ground and have power over the mental ego, attracting its attention and drawing it into 'entrancements or absorptions' (p. 125). This is very threatening for the mental ego and subsequently these objects become the foci of fixations, obsessions, and compulsions. Driven to these objects, Washburn suggests, and frequently taken captive, the mental ego is

confused by a power it cannot understand. Consequently, because of their uncanny power, these objects impose hidden limits to the mental-egoic system and its self-control (pp. 124-6). However, if the unconscious can still affect the ego in this way, it is also likely that under certain circumstances the unconscious may affect a break-through, or significantly attract the ego to a subject, by its numinous quality. This may initiate a state not unlike a brief spiritual or 'spontaneous' emergence, peak experience, or SE.

Washburn makes a very general delineation of numinous experience in the late mental-egoic stage in his (1995) Table 5.2 'The Ambivalence Bivalence Phenomenon' (p. 125). If this table were redrawn to incorporate the potential that the power of the ground, and that of the repressed body unconscious, and the instinctual archetypal unconscious do make incursions into the field of mental ego awareness as early as adolescence it would not damage his basic theory. The following conditions suggest why Washburn's concept of adolescent development could be modified:

- 1.) In the second phase of Washburn's model the connection between the ego and the ground is not fully disconnected because primal repression has not been fully completed and the ego is still unable to take possession and control of itself. The re-emergence of the Oedipal phase in adolescence significantly increases the ego's desire for intimacy, not for the great Mother but for the Other as it is represented in intimate psychodynamic relationships. In other words, influenced by the classical psychoanalytic two-drive theory, the ego cannot detach because the power of the ground is still linked with the ego through sexual energy.
- 2.) Washburn maintains that there are two energies in the dynamic ground that are linked (citing Reich, 1942), the 'sexual' and the 'psychic'. For most people the power of the ground is limited to sexual energy since the psychic is primarily repressed. However, the mental-egoic sexual organisation of the ground is the libido and the power of the ground is employed to amplify and fuel the psychic process linking the two together. It could, therefore, be argued that if the ground can still be accessed via its sexual energy it is

possible that the energy that fuels sexual activity may also be linked to fuel a parallel psychic process.

- 3.) If primary repression is incomplete in early adolescence the psychic centres may not be permanently repressed and may still open. In other words, if the two energies, processes, or drives, to which energy is focused from the dynamic ground, develop independently, might they also respond independently and spontaneously? For example, the energy of the sexual is able to function from the ground even if the energy of the psychic is repressed. This might suggest that, theoretically at least, other development continues irrespective of the primal repression process in the dynamic ground by the ego.
- 4.) Finally, a further limitation of Washburn's model is that he does not consider the possibility or the effects of the activation of psychic energy from the repressed and dormant dynamic ground by a trauma or a crisis.

Washburn (1995) does describe adolescent emotional life as 'both volatile and labile' (p. 128) and consequently adolescents do indulge in sexual activity, and the power of the ground enhances and activates sexual energies. As a result the ground becomes more visible and as a bi-product of the sexual act, objects of numinosity become visible to the ego. With awakening sexuality in adolescence the psychosexual effect is described as,

... an upsurge from the nonegoic sphere, has the effect of loosening primal repression. The power of the sexual drive is such that it weakens primal repression sufficiently to allow sexual feelings to express themselves within consciousness...the awakening of sexuality has the effect of arousing nonegoic life generally. Nonegoic potentials, long dormant, are reactivated and, along with sexuality, begin to exert an influence within consciousness...evident across virtually the entire range of these potentials: the body, energy, instincts, feelings, and the creative (imaginal-autosymbolic-archetypal) process. (Washburn, 1995, p. 125)

Consequently, Washburn agrees that nonegoic potential is released when the power of the ground is activated as the ego, becoming too attracted to the ground's hypnotic power, loses for a while its self-control and falls into a state of 'entrancements and absorbtions'. Washburn is not very clear about the depth and extent of what he calls 'entrancements and absorbtions'; they might be

viewed as a form of peak experience or as a spiritual emergence or, *in extremis*, a form of SE. The difficulty with this line of reasoning is, it could be argued, that what one is really dealing with in adolescence is not SE but a number of momentary pseudo-psychic experiences derived from a sexual rather than a spiritual source. If SE cannot in reality occur in adolescence then certain assertions of this work have fallen foul of Wilber's famous 'pre/trans fallacy' trap.

Finally, referring to Blos (1967, p. 154), Washburn considers that regression could be part of the awakening of the self-conscious and nonegoic life that occurs in adolescence, as, perhaps, a regression in the service of development.

Regression in adolescence is not, in and by itself, a defense, but it constitutes an essential psychic process that, despite the anxiety it engenders, must take its course. Only then can the task be fulfilled that is implicit in adolescent development. (Washburn, 1994, p. 128)

He concurs with Blos that regression is totally essential to the individual's development at this stage. He discusses the weakening of the ego to allow the reopening of consciousness to nonegoic potentials, suggesting that this greatly enriches the ego's interior life even as it destabilises it. 'It becomes sensitive to a wide range of new sensations and feelings, and it sometimes becomes significantly more creative' (p. 129). This can also present itself in some individuals as unnecessary risk taking and fantasising. Washburn calls this 'powerful nonegoic spontaneities' (p. 129).

Thus, in Washburn's theoretical model, regression for adolescents is normal, if somewhat distressing and responsible for poor judgement 'not symptomatic of psychic impairment. They reflect a turbulent but noninjurious transformation of the adolescent psyche' (p. 129). As in the healing process of SE, the ego survives the adolescent process of regression as stronger and more integrated, at least in terms of incorporating awakening sexuality and intimacy needs, allowing them to be expressed within the field of consciousness. This view is also supported by Adelson and Doehrman's (1980) observations that in adolescence the ego undergoes regression and dramatic forward development at the same time.

Linking SE with the Process of Regression in Adolescent Development

Grof (1985, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000a and 2000b) does not tie his holotropic theory to the conventional biological, cognitive, or even transpersonal models of human development, and more specifically the capacity to experience SE does not appear to be associated with any particular age. From Maslow's (1958, 1964) humanist orientation his work on 'peak experience' includes data from adolescent subjects but he also appears reluctant to refer to them specifically. However, Wilber's (1993, 1996) structural sociological approach has defined a stage in human spiritual development that could be tenuously assigned to adolescence. In a complimentary way Washburn's (1994, 1995) psychological theory on 'regression in the service of transcendence' in borrowing from Blos' (1962) adolescent development theory and Maslow's work on regression, usefully indicates the possibilities of pioneering work with adolescents in this exciting field.

The work of this thesis suggests that regression in adolescence, or 'second individuation' (Blos, 1962), may be regarded in terms of regression in the service of mourning and consequently of development. Regression may therefore constitute a parallel process, or a specialised form of SE, which initiates inner mastery and healing specific to the stage of adolescent development. The following will briefly discuss features of Blos' developmental theory as they directly pertain to Grof's notion of SE in psychic development and also to the process of grief and loss in the same context.

Blos' (1962) work is derived, like Grof's, from Freud's psychodynamic model. He confirms that psychic restructuring occurs in adolescence and in so doing tacitly affirms the importance of inner transformational processes such as SE. Indeed, the difference between Blos and Grof might simply be in the way in which they perceive the process as occurring. For Blos the process is covert, perhaps similar to benign spiritual emergence, while for Grof it is often expressed overtly as in SE. The task of SE seems to be consistent with those of inner transformation in the service of psychic development.

However, if we regard adolescence as a maturation period in which each individual has to work through the exigencies of his total life experiences in order to arrive at a stable ego and drive organization, then any study of adolescence must attempt to clarify those processes which lead to new psychic formations or to psychic restructuring. (Blos, 1962, p. 9)

Blos is more cautious about admitting the overt expression of what he considers to be unconscious material in adolescence by suggesting that what might be perceived as access to the unconscious, in for example SE, is in fact access to 'pre-consciousness'. Blos suggests that ego defenses firmly in place during adolescence allow access to this pre-conscious domain but not to the unconscious. This raises questions about adolescent therapy. If the pre-conscious is gatekeeper to the unconscious can it be bypassed by the effects of trauma, by the use of drugs, or by holotropic intervention? When access to the unconscious is achieved, will primary processes be activated, and will those processes represent some kind of risk for the adolescent client in counselling?

What appears in adolescence as easy access to unconscious determinants in terms of insight is, in fact, more often than not preconscious content. Consequently, the fear that in the treatment of adolescents the weakening of the defenses will also mobilize primary processes is in many cases without foundation. The stabilizing mechanisms characteristic for adolescence include defensive, adaptive, restitutive, and compensatory mechanisms. (Blos, 1962, p. 179)

Even though Blos' pre-conscious dimension may not be in consonance with the dimensionality of Grof's 'perinatal' category of experience, outlined in the next chapter, or of Jung's 'collective unconscious' he still maintains that adolescents are subject to healing processes in normal development. He draws attention to the fact that adolescence affords spontaneous recovery from debilitating childhood influences and that it provides an opportunity to modify or rectify those adolescent childhood exigencies that threaten to impede progressive development. He suggests that this is managed by regressive processes that 'permit the remodeling of defective or incomplete earlier developments' and that this profound emotional reorganization 'harbors a beneficial potential' (p. 10). This raises further questions about the role of crises and the significance of loss in this process. Blos draws upon the work of Hartman, Fenichel, and Erikson to support his argument.

'The potentialities for formation of personality during latency and adolescence have been underrated in psychoanalytic writing' (, et al., 1946). Fenichel (1945) hinted at a similar concept: 'Experience in puberty may solve conflicts or shift conflicts into a final direction; moreover, they may give older and oscillating constellations a final form. Erikson (1956) has suggested that we look at adolescence not as an affliction, but as a *'normative crisis, i.e., a normal phase of increased conflict characterized by a seeming fluctuation in ego strength, and yet also by a high growth potential... What under prejudiced scrutiny may appear to be the onset of neurosis, often is but an aggravated crisis which might prove to be self-liquidating and, in fact, contributive to the process of identity formation.'* One might add that the definitive settling of conflicts at the end of adolescence means either that they lose their disturbing quality because they have been characterologically stabilized, or they solidify into permanently debilitating symptoms or character disorders. (Blos, 1962, pp. 10-11)

Blos describes a 'second individuation' in adolescence suggesting that in responding to the trauma of puberty the adolescent phase is used as an opportunity to regain or retain psychic equilibrium through acts of regression, which in its goal if not in its process is described in similar terms to SE. Blos explains the process as a recapitulation of the significant emotional needs and conflicts of early childhood before 'new solutions with qualitatively different instinctual aims and ego interests can be found'. Quoting Freud (1936) he suggests that this is why adolescence has been called a second edition of childhood because they have in common the fact that 'a relatively strong id confronts a relatively weak ego' (p. 11).

In her detailed review of the literature relating to adolescent development, separation, change and loss, spiritual growth, resilience, and construction of meaning, Dickinson (2000) concluded that adolescence is a period of development filled with losses. Blos too seems to suggest that loss and grief are built into the adolescent developmental process, describing adolescence as

... two broad affective states: 'mourning' and 'being in love.' The adolescent incurs a real loss in the renunciation of his oedipal parents; and he experiences the inner emptiness, grief, and sadness which is part of all mourning. 'The work of mourning... is an important psychological task in the period of adolescence' (Root, 1957). The working through the mourning process is essential to the gradual achievement of liberation from the lost object; it requires time and repetition. Similarly, in adolescence the separation from the oedipal parent is a painful process which can only be achieved gradually. (Blos, 1962, p. 100)

Thus Blos describes a regressive process of adolescence that permits the remodeling, or as Grof has suggested 'reorganization', of the psyche. If this is regarded as the normal end of the continuum in which mourning must be done in order for development to proceed, where on the same continuum might we place interrupted developmental mourning and where might we position SE?

Significantly, Blos, unlike Grof, directly links the psychological task of mourning with its affective state in normal adolescent development. In the case illustration in Part Two, although mourning is shown to be a key adolescent developmental task (Krystal, 1988) which consists of giving up attachments to infantile and childhood self- and object-representations (Erikson, 1987), the adolescent may also be forced to regress by the loss of a father and to remodel the defective or incomplete in earlier development. Here, then, it might be argued that the adolescent is experiencing a form of regression that incorporates the process of mourning by revisiting developmental stages that are linked to defective and incomplete object-relations. In the case illustration, vivid transpersonal materials combined with the powerful perinatal experiences indicate regression back to uterine experience. Certainly, if it had not included these further dimensions then it would be fair to suggest that this adolescent's mourning had permitted this regression. As it is, the combined presence of Grof's extended cartography and the trauma of father-death in this equation has qualified normal loss in the context of developmental process to be viewed instead as a SE.

Thus Blos goes on to explain the process of second individuation in adolescence in terms of regression in the service of the work of mourning. He characterises this form of regression in much the same way as Grof in highlighting its healing potential for the adolescent and, through the project of internal mastery, the fulfilment of its ego strengthening function.

This work of mourning involves the ego in well-known reactions. It accounts in part for the depressive states of adolescents, as well as for their grief reaction as a postponement of affect. To complete the work of mourning requires repetition and time. (Blos, 1962, p. 100)

Adolescent development is characterised throughout by oscillating progressions, regressions, and standstills... The positive aspect of the withdrawal of libido from the outer world lies in the 'internal mastery' through

thinking, experimental feeling states, self-observation, and cathectic shifts in the ego with reference to self- and object representations; these are all preparatory stages to a decisive turn to the object world, which occur before 'outer mastery' is initiated. (p. 188)

Although it will be dealt with in more detail in Chapters 11 and 12 of this thesis it is perhaps useful to place Blos' adolescent regression in the service of mourning in the developmental context of Washburn's (1994, 1995) theory. Washburn considers that regression, rather than a defence, could be an 'essential psychic process' part of the awakening of the self-conscious and nonegoic life that occurs in adolescence, a process that 'must take its course' in order that adolescent development is completed (p. 128). In Washburn's theoretical model, as noted previously, adolescent regression through the process of second individuation is normal if somewhat distressing and responsible for a temporary imbalance of the psyche. As in the healing process of SE, the ego survives the adolescent process of regression to become stronger and more integrated.

Finally, Tart (2002) suggests that for most adolescents the manifestation of inner change, unless it is radical and consequently overt, goes relatively unnoticed. In his discussion of different states of consciousness, he notes that for many, adolescence simply occurs as continuity with childhood and that the transition period of adolescence leads into a 'grown-up version' of the child he or she was. However, for others, he suggests a process of 'conversion' of some sort occurs in which sexual and other energies unleashed at puberty become sublimated into a belief system that may be radically different from what was held as children. Tart suggests that if this is traumatic or sudden, or if the belief system is radically at odds with that of the parents, this conversion is noticed 'If the sublimation of the energies is into a socially accepted pattern, we are not likely to perceive it' (p. 7).

Conclusion

Transpersonal psychology provides a number of models for adolescent transformation and a number of opportunities that use regression to incorporate

and connect the processes of loss, mourning and integration to adolescent psychic development through second individuation, grief and loss and spiritual emergence and emergency. Used as theoretical lenses through which to view adolescent development and experience, each of these provides legitimate ways of explaining adolescents. These models operate in and derive from the unconscious but also unfold to and operate within the field of an individual's consciousness, and ultimately the process produces positive outcomes. Consequently, while a counsellor may wish to consider these processes in isolation, it is possible that each must be effected by and affects the others. The effect of individual parts of this model has already been determined and exists in the literature. However, the independent and interdependent nature of these opportunities could usefully become the subject of future research. Such research might investigate whether the combined effect of such opportunities might be greater or smaller than the sum of their parts.

In summary, transpersonal psychology admits to the possibility of inner transformation as part of adolescent development. It suggests a model which incorporates and links individuation, development and transformation experiences. Transformation in consciousness, according to Maslow, may occur as a result of self-actualising experiences which match the individual's evolutionary tendency without the need for regression. Or, as stated by Wilber, a temporary but nonetheless authentic unfolding of consciousness may occur which requires regression to fully integrate it before it may serve the individual's transformation or development. In which case, states of altered consciousness require acceptance at the preceding stage of consciousness before the individual is able to fully ascend to the next stage. Washburn considers this process as regression in the service of development but it could also take the form of Blos' second individuation or Grof's spiritual emergence. In addition, the accommodation of grief and loss in adolescence is regarded as a critical task that is significantly linked to these transpersonal processes. The next chapter deliberately expands upon this discussion by looking at the holotropic theory of transpersonal psychologist Stanislav Grof. It discusses his influential theory and examines how it is applied to cases of what he has termed 'spiritual emergency'.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOLOTROPIC THEORY OF STANISLAV GROF

Transpersonal theory ...serves today mainly as an expanded context for a form of psychotherapy that adds authentic spirituality to the usual goals of healthy functioning. (Wulff, 1997, p. 617)

Introduction

Grof's holotropic theory is critical to an understanding of this thesis. It is the foundation and starting point for the exploration and examination of the question of spiritual emergency in adolescence. The specific interest of this chapter is to examine and comment upon Grof's research into spontaneous mystical experiences or non-ordinary states of consciousness which develop for some individuals into the psycho-spiritual crises that he terms 'spiritual emergency' (SE) (Grof & Grof, 1989). The first part of this chapter positions SE in the context of Grof's holotropic theory. This is followed by an examination of the possible conditions in which SE can occur, diagnosis, assessment and identifiable typology in the context of Grof's mapping of the psyche. Finally, the chapter examines the key characteristics of this particularly difficult form of spiritual experience through a discussion of Grof's suggestions for supporting individuals in this crisis and concludes by looking at how individuals can assist themselves to manage their own SE experiences. This discussion is further summarised in the conclusion and final part of this thesis.

Grof's Holotropic Model

Grof's interest in and understanding of the healing and heuristic potential of NOSC has evolved gradually from four decades of intensive clinical practice. His approach to transpersonal, 'fourth force', psychology is perhaps the most

comprehensive of all the major theorists because it incorporates and provides explicit accounts of a remarkably wide range of transpersonal experiences (Daniels, 2002). In expanding our understanding of the human unconscious and its transpersonal potentials Grof has gone further than anyone in exploring the numinous and archetypal experiences that lie in store in the deeper strata of the unconscious (Washburn, 1995). By investigating crises that share potential for both personality growth and transformation he has extended Maslow's (1958, 1964) contribution to psychology on 'self-actualisation' through 'peak experience'. He has written extensively on the difficulties caused by crises that accompany spiritual awakening, bringing much-needed clarity to a vitally important class of developmental phenomena first recognised by Assagioli (1976, 1989, & 1993). Through a detailed typology of NOSC experiences, he demonstrates that the notion of renewal can be applied to a far fuller cartography of the human psyche, in which he includes perinatal and transpersonal dimensions.

The origins of Grof's theory lie in his work as a psychiatrist, which began in clinical psychedelic research with LSD and other psychoactive substances. The subjects in these research projects were psychiatric patients with various emotional and psychosomatic disorders, alcoholics, drug addicts, terminal cancer patients, and 'normal' volunteers such as scientists, students, clergy, artists, and mental health professionals. In the second half of his working life Grof found that the types of extraordinary experiences reported using LSD could be duplicated by use of a powerful therapeutic method that he developed jointly with his wife Christina, which triggers NOSC without the use of drugs. NOSC induced by holotropic breathwork were remarkably similar to those using LSD and included sensory alterations, emotional reliving of past events and traumas, death and rebirth episodes, and a wide variety of psychic, archetypal and mystical experiences. Subsequently, breathwork programmes, involving lengthy sessions of altered breathing, music and energy work, have been conducted in the context of long-term training courses for professionals and as experiential workshops with a cross-section of the general population.

Grof began his theoretical writing, in the first instance, simply as a way of explaining and understanding the reports of the people with whom he has

worked. Consequently, through this work, and in order to account for the remarkable potential for healing in these experiences, Grof has developed his holotropic paradigm. He has also drawn upon his own experiences of non-ordinary states induced by psychedelics and a variety of other non-drug related methods. An important source of his inspiration is the literature and traditions of both ancient and contemporary cultures, which have served to illuminate his unique clinical observations and challenged him to put his casework into an appropriately broader conceptual framework.

Defining Spiritual Emergency

In Grof's holotropic theory spiritual emergence is as comparably natural in developmental terms as birth. Indeed, spiritual rebirth is as normal as biological birth, just as spiritual growth is as natural as physical development. The individual moves toward

... a more expanded way of being that involves enhanced emotional and psychosomatic health, greater freedom of personal choices, and a sense of deeper connection with other people, nature, and the cosmos. An important part of this development is an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension in one's life and in the universal scheme of things.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 34)

Sometimes the process of spiritual transformation is experienced subtly and gradually. When natural spiritual emergence is experienced dramatically and rapidly it becomes 'emergency'. Individuals are exposed to sudden inner experiences that: confront old beliefs; challenge ways of existing; alter their relationships with reality; bring discomfort with a once familiar world; cause perceptual problems with distinguishing between the inner and outer worlds; cause them to experience in their bodies forceful energies and spontaneous tremors; and require the individual to talk about these experiences and insights.

A SE may occur spontaneously as a result of a difficult episode of NOSC, which has developed into a crisis of spiritual opening and transformation. According to Grof (1990, 2000a) spiritual emergencies are

...difficult stages of a radical transformation and spiritual opening. If they are correctly understood and supported, these psychospiritual crises can result in emotional and psychosomatic healing, remarkable psychological changes, and consciousness evolution. (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 137)

Grof makes the point that these transpersonal experiences, if understood and supportively treated, rather than suppressed as psychotic episodes, do have a positive transformative, healing, and therapeutic potential for the individual (Grof & Grof, 1989, 1990). In his later work *Psychology of the Future* (2000a) Grof distinguishes between transformative states of consciousness and other non-ordinary states of consciousness. He regards this special category of NOSC as so important that he coined for it the name 'holotropic'. This composite word literally means 'oriented toward wholeness' or 'moving in the direction of wholeness' (from the Greek *holos* meaning whole and *trepein* meaning moving toward or in the direction of something). These transformative states differ significantly from the rest in that they 'represent an invaluable source of new information about the human psyche in health and disease' (Grof, 2000a, p. 2). Thus, the NOSC experience known as SE, if handled correctly, develops its inherent holotropic features, which are clearly positive for the individual. 'It is important to realise that even the most dramatic and difficult episodes of spiritual emergency are natural stages in the process of spiritual opening and can be beneficial if circumstances are favourable' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 36).

Grof concludes that this activation of the psyche effectively purges it of traumatic memories and imprints and that, by its very nature, this process heals and transforms. Unfortunately, this sudden muddying of the consciousness makes it hard for an individual to operate properly. 'Thus, in the transpersonal state, we do not differentiate between the world of *consensus reality*, the conventional everyday world, and the mythological realm of archetypal forms' (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 11).

Grof (2000a) suggests that in our everyday state of consciousness individuals identify with only a small fraction of what they already are and that in a sense all individuals are operating at levels below full capacity. Indeed, Grof clearly implies here that it is normal for the individual undergoing holotropic therapy to

be operating below his or her potential, and that perhaps all human beings are underachievers in the matter of liberating themselves from the burden of powerfully traumatic unconscious material. Grof directly links trauma suffered in infancy and childhood with an individual's interpersonal and social functioning, so much more so when trauma is compounded with difficult perinatal experiences. In holotropic states, we transcend the narrow boundaries of the body ego and reclaim our full identity. He cites (1989, 2000b) Watts' 'skin-encapsulated ego' as a way of explaining how Western culture limits its experience to nothing more than the five senses in the here and now, comparing it to NOSC where these limitations do not apply. The content of transpersonal holotropic experiences is not therefore limited to what might be defined as objectively real (Zigler, 1999).

In realistically recognising that there is a resistance in Western science to his work, and the ideas of those working in this and similar fields, Grof identifies the inertia in what he calls mainstream 'monistic materialistic philosophy'.

Throughout his life's work he has steadfastly put the case that there is a need to re-evaluate the relationship between psychiatry, spirituality, and psychosis.

The mystical nature of many experiences in nonordinary states of consciousness puts them automatically into the category of pathology, since spirituality is not seen as a legitimate dimension in the exclusively material universe of traditional science. (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 5)

In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, mainstream psychiatrists continue to view all holotropic states of consciousness as pathological, disregard the information generated in researching them, and do not distinguish between mystical states and psychosis. (Grof, 2000a, p. 16)

For Grof there can be no doubt as to the efficacy of properly supported and guided holotropic experiences. His work draws upon a rich tradition of holotropic states of consciousness in human history, and his own experience and observations have dictated an expanded cartography of the psyche, which goes beyond the biographical dimension to include a significant and contentious perinatal dimension, as well as a transpersonal dimension.

A good example of how Grof typically reconciles and synthesises established mainstream views with his own is in his consideration of how individuals, and

cultures, confront the experience of death and dying (2000a, pp. 219-268), and subsequently the relationship consciousness has with matter. He suggests that if the experiences and observations from the 'hylotropic' - matter-oriented states of consciousness that dominate everyday life and characterise Western industrial society - are combined with the transpersonal experiences in the 'holotropic' - states of consciousness that transcend time, linear causality and space and characterise ancient and pre-industrial cultures - a new formula might be created. This formula, first alluded to in his book *Beyond the Brain* (1985, p. 69), and similar to the wave particle paradox in modern physics, describes humans as 'paradoxical beings' who have two complementary aspects:

Depending on circumstances, they show either the properties of Newtonian objects (the 'hylotropic aspect'), or those of infinite fields of consciousness (the 'holotropic aspect'). The appropriateness of each of these descriptions depends on the state of consciousness in which these observations are made. Physical death then seems to terminate the hylotropic functioning, while the holotropic potential comes into full expression.

(Grof, 2000a, p. 232)

This notion of paradoxical duality seems to begin to reconcile not only the knowledge of pre-industrial cultures with the material culture of Western civilisation, but also reconciles Grof's own 'holotropic model' with that of Wilber's 'spectrum psychology', begun in his book *Spectrum of Consciousness* (Wilber, 1977).

What Triggers a Spiritual Emergency?

The onset of gradual spiritual emergence is generally an indication of an individual's readiness to make inner changes. A SE, however, occurs when the individual is suddenly overwhelmed by significant material from non-ordinary sources located in one or more of the three dimensions, and the individual is not ready to accept the changes that this experience offers. In many instances the source of a SE can be traced back to a number of significant factors, including 'loss'. Loss is linked to SE as a potential trigger to transformational experience. Thus SE may be activated or initiated by a strong emotional experience,

particularly one that involves a serious loss. 'This can be the end of an important love affair, divorce, or the death of a child, parent or other close relative' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 32). However, in his later work Grof describes a much fuller range of losses that may cause spiritual emergence to become SE.

...disease, accident or operation; extreme physical exertion, or prolonged lack of sleep; childbirth, miscarriage, or abortion; powerful sexual experience; traumatic emotional experience...or loss of a job or property.
(Grof, 2000a, p. 14)

It is important to note that the physical symptoms that characterise a spontaneous SE in an individual, whilst apparently the effect of a sudden event, still indicate that a subtle transformational process within the individual has been developing, but instead of being benign has become a psychospiritual crisis. This is reflected in the fact that there are a wide range of triggers, which suggests that the readiness of an individual to make inner changes is more significant than the external stimuli (Grof, 1990, 2000a). As Hamlet will observe later in Part Two, 'the readiness is all' (*Hamlet*, 5. 2. 220).

In terms of this inner process, Grof observes that most commonly the type of losses described above causes a radical shift in balance between the conscious and unconscious processes. The trauma of loss can so weaken the ego's ability to defend itself that material from the unconscious, or 'superconscious', is allowed to come to the surface unhindered. This favours the unconscious dynamics to the extent that the ordinary awareness is overridden. Another possibility is that the psychological trauma redirects the individual's usually outward oriented focus back into his or her inner world. Depending upon the ego's resilience, and the nature and characteristics of the loss, it could soon be overwhelmed by this spiritual emergence and become an emergency.

Grof (1984, 1996, 2000a, 2000b) indicates that it is well known that psychological defences can be thwarted by any number of physical and biological factors, and that psychological traumas particularly, can rouse the unconscious when recreating elements of earlier traumas that are part of significant systems of 'condensed experiences' (COEX). Grof (1996a) defines COEX as consisting of

emotionally charged memories stored in the unconscious in the form of complex dynamic constellations from different periods of our life that resemble each other in the quality of emotion or physical sensation that they share (p. 493). Grof stresses that COEX that contain 'memories of encounters with situations endangering life, health, and integrity of the body' are of particular significance as they are laid down for individuals in the womb (p. 494). Drawing upon his 'new paradigm' Grof maintains that childbirth combines biological weakening with specific reactivation of the perinatal memories. These particular memories, constellated in COEX systems are then reflected in, and strengthen, the potential of psychological trauma to become a trigger for psychospiritual crisis. Equally, for the outwardly oriented individual, any dislocation or removal of external activities that might usually be used as an escape from emotional problems can lead to psychological introspection and withdrawal into the inner world, which will ultimately interfere with everyday functioning. 'The Chinese pictogram for crisis perfectly represents the idea of spiritual emergency. It is composed of two basic signs, or radicals: one of them means *danger* and the other *opportunity*' (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 7).

Diagnosis and Assessment of Spiritual Emergency

It is very clear from Grof's comments that he believes that Western civilisation has lost touch with its mainstream religious roots. Greeley concludes, however, that based upon 15 years of survey research,

More people than ever say they've had such experiences... whether you look at the most common forms of psychic and mystical experience or the rarest... These experiences are common, benign and often helpful. What has been 'paranormal' is not only becoming normal in our time - it may also be health-giving. (Greeley, 1987, p. 49, in Lukoff, 2000, p. 13)

Accordingly, it is suggested that as the number of persons who engage in spiritual practices and have spiritual experiences increases, it seems likely that the incidence of spiritual problems seen in psychotherapy will also grow (Lukoff, 2000). These are the implications for the future. Grof echoes this sentiment and reinforces the need for individuals to have a spiritual dimension to their existence

if they wish to remain psychologically healthy. He suggests that 'on the individual level, the toll for the loss of spirituality is an impoverished, alienated, and unfulfilling way of life and an increase of emotional and psychosomatic disorders' (Grof, 2000a, p. 138).

Similarly, since Christina Grof set up the Spiritual Emergence Network (SEN), in 1980 specifically to support individuals in America in psychospiritual crises, the number of consultations confirms that Americans' acknowledgement that they have had spiritual experiences has significantly increased in the last fifty years. This is accompanied by a parallel increase in identifiable SE (Lukoff, 2000). In their earlier work the Grofs (1989) indicate that since the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions in Europe visionary states have no longer been regarded as significant or valuable complements to ordinary states of consciousness in terms of providing insights into self and reality. Rather, they have been viewed as 'pathological distortions of mental activity' (p. xi). Consequently, people exhibiting psychosomatic and emotional disorders were automatically referred to as 'patients' and their difficulties as 'diseases of unknown origin'. They stress that in discarding spiritual experience as disease or unscientific we may be in danger of rejecting a force that 'nourishes, empowers, and gives meaning to human life' (p. xiii). Nevertheless, they stress awareness of the need to take a balanced approach that can differentiate spiritual emergencies from genuine psychoses. Indeed they are cognisant that there is the opposite danger of spiritualising psychotic states and glorifying pathology or, even worse, overlooking the existing organic source of the problem.

Assagioli, in his seminal paper *Self-Realization and Psychological Disturbances* (1989), has noted the association between spiritual practices and psychological problems. For example, persons may become inflated and grandiose as a result of intense spiritual experiences. 'Instances of such confusion are not uncommon among people who become dazzled by contact with truths too great or energies too powerful for their mental capacities to grasp and their personality to assimilate' (p. 36). It is for this reason that Grof insists that the first part of any diagnostic procedure must be to determine, by means of a full medical examination, if an individual's condition is caused by a recognisable organic

source that requires medical attention. NOSC covers a wide spectrum and Grof (2000a) clearly argues that functional psychoses, psychotic states not clearly organic in nature because they cannot be identified in medical terms, are perhaps not definable as a disease at all. However, he does concede that since functional psychoses are defined psychologically and not medically it is difficult to provide a clear differential diagnosis between SE and psychosis. He goes on to point out, however, that it is unlikely that a brain, afflicted by a pathological process, could in itself and by itself produce the 'rich experiential spectrum of the states currently diagnosed as psychotic' (p. 141). Thus these culturally specific visions, struggles of death and rebirth, historically accurate encounters, and mythological scenes cannot be the brain's invention alone and, as such, must belong to the psyche.

SE reveals that there is an extended cartography of the psyche and that it appears to involve a combination of biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal experiences. Seen in the context of supporting and encouraging an individual's spiritual emergence, these experiences can be induced by psychedelic substances or more simply and naturally by meditation, faster breathing, bodywork, music, shamanic drumming, and other non-drug techniques. The Grofs have used their holotropic breathwork technique, a form of fast breathing, evocative music, and bodywork, with great success to encourage spiritual emergence, and they have suggested that their experiences with individuals in this process could be used as a strategy for dealing with SE. Consequently, in holotropic sessions they encourage the individual to surrender to the process and support them in the full expression of the unconscious material as it unfolds.

Additional characteristics of a transformational crisis [SE] are an awareness by the person involved that the process is related to critical spiritual issues in life, as well as the transpersonal content of the experiences themselves. Another important hallmark is the ability to differentiate to a considerable degree between inner experiences and the world of consensus reality. Persons who are having a spiritual emergency are typically aware of the fact that the changes in their experiential world are due to their own inner processes and are not caused by events in the outside world. Systemic use of the mechanism of projection – disowning one's inner experience and attributing them to influences coming from other people and from external circumstances – is a severe obstacle to the kind of psychological approach we described here. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 44)

Although it does not seem possible to provide a totally clear differential diagnosis between SE and psychosis, in *The Stormy Search for Self* (1990, Appendix III, Table 2, p. 254) Stan and Christina Grof have attempted to distinguish the differences between spiritual emergence and psychiatric disorders. In practical terms they suggest that an assessment can be made on the basis of an individual's likely benefit from either treatment in traditional medical ways or by holotropic therapy. In summary, favourable signs of treatment for spiritual emergence include a history of 'reasonable psychological, sexual, and social adjustment preceding the episode' (p. 256), willingness to trust and honour the rules of treatment, and an openness to the possibility that this ongoing process might originate in their own psyche. Clearly, in an individual's experience of spiritual emergence, calming factors such as acceptance, previous history, and level of cognition, particularly about the experience and about self, are positively significant.

As Grof (2000a) points out, an important prognostic indicator must be the individual's approach to the process of emergence and his and her experiential style. An individual needs not only to be ready for the experience but also to cognitively accept the process, since a key component of the treatment is normalisation of, and education about it. This implies a certain level of development, experience, and cognition. A clear communication style seems to be an important requirement, and another good prognostic indicator of suitable candidature for holotropic therapy. Interestingly, in the fields of Western counselling and psychotherapy, it is just these skills that the therapeutic engagement requires most from a client to ensure the high likelihood of a positive outcome (Corsini & Wedding, 1995). It might be suggested that it is the very absence of these qualifications which can cause an individual's spiritual emergence to become an emergency, and just the lack of these skills that prohibit an individual from recognising and communicating his or her understanding of the crisis to others.

Grof's general view characterises Eastern and Western culture as both homogenous and uniformly different. He observes that Western culture *in toto* has sidelined holotropic experiences and that holotropic therapy as a tool has

been blunted by the use of Western methods of analysis. Nevertheless, a more culturally specific and developmentally appropriate methodology, coupled with a comprehensive programme of mainstream education in assessment and treatment of those in psychospiritual crises, would seem a valuable addition to Grof's approach.

Attempts to classify individuals who fit the category of SE using traditional medical labels have also in the past proved problematic. Making the differential diagnosis between a SE and psychopathology can be difficult because the unusual experiences, behaviours and visual, auditory, olfactory or kinaesthetic perceptions characteristic of SE can appear as the symptoms of mental disorders: delusions, loosening of associations, markedly illogical thinking, or grossly disorganised behaviour. Grof recognises that, even with a typology of some twelve varieties of SE, assigning people to 'well-defined diagnostic pigeon holes' is difficult because of the fact that their 'phenomenology is unusually rich and can draw on all the levels of the psyche' (Grof, 2000a, p. 144). Alternatively, Wilber (1993) believes that the distinction between SE and psychopathology pivots on a crucial distinction between pre-rational and authentic transpersonal states. The 'pre/trans fallacy', he argues, involves confusing these conditions, which is easy to do, 'Since both prepersonal and transpersonal are, in their own ways, nonpersonal, *then* prepersonal and transpersonal tend to appear similar, even identical, to the untutored eye' (Wilber, 1993, p. 125). For example, the visions of a Near Death Experience (NDE) can appear as hallucinations; or the jumbled speech of someone trying to articulate the noetic quality of a mystical experience can appear as loose associations; or the need for solitude and quiet of a person in a SE can appear as catatonia, or depression-related withdrawal (Bragdon, 1988).

David Lukoff and his colleagues (Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 2000) in their submissions to and review of the diagnostic category 'Religious or Spiritual Problem' (Code V62.89) in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual - Fourth Edition* (APA, 1994), recognise that the frequent occurrence of religious and spiritual issues in clinical practice, particularly from the experiences of transpersonal clinicians working with SE, and those within the Spiritual Emergence Network itself, has given the

most impetus for the proposal that it be included in the *DSM - IV*. The shortened and modified definition reads:

This category can be used when the focus of clinical attention is a religious or spiritual problem. Examples include distressing experiences that involve loss or questioning of faith, problems associated with conversion to a new faith, or questioning of other spiritual values which may not necessarily be related to an organized church or religious institution.

(American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 685)

Lukoff (2000) maintains that the final definition of this category, and its inclusion in *DSM – IV*, has its roots in the transpersonal movement's attention to SE.

Incidentally, there is considerable overlap among the criteria proposed by different authors for making the differential diagnosis between psychopathology and SE, which gives further credibility to the existence of SE as a valid clinical phenomenon. These constants include: 1) cognitions and speech thematically related to spiritual traditions or to mythology; 2) openness to exploring the experience; and, 3) no conceptual disorganisation (Grof & Grof, 1989; Lukoff, 1985; Watson, 1994, in Lukoff et al., 2000).

Varieties of Spiritual Emergency

Stanislav and Christina Grof coined the term 'spiritual emergency' and founded the Spiritual Emergency Network (Grof and Grof, 1989) in 1980 to identify a variety of psychological difficulties, particularly those associated with Asian spiritual practices that entered the West in the 1960s. Grof and Grof note that 'Episodes of this kind have been described in sacred literature of all ages as a result of meditative practices and as signposts of the mystical path' (p. x). They have described the more common presentations including: 'kundalini awakening', a complex 'physio-psychospiritual transformative process' observed in the Yogic tradition (Sannella, 1978); 'shamanistic initiatory crisis', a rite of passage for shamans-to-be in indigenous cultures, commonly involving physical illness and/or psychological crisis (Kalweit 1998; Lukoff, 1993); 'psychological renewal through return to the centre', a process of rebirth and renewal (Perry, 1986); 'experiences of close encounters with UFOs', and alien abduction experiences (Thomson,

1989); and 'psychic opening', the sudden occurrence of paranormal experiences, and synchronicity, or, in a more dramatic form consciousness becomes autonomous in an 'out-of-body experience' (Armstrong, 1986).

In 1990 Grof and Grof added a further five types of SE to the topology: 'possession states' (Lukoff, 1993); episodes of 'unitive consciousness', or 'peak experiences' (Maslow, 1958, 1964); 'near-death experiences' (NDE); emergence of 'past-life memories'; and 'communication with spirit guides' and 'channeling', where an entity offers a personal relationship, to act as a guide, a teacher, or a superior source of information. To this initial typology of ten Grof (1996b) added 'alcoholism and drug addiction', defining it as 'an unrecognised craving for transcendence or wholeness'. Although designated as separate experiences in actual clinical practice there is often an overlap between these types. However, the distinguishing characteristics of all types of SE are that, despite the distress, they can have very beneficial transformative effects on individuals who experience them. Another is that since the psyche contains no boundaries according to Grof and the contents present as a continuum of many dimensions and levels, SE is as uniquely different as the individual experiencing them.

Grof's Cartography of the Human Psyche

The common denominator of all crises of transformation is the manifestation of various aspects of the psyche that were previously unconscious. However, each spiritual emergency represents a unique selection and combination of unconscious elements – some of them biographical, others perinatal, and still others transpersonal. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 73)

Spiritual emergence and SE is the subject of the Grofs' *Spiritual Emergency* (1989), and *The Stormy Search for Self* (1990), but the 'new paradigm' in which they find their context was crystallised in some detail by Grof in his ground breaking *Beyond the Brain* (1985). With a few exceptions, the basic principles of the paradigm and its cartography remain the same. In this archetypal map of the unconscious, Grof adds to an existing psychodynamic, 'biographical' dimension

two further dimensions which he describes as the 'transpersonal', and, the fundamental biological dimension, the 'perinatal'.

Grof notes that human birth is dangerous and death is a resonant feature of the transformational process. 'The persons reliving episodes of intrauterine disturbances, or 'bad womb' experiences, have a sense of dark and ominous threat and often feel they are being poisoned' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 147). In Grof's model perinatal dimensions of the unconscious represent the interface between the individual and Jung's collective unconscious, thus when an individual experiences something in the perinatal dimension, it 'touches upon or affects the collective unconscious, [and] then it has happened everywhere' (Jung, in Bache, 2000, p. 155) and *vice versa*.

Transpersonal dimensions include a 'broad variety of states that are in other contexts referred to as spiritual, mystical, religious, magical, parapsychological, or paranormal' (p. 151). In the 'normal' state of consciousness individuals regard themselves as solid material bodies, as 'skin-encapsulated egos' (Watts in Grof, 1990, 2000a); thus the skin is a boundary to, and interface with, the external world. With ordinary senses individuals only experience what is happening in the here and now but in transpersonal states of mind,

... all limitations appear to be transcended. We can experience ourselves as a play of energy, or a field of consciousness that is not confined to a physical container. This can further develop into identification with the consciousness of other people, groups of individuals, or even all of humanity. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 151)

The transpersonal movement has historically been deeply influenced by eastern spiritual thought that suggests that utilisation of energy is the key to physical vitality and spiritual evolution. Simply, it is believed that individually and collectively human beings are immersed in and are permeated by an infinite field of non-physical energy that supports continued life and health. Esoteric traditions of all ages have employed these energy systems to promote physical vitality and spiritual well being and different spiritual traditions and philosophies work with different kinds of energies. Consequently, there are many different cosmic energies that reflect their respective tradition and philosophy.

In Grof's general theory, however, the transpersonal dimension does not differentiate between the worlds of spirituality, mythology and archetypal forms, and the world of consensus reality. Equally, these experiences are not random phenomena produced by a diseased brain. Indeed, they cannot be explained solely in terms of processes within the human brain or its function. Induced by a process of deep self-exploration, often following memories of childhood events, birth, and intrauterine life, the transpersonal experience provides, without the negotiation of the senses, direct access to non-ordinary information by linking to the collective unconscious. Therefore under the right conditions any individual can, according to Grof's model, access the entire cultural experience and heritage of humanity. Seen from the position of support, this possibility alone provides an incredibly significant resource for an individual in search of meaning. However, what is even more significant and exciting is that this additional dimension of experience, Grof claims, is accessible under certain circumstances.

Transpersonal experiences, or NOSC, are genuine manifestations of the psyche that reveal that dimensions of human consciousness reach far beyond what is currently accepted by psychology and psychiatry. At a recollective-analytical level these transpersonal experiences are clearly 'biographical' in nature. At an existential-experiential level experiences of the perinatal dimension reflect strong connections with birth and death. Thus perinatal experiences represent an intersection between the personal and the transpersonal, which in turn reveal connections between the individual and the cosmos (Grof, 1985, 1996, 2000a).

Grof's suggestion that spiritual experience reflects or is modified by intrauterine and childbirth events is highly controversial. Some of Grof's contemporaries in the field of transpersonal psychology such as Wilber and Washburn have produced models of spiritual experience that begin with birth. However, Grof's model begins with the domains of prenatal existence and the processes of birth itself. Grof (1985) particularly acknowledges his debt to Rank for his pioneering work on the influence of birth trauma as the precipitator of 'primal anxiety and primal repression', and identified as 'a powerful psychological force behind religion, art and history', in which Grof's work finds its genesis.

Influenced by the certainty of Grof's findings, Wilber has adapted many of Grof's ideas to his own hierarchical spectrum psychology model, but in the process has lost Grof's significant perinatal work. Grof asserts that the foetus is conscious during its nine months and that pre- and perinatal events play a critical role in an individual's psychological history, and creates memories (COEX) that constellate around these experiences. Wilber seems to discount the substantial data that have been collected from both ancient and modern sources and, by putting aside these observations and experiences, to ignore 'the paramount psychological significance of prenatal experiences and of the trauma of birth, as well as their relationship to spirituality' (Grof, 2000b). In his work, Grof's subjects were not just able to access the personal or biographical dimensions of the unconscious, but eventually came to relive the traumatic processes of their own births, to unfold outwards beyond individual biography and access symbolic, visionary, collective, archetypal, and transpersonal levels of experiencing. In Wilber's model the evolution of consciousness of an individual begins with the pleromatic stage, a stage of undifferentiated consciousness of the newborn, and turns through an outward arc through the uroboric, typhonic, a verbal-membership, and mental-egoic levels to the centauric stage. At this point Wilber's adult begins his spiritual development. In the centauric stage the chronology of 'unconscious disclosures', the involution of consciousness, begins in an inward arc to the lower and higher regions of the subtle and causal realms and finally to the boundless radiance of Formless Consciousness and unity with the Absolute (Wilber, 1980). It is for this very reason that Grof suggests that Wilber's model, as well as being incomplete, is woefully inadequate in its consideration of the foetus. Wilber's and Grof's work are critiqued further in Chapter 14.

What is important for the purposes of this thesis, however, is Grof's firm contention that both the distinction and the link between the personal and the transpersonal is at the level of the Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPMs). Grof defines BPM as four dynamic constellations or experiential patterns of the deep unconscious each 'characterized by specific emotions, physical feelings, and symbolic images', and each corresponding to the four consecutive periods of biological delivery in childbirth (p. 499). Thus, individual matrices are connected to specific categories of postnatal experience arranged in COEX systems.

Consequently, Grof maintains that, in addition to Wilber's notion of a permanent evolutionary system of consciousness development, one must take into account that any regressive process that accesses the transpersonal dimension via the perinatal process must be considered as a 'genuine mystical state of a very specific kind' (Grof, p. 16, 2000b). Consequently, Grof seems to be indicating that temporary, or transient, transpersonal experiences involving various levels of consciousness even though they would be difficult to diagnose can still be valid, even if they do not immediately indicate a stable personality structure at a certain evolutionary level. It is also worth noting that an individual, regardless of developmental level, may be regressed, via the BPM, into a mystical state, which may not necessarily be an experience exclusive to the adult, centauric stage and beyond. It might be argued, therefore, that short term NOSC experiences, under conditions commonly associated with SE might be induced, or triggered, in an individual by events involving loss at any level of physical development.

Disturbances and experiences at any stage of the intrauterine and birth processes have been established by Grof as corresponding to certain generic existential conditions and psychopathological categories. For Grof, complex modes of human experience and behaviour, both 'normal' and pathological can be understood, and therapeutically influenced, by relating them to these foundational structures. By approaching them via these critical access points to the complex dimensionality of the psyche, Grof is able to reinterpret the standard biographical dimension by his superimposition of a perinatal doorway to transpersonal and deeply transformational dimensions.

However, Grof does not attempt to fully explain all spiritual-archetypal experiences in terms of perinatal influences. He also postulates the existence of a 'genuinely' transpersonal, or universal, level of reality. The fundamental difference between his perinatal and the transpersonal dimensions is that the perinatal is essentially an aspect of personal psychology, whereas the transpersonal represents a level of universal mind or consciousness.

To understand the transpersonal realm we must begin thinking of consciousness in an entirely new way ... as something that exists outside and independent of us, something that in its essence is not bound by matter

... Transpersonal consciousness is infinite, rather than finite, stretching beyond the limits of time and space. (Grof, 1993, p. 83)

Thus the perinatal, in providing a major access point to the individual inner unconscious, also mediates, without the aid of the senses, with a greater transpersonal dimension outside of the individual. In this distinction Grof's understanding of the transpersonal domain differs from both the 'collective unconscious' of Jung (Corsini & Wedding, 1995) and the 'higher unconscious' of Assagioli (1989). Jung's collective unconscious could be said to partly overlap both perinatal and transpersonal dimensions, whereas Assagioli's higher unconscious is essentially a subset of the transpersonal dimension.

Grof (2000a) suggests that it is useful to divide the transpersonal dimension into three major regions of experience:

1. The extension of consciousness within ordinary space-time reality. This includes experiences such as identification with other people or groups, union with the physical world, clairvoyance, and memories of past lives. Essentially these experiences, although belonging to a known reality, are not ordinarily accessible to be witnessed or identified with.
2. The extension of consciousness beyond ordinary space-time reality. This includes shamanic journeying, channeling, encounters with mythical-archetypal figures, and identification with formless consciousness (Cosmic Consciousness, the Universal Mind, and the Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void). These are experiences that are generally considered not to be 'real'.
3. 'Psychoid' experiences. These are experiences that are neither clearly mental nor physical, such as UFO encounters, synchronicities, psychokinesis, and poltergeists and magic. Grof's willingness to include paranormal experiences within the realm of the transpersonal is both challenging and contentious. The most overwhelming characteristic of this region of experience is that they often confound the Newtonian-Cartesian assumptive world and are readily dismissed because they are not so easily explained. Grof regards this category as a 'critical challenge' to the whole of Western science.

Grof does not regard transpersonal experiences as simply intrapsychic phenomena. While they are experienced as biographical and perinatal, coming

as they do from within the individual psyche, they are also clearly accessing information beyond the individual's ordinary reach. Indeed, perinatal trauma, Grof suggests, may have the power 'to influence not just the individual but a group or whole culture, enacting in their behaviour important mythological themes' (Grof, 1996, p. 63). Thus, a SE, or alternatively a psychospiritual renewal or transformation, might be as easily experienced by a group, or a culture, as it is by an individual.

Grof's metaphysical position emphasises the fundamental realities of the psyche and of a universal consciousness that overlaps, but is not identical with, the material world. This universal consciousness itself contains many levels or regions of experience. These include not only the personal, archetypal and spiritual, but also other universes and other dimensions.

Experiencing Spiritual Emergency

There are many forms of spiritual emergency involving varying degrees of intensity. The extent of assistance required thus depends upon the situation. (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 192)

By Grof's definition, noted earlier, sometimes spiritual transformation, as a process, can be experienced subtly over time, whereas SE is a dramatic and sometimes difficult experience. The latter inner experience can be felt as a suddenly spontaneous challenge to existing beliefs, and to existence itself, and may alter perception and bring discomfort with a once familiar world. SE is also experienced physically, as forceful energies and spontaneous tremors. Often the individual feels bound to disclose his or her altered state. It represents an enormous challenge to the individual, as he or she comes to terms with changes associated with both inner resources and outer relationships with the world, and engenders tremendous fear of the unknown and of losing control,

...most people have to delve into the dark areas and go through them before they reach a state of freedom, light, and serenity. For those who take this route, the positive feelings often seem all the more significant and intense when contrasted with the difficult ones they encountered previously. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 46)

What are these dark internal territories like, what do they feel like and what kinds of conflicts are likely to arise? Getting through the day and functioning in a familiar way can become problematic. Normal activities become troublesome or overwhelming. Concentration is difficult to maintain. Experiencing frequent changes of mind may cause an individual to panic, and there will be feelings of powerlessness, guilt, and ineffectiveness. Commonly, individuals confront a sense of fear, vulnerability, and loneliness, which can range from 'a vague perception of separateness from other people and the world to a deep and encompassing engulfment by existential alienation' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 52).

Nevertheless, it is only too easy to deny the fear's source and mistakenly associate these sudden and new attendant sensations and emotions with one's immediate life circumstance. However, sometimes fear seems illogical and disassociated from the person in crisis and can be dealt with easily. At other times, because of heightened emotion, even a little fear becomes an overwhelming attack of panic. As boundaries that have been previously maintained between the consensus reality of the biographical dimension and the transpersonal and perinatal begin to dissolve, so the individual's worldview is disintegrating, increasing emotional responses, physical stresses and pain. 'The transpersonal realms contain both light and dark elements, and both the "positive" and the "negative" can inspire fear' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 48).

In an attempt to disassociate themselves from emerging memories, which are associated with or contain some fear, individuals become alienated from themselves. They can sense and begin to behave as if, they no longer fit. They might even decide to change their appearance, and changes in conduct may or may not be obviously occurring. To the outside world this self-isolating behaviour may be regarded as different or potentially threatening, and it is not unusual for individuals to question their sanity or even temporarily experience insanity, to consider suicide, or become preoccupied with death.

Many people understandably regard death with genuine fear when it manifests itself physically but how much more terrifying must it be when it becomes part of their inner experience? For example, an individual may re-experience biological

birth, or re-live serious illness or potentially fatal accidents. As Grof asserts, 'Confrontation with the issue of death is a pivotal part of the transformation process and an integral component of most spiritual emergencies' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 57).

Clearly, individuals embrace the possibility of death in many forms in the course of a lifetime. This includes not only the natural death-rebirth cycle but also a familiarity with all forms of loss. Its acceptance liberates individuals from the fear of death and lesser losses by 'opening one to the experience of immortality' (p. 58). The death-rebirth paradigm is a core belief in many pre-industrial cultures and the hallmark of many faiths.

It seems too that during SE the logical mind can be bypassed, or temporarily die, while intuition, inspiration, and imagination assert themselves. The intellect too is superseded by true insightfulness. This dissolution of the old ways of thinking seems to be

...mandatory before a new expanded understanding and increased inspiration can take its place. What is actually disappearing is not one's reasoning ability, although it may seem that way for a while, but the cognitive limitations that keep one constricted and unchanged. While this is happening, linear thinking is at times impossible, and the person feels mentally agitated as the conscious mind is bombarded with unblocked material from the unconscious. Strange and disturbing emotions are suddenly available, and once-familiar rationality is useless in explaining such occurrences. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 56)

This process of renewal sees that the old pattern of thinking that is blocking the transformative process is destroyed by it in order that new learning, experience, and insights may take its place. However, the unblocking process only temporarily confuses the individual's facility to reason. Significantly, the new processes do not simply overlay, improve, or supersede existing cognitive limitations. It appears that the old cognition must be removed because it is no longer required; either it causes unnecessary restrictions on the individual's continuing growth, or the old process is simply the result of previous defensive strategies that have become necessarily redundant.

During transition toward this experience, individuals must undergo a painful procedure of letting go of worldly concerns that keep them attached, thereby perpetuating suffering. The process of detachment is itself a form of death, the death of attachment. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 60)

In SE detachment occurs regularly throughout the process, which can be confusing and distressing. Consequently, there has to be a consideration of the process of grief that occurs over the death of the old self. In dealing with the traumas of the birth of the new, the passing of the old must necessarily be mourned. In the process of transformational healing, for a while, detachment from the world and its relationships occurs and another form of death experienced, which is symbolic. Grof describes 'ego-death' as the ultimate detachment from the old and familiar existence – the ego being destroyed in order to accommodate a more expanded self-definition. Typical of the inverse logic of spiritual language, Grof suggests that, 'what feels like total destruction of the ego is a broader, more encompassing sense of self' (p. 62). With therapy and forms of self-exploration such as spiritual practice, the individual can complete the symbolic experience of dying internally without the body having to participate. Indeed, in Grof's experience, 'ego death' can leave a body potentially much more able to function effectively than before. What may also occur through this process is that the individual may confuse the inner event with the outer reality and come to believe that the whole of existence is on the point of being wiped out.

In their consideration of mystical and transcendent states, the Grofs (1990) maintain that they may have positive or negative effects which, in the crisis of transformation, are both 'necessary' and 'complementary' to the healing process. Encountered in natural settings through exercise and body work that increases breathing rate such as sport or dance, and during meditation mystical states can occur that are radical and all-consuming in that they completely alter perceptions of self, life, and the world. Generally, instead of encountering alienation, the individual encounters unity, peace, ecstasy, and deep support. Consequently, instead of 'madness' the individual experiences clarity and serenity, and a preoccupation with the eternal rather than with death.

Just as one may encounter the desolate area of ego death during the dark night of the soul, one can also encounter a kind of positive ego death in transcendental realms. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 67)

In SE people encounter these realms often too briefly in the initial stage of their process, but the frequency increases as they move on. In the specific area of mystical or transcendental experiences the Grofs note that, 'Many people feel unprepared for the scope of the sacred realms' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 68). This can cause difficult shifts in perception about what is real. There can also be feelings of violence and destructiveness during an encounter, which may later be reinterpreted and recognised as the pain of spiritual opening. Connecting with 'Higher Powers' - entities or deities encountered in or from mystical or transcendent dimensions of experience - can also distort the ego or the sense of personal identity. Rather than understand them, that all things and individuals are divine, those undergoing such an experience may believe themselves to be uniquely blessed and set out on a messianic mission that alienates them still further.

Assisting Individuals in Spiritual Emergency

In their book *Spiritual Emergency* (1989) the Grofs outline a strategy for assisting those who are in a SE, which combines Stan Grof's clinical observations and Christina Grof's experience in attempting to establish a worldwide Spiritual Emergence Network (SEN). In the subsequent book, *The Stormy Search for Self* (1990), they elaborate upon the theme of SE, thoroughly detailing the experience for the individual, outlining therapeutic process, and providing guidelines for the individual and others on how to manage this potential crisis in a positive and healing way. They suggest that individuals in crisis need to be exposed to a fully sympathetic, psycho-educational environment where they can be given a positive context for their experience. Individuals require information about the process that they are going through, and an understanding that they are not sick, *per se*, but that this may be the onset of a healing process. Provision should be made for opportunities to talk to others about what they are going through, and educational resources would combine engagement with successful role-models

to support individuals in the SE process, as well as access to a good spiritual teacher. Ideally, family, partners, and important friends should be included in the support network, and a specialist group set-up specifically to support those in SE.

Clearly, factors that hinder support do not serve the best interests of individuals who are plunged into a psychospiritual crisis, particularly in terms of the most appropriate assessment, diagnosis, and interventions. The Grofs identified a number of these limiting factors in 1980 and 1989, which are, perhaps, equally applicable today. These include: the individual does not belong to a recognisable group where SE is common or even heard of; the individual is unable to articulate his needs; he or she has no access to SE services, or they are not available; the culture does not recognise SE as a problem, or the research does not indicate that there is a need for SE support.

The Grofs go on to suggest what characterises an effective support person. A first priority is open and trusting therapeutic relationships. In addition, the helper must have a professional, in-depth knowledge of NOSC, from both personal experience and, if possible, hands-on practice, as the individual in SE, in this heightened state, will expect the helper to be truly responsive and will need the helper to empathetically understand the transformative process and the levels of intervention. An intimate knowledge of the cartography of NOSC is seen as helpful, because, 'Even if people in this stage are aware of the variety of theoretical maps and spiritual systems that describe similar states, they will find a difference between studying them and being in the middle of them' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 53).

Individuals in SE feel that they are having an experience which is unique to them, hence, in their special circumstances, they require special therapy and support. It is easy for them to regard themselves as abnormal, especially if the helping community is unsympathetic. Skill is needed to initially diagnose whether transpersonal psychotherapy or medical treatment is required and to evaluate the individual's attitude and experiential style, especially an ability to accept non-

confrontationally that the problem resides within the individual, and that he or she is open to dealing with it.

Once the initial interview is completed and the individual and the counsellor decide to work together, it is suggested that before they do, they need to agree to accept some basic concepts. What follows, although typical of the collaborative way in which the Grofs work, also exemplifies their strong belief that individuals can not only be assisted to help themselves but also that an SE alerts the individual consciously to the fact that an inner healing process has, at some time earlier, already spontaneously begun. The Grofs stress that individuals' readiness to accept the experience as their own is of paramount importance in anticipating the best possible outcomes. However, an individual during SE, no matter how compliant, will be greatly fearful and will respond accordingly.

Confronted with the fear of losing control, the mind and the ego become very ingenious in their efforts to hang on; telling themselves that they are just fine the way they are and do not need to submit to change, or that the changes they feel are just illusory. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 51)

Thus, healing is contingent upon the following agreements: the difficulties are not the manifestations of disease; the process will be healing and transformative; all emergent experiences – biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal – are normal constituents of the human psyche; the condition is not pathological but it is inappropriate under everyday life conditions; confronting the condition needs to be limited, as much as possible, to times when and where support is available; not to confuse the worlds of consensus reality with the archetypal – they complement each other but they are not the same, however responding to them simultaneously will be confusing, and impair functioning in life, until a balance is achieved.

In terms of therapeutic strategies, the preferred option is to facilitate the process of healing with a planned experiential programme which may include Jungian active imagination, Perls' Gestalt practice, Assagioli's psychosynthesis, Kalff's sand-play therapy, and notably the Grofs' holotropic breathwork. However, if the individual becomes markedly distressed and cannot be helped to manage the

powerful experiences of SE, rather than to see the individual begin to reject the process and deny the experiences, it is suggested that the process can be slowed down. The inner process is responsive to stimuli and by discontinuing all medication, stopping all forms of spiritual practice, changing to a heavy diet, such as meat, cheese, and sugary drinks, taking warm baths, and engaging in simple manual work, this appears to ground the individual and bring the process under control. There is also evidence that suggests that individuals who use alcohol and sedatives can make the experiences more manageable by slowing down the process and suppressing difficult physical and emotional symptoms. However, the clear risk is that those with an unidentified problem of chemical dependency can be subject to greater addiction.

Managing Spiritual Emergency

In *The Stormy Search for Self* Grof and Grof (1990) supply strategies for the individual to use which will enhance and bring to completion the emergence process, these include; support guidelines for families and friends, notes for counsellors, specialist guides and teachers, and advice for managing life after SE.

In the course of SE individuals will become aware that the emergence process will in the end wish to go its full course whether the individual has consciously anything to do with it or not, and that they are living in two worlds: the familiar and tested with defined roles and responsibilities, and the unknown and unfamiliar, an inner realm of the vast unconscious beneath the thin everyday layer of the ordinary. As the inner intrudes on the ordinary awareness, the boundaries between them collapse, and definition and differentiation between the two domains is impaired. It is trying to live in this grey area of the transformational crisis that can be the most problematic because the individual becomes separated, feels ineffective and can either go with the flow or anxiously try to control the experience. The Grofs advise the former as a path of least resistance and as a way to allow this healing process to flow to its completion

more swiftly and with minimal disruption. 'If the emergence process is allowed to progress, if the inner world that is causing the discomfort is fully expressed, you will reconnect with the daily work' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 159).

Rather like biological birth the process is shorter and less painful if embraced freely. As in therapy, people in SE often intuitively know what is right for them but are not always able to articulate it. The Grofs express a preference for fully confronting the inner experiences that are trying to surface, and understanding them as they move an individual through the process. A second best option is to inhibit the process so that an individual may more effectively function in his or her life, but in a less fulfilling and self-actualising way, without the intrusion of these inner experiences.

Although the Grofs (1989, 1990) suggest various therapeutic interventions it is interesting to note that they encourage individuals to use various methods to face their SE. These include the following: play, evocative music, and expression of emotions and experiences through sound, and movement; actively working with dreams; using artistic expression; practice focused meditation; and development of simple personal rituals.

In their suggestions to professional helpers, the Grofs emphasise that the base-line of care is expressed in the quality of love, caring, and genuine concern of all those assisting with a SE. The aim in care is to avoid impeding the process by needless manipulation and controlling games, and hurting the individual.

Although they need not be trained professionals, helpers should have some knowledge of the dynamics and cartography of the transformation process. There will be times when the skills of a doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, priest, social worker and transpersonal therapist may be essential to assist both the individual and immediate support people, such as the family. A sympathetic medical doctor is useful, as he or she will initially be able to tell whether the condition is medical or the product of non-ordinary realities. In short, the family should be supplied with as much support and information as possible. This support might include: a twenty-four-hour care facility that understands and encourages the healing potential of the experience and offers full and on-going

support as well as a sitters' service so that the individual is supported within the home, which is familiar and comfortable rather than being removed to a centre.

Sitters can be trained to have knowledge of deep emotional and spiritual states, and possibly have their own experiences to draw upon, either through practice or therapy. Equally important, sitters should have regular supervision, both group and individual, as they reflect upon the process and evaluate the episodes. They assist the individual's re-entry to everyday life; providing halfway houses, professional help, support groups and regular contact with others who have had a SE. They will be mental-health professionals familiar with spiritual emergencies. As facilitators they will recognise a conceptual framework that covers a wide number of experiences, and understand the nature of the transformation process with an emphasis on the symptoms being opportunities for healing rather than suppressing them.

Consequently, the professional helpers will allow adolescent clients to guide their own processes, and provide a well-informed support role, being conversant in both verbal and experiential therapies. They will use a theoretical model, which incorporates work at the biographical, perinatal and transpersonal levels. An open-minded physician is most important in assisting the individual's fullest expression of his process without medical interventions that might hinder it. A spiritual teacher will offer tools that further expand the process work and assist the individual to use them successfully in daily practice. Spending time with a highly regarded spiritual teacher can be inspirational, healing and instructive, as can a spiritual or therapeutic community, but joining one does not commit one to a life dedicated to it. Group knowledge and experience would prove an invaluable source of support. Being in a peer support group, in the company of like-minded and non-judgemental people can be very reassuring and can ease the emergence process.

For further points of support the Grofs' offer: a good body worker; someone who has lived through his or her own crisis; close friends and family members; and a combination of the above. 'Because a person in a spiritual emergency is often emotionally vulnerable, sometimes his or her decisions are based on unfulfilled

desires rather than present needs' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 208). Equally, in choosing a teacher, therapist or guide, the individual who is in SE is encouraged to consider the following factors: sufficient training; personal experiential exposure to the psychic territories; broad conceptual framework; attributes such as effectiveness, humility, compassion, dedication and respectfulness. The individual in SE is also directed toward a carer who will be able to use the client's inner resources as a key to his or her strength and growth, to have a sense of humour, an ability to laugh at his or herself in any situation. The Grofs suggest that there should be a resonance between counsellee and counsellor that include feelings of trust, confidence and interest. Finally the individual in SE is encouraged to avoid: situations and people who get in the way of the transformation process; routinely applied medication; being labelled as sick, or a psychiatric case; those who don't recognise the healing potential of the process; and therapists or guides who offer themselves as experts in the individual's unique process.

In their guidelines for families and friends, the Grofs (1990) encourage genuine understanding and willingness to face the demands that SE can place upon everyone involved in an individual's process. It is not easy for a caring individual to face his or her limitations and emotional responses to SE, and recognise that normal relationships are threatened because SE magnifies the stress on those who love them as they go through it together. Equally, they are asked to be aware that the individual's behaviours and attitudes will also affect them: that as a result of new awareness an individual may change appearance or daily habits; that normally sociable and outgoing personalities may become introspective, avoiding contact, and behaving in asocial ways; that individuals reject the ordinary world as mundane and superficial; their interests may change, they might wish to discuss their newly acquired insights with everyone becoming easily frustrated by their lack of understanding; and that during the transformation process individuals may blame or project their difficulties onto others, or blame the situation around them.

In this confusion between the inner psychological process and outer reality, the individual might perceive other people or the environment in a way that

reflects what is happening inside, and even act on those perceptions, a process that is called 'acting out'. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 173)

Significantly, people in a transformation process sometimes use their family or friendships as symbols of the restrictions they are shedding. Similar to the later adolescent process of individuation, they confuse freeing themselves from internal limitations with actually moving away from the family. They are dissatisfied with ways of being that no longer seem compatible with their new worldview, and they can blame their discontent on some of the closest or most caring people in their lives. This occurs most during the emergence phase where issues of detachment are being faced:

Here, people have the insight that their pain and restriction in life have to do with the degree to which they are emotionally clinging to roles, relationships, and material possessions. In order to be free of suffering, these attachments must be severed. It is important to know that this does not necessarily mean that they need to physically move away from their attachments. The process of detachment can be completed internally, through meditation or other experimental methods, without jeopardising one's external world. (p. 174)

Issues of death during SE, the need to achieve the ultimate freedom from the experience or a sense that one is literally dying, and certain high levels of fear and confusion, as referred to above, can predominate at certain times. As a result sexual responses may change, for example, ordinary relationships are put aside in favour of a relationship with God. Feelings of great intuition and clairvoyance can unnerve loved ones with their insightful accuracy, especially regarding family behaviour and family secrets. Guided by meaningful coincidences, synchronicities that involve people close to them, individuals in SE can be fearful that their structure indicates a fate-like trend towards an unfolding tragedy.

Grof and Grof have found that family and friends in their responses can often deny that anything is wrong. They may feel confused, ashamed, helpless, threatened and afraid, react with guilt, reject both the individual and the process itself, become judgmental, and find someone or something to blame. What family and friends can do to help is to become aware of their own motivations for

providing support, suspend judgement and use their intuition. Becoming open, receptive, and willing to listen and to offer frequent reassurance, and even offering physical comfort, can be welcoming. Total assistance for an individual experiencing SE can be provided by being honest with oneself, avoiding the giving of inappropriate messages but giving oneself permission to be playful and flexible, which will finally permit the transformation process to unfold in a trusting and patient manner. The emphasis is on the provision of a totally secure holding environment, and to this end Grof and Grof insist that caregivers become educated about SE, and determine the degree to which they are willing and able to participate in their loved one's transformation. What is of equal importance, and perhaps more difficult, is that caregivers abandon the idea that they can fix or control the situation, or use it for personal therapy. Clearly, the role requires a level of commitment, organisation, education, and personal balance similar to that of a therapist, with the unique addition of an unqualified love for the person involved in this SE.

The Grofs' final word to the person in SE concerns reintegration into daily life, and the benefits of the healing process, which they call 'the homecoming': 'People at this stage frequently experience a new home within themselves, an inner source of comfort and nourishment' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 212). The individual values relationships, familiar environment and activities but the transition to effective functioning is problematic. The individual is changed by his experiences, reborn with new values, new spiritual perspectives and a healthier relationship with self. There is a phase of re-entry where the individual is uncertain about his role and himself. However as the two worlds begin to merge there is a sense that the sum of the whole is greater than the parts. 'Divine impulse is everywhere' writes Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Grof & Grof, 1989).

The first problem of the returning hero is to accept real life 'to complete his adventure' and 'survive the impact of the world.' Campbell describes individuals that inhabit this unfamiliar world with the metaphor 'men who are fractions imagine themselves to be complete'. The Grofs advise that individuals nurture themselves through this transition, keeping his or her perception of the external

world as calm as possible as there is a tendency to experience some confusion as to where he or she ends and the external world begins. However, setting boundaries on self and limits on relationships is difficult. This can be especially hard when the individual still does not have the power to override people in power who wish him or her to fulfil their responsibilities. They do not recognise the tenuous position that the individual is now in, having to meet expectations by trying to fit back into the world not as the changed individual, but as the individual they remember. However, individuals are urged not to worry about losing their new identity by a return to a more ego-centred existence. The impression of what has happened during SE runs very deep and its influence is 'all-pervading'. Individuals may continue to experience visions, waves of emotion and insights left over from the SE but by using the same practised techniques that were used during the SE they can be integrated into the new way of life and kept from intruding too much. It is possible that the individual may not be able to understand the experiences but through self-education and reflection on the process things become clearer. The problem of communicating with others who have little conception of what has occurred is, perhaps, the most difficult aspect of the homecoming. The Grofs note that different spiritual disciplines vary with regard to how much one should try to communicate these experiences, and suggest that creative and artistic modes of expression are generally the easiest means of articulation, as well as their having positive therapeutic value. They note that to feel embarrassed, judgmental, or guilty about behaviour during the SE,

... confounds your further healing. The mind is our worst enemy during a transformation process. During a powerful experience, your logical world was most likely subsumed by the irrational realm of your unconscious.
(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 221)

It is seen as important to honour all of the experiences without denying the negative ones as significant elements of the healing process. There are often difficulties in integrating experiences intellectually and philosophically with the previous worldview, and old activities and relationships need not be abandoned but engaged with differently.

Finally, the individual will continue to experience alternating strong, positive feelings of wonder, awe, humility and grace, relief, and a new source of strength, which will at first be difficult to accept. It is hard to believe that this sense of well being can be maintained but, according to the Grofs, the homecoming represents just that – acceptance of the world and the self in it. The homecoming is just the beginning of an ongoing process of self-exploration and transformation. The individual begins to find that the life process is trustworthy and not to be resisted. Reassuringly, there is strong sense of being more centred in the moment, existing more in the here and now, and that inner needs are more than satisfied. Some individuals have found that they can think more clearly and have limitless resources of creativity. However, while personal values may have changed and new ones become more essential ingredients for everyday living, the individual no longer finds he needs to prove something to the world. The process of SE completes itself in the final realisation that, being fully functioning as a human being, spirituality must become a necessary and desirable part of human living. Grof's holotropic theory clearly suggests that to be fully effective with individuals in psychotherapy and counselling, the professional cannot in all conscience ignore their clients' or their own spiritual experiences.

The final chapter in this part of the thesis prepares the reader for the detailed illustrative case example presented in Part Three. In the next chapter it is suggested that the experience of adolescence and loss, described in the archetypal theme of death and resurrection, may be used as a model for adolescent transformation. The chapter also considers the Elizabethan position on death and it examines the possibility that Shakespeare might have used his own traumatic experiences of loss and SE to create *Hamlet*. This chapter also establishes the methodology to be used to describe adolescent transformation in the case example, and it provides an opportunity to see how some of the theory already covered in the first few chapters may be presented in this case by drawing specifically upon Grof's work and transpersonal theory. Through an application of holotropic theory to *Hamlet* and Hamlet, and by its positioning alongside a number of important ideas and readings from different disciplines, a new and original synthesis of adolescence and development will begin to emerge.

CHAPTER FOUR

GROF AND HAMLET

It is not mere chance... that poets have used symbols and figures of madness for the essence of human life in its highest and most horrible possibilities, in its greatness and decline.

(Jaspers, *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*, 9th edition, 1913/1973)

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. (Shakespeare, 1957, 1.5.167-8)

Introduction

The core assertion of this thesis is that adolescents are able to experience SE, as defined by Grof and Grof (1989, 1990), and that an understanding of how adolescents' function in the context of both transpersonal and developmental psychology is critical to a reading of this transformative experience. It is suggested that adolescents, in keeping with archetypal patterns involving death and resurrection, recycle and rebirth themselves in a number of ways in the natural course of their development depending for the impetus of their transformations on their responses to changes and losses great and small. Adolescent development, therefore, involves a number of physical and cognitive transformations that account for individual positive changes. These transformations may include encounters with NOSC such as ghosts, spirits or spirit guides, which suggest changes in adolescents' spiritual lives. Thus, normal transformations, if they rely upon loss events to stimulate regression and subsequent re-growth, may in extreme cases be experienced as the holotropic phenomena of SE.

This chapter begins by continuing the discussion begun in the Introduction to the thesis about the use of Hamlet in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an illustrative

case study to demonstrate how SE is presented in an adolescent. This part will also include a synopsis of the plot of Hamlet and a note on the source text. It is also suggested here that the death and resurrection motif demonstrated in Hamlet's journey might provide a mythic model of ritual transformation similar to that experienced in adolescence. This chapter also prepares the reader for a fuller analysis of Hamlet's NOSC experiences in subsequent chapters as it considers the influence of *Ars Moriendi*, 'Art of Dying', in the Elizabethan period, and the effect of personal loss on Shakespeare himself. Finally, in preparation for Part Two of this thesis, Hamlet's NOSC is assessed and followed by a brief examination of the forces that drive his psyche when encountering loss and, to conclude, Grof's inner cartographic model of the psyche is applied to Hamlet's experiences.

Hamlet Prince of Denmark

The Case Study

Shakespeare's Hamlet, from the play of the same name, has been chosen as a suitable case illustration because of the character's age and the play's universal appeal as a study text.

As a rough guide, New Zealand's Age of Majority Act 1972 determines that a person becomes an adult on attaining the age of 20 years (Ludbrook, 2003). Everett (1989), in common with many Shakespeare scholars, concludes that Hamlet's age might contentiously be found anywhere between sixteen and twenty-three. However, according to Balk and Corr (1996, 2001) this places Hamlet in either the category of 'middle' or 'late' adolescence, or even from 23 years onwards as an 'early adult'. However, Balk and Corr (2001) are at pains to point out that such categories should only be used as guidelines as attaining the age of 22 does not necessarily propel an individual automatically out of later adolescence and into responsible adulthood. They suggest that 'the end of adolescence is less easily identified than its beginning' for a number of reasons which may include ambivalence about forging a separate identity, accepting

responsibility and sustaining interpersonal intimacy (p. 200), and Hamlet experiences all of these difficulties. However, Shakespeare scholar Sjogren's comprehensive research on *Hamlet* serves this thesis as the final arbiter of Hamlet's age. In his essay, 'How old is *Young Hamlet*?' (1983), Sjogren uses Shakespeare's consistent portrayal of adolescents such as Romeo and Prince Hal, as well as contemporary historical evidence, to convincingly support his argument that Hamlet is sixteen years of age which, according to Balk and Corr makes him a middle adolescent.

Given that the Grofs' notion of SE is located within the full range of their holotropic cartography of the human psyche, readings of Hamlet will recognise all three of these dimensions. Shakespeare's Hamlet provides the researcher with a well known and accessible character who continues to be the subject of much speculation and constant revision. Bloom (1998) describes Hamlet as having 'an ever-growing inner self, the dream of infinite consciousness' (p. 416) and as such, his appeal is his peculiar ability to represent the myriad of elements that make up the human being, and particularly the adolescent. In holding a mirror up to human nature Hamlet reflects aspects of adolescent experience, behaviour, and development that are congruent with those characteristics of young people today. His soliloquies provide his spoken thoughts for four of the five acts of the play, tracing his immediate inner reactions to events outside of himself. Indeed, the play is so tightly knit around the person of Hamlet, and he is such an enigmatic and sympathetic character, that as an audience we might be excused for thinking that the action of the play is written as if observed entirely through his eyes. Similarly revealed are the Danish Court who, coloured by Hamlet's loss are rendered as duplicitous and malevolent as creatures in a nightmare. In fact, the characters at times parody the hellish visions experienced by an individual in SE. In this way the microcosmic world of Hamlet's inner emergency is experienced in the macrocosmic world of the play – the SE within the collective unconscious.

What will be shown is that Hamlet's natural spiritual emergence complicated by the sudden and unexpected death of his father, spontaneously induces a SE. Subsequently, in this psychospiritual crisis Hamlet, supported by Horatio, is able

to survive this SE and is inwardly transformed. However, his management of the crisis is at times tenuous and his behaviour difficult for his family to deal with. It is only after his journey to England that Hamlet returns to Denmark a healthier and more fully functioning individual, but one whose process of transformation is tragically not fully completed. Management of his SE is hampered by his lack of understanding about the process, on-going grief and loss issues, adolescent development, and lack of support and understanding from the family who disenfranchise his grief and fear his transformation. The soliloquies, rather than being the practical problems of the play as Alexander (1971) has argued, open a remarkable window onto Hamlet's inner journey and his deep preoccupation with the nature of reality and what constitutes a meaningful existence. It allows us to map the experiential elements of his SE.

Plot Synopsis

The following is a brief outline of Hamlet's journey of transformation. It is provided as a context for the following discussions and the subsequent case analysis. It also clarifies and fixes the positions of Hamlet's soliloquies in the text.

Act I. The Ghost of Hamlet, late King of Denmark, has on two successive nights terrified officers guarding the royal castle at Elsinore. Horatio, friend of the younger Hamlet, the dead King's son, joins the watch on the third night. The Ghost appears, but will not speak, and Horatio fears that the apparition bodes ill for Denmark. The kingdom is already on the brink of war. Fortinbras, rash young Prince of Norway, is raising an army with which, it is expected, he will try to recover the lands forfeited to Denmark after his father had been killed in battle by the elder Hamlet.

In a stateroom, Claudius thanks the assembled courtiers for their acquiescence in his succession to the throne of his brother and in his admittedly hasty marriage to Gertrude, the widowed Queen. Claudius sends emissaries to the aged uncle of Fortinbras asking him to restrain his nephew's political ambitions. The King and

the Queen then chide Hamlet for being unduly melancholy since the death of his father about two months before. Left alone, the Prince gives vent to a paroxysm of grief and outrage over his mother's 'incestuous' remarriage (First Soliloquy). When Horatio tells him about the Ghost, Hamlet arranges to stand watch himself.

Hot-headed Laertes, about to return to school in France, warns his sister Ophelia not to give credence to Hamlet's proffers of love, as a prince, he says, is not free to choose a wife. Their father Polonius, chief counsellor to Claudius and a foolish meddler, gives Laertes some parting advice and forbids Ophelia to meet Hamlet again.

That night on the battlements of the castle the Ghost returns and, drawing Hamlet apart, tells him that he has returned to demand revenge for his foul and unnatural murder. The Prince begs to know the criminal's name, so he may sweep to his revenge. Hamlet is horrified when the Ghost tells him that the murderer is Claudius, who has debauched his wife and poured poison in his ear while he slept; the King had died without even the opportunity to confess his sins. He appeals to his son not to let the royal bed be a couch of lust and 'damned incest'. Hamlet promises to think of nothing else until he has accomplished his father's wishes (Second Soliloquy).

Act II. Days pass, and Hamlet cannot bring himself to act: he does not relish the role of avenger, and is not certain that the Ghost is a benevolent spirit. While he awaits an opportunity to confront his uncle he feigns madness. In this guise he frightens Ophelia, who has dutifully refused either to see him or to accept his notes. Polonius tells Claudius that Hamlet's insanity is the 'very ecstasy of love' and to prove it he contrives to have the pair meet where he and the King can spy on them. Claudius first sends two friends of the Prince, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to him to see if they can discover the reason for his strange conduct. The King has learned, meanwhile, that his appeal to Norway has been successful. Fortinbras has been deterred and now asks for and receives permission to march through Denmark to attack Poland.

A troupe of players comes to the castle and Hamlet resolves to have them act before the court a tragedy containing an incident very like the alleged murder of his father. If the King reacts guiltily, Hamlet will know that the Ghost is not an agent of the devil (Third Soliloquy).

Act III. The following day the Prince meets Ophelia and shocks her with wild denunciations of marriage and women (Fourth Soliloquy). Claudius and Polonius hear the tirade from a hiding place and the King, fearful of its significance, determines to send Hamlet away. Polonius suggests that the Prince confide in his mother; he proposes a meeting between them, at which he intends to eavesdrop.

When the players present the tragedy Claudius flees the hall in consternation (Fifth Soliloquy). He orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take his lunatic nephew to England. Alone the King tries to pray. Hamlet observes him and now, convinced of his guilt, draws his sword to kill him, but restrains himself, musing ironically that by dispatching the King at prayer he may send his soul to heaven (Sixth Soliloquy).

Hamlet goes to his mother's chamber and denounces her so ferociously that she cries out in alarm. Polonius, hidden behind the arras shouts also and Hamlet, believing the spy to be Claudius, stabs through the arras and kills the counsellor. He renews his scalding attack on his mother, but the Ghost, unseen by Gertrude, intervenes to remind the Prince of his purpose. After begging his mother to repent and warning her not to side against him, Hamlet drags away the body of Polonius.

Act IV. Now convinced of her son's madness, the Queen tells Claudius of Polonius' death and the King, suspecting that he will be blamed for not confining the insane Prince, orders him immediately dispatched to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern carry documents that authorise Hamlet's execution there. En route, Hamlet sees Fortinbras' army bivouacked, and comparing his own grievances with those that have led to the forthcoming slaughter over a worthless piece of land, he resolves hereafter to be bloody (Seventh Soliloquy).

Laertes returns to Elsinore and demands of the royal couple an explanation for the murder and secret burial of his father. Ophelia, desolate and deranged, wanders about singing distractedly. Claudius tells Laertes how Polonius was killed and explains that he dare not punish the Prince because Gertrude dotes on him, as do the people of Denmark. Sailors arrive carrying letters from Hamlet. To Horatio he writes that pirates attacked the ship bound for England and that they have helped him return to Elsinore. The Prince's note to the King simply announces his return and promises an early explanation.

Claudius suggests to Laertes that they arrange an 'accidental' death for Hamlet and Laertes readily agrees to a display of swordsmanship in which he will wield a foil tipped with lethal poison. The Queen enters and tearfully tells them that Ophelia has drowned herself.

Act V. Hamlet meets Horatio in the graveyard at Elsinore and exchanges witty comments with the gravedigger. The Prince and Horatio hide when a funeral procession approaches. They hear a priest tell Laertes that only a perfunctory service is allowed for the deceased because her death was 'doubtful' because she may have committed suicide. Laertes leaps into the grave for a final embrace with his sister, and Hamlet, when he hears that the funeral is Ophelia's, emerges to assert that his great love entitles him to the honour of first mourner. He jumps into the grave with Laertes and they fight.

Later, Hamlet tells Horatio how he had discovered the plot to kill him and escaped, after forging an order that insured the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Osric, a foppish courtier, tells the Prince of the proposed match with Laertes and of the heavy wager the King has made on his nephew.

As the two fence before the court, Claudius drops a poisoned pearl into a drink intended for Hamlet. Unwittingly, the Queen intercepts the cup and drinks from it. Laertes wounds Hamlet, then in a furious exchange they switch foils. Before Claudius can interfere, Laertes is mortally wounded; the Queen, swooning, warns her son about the cup.

Dying, Laertes begs Hamlet's forgiveness and blames the King. Hamlet rushes to Claudius, runs him through and forces him to drink the poison. Horatio, distraught at the sight of his stricken friend, attempts to take the cup also. Hamlet wrenches it from him, bidding him to live and tell the true account of these events, and then dies in his arms. His last wish is that Fortinbras succeed to the throne of Denmark. Ambassadors from England arrive with news of the deaths of the courtiers. Fortinbras, returning victorious from Poland to claim the crown, orders military honours for the dead Prince.

The Text of Hamlet

The version of *Hamlet* used throughout this thesis is *The New Shakespeare Hamlet*, edited by John Dover Wilson for the Cambridge University Press. It was originally published in 1934 and this research uses the second edition published in 1936 and reprinted in 1972. Dover Wilson draws upon three main versions of Shakespeare's play for this edition: the First Quarto (Q1), a pirated memorised manuscript published in 1603; the more authoritative, if incomplete, Second Quarto (Q2) intended to supersede Q1 published in 1604/5; and the First Folio (F) published in 1622/3. Dover Wilson shows that although F does have a material connection to Shakespeare's original manuscript it is also corrupted because, although it is ultimately derived from the author's autograph, it was a transcript of a transcript deriving from the Globe playhouse's inaccurate prompt book. He suggests, therefore, that Q2 is the most authoritative of the sources. In constructing his version of the text Dover Wilson has used F as the *textus receptus* but has improved it by incorporating a large number of readings from the influential Q2 and a few from Q1. Thus, Dover Wilson's version of *Hamlet* derives more of its impetus from the spirit of the author's language found in Q2 than from the practice of the playhouse described by F. Given that the substance of the plot, and its subsequent impact on Hamlet, is not radically altered in any version of the play, this particular edition was chosen because, based upon Q2, the text is likely to be a more accurate version of the author's original manuscript and therefore closer to Shakespeare's expression of Hamlet's experience.

Death and Resurrection in *Hamlet*: A Model of Adolescent Transformation

Death is certainly a major theme in *Hamlet* where death and life play equally important roles and the adolescent hero needs, for balance, to continually contend with both. 'Books of the dead' are of particular interest to Grof. A common characteristic of this traditional writing is the dual orientation of death and resurrection that emphasises the importance of both life and death. Commentators later in the work note Hamlet's preoccupation with life and death as an obsession but in the context of the Elizabethan *Ars Moriendi*, 'Art of Dying', detailed further below, it was an entirely appropriate preoccupation. Certainly, Hamlet's interest in the concept is in keeping with this tradition and the narrative of *Hamlet*, and not to be regarded as a potentially dangerous flirtation with self-harm.

Hamlet's concern as a play to explore the notion of transformation at the macro- and microcosmic levels of human experience whilst it engages the concept of *Ars Moriendi* also seriously invites comparisons with the concept of ritual transformation. Drawing illuminating parallels with the accounts of those who have survived clinical death, and the death and rebirth episodes experienced by schizophrenic patients and by those who have passed through psychedelic states explored in experimental psychiatry, the Grofs (1980) demonstrate a model for ritual transformation. They cite the mythological model of Isis and Osiris who, murdered and dismembered by his brother Set, is then magically resurrected by his sisters, Isis and Nephys. The story mirrors the murder of Old Hamlet by his brother Claudius. The death and resurrection of the father in the son finds its immediate and superficial similarity in the revenge motif of the pagan Middle Ages. However, the story of Hamlet combines both pagan and Christian influences and outcomes. As a common model of brother against brother, this kind of resurrection is both in keeping with the Christian myth and clearly resembles the resurrection and rebirth of Old Hamlet as his son Hamlet, sent by the father to free his people from evil. However, Hamlet's final submission to the forces of providence to support his cause reflects a far deeper response to the death of his father than the need to respond with the fury of murder.

Scholars of comparative mythology note the similarity of certain symbol-forming practices among otherwise diverse groups of people. One example is the comprehension of the experience of death as an archetypal pattern involving death and resurrection. Watts suggests, 'the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is about the most basic theme of myth and religion' (Grof & Grof, 1989; Grof, 1998). For example, a similar myth to that of the Egyptian Osiris surrounds the Greek God Adonis and a parallel story involves the Babylonian Tammuz. In more recent times, among the Blackfoot Native Americans, rituals gave thanks for the sacrifice of a buffalo, which had sustained the life of the tribe, and then restored the slain buffalo to life. In the Roman Catholic Church, the communion ritual transforms the bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus making meaning out of the brutality of the Crucifixion.

In each of these mythic archetypes a death that might initially appear cruel and unnecessary is invested with meaning. Many of these rituals involve death by violent means that then benefits the community. Such a death allows each person to face his or her own death by accepting the condition as a catalyst for a new life in which the martyr and the believer both emerge into a richer and more mature condition. Given the prevalence of myths such as these, it is easy to speculate about the possible connections among these accounts of the violent death and resurrection of the mythic hero and the similar fate of Hamlet. From this perspective Hamlet's and Old Hamlet's deaths may be viewed as necessary to the purging and restoration of Denmark. In understanding the common links between various myths involving the hero as scapegoat, we can begin to understand the psychological attraction of Hamlet's biography as a cycle of death and resurrection.

In each of these resurrection archetypes, the hero moves from the condition of the non-living to the living, but looks different upon his or her return. As Watts writes of the resurrection of Jesus, the hero has become perfected, and the resurrected state transcends whatever limitations confined the hero in the previous state of life. The resurrection,

... makes it clear that this is not merely the return of a ghost from the dead,

nor even a simple resuscitation of the corpse. The Body which was nailed to the Cross and pierced with the Spear rises again into life, but so transformed that it can pass through closed doors and appear and disappear out of all conformity to the ordinary physical laws.

(Grof & Grof, 1989, pp. 170-71)

By moving beyond the physical, the resurrected Jesus becomes, in Watt's formulation, 'spiritualized' as a part of the world beyond the conventions of space and time and thus a reminder of eternal life. The condition illustrates what Joseph Campbell refers to as 'Eternal Man' in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1968) whose 'solemn task and deed... is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed' (p. 20). Such is the condition in rebirth for Osiris, Adonis, Tammuz, or any of the other scapegoat heroes. In nearly every mythology involving the violent destruction of the hero who then, in effect, returns to 'receive communications', a similar psychological process operates, as the hero's value is enhanced because he or she survives the destructive impulse.

In *Hamlet* this process is circular and involves Old Hamlet as the facet of Hamlet's personality that must and does die, and Hamlet, whose symbolic death and rebirth and then his actual death benefits the community. Thus when the object of Hamlet is destroyed in the fantasy of the subject, the object becomes distinct and separate and takes on a life of its own. Without his symbolic death, triggered by the death of the father and Old Hamlet-self, the experience of meeting the self-Ghost and rebirth culminating in his banishment from Denmark and from life the hero Hamlet cannot be expected to carry this additional educational imperative. Rebirth carries the responsibility of helping to educate other members of the community. This is a feature of almost every well-known story of the hero's resurrection. As resurrection implies a state of transcendence, the psyche, either in individuals or collectively, is enabled to make a transition from one stage of development to another. Thus the theme of death and rebirth comes into a close relationship with education in both the religious and secular senses.

Such mythic representations of destructive impulses can be viewed as a means of continuing developmental processes that began at birth. As Hamlet has 'matured,' his biography repeatedly bears out Winnicott's belief that 'growing up is inherently an aggressive act' (1971, p. 144). Indeed, as Nietzsche has noted in *Beyond Good and Evil (Part Four: Aphorisms and Interludes, 1886)* that unexpressed aggression turns back upon the individual; as he put it 'Under conditions of peace the warlike man attacks himself'. In his *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973) Fromm has argued that those blocked from self fulfilment, typically by social arrangements and conditions, turn from the love of life to the love of death, seeking the deaths of others, and indeed of one's self. In childhood games such as 'King of the Castle,' Winnicott (1971) sees a recapitulation of the destructive fantasies first manifested in an infant's nursing. Thus in an unconscious impulse that culminates in dominance through the imagined death of all rivals, the adolescent's growth in which 'there is to be found death and personal triumph as something in the process of maturation and in the acquisition of adult status' (p. 145), depends upon fantasised destruction. Consequently, the drives that motivate the child who is breast feeding or the similarly-structured adult processes that explain how an individual 'uses' objects and recognises their externality, could be analogous with the object-use characterised by many of the mythic narratives of different cultures. The pattern of destruction and survival central to Winnicott's model of development becomes a central feature of myths ranging from Osiris to the Crucifixion. Similarly, Hamlet's destructive use of other characters in the play and his inner transcendence of the same destructive impulse might be regarded as a mythic model of ritual transformation.

This thesis contends that the key to understanding Hamlet must lie within his inner process, a process totally consumed with dealing with his father's death, the negotiation of his SE and his survival. It is assumed here that Hamlet's interiority may be reflected in and accessed through his soliloquies, and that his external actions are the product of this inner process alongside his responses to external circumstances. Consequently, Hamlet rather than dismissing death confronts it in the only way that he can. Hamlet uses his education and interest in theatre as a tool to understand the trauma of his bereaved position. His subsequent SE deepens his understanding by admitting new dimensions of

reality to positions that began as simple role-play but become perilously close to the truth. Hamlet, in the guise of the dead, understands what it is to be Death himself. Thus, this research seeks to explore Hamlet's journey through the play as a process of survival that generates a rebirth, a transformation and transcendence, rather than a simple demonstration of the tragic consequences of passionate emotion overcoming noble reason.

Understanding of how adolescents function must influence this reading of Hamlet's growth and its outcomes. Contemporary theories of adolescent development, discussed in detail later, use a largely biological model to describe adolescent growth. More specifically, this thesis suggests that, in keeping with archetypal patterns involving death and resurrection, adolescents undergo transformational changes in their development which may find their genesis in experiences of loss. It is also noted later that in some cultures, adolescence is altogether bypassed by a ritualised passage from childhood to adulthood. However, it is suggested here that transformation also involves a certain amount of loss of, and death to, self in order to aid development, and that development involves a degree of transcendence, which includes an understanding of the spiritual lives of adolescents.

***Ars Moriendi* : Death and Non Ordinary States of Consciousness in the Elizabethan Era**

Prior to the sixteenth century, Europe had access to a body of medieval literature known as *Ars Moriendi*, or the 'Art of Dying'. Shakespeare, even if he were not aware of these texts, would have been influenced by their content as it pervaded Elizabethan culture (Beaty, 1970; Atkinson, 1982). The creation of the adolescent Hamlet, his philosophy and understanding of non-ordinary states of consciousness, owes some of its shape to this literary tradition (Haruta, 2004). In this respect, Elizabethans were not so far removed from their non-western counterparts when it came to the spiritual significance of death, and the dimensions of existence beyond death. This understanding and respect for mortality is significantly fused with the notion that life should be a well-conducted

preparation for death. *Hamlet* argues the case between the revenge tragedy assumption that Hamlet must complete revenge in order to have lived well, and the Christian belief that to live well, an individual like Hamlet is not permitted to commit murder.

Hamlet's observations of Claudius and Gertrude also provide a good example of how culturally inappropriate it can be to briefly perform the funeral rites and associated rituals of mourning for any individual, let alone those of a king. Their brevity indicates the level of importance they give to Old Hamlet's life, and this lack of respect is conveyed to the country and to the son. Their swift marriage also appears to support this theme. However, an audience today might well interpret their sentiments and actions more sympathetically in a way more consistent with, and reflective of, contemporary culture. As a challenge to the surviving Danish Royal Family's ability to rule credibly and effectively, Old Hamlet's death and Gertrude's subsequent remarriage to the brother, Hamlet's uncle Claudius, the marriage was a necessary response to effect and maintain a stable state after the potentially disruptive death of the sovereign. The funeral was undertaken expeditiously, a minimum that the culture required to acknowledge the significant death of a King. By the cynical exercise of authority, they are able to manoeuvre quickly around the death to focus attention on the marriage, and thus avoid investigation of the circumstances under which Old Hamlet died, any question of their involvement, and details of a prior relationship.

As the new arbiters of fashion, culture and custom, the new King and Queen are able to establish a dynasty in which the old rules and history can be redefined, or rewritten, in the name of expediency. We still tend to regard the posthumous journey of the soul to be a product of magical thinking and primitive fears. Claudius and Gertrude appear to exemplify the modern pragmatic view that if we are able to control the process of life then it becomes easier to deny the concept of death. In *The Denial of Death*, Becker (1973) suggests that awareness of our own death is a fundamental aspect of the human condition but he also goes on to show that much of human character as well as social institutions seek to deny that finitude. As the Grofs (1989, 1990) point out, death is a painful reminder that we are ultimately limited in our control of nature.

In any culture it would be taboo for Hamlet to admonish Claudius and Gertrude for their lack of cultural sensitivity but because of his role in the state he feels his disenfranchisement the more keenly. Hamlet is caught in the triple bind of being a potential heir, and consequently representing dangerous competition for the throne, a dutiful son, and subsequently subservient to the wishes of his parents, and a loyal subject, and bound as a subject to the King and Queen of his country. Compounded by the identity crisis of adolescence Hamlet is rightly puzzled by how he should respond to the loss of his father, and what that loss makes him. In terms of kingship, his father is described as a warrior more akin to the Middle Ages than that of the Elizabethan renaissance, a figure already embedded in a different era and easily superseded by the Machiavellian and ruthlessly modern figure of Claudius. Thus Old Hamlet's premature death is symbolic of the death of an archaic and mythological age, of a heroic but necessarily brutal stage in the nation's earlier development. We encounter a Hamlet similarly trapped in a process of development, caught between the impulsively brutal responses of childhood and the carefully guarded reactions of adulthood.

Hamlet and the Ghost: Psychosis or Spiritual Emergency?

As noted in the previous chapter, since functional psychoses are defined psychologically and not medically, it is difficult to provide a clear differential diagnosis between SE and psychosis. Consequently, any diagnostic procedure must be pre-empted by a full medical examination to determine if an individual's condition is caused by a recognisable organic source that requires medical attention. Hamlet's medical condition is not difficult to determine. The text indicates that he is a model adolescent, he is well educated, a physically skilful sportsman, he is liked by his friends and the nation's people and does not hide his abhorrence of excessive drug taking.

Grof and Grof (1989) in their introduction to R.D. Laing's work *Transcendental Experience in Relation to Religion and Psychosis*, usefully summarise his definition of psychoses as a condition that 'cannot be understood in terms of abnormal biological processes inside the human body, but are products of

disturbed patterns of human communication. They reflect problems in important relationships with individuals, small groups such as family, and society as a whole.' (p. 50) In other words, Hamlet could be regarded as psychotic if all of his relationships with his family, his friends and the kingdom of Denmark are viewed as problematic. However, this relies upon objective judgements, and since Claudius is the individual making the final judgement in Hamlet's case he has a vested interest in seeing that it is followed through. Hamlet's madness becomes more understandable when viewed in this social and cultural arena as a judgement made on an individual by society rather than as a chemical imbalance. Laing's radical perspective describes society as founded on the denial of the self and of experience. Consequently, it is society that is insane and the psychotic is the individual who finds it difficult to accommodate society's values and norms. Hamlet is at odds with his society, especially after his supernatural experience, and finding himself in the minority it is he who will be regarded as insane. This judgement that sets an individual apart from the group, from his or her family, and from the norms of society also alienates that individual from the very groups that might supply support through the crisis.

Similarly, the education system, like Hamlet's Denmark, can become the source of shattered ideals hopes and dreams for many adolescents. Maslow (1970) has suggested that the need to belong is probably more acute in adolescence than at any other time of life. This is partly due to the transition that is being made from dependence upon family members for self-esteem, attention and love to that of peers. This transition is part of the identity project, and a move toward independence and personal integration. However, the peer group cannot function as a real substitute for a family unless a person is accepted into it and not all individuals are. Maslow (1970) puts the need to belong in the centre of his hierarchy of needs. It comes just after the need for food, water and safety. Humans take a very long time to mature compared to other species, and so they have an innate instinct to live in mutually interdependent groups. There are cultures in the world where, if the group ostracizes an individual, he or she will die even without any physical pathology.

The need to belong is basic to human nature but the need to differentiate and individuate is basic to adolescent development in Western society (Beit-Hallahmi, 1995, p. 262). Consequently, SE could complicate an adolescent's individuation and differentiation process by making that individual feel unusually different, not only cut-off from the familiarity of normal familial relationships but also from very necessary peer relationships. The need to belong can be strong for some adolescents and, because they are trying to move away from the birth family as their primary source of support, rejection by or isolation from the peer group is especially debilitating. It results in an unwelcome isolation that creates incredible stress and painful loss. An individual's responses may also aggravate the isolation further by displays of anger or complete withdrawal inward, depending on who is perceived as the source of the problem. Consequently, if a school, for example, is no longer able to accommodate an adolescent because SE interferes with normal functioning, then the worst thing that it can do is to isolate or reject the student or create a rift between the adolescent and the family. Estranged adolescents, therefore, require connections with structures that fulfil their need to belong and the birth family is ordinarily the one in which an individual experiencing SE is best helped, cared for and supported (Grof & Grof, 1989).

NOSC covers a wide spectrum, recognised by Grof's typology of 12 varieties of SE. Assigning people to 'well-defined diagnostic pigeon holes' is difficult because of the fact that their 'phenomenology is unusually rich and draws upon all the levels of the psyche' (Grof, p. 144, 2000a) and it is likely that Hamlet's NOSC experiences will also be represented in all levels of the psyche. Grof provides a number of common characteristics in SE against which Hamlet's case may be judged and they are, significantly, based on an individual's ability to self-diagnose. These criteria for making the differential diagnosis between psychopathology and SE give further credibility to the existence of SE as a valid clinical phenomenon.

As the term *spiritual emergency* suggests, additional characteristics of a transformational crisis are an awareness by the person involved that the process is related to critical spiritual issues in life, as well as the transpersonal content of the experiences themselves. Another important hallmark is the ability to differentiate to a considerable degree between inner

experiences and the world of consensus reality. Persons who are having a spiritual emergency are typically aware of the fact that the changes in their experiential world are due to their own inner processes and are not caused by events in the outside world. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 44)

In the context of diagnosis and assessment for SE discussed in the previous chapter, and given that there is no medical case to answer, Hamlet's behaviour and awareness to begin with is not too unusual. His responses could be seen as typically mirroring an adolescent who is in mourning for his father. There is no doubting his cognisance, as he is a totally aware human being. Hamlet provides ample evidence to corroborate this in the clarity and perception of his comments about the nature of man and his condition, the meaning of existence, and the superficiality of life. These significant themes run parallel with the death of his father and his hopes, the marriage of his mother, and the search for a purpose in life, and are embedded in the culture and spiritual traditions of his age. He is aware that he has critical spiritual issues to deal with.

Hamlet's experience qualifies as SE in at least four requirements that distinguish spiritual emergence from an emergency. According to the Grofs (1990), this inner experience is at once disturbing and disruptive to Hamlet's existence, it requires controlling, it brings about an abrupt shift in perception of self and the world, and Hamlet does show some resistance to it. At first Hamlet is unable to discern what the product of his inner process is and differentiate it from the outer consensus reality. The Ghost, in validating intuitive knowledge, also confirms that Hamlet's perceptions have been altered by an experience prompted from within the self, the result of a traumatic experience, rather than by others from outside. Initially, Hamlet believes the Ghost to be autonomous because others have seen it, perhaps as shared material from the collective unconscious. At this point the product of the inner process is so obviously part of outer reality that Hamlet cannot differentiate. Later, however, as only he may engage fully with this transpersonal phenomenon, he discerns that the experience is part of an, as yet, only partially discernible process.

Grof's suggestion that the experience must be understood by the individual as deriving from his psyche may prove a difficulty for the professional helper and for the client to overcome at the beginning of therapy. Hamlet initially has no way to explain what he has seen in terms of inner process; like most adolescents he doesn't have the educational reference or the vocabulary to assist him. The problem of dissolving temporal and spatial boundaries will also cause significant problems in discerning where the Ghost originates. However, there is no doubt that Hamlet's decision to suspend his judgement about the Ghost and to test its provenance as a messenger with the full understanding and compliance of Horatio supports willingness on his part to explore the experience further. This speaks of a readiness to trust a sympathetic helper and to honour the rules of treatment. As Grof (2000a) constantly stresses, an important prognostic indicator must be the individual's approach to the process of emergence and his or her experiential style.

Cognitive acceptance of the process would be a key component of Hamlet's treatment, alongside the normalisation of and education about the experience. This therapy implies a certain level of development, experience, and cognition in Hamlet. Undoubtedly, an important requirement is that he has a clear communication style, which is a good prognostic indicator of suitable candidature for holotropic therapy. Day to day it is the lack of these skills that prevents an individual from recognising and communicating his or her understanding of SE to others. It is therefore by the provision and use of creative and alternative forms of communication in therapy that the possibility of good outcomes is created.

Dynamics of Hamlet's Loss

Loss and Survival

Central to this thesis is the argument that Hamlet's loss may have triggered a transpersonal inner event anchored in the perinatal dimension of experience and that, rather than revenge, Hamlet is engaged in a SE that assists him to

negotiate his survival. Literally, Hamlet's personal losses are extended to his contemplation of the loss of self. Grief and loss in terms of development and as a holotropic analysis are covered in greater detail later in Chapters 10 and 11. The developmental process can be simply reframed in terms of an individual's responses to threats against his or her continuing existence.

Hamlet's new stepfather Claudius, rather than the object of revenge can also be viewed as the most likely threat to Hamlet's integrity as a living individual. However, the experience is not just about Hamlet's survival, it derives from the developmental needs of Hamlet himself. It is not about worldly vanities such as honour and filial duty; it is about maintaining the integrity of the whole, and those elements of the macrocosm finding expression within the microcosmic individual called Hamlet.

All of Hamlet's responses are firmly embedded in COEX systems fixed to the basic perinatal matrices whose roots go deep into the collective unconscious. The trauma of Hamlet's loss and its unconscious existential threat, therefore, draw upon these deeper transpersonal and perinatal experiential systems in order to support the reorganisation of Hamlet's psyche by these COEX systems. In the biographical dimension of everyday existence this will be both traumatic and confusing to Hamlet, and equally difficult for others to understand. However, changes in this biographical dimension enable him to access the necessary skills to effectively complete the transformation in all dimensions. Thus Hamlet is empowered enough to eventually effect the important balance required by both his biological and spiritual centres not merely to survive but to effectively maintain integrity and support development.

Existential Threat as Perinatal Transformation

The following simple synthesis of Grof's holotropic theory and Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is offered as a brief introduction to the in-depth analysis that follows, and particularly as an outline of the perinatal structuring of Hamlet's experience.

... it is essential to distinguish the process of transition from one developmental stage to another from the birth trauma and other events that endanger the survival of the organism. The latter experiences are of a different logical type and are in a meta-position in relation to the processes that Wilber includes under the description of thanatos. They endanger the existence of the organism as an individual entity without regard to the level of its development. Thus, a critical survival threat can occur during embryonic existence, in any stage of the birth process, or at any age, without regard to the level of consciousness evolution. A vital threat during prenatal existence or in the process of childbirth actually seems to be instrumental in creating a sense of separateness and isolation, rather than destroying it, as Wilber suggests. (Grof, 1985, pp. 136-7)

In the early and traumatic stages of loss and before the conscious onset of SE, Hamlet looks outward to investigate any further threat to his basic survival and inward to make sense of his new condition. There is a growing understanding that his relationship with the world has radically changed, and that the change causes disruption to what was previously known, physical discomfort, and pain in a number of dimensions of feeling. This is outlined further in Grof's 'bad womb' experience of BPM I. Hamlet intuitively recognises that the dynamics of a father's absence, and a mother's remarriage, coupled with the addition of a new, powerful and unpredictable parent figure, will have the power to affect him either positively or negatively, the latter being the most likely.

Following inner intuition, Hamlet reasons that if the present threat originates with Claudius and Gertrude then it is possible to extrapolate the nature and extent of the threat using deep past experience as a basis for future prediction. Since he is not thus far compromised, the threat is seen as based in the future. However, having extended his concern, Hamlet reviews his position and supposes that a threat could have always existed from this source in the present and the future, as well as the past. Based upon the fact that Old Hamlet has died and that Claudius and not Hamlet has taken his place, he intuitively deduces that Old Hamlet may have been effectively and successfully threatened from the same source. Similarly, Hamlet perceives that an attack on Old Hamlet is an attack upon himself. This supports his original contention and increases his anxiety that present threat is now imminent danger.

Unsure of the validity of his deduction, Hamlet needs to test this hypothesis. Unable to satisfactorily render an answer at the day to day level of existence, because his movements are watched and conversations are monitored, he is able to do so by accessing the transpersonal dimension in the form of the Ghost, which effectively corresponds to the 'hell' components of BPM II. This transpersonal experience organised by unconscious COEX, in total concurrence with the intuitive process, confirms that Hamlet's survival may be compromised and logically suggests that the threat to him would be greatly reduced if it could be permanently removed. Interestingly, in the absence of the NOSC experience, an alternative suggestion might be that Hamlet might try to, at least initially, integrate and accept imminent danger as part of his experience. However, following the trauma of death complicated by the effects of disenfranchisement, he feels anger, frustration, and impatience, combined with a sense of being somehow immersed in an unpleasantly alien and toxic environment. The Ghost, representing a COEX system anchored over the perinatal with its consciousness in the transpersonal, offers a limited interpretation of all of these elements and memories. In the presence of this powerfully influential experiential manifestation of the organising principles of the psyche, Hamlet is persuaded that the threat that he experiences is a danger not only to his own integrity but also a threat to all of existence. In terms of the Elizabethan understanding of universal order, the nation, the Body Politic, and the macrocosm of the Chain of Being all share this transformative emergency (Tillyard, 1943). Thus, Hamlet's experience of SE is reflected and experienced by the Cosmos.

Hamlet has some initial difficulty in distinguishing between the regular business of survival, which may ultimately demand a passive removal of self from a threat, and the confrontational use of aggression in the service of survival. Under the influence of the transpersonal dimension, COEX systems of experience are initially interpreted as the desire to take the latter course – revenge dictated by the transpersonal dimension in a deliberate attempt to pursue the dictates of BPM III in the holotropic process of renewal. However, Hamlet's overly long obsession with revenge might also be read as either positive resistance to that process or some kind of impasse. By providing himself with a superficially simple temporary solution

Hamlet attempts to prevent what is inevitable - the pursuit of a legitimate response in the service of development. However, as an individual he is developing at all levels in his perinatal rediscovery of self and this enlarges his consciousness to the possibility of a more meaningful existence. Equally, the influence of the transpersonal phenomena reduces or, more likely, is transformed itself by the individual's spontaneous inner reorganisation. Hamlet is able to make more distinctions the deeper he journeys to the source of his original imprinted anxieties and finds the ability and opportunity to re-integrate and resolve them. This position resembles Grof's final perinatal matrix, BPM IV.

It may be that through the process of transformation and enlightenment, Hamlet learns, amongst other things, to properly understand, identify, and distinguish threats imposed by forces in both the outer world of biographical reality and from within the transpersonal and perinatal dimensions. It is argued that initially Claudius must be experienced by Hamlet as a very real threat, not just in the world of day to day existence, the biographical, but also in the dimensions of the transpersonal and perinatal. This is because the particular archetypal characteristics that he represents are present in Hamlet's deeper unconscious memories, in the COEX systems that straddle and influence all of the dimensions that an individual is capable of accessing. However, as the individual learns to understand that he or she may freely exist in a number of dimensions, the fear of loss of integrity is lessened, and the source of that threat ceases to be of any importance. In effect, one might say, the individual recognises his or her unconditional immortality. The existing COEX systems are reorganised, or re-constellated, around this concept which acknowledges the enlarged consciousness and its accommodation of other dimensions of experience.

In summary, Hamlet's father dies and Hamlet's most primal fears emerge and become superimposed upon, and personified by, Claudius. The COEX system constellated around these fears is activated into consciousness as the Ghost, which suggests a survival agenda that involves revenge. Hamlet, deeply introspective and already engaged in a subtle process of psychospiritual renewal, is now unwillingly propelled into a full blown reorganisation of the psyche, the conclusion of which may be transformative but whose immediate characteristics

are those of a SE. Meanwhile, Hamlet is left to manage this multidimensional crisis as best he may by a family who cannot comprehend or support him through it. Early on, side issues of 'delay' and 'revenge' serve to complicate his true understanding of this enlarging experience, and hinder his access to dimensions of fuller consciousness. Even in its early stages his experience of the process is so consuming that it fully and finally overwhelms any other concerns, save his determination to survive it by maintaining his biological, psychological and spiritual integrity. Doubtless, Hamlet's journey to England and his homecoming represent a conclusion to the more violent and traumatic aspects of the closing phase of his process. Act V reveals Hamlet as a more balanced and comfortable individual, one who has actively chosen to accept his life as it is and how it will become, rather than as a pawn in the hands of Fate as he is so often described. Finally, aware of the multidimensional possibilities of existence, Hamlet is able to put aside his fears and accept simple existence in the here and now.

Hamlet's Inner Cartography

To briefly recapitulate and clarify, Grof's work outlines very specifically the dimensions and possibilities of a spontaneous psycho-spiritual crisis, or SE. He suggests that the individual is ultimately engaged in a process of self-healing with the addition of professional support. The process of SE describes the individual as guided towards a state of engagement with the collective unconscious and it is through this meeting that a spiritual transformation occurs, which leads to healing and personality rebirth.

As a result of his losses, Hamlet spontaneously engages with the collective unconscious via a NOSC, which is characterised by his father's Ghost. Hamlet experiences the transpersonal dimension that both provides an interpretation of, and mediates access to, the unconscious realm via the perinatal interface. Consequently, what Hamlet has experienced at birth affects him at the level of the personal and the cosmic, accessed by events that directly relate to loss, and such losses impact upon biographic, transpersonal and perinatal experiences.

Biographical Readings of Hamlet

Traditionally a postnatal biographical reading of Hamlet's soliloquies would engage those parts of the psyche that can be recollected. This approach would be limited to those parts that exclusively make up an individual's unconscious, and specifically, material that has been forgotten or actively repressed. However, using Grof's (2000a) definition derived from his holotropic work, the biographical dimension has 'revealed certain aspects of the dynamics of the biographical realm that remain hidden to researchers using verbal psychotherapy' (p. 21). Firstly, this means, according to Grof, that, in Hamlet's case, alongside the usual traumas the individual faces the possibility of having to relive and integrate traumas that were primarily of a physical nature. Secondly, unlike a simple recollection, or reconstruction, the experience is rendered to the individual 'in full age regression', complete with original sensory perceptions, emotions, and physical sensations. This means, for example, that in meeting his father as a Ghost, Hamlet could be reliving important trauma from his infancy or his childhood, experiencing this trauma in a child-like body image and with the emotions, sensations and perceptions of a child or infant. However, the integration of this recollected experience is carried out by the individual at his current developmental level (Grof, 2000b). Grof's underlying 'organising principle' of the psyche would have this meeting with the deceased father located in a COEX system of memories and experience. Thus it would seem that all recollective states combine both the cognitive and the experiential elements of existence as they were conceived at the time, and then how they are newly perceived.

The important point here is that the difference between the conventional view of the unconscious in therapy and Grof's seems to be one of dimensionality. Grof claims that postnatal biography extends to other dimensions of the psyche not apparent in traditional definitions, and that barriers are dissolved. Grof focuses more precisely upon aspects of the human psyche already known to traditional therapy, and his theory, rather than being new, creatively and logically extends and changes what has gone before. However, in practice, it may appear that the traditional biographical realm does not always offer or recognise the depth of

experiential possibilities or the breadth of transbiographical opportunities available to the client.

Mapping Hamlet's Perinatal and Transpersonal Journey Through His Soliloquies

Our self-definition and our attitudes toward the world in our postnatal life are heavily contaminated by this constant reminder of the vulnerability, inadequacy, and weakness that we experienced at birth. In a sense we were born anatomically but have not caught up with this fact emotionally.

(Grof, 2000a, p. 52)

By viewing Hamlet's seven soliloquies as a perinatal doorway to the transpersonal and transformational dimensions, it is possible to explore Hamlet's inner process from the perspective of Grof's cartography of the psyche. Grof has made very clear that disturbances and experiences at any stage of the intrauterine and birth process correspond to certain generic existential conditions and psychopathological categories. In the same way that complex modes of human experience and behaviour, both 'normal' and pathological, can be understood and therapeutically influenced by relating them to these foundational structures, it is suggested here that Hamlet's behaviour and experiences can be developmentally mapped and interpreted. An analysis of Hamlet using these critical transbiographical access points to the complex dimensionality of his psyche, enables a reinterpretation of the standard postnatal, biographical descriptions of Hamlet, proposed by the earlier depth psychology readings of Jones (1949), particularly, and the oedipal theory of Freud (1915/1978), described in more detail in Chapter 5 and throughout the case analysis.

An interpretation of Hamlet in terms of perinatal, the domain of the psyche that lies beyond the recollective biographical realm and is most concerned with birth and death, accepts the possibility that Hamlet experiences a reliving of his biological birth with all of its attendant trauma. Perinatal phenomena occur in four distinct experiential patterns 'characterized by specific emotions, physical feelings, and symbolic images' (Grof, 1996b, p. 499). These four Basic Perinatal Matrices, corresponding to the four consecutive periods of biological delivery, will be considered with Hamlet's soliloquies at greater length below. However, to

summarise, they do include certain important features, which are specific to Hamlet's case as follows (Grof, 2000a):

The first is 'Primal Union with Mother' (BPM I), which describes the onset of biological delivery, mainly characterised, in Hamlet's case, by an awareness of a vital threat, the source of which is not clearly identified. There are few recollections of good experiences and feelings. Grof's subjects at this stage viewed the world in terms of negative 'bad womb' experiences, 'The persons reliving episodes of intrauterine disturbances, or 'bad womb' experiences, have a sense of dark and ominous threat and often feel they are being poisoned' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 147). Feelings of a positive 'good womb' experience were particularly characterised by sensations of total oneness with Nature. Hamlet's 'bad womb' discomfort has been triggered by his father's death and further complicated by this individual's adolescent development project.

'Cosmic engulfment', and 'No exit', or 'Hell' (BPM II), is the first clinical stage of birth, where there are uterine contractions but the cervix is closed. Hamlet at this point accesses memories of a dark and menacing world, claustrophobic, torturous, nightmarish, and, as Grof suggests, this is the religious prototype for Hell. Hamlet can see no end to the sudden meaninglessness and superficiality of life. Importantly, one must make the distinction between what is normal subjective adolescent introspection and depression, and the effects of SE on Hamlet objectively. For Hamlet there is a more persistent sense of paranoia, especially as the transpersonal dimension breaks through in the form of his dead father. Grof indicates that for some, a descent into the underworld, the realm of death, or hell, becomes a theme of the second matrix. Adopting the role of a helpless victim in this eternal and hellish landscape Hamlet must anxiously prepare to meet his nemesis.

Reliving this stage of birth is one of the worst experiences we can have during self-exploration that involves holotropic states. We feel caught in a monstrous claustrophobic nightmare, exposed to agonizing emotional and physical pain, and have a sense of utter helplessness and hopelessness.
(Grof, 2000a, pp. 41-3)

'The Death-rebirth struggle' (BPM III) is the second clinical stage of delivery, uterine contractions continue and the cervix is open, allowing for the gradual propulsion of the foetus down the birth canal. The foetus makes contact with a variety of biological materials, and experiences crushing sensations, suffocation, and struggles for survival, as the body is propelled down and out of the birth canal. Grof observes that in this matrix individuals experience a discharge of energy, sexual excitement, and an inter-play of self-destructive and destructive experiences. Hamlet, emerging painfully from his appalling encounter with the Ghost and the truth, is tremendously energised, but this power is unfocused and frenetic. His sexual arousal so clearly focused on Ophelia, becomes more controlled when he toys with the possibility of killing Claudius, and manic again when he dangerously confronts his mother. He is all self-destructive as he rushes to understand how to at once free himself from the maternal body and yet still satisfy those needs that it alone seems able to provide. In this vortex of intense energy Hamlet's needs it seems can only be satiated by violence. 'When the experience of BPM III comes closer to resolution, it becomes less violent and disturbing. The prevailing atmosphere is that of extreme passion and driving energy of intoxicating intensity' (Grof, 2000a, p. 48).

'Death and Rebirth Experience' (BPM IV), relates to the third clinical stage of delivery. Propulsion through the birth canal is complete and followed by overwhelming relief and relaxation. On cutting the umbilical cord, separation from the mother is a further completion. Exiled, Hamlet is literally and metaphorically disconnected from his mother and motherland. In adolescent development terms he is forced into achieving a full separation from the parent figures. This repositions Hamlet and allows the former original concepts, formed and imprinted by the trauma of birth, of who he was and what the world was like, to die. Grof (1998), quoting Abraham a Sancta Clara, a seventeenth-century German Augustinian monk, sums up Hamlet's new position as, 'The man who dies before he dies, does not die when he dies'. This 'dying before dying' has played an important role in all shamanic traditions. By undergoing death and rebirth in his crisis, Hamlet loses the fear of death and becomes familiar and comfortable with its experiential territory.

Suffering and agony culminate in an experience of total annihilation on all levels – physical, emotional, intellectual, moral and transcendental. This is usually referred to as ‘ego-death’; it seems to involve instantaneous destruction of all the individual’s previous reference-points.

(Grof & Grof, 1980, p. 28)

In this ego-death, which is a purely symbolic event, he is stripped of all resources and possessions save his physical self. In some this death will be experienced as fearfully as the real thing. However, ego-death is not the death of the ego since this is still required for functioning. It is simply the ultimate detachment from the old and familiar existence – the ego being destroyed in order to accommodate a more expanded self-definition. For Hamlet this self becomes symbolised by his retention and use of his father’s royal seal, which literally preserves his life. What is actually dying is Hamlet’s false self and he is able to return to Denmark as a young man in the final process of healing and transformation. However, it is important to consider Hamlet’s management of this detachment process. His fear of death is both an interior and externally focused experience. In SE detachment occurs regularly throughout the process that can be confusing and distressing.

These kinds of insights can lead to the realisation that death is the ultimate equaliser and that even if one denies its reality in life, it will eventually take its toll. During transition toward this experience, individuals must undergo a painful procedure of letting go of worldly concerns that keep them attached, thereby perpetuating suffering. The process of detachment is itself a form of death, the death of attachment.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 60)

There could be real perceptual problems in his discernment of what has a source outside of him and what is generated from within. Trying to perceive both experiences as one and the same or attempting to integrate them before understanding their difference might cause genuine problems for the healing process. There is scope here for comparing elements of mourning for the lost self in the SE experience, with continuing bonds theory (Klass et al., 1996). As we die to self we must, for a time, continue to honour and communicate with that self until it becomes integrated into the transformed self that we continue to carry with us always.

It is only when Hamlet's experience is examined through Grof's perinatal lens that one is able to view Hamlet from both the microcosmic and macrocosmic perspectives. The perinatal dimension provides a fuller description of the transpersonal experience and an explanation for its existence in the biographical dimension. As a specific non-ordinary occurrence, Hamlet and the Ghost represent all dimensions of Grof's cartography of the psyche. However the perinatal reading provides a wider context for understanding Hamlet's responses to this experience. Given that this experience is an indication that a process of spiritual emergence has already begun, it is possible to locate its original trigger in the death of Old Hamlet and the demise of Hamlet's future expectations. In locating the shadow of his father Hamlet has focused upon a major event most in need of closure. The death is located in a constellation of COEX that represent other transpersonal, biographical and perinatal events, that reach far beyond the here and now, as they spiral outward to the collective unconscious, and inward to the BPM. Consequently, in resolving Hamlet's problem, he must be allowed 'to experience all the layers of problems associated with it' (Grof, 1996b). The symptoms from this crisis of opening indicate that Hamlet has already begun to experience the world differently, and that he has embarked upon a healing process in a way that is not solely explained in terms of theories of grief and loss, and adolescent development.

Shakespeare's Mourning and Spiritual Emergency

Although Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is widely influenced by the Elizabethan Renaissance and the dominant influence of the monarchy it is also very important to briefly discuss the relationship between Shakespeare's experience of loss and the depiction of this experience in his work. In doing so, this thesis gets closer to examining the question of Shakespeare's work being directly influenced by his own psychospiritual experience of SE.

In his creation of Hamlet, Shakespeare would have drawn upon very deep personal experiences. The death of his son Hamnet at the age of eleven in 1596 (Everett, 1989) and the death of his father John in 1601 would have significantly

informed his view of the world and influenced his writing. 1601 was also a year marked by two other highly charged events for Shakespeare: the imprisonment of his patron and friend the Earl of Southampton and the writing of his first great tragedy *Hamlet*. It has been suggested that from 1601 onward Shakespeare's plays have a sad, bitter and sombre note to them. Welsh notes (2000), 'a profound change in the weight and emphasis of Shakespeare's output coincides with the death of his father; with *Hamlet* he inaugurates the series of major tragedies and problem comedies that are relieved only by the magic of the later romances' (p. 37). Furthermore, Shakespeare's loss of both his son and later his father do seem to resonate with one of the major themes of *Hamlet* which explores the father and son dyad in four relationships. Indeed as Everett notes, 'These two events perhaps became one in Shakespeare's mind, the seed from which his tragedy of a son began growing' (p. 34). This point is confirmed by Logan (2004) who notes Berryman's observation that after John and Hamnet's deaths Shakespeare wrote a 'father dominated tragedy' in *Hamlet*, which made him a 'tragic playwright by two devastating crises' (p. 6). What is perhaps more telling is Berryman's suggestion that Shakespeare is able through *Hamlet* to create 'an imagined life for his dead little son Hamnet' (p. 6). If this was so, Hamnet/Hamlet might have been given a happier ending.

Clearly, Shakespeare was not a stranger to death and according to this thesis and Grof's research his losses may have triggered a transformative experience such as spiritual emergence or emergency that has been played out specifically in *Hamlet*, and in his opus generally. Although there is no biographical evidence as to how Shakespeare might have responded to the death of his only son there can be no doubt that his grief at his son's passing influenced his work. It has been suggested that Hamnet's death occurred while his father was on tour in Kent. The cause of death is unknown, although plague and famine were rife at that time in the Stratford area. Quennell (1963) speculates that Hamnet Shakespeare was, like the Ghost of Old Hamlet in *Hamlet*, 'disfigured and diminished' over a period of time by paludal fever common to low-lying and damp areas like Stratford. As Quennell continues,

It seems obvious that Hamnet's death provoked some kind of moral crisis: for *King John* contains the opening version of a theme that runs through many of his later tragedies:

'Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man...'

The human condition is both cruel and meaningless, and, because it lacks any discernible meaning, not only dark and tragic but wearisome and insignificant. (Quennell, 1963, p. 162)

It is generally thought that *King John* dates between 1594 and 1597 which places it at the time of Hamnet's death and would certainly confirm a transformative crisis of the kind that forced Shakespeare to bear witness in its text to the human condition as 'tedious' and 'vexing'. However, Honingmann and Dover Wilson argue for the dates 1590-1591 (Campbell & Quinn, 1966). Nevertheless, it has often been suggested that Constance's speech in *King John*, beginning with 'Grief fills the room of my absent child' (Act 3, 4), reflects Shakespeare's grief at this great loss. Equally, the lines 'I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!' and 'If I were mad, I should forget my son', are deeply reminiscent of the existential tensions within Hamlet which dictate self-harm and survival and the grave responsibility to remember his deceased father. Furthermore, it is altogether possible that the final part of this speech finds its origin in Shakespeare's grief for Hamnet, and prefigures Hamlet's transpersonal experience of meeting the Ghost.

There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud
And chase the native beauty from his cheek
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him:

(*King John*, 3. 4, 83-90)

Though indirect, this is arguably the only reference to Hamnet in any of Shakespeare's written works.

Freud too, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), recognises the significance of Shakespeare's losses and by inference connects Hamnet with Hamlet, when he states 'It is known, too, that Shakespeare's son, who died in childhood, bore the name of Hamnet which is identical with Hamlet' (Wasserman, 2004, p. 298).

However, Hamnet, it is generally assumed, was probably named after his

godfather, the baker Hamnet Sadler who was William Shakespeare's lifelong friend. What is certain is that Shakespeare did not name his Danish prince Hamlet after his son; instead, he took the name for the title character of Hamlet from the original literary source for the play. Amleth, Prince of Jutland chronicled by Saxo Grammaticus towards the end of the 12th century, is itself based upon the true story of the Danish prince who after the murder of his father by his uncle feigns idiocy in order to avoid being murdered himself. After a period of exile and with the support of his mother he brutally destroys the entire court and his usurping uncle King Feng with a devastating fire and is subsequently elected ruler of Jutland. Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques*, translated as *The History of Hamblet* (1608), not only provided the source of the plot and the name of the tragic hero but according to Barton (Spencer, 1980), a thoroughly misogynistic reading of the women's roles which may have subsequently coloured Shakespeare's characterisation in his version of this gory revenge saga.

Again Shakespeare's biography reveals less than his actual writing at the time of his father's death in September 1601. Welsh contends that *Hamlet* more than any 'other play by Shakespeare appears to be this egocentric in design' suggesting that in some degree Hamlet's ego belongs to Shakespeare himself (p. 36) a point he takes up from Freud. Welsh's (2000) thesis is that Hamlet's contemplation of revenge and suicide are ways of managing his own losses as a form of mourning. He contends 'That the contemplation of revenge may finally suffice for mourning... suggested in *Hamlet* by the way the action devolves upon chance' (p. 37). He continues that,

Certainly it is neither foolish nor improper to judge that *Hamlet* was in part a response to the death or impending death of his own father. That John Shakespeare was buried on 8 September 1601 is one of the few facts we possess about the playwright's family, and that date may be months or more after the first production of the play. But one may become aware, that from apparent illness or the concern of other in the family, that a parent is dying. The death of his only son Hamnet five years earlier would have intensified Shakespeare's feelings about his father's death and made him still more mindful of his own death to come.
(Welsh, 2000, p. 36-7)

It is certain as Grof suggests that loss, particularly from bereavement, exercises an individual's existential concerns and it is possible that Hamlet is a means of

exploring or even purging Shakespeare's own very real psychospiritual crisis. Welsh also notes that A. A. Jack's (1950, pp. 143-155) commentary *Young Hamlet* on the apparent disparity between Hamlet's youth in Act I and the thirty years assigned to him in Act V may be more than coincidental, as Shakespeare was thirty-two when Hamnet died at eleven. He further suggests that, like Dickens, Shakespeare's greatest and darkest work was completed after the death of his father.

Freud (1900) has famously noted that in *Hamlet* the audience is confronted with 'the poet's own psychology' (p. 7). Freud observes that following the deaths of both his father and his son, Shakespeare was made more vulnerable to his own 'childish' feelings towards his father and presumably to his needs as a father. He is very clear about the psychological effects on Shakespeare and suggests that these 'neurotic symptoms' influence the creative process of the play inferring a therapeutic process for the creator in its creation. Freud cites *Hamlet* as a play that deals with the subject of the relations between a son and his parents and *Macbeth*, written subsequently, as following a theme of childlessness. Thus the play, like a dream, is an expression or working through of neurotic symptoms and needs.

Just as all neurotic symptoms, like dreams themselves, are capable of hyper-interpretation, and even require such hyper-interpretation before they become perfectly intelligible, so every genuine poetical creation must have proceeded from more than one motive, more than one impulse in the mind of the poet, and must admit of more than one interpretation.

(Freud, 1900, p. 7)

Freud's contribution to this thesis is discussed in greater detail in the section, 'A Transpersonal Conclusion to Hamlet's Spiritual Emergency' in Chapter 9.

The question of whether Shakespeare's accumulated losses could have helped to ready his psyche for the transformation of spiritual emergence or SE can be no more than speculation according to what is known biographically. However, to follow Freud's reasoning and the evidence presented from Shakespeare's creative work, there is evidence to suggest that his genius is supported by an

understanding or an experience of transpersonal phenomena which goes beyond the simple and random inclusion of stage devices.

Belief in transpersonal phenomena was widespread in Elizabethan England. James I, Shakespeare's most significant patron, wrote a tract on the nature and reality of witches. However, as he was aware that such beliefs were popular it could be argued that he cynically used the supernatural as a device to advance or embellish his plots and to please his patron and his audience. Transpersonal matters were hotly debated in Shakespeare's time and the belief in ghosts owes much to Renaissance daemonological traditions and beliefs (Nighan, 2004) and the Elizabethan cosmological concepts of 'microcosm' and 'macrocosm' (Tillyard, 1975). Belief in ghosts ranged between scepticism and total belief in supernatural forces and this is mirrored in Shakespeare's plays. The argument is presented in *Henry IV, Part One* (1597), where there is a heated argument between Glendower, who believes that he can 'call spirits from the vasty deep,' and indulges in 'deep experiments' and Hotspur, who regards such talk as 'skimble-skamble stuff' (3.1.52, 48,150). In *Hamlet* (1601), the argument is repeated when Horatio initially and sceptically suspects the Ghost as originating from Marcellus' fantasy. In seeking to explain the Ghost, Horatio cites the transpersonal phenomena that occurred before Julius Caesar's death in direct reference to Shakespeare's play of the same name written the previous year that also makes reference to these events. Shakespeare may or may not have believed in transpersonal phenomena but there is no doubt that they strongly feature in his plays coincidentally within and subsequent to the period of his bereavements.

Thus transpersonal concerns are a recurring aspect in many of Shakespeare's plays. In the early *Richard III* (1592), it is a conscience-ridden hallucination, whereas in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (1605), the supernatural is an integral and substantial part of the structure of the plot (Greenblatt, 2001). In *Hamlet* a ghost is seen on three occasions and this force hovers darkly over a dissolute Denmark gone to Hell. In *Macbeth* a floating dagger, witches, and prophetic apparitions supplement Banquo's jeering and bloody phantom. The transpersonal realm of experience therefore provides a catalyst for action, an insight into character, and augments the impact of many key scenes.

Significantly, Shakespeare's early comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) encompasses three worlds or dimensions. Two of Grof's cartography of the psyche are featured here as the biographical everyday world of the rude mechanicals and the romantic world of the aristocratic lovers, and the transpersonal fairy world of Titania, Oberon and Puck, later reincarnated as Ariel in the later romance *The Tempest* (1610). In this *Dream* reality is suspended to make way for an influx of transpersonal characters whose powers are supernormal. The perinatal dimension is activated as all three worlds become intertwined, and in the extraordinarily poetic nature of the language and its values during the course of the play. The transpersonal world dominates the others but as both the lovers and the mechanicals engage with the 'children of Pan' they are literally and metaphorically transformed by their experience. Finally, the date for this play indicates that it was most certainly written by Shakespeare at the time of his son's illness and his death. It may or may not be coincidental that the play's content, which widely interprets the relationship between consensus reality, earthly power and transpersonal power, also explores notions of loss and it illustrates that such encounters are ultimately redeeming and positively transforming. It might be argued that Shakespeare was writing for his audience alone but the evidence generally indicates that the playwright significantly explores his own experiences through his plays written at the time of his major losses and that they may reveal and illustrate his experience of spiritual emergence or SE.

This chapter has been concerned to prepare the reader for the next part of this thesis by delineating the holotropic dimensions that comprise Hamlet and his creator's biographical, transpersonal and perinatal journey. Part Two provides a full holotropic analysis of this journey beginning with, in Chapter 5, a review of the literature pertaining to Shakespeare's *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*, a discussion that considers Hamlet's soliloquies as a gateway to his inner experience, and an introduction to him as an adolescent counselling client.

PART TWO

HAMLET'S TRANSFORMATION: A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysing Hamlet

What needs to be emphasized here is that these collective or trans-spatial experiences are not simply temporary states but rather are profound encounters with the being one always is. These glimpses awaken us to the larger being we are at this and every moment. After the shock wears off that contact with such collective fields of awareness is possible, the greater shock settles in when we realize that this contact is taking place continuously beneath our conscious awareness. The interlaced quality of our existence may move in and out of our attention, but it never ceases for a moment to be our functioning reality. (Bache, 2000, p. 12)

Introduction

What is proposed in this chapter is that both conventional psychoanalytic readings and the readings of literary criticism when considered independently or together may only partially illuminate Hamlet's experiences and those of adolescents. It is suggested here that by extending their synthesis by the addition of Grof's holotropic theory, a new reading will emerge. This original understanding of Hamlet as a mimetic model for adolescence dismisses the concept of *tabula rosa*, and redefines the origins of knowledge admitting other dimensions of human experience. This chapter is concerned with the roles played by psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism in the analysis and illumination of Hamlet's character and the function of Hamlet's soliloquies, concluding with a brief discussion which places Hamlet in his context as an adolescent character primarily preoccupied with loss. The chapter provides the introduction to an in-depth analysis of Hamlet that follows in subsequent chapters.

The Psychoanalysts

Although the use of Hamlet as a case study does not require the researcher to engage fully with the variety and richness of English Shakespeare scholarship and criticism, because of the nature of the text, there are a number of powerful voices that should be engaged in the thesis. Shakespeare scholarship in general and analysis in particular, has a distinguished pedigree, and much of current psychoanalytic theory follows, it could be argued, in this philosophical-theoretical tradition. Typically, psychoanalytic literary criticism, much like developmental theory, depends upon the interpretation or style of the school of psychoanalysis employed on the text and the nature of the text. It is interesting to note that Kiell's (1982, in Holland, 1998) *Psychoanalysis, Psychology, and Literature: A Bibliography* typically refers to 20,000 items of criticism which, as the title suggests, rely upon the application of psychoanalytic and psychological concepts and methodology to the study and analysis of works of literature. In this manner psychoanalysis has served to illuminate English literature by its support of literary criticism and 'character analyses'.

With the publication of *The Studies on Hysteria* (1895), psychoanalytic theory has, so Kavanaugh (2002) contends, modelled its understanding and conceptualisation of behaviours considered to be pathological after the traumatic neuroses. The acceptance of the traumatic neuroses as a conceptual model of theoretical truth in analytic work also included the acceptance of the largely unquestioned philosophical underpinnings of this theory of symptomatology, pathology, and aetiology that subsequently guides the ways on which practitioners listen, formulate, and respond during an analytic session. The philosophical underpinnings of Freud and Breuer's conceptualisation presume a linearity of absolute and categorical time in which traumatising archaic events of the past were understood to have occurred at specific points in time. Alongside this presumed linearization of time and causality, the world was also understood to be continuous and orderly with its events interrelated and linear in organisation, universal in its laws, and providing an objective frame of reference existing independently of the observer. All knowledge in and about the world was gained by the individual through experiences with people and events (Slife,

1993). Thus this 'mind independent' reality of the world was gradually acquired and internalised as was that which constitutes its conceptualization of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Much of current psychoanalytic theory follows in this philosophical-theoretical tradition and holds that the basic motive of pathological behaviour is that the individual is attempting to repeat the faulty attunement of childhood in order to master, or to attempt to master through repetition, a particular traumatic event or series of events that impacted on him or her in early life. Alternatively, the individual's current pathological behaviour is interpreted as the consequence of arrest at critical developmental junctures or stages because of certain traumatic events having occurred at that time. In the therapist's mind, behaviours considered to be pathological are viewed as a consequence of such developmental arrest or developmental anomaly due to objective, real, live people and events which impacted so profoundly and dramatically long ago in childhood (Kavanaugh, 1992).

Freud's diagnosis of Hamlet, made in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) was that he had an Oedipus complex. The argument was developed in much more detail by the psychoanalyst Ernest Jones, whose revised findings were published in his book *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949). In essence, Hamlet is unable to murder Claudius because he unconsciously represents the embodiment of Hamlet's oedipal fantasy. For Hamlet to kill Claudius is like killing the image of himself. Jones also contributes to this work's argument by stating that Hamlet's 'psychoneurosis' is both common and driven by the "'unconscious" part of the mind' (p. 69), superficially sharing characteristics with SE.

The psychoanalytic reading, as its counterpart in the domain of English literature, depends therefore upon the naïve assumption that the character of Hamlet has a greater inner authenticity, a mimesis, than is apparent in performance and that the play will yield itself up as a psychiatric document. Armstrong argues that tragedy has a cultural function much in common with psychoanalysis, and that Freud's theory is indebted to the work of Shakespeare,

This model of historical development [artistic creation and Aristotelian 'catharsis'] plainly parallels the psychoanalytic view of the maturation of the individual, who in later life retains in unconscious form traces of those traumas which had most impact in childhood; and so, too, tragedy's social value parallels the individual need for psychoanalysis: both offer a form of psychic hygiene in which the repressed can be gratified safely and without threat to either the social order or the individual ego.

(Armstrong, 2001, p. 29)

From Armstrong's perspective Freud's analysis provides the same social service as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Similarly, this study of *Hamlet* seeks to reveal Hamlet as a suitable case with which to illuminate SE.

In the current study use of conventional psychoanalytic readings of Hamlet is limited – limited by their biographical nature and the fact that they locate agency within self (Eissler, 1971; Jones, 1949; King, 1982; Paris, 1991). Such readings provide an excellent starting point for the study of Hamlet and adolescents generally but the psychoanalytic model is not broad enough to contain or fully explain other dimensions of human experience. Although the interiorised self of Hamlet that the play projects provides a model completely compatible with the methodology of self-disclosure found in contemporary psychotherapy and analysis, it tends to be biographical in nature which, while this contains the isolated, constantly absorbed, and self-analysing figure of Hamlet, cannot fully explain the dimensionality of his experience beyond the functioning of self in relation to the external world. Thus, psychoanalytic readings in revealing the individual then go on to persuasively and powerfully mediate what is 'normal' for that individual, in generic terms, in order to determine his or her pathology. Thus with its emphasis upon the client's interiority, such readings are illuminating but can be equally reductive.

Significantly, the sharp instrument of psychoanalysis, in exposing the interiority of Hamlet must strive to contain it by fully explaining it in psychological terms. However, the assumption that Hamlet can be fully understood in this way presumes a similarity between current psychoanalytic theory and the psychological in Shakespeare's tragedy that, according to Greenblatt (2001), 'is constructed almost entirely out of the theological, and specifically out of the issue

of remembrance that lay at the heart of the crucial early-sixteenth-century debate about Purgatory' (p. 229). Consequently, such an exclusive enterprise must fail to fully recognise the theological and spiritual dimensions of an individual's existence. Lesser (1955/1977), in a critique of the psychoanalytic approach to *Hamlet*, exemplified by Freud and Jones, indicates that their concern to focus upon the psychology of Hamlet's character, inferring the unconscious sources of emotion, has not done justice to the aesthetic aspects of religious, cultural and moral values in the play (p. 27). He further suggests that psychoanalysis allies itself to more conservative modes of thinking and the maintenance of the *status quo*. This is supported by the notion that Hamlet's resistance to authority is often linked by psychoanalysis to infantile conflicts. Thus he implies that psychoanalytic commentators have a tendency to prejudge, according to their theoretical model, Hamlet's emotions as originating in the unresolved, repressed, and unconscious desires of childhood and that those influences must become problematic as he develops. Certainly Freud and Jones have presumed Hamlet's aetiology and therefore the outcomes. This is a process of reasoning and analysis that Kavanaugh (2002) describes as 'retrospective *genetic reconstructions* in analysis of what *must have happened* to have resulted in the individual's present behaviours by the use of the concept of 'linearization of time moving from present to past' (p. 3).

This philosophical framework of objectivism tends to ignore all knowledge that did not originate or exist in the external world 'independent of the individual'. Within this definition Grof's extension of the psyche by the inclusion of the perinatal dimension becomes quite feasible, accepting the ability of the foetus to recognise its own birth process. However, from the psychoanalytic position the infant is conceptually created as having been born into the world as a blank slate. Theoretically, then, its development is essentially and subsequently shaped, moulded, and determined by the impact of independently existing real objects, people, and events. Any psychoanalysis of Hamlet assumes that all that becomes internal for him in his life is understood as having been external at an earlier time subsequent to his birth.

Kavanaugh (2002) further observes that a kind of socio-psychological determinism in which primacy lies with environmental factors has guided modernistic systems of psychoanalytic thinking and theorising. In its primacy the external world, because it has an objective temporal priority, organises experiences. Current symptoms are then conceptualised as being disguised representations of traumatic past events occurring in the present, whose connection is to actual people and events having occurred in one's past life. Consequently, the mind must be viewed as a product of the environment with internal mental representations of self and other in some way related to, if not actual reflections of, the actual traumatising people and events. Thus, Kavanaugh concludes, in this philosophical context, the myth of psychoanalysis as a natural science of the mind is perpetuated.

The following brief discussion of the views of some commentators is by no means exhaustive from the rich pantheon of more recent psychoanalytical literature available to the writer on the subject of Hamlet and *Hamlet*. They provide a broad sweep across a spectrum of successful syntheses of Freudian psychoanalysis with other aspects of psychoanalytic and developmental theory. What they all have in common is the theoretical understanding that there is a relationship between early personality development and current behaviours that may be considered to be pathological - a conceptual linearization of time moving from past to present (Kavanaugh, 2000). They are included as examples because they profoundly inform the biographical readings of Hamlet's soliloquies in this particular thesis. From their socio-psychological deterministic perspective their observations on Hamlet represent a small and very recent part of a powerfully influential tradition.

Eissler (1971) has conducted a thorough inquiry from a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective and discusses Hamlet's haunting by, and final incorporation of, the image of a weak, selfish, and defeated father 'superego'. He proposes that it is only when Hamlet's interior response to feelings and emotions is stabilised, and he has achieved full ego development, that he is able to dismiss the father-image and assert his true self. Byles (1994) supports Eissler's contention in a detailed analysis on the sources, formation, and function of the superego in Hamlet. King

(1982) further develops Freud's oedipal position by using Erikson's development theory as it particularly relates to adolescent 'identity confusion'. It is one of the few examples of Hamlet's age being noted as a factor in his development. In his contention that Hamlet moves not towards meaninglessness but towards meaning in the course of the play 'from the febrile irresolution of "To be or not to be" to the calm recieption of "Let be"' (p. 104), Calderwood (1983) provides a more philosophical argument and relates it to the psychology of Hamlet's role-playing and to the play's guiding structure.

Stockholder's (1987) position although particularly concerned with love and death in *Hamlet*, directs the reader to the transpersonal dimensions of Hamlet's introspective dream life. Stockholder's concern with Hamlet's dreams and unconscious fantasies links the work of Freud with Jung. There is an acknowledgement of Shakespeare's confrontation of the oedipal struggle particularly in regard to heterosexual love and Hamlet's ambivalent sexuality towards his mother, which he reclaims in death. However, Stockholder proposes that the further the figure of Hamlet is absorbed by the drama, the more complete he becomes in his complexity, and his modern self-considering intellectual detachment. In contrast, Horwich (1988) deals with Hamlet's alienation in terms of his existential dilemma.

Paris (1991) examines Hamlet's character from his synthesis of Horney's (1950) 'self psychology' theory and his own scholarly understanding of English literature and psychology. He concludes that, according to Horney's theory, Hamlet is suffering from an unhealthy 'self-alienation' that can only be resolved by his 'self-realisation'. Adelman's (1992) main concern is the exploration of the fantasy of maternal origins in Hamlet. She reframes the play's conventional oedipal material unconventionally as one in which 'the chief object of contention has been removed' (p. 11). Thus the oedipal triangle is one son and two fathers, and not of a son and his parents. Here the defining act of manhood for Hamlet and his task, according to Adelman, is his progress towards choosing between two fathers. Unlike Eissler, she proposes that Hamlet chooses or repossesses Old Hamlet, finally and satisfactorily making his biological father's will his own.

Russell (1995) views Death as Hamlet's weapon against the tyrannical authority of paternal injustice and subordination as he becomes assimilated into the paternal ideal. In a reframe of Freud's argument, Hamlet in a narcissistic fantasy of death, sends his uncle to join his mother to spite his father, and destroy himself. Russell refutes the irrationalist arguments of Eissler and Mack and contends that Hamlet has not changed to the degree necessary to explain or acquire his redemption. Murray (1996) adopts Skinner's behaviourist model as a tool to examine Hamlet and especially concerns himself with the source of his madness, his thinking and his actions.

Lee (2000) applies the personal construct theory of the humanist, constructivist, psychologist Kelly (1955) to examine Hamlet's personality in his changing existence in the two worlds of the past and the future. Armstrong (2000) investigates the work of Lacanian psychoanalysis by invoking the 'gaze behind', a look 'on the part of 'another in Hamlet. In his study he seeks to identify the role of the visual in ego-identifications which constitute the history of Hamlet. Armstrong (2001) goes on to consider '*the interior nature* of human existence' in the relationship between psychoanalysis and Shakespeare. This is, perhaps, a fitting closure to a brief review of a discipline that revels in the self-reflected analysis of its self.

Hamlet's Soliloquies: The Scholars

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to include a fuller review of Shakespeare scholarship since the seventeenth century. Particularly in the biographical readings, the ideas of just a few of the eminent scholars in the field will be cited to which the researcher is most indebted. It is appropriate, at this point, to single out those commentators who have contributed significantly to the researcher's specific understanding of Hamlet through his soliloquies.

Scholars of Hamlet's soliloquies such as Clemen (1987) confirm the close similarity between the client verbatim of counselling and psychoanalysis, and the

soliloquy. Ellis-Fermor (1964) suggests that Hamlet's soliloquies both deepen understanding of the character and reveal his mind's processes. Kerrigan (1994) summarises their function as sharing 'a thought-world with the audience' (p. 8). Although Hamlet's 'thought-world' has been comprehensively studied there is no evidence in the literature to show that it has been submitted to a full holotropic reading, a comprehensive adolescent grief and loss reading, or one in which his spiritual development specifically as an adolescent has been fully explored.

Of the few scholars who have written specifically about Hamlet's soliloquies, Alex Newell's (1991) *The Soliloquies in Hamlet: The Structural Design* is the best informed and comprehensive. Newell's work provides a very strong platform from which to observe Hamlet's journey through the play. In his methodology he has attempted to avoid imposing general themes from the play upon a specific instance of self-reflection in an individual soliloquy, a convention illustrated by Knights. Newell is impressed with the soliloquies as a coherent structural system and their 'intense dramatization of the human mind as the innermost realm of consciousness' (p. 18). He sees their function as projecting forceful images of the mind itself. Enlarging his argument, begun with Knights, Newell addresses Freudian analysis as too often mistaking a particular facet of what is seen in Hamlet's character as a refraction of the comprehensive view. His criticism of Freudians particularly reinforces the views expressed in an earlier section about the reductive nature of this kind of approach if it fails to thoroughly consider all of the integral aspects and contexts of an individual's experience. In other words, the sum of the parts is often greater and not smaller than the whole. It is hoped that, based upon Newell's conviction that a 'comprehensive contextual approach' is critical to a full understanding of the soliloquies, that he would not judge this particular work too harshly. Newell concludes, in a rejoinder to Jenkins' argument that to render a non-contextual reading is quite valid, 'A "strict reading" requires one to see the speech as a part of the action, not apart from it' (p. 23).

Newell's contention that Hamlet is preoccupied with his fated and unavoidable role as a revenger, and that it is his tragedy that the passion of the role finally overcomes his mind, is arguable in the face of a SE experience. In arguing that there is a universal tendency to ignore Hamlet's violent side and to favour his

staggering intellect, Newell assumes that once the two are equably squared up with one another, the passion of the revenger must be stronger and ultimately uncontrollable. Nevertheless, it is by no means certain that Hamlet's mind is overcome either by passion or anything else, or proven that he does not have control over his emotions. Indeed, Kellyan psychologist Lee (2000) argues that not only does he believe Hamlet to be 'unemotional in a broad sense' but that 'emotion', like 'action', and 'delay' are what he calls 'focus of convenience' in assisting a particular literary approach or theory. Thus, he might argue that Newell's belief in the power of Hamlet's passion is simply a focus of convenience which neither resolves Hamlet's character or reveals his motives as he, in the words of Kelly, goes 'about his business of being a person' (Lee, 2001, p. 207). However, what Newell and the writer acknowledge and agree upon is that Hamlet's alienation from the world suggests a role 'within the larger mysterious universe' triggered by the appearance of the Ghost (Newell, p. 28). Although Newell's arguments are very persuasive it might alternatively be suggested that Hamlet's 'feigned madness' has convinced even the commentator, and that what Newell perceives as madness is as Claudius surmises 'Was not like madness – there's something in his soul, / O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,' (3.1.67-8). Indeed, Newell does suggest earlier on in his work that Hamlet's 'antic disposition' and the soliloquies are 'a kind of therapeutic safety valve' for his unspeakable and publicly repressed emotions (p. 36).

It is in the revelation of Hamlet's 'soul' that this thesis is particularly indebted to Newell. His appraisal and understanding of how the soliloquies are used in the structural design of *Hamlet* to magnify and interpret Hamlet's isolation and his representation as 'a man divinely made with large discourse and godlike reason' is scholarly and painstaking. In SE the individual experiences a challenge to his reason and consequently a rare perception that renders him isolated. As Clemen (1987) confirms it is not by chance that characters in Shakespeare's tragedies like Hamlet are given the soliloquies because their 'inner loneliness is combined with the compulsion to conceal their thoughts from those around them' (p. 181). For Newell (1991) the soliloquies 'render Hamlet's sense of isolation and alienation in the world of Claudius' Denmark', indeed, he suggests the soliloquies are increased in number subsequent to seeing the Ghost as 'his isolation

becomes more acute and complicated' (p. 27). The more Hamlet is forced to 'hold my tongue' the more he must resort to the soliloquy as a means of expressing an ongoing inner dialogue.

Hamlet's unbalanced mind, therefore, rather than 'madness', is a direct indication of his attempts to rebalance his newly emerging and enhanced perceptions of the world as he wrestles with his SE. Fermor (1964) notes that Hamlet's soliloquies perform the dual functions of deepening our understanding revealing 'what is at work in his mind' while at the same time revealing the mind's process through the sequence and form of speech (p. 107). Lee (2000) has suggested that the soliloquies provide the equivalent to a 'representative test', which aids our understanding of Hamlet's ability and limitations in re-establishing predictive control of the world around him to a meaningful degree. The necessary outcome of the reconstruction of his beliefs and value systems after engaging with the Ghost, Lee predicts, is unsuccessful (pp. 179-80). However, the end of Act IV sees the end of Hamlet's soliloquies and the test is rendered inconclusive. Certainly, the one point that all scholars can agree on is that Act V reveals a subtly transformed Hamlet who is sane in appearance, controlled in his reason, and conscious of the transpersonal dimension. The abrupt termination of the soliloquies may signal Hamlet's deliberate internalisation of all previously shared material and reasoning. It may also be assumed that Hamlet no longer requires or will no longer use the soliloquies as a safety valve and is either repressing or has fully integrated both reason and passion.

The function of the soliloquies is, as Kerrigan (1994) indicates, in sharing a thought-world with the audience, 'provides them with a precise rationale...the form in which a candor impossible in public will be indulged.' (p. 8). Clemen (1987) adds that the use of the language of that 'thought-world' is couched in a 'psychophysical blend' of abstract and concrete conceptual language that links the inner with the outer vision (p. 181). Certainly, Newell in citing Arnold's lucid comment that the soliloquies are 'the dialogue of the mind with itself' (p. 26) seems to acknowledge the possibility and significance that a further function might be as an inter-dimensional dialogue of the mind. A reframe of Arnold's comment in the context of this work might read Hamlet's soliloquies as a

dialogue of the psyche with its biographical, transpersonal and perinatal dimensions, as the individual engages with the collective consciousness of the transcendent. As Clemen (1987) concludes, 'when we listen to one of the great soliloquies it is as if we are being given access to a different plane, a new dimension' (p. 189).

Hamlet Prince of Denmark: Introducing Hamlet

Scholars the world over have very specific points of view about Hamlet's experience of loss as a motivational device, how his character is shaped subsequently and the outcome of these transformational changes. In this section it is proposed that the key to understanding Hamlet's inner experience is through his self-revealing soliloquies.

Left alone after the exit of the court Hamlet discloses his isolation, vulnerability, and deep despair. For the first time he has the opportunity to reveal the many facets of his role and the intimate relationship he will develop with his audience. The soliloquies allow Hamlet to externalise both internal process and repressed material (Maher, 1992). This convention provides Hamlet with an opportunity to dialogue with self. Calderwood (1983, p. 157) proposes that Hamlet converts 'the diachronic subjective utterance', the flow of the ego, into 'synchronic objectivity' by positioning himself outside by adding to the text of the soliloquy a metatext focused upon self-criticism and questioning. It is proposed here that the metatext described by Calderwood is in fact the process of SE and that Hamlet is in fact positioned inside the process looking out at the world of consensus reality. Rather than presenting his audience with a division of selves and a division of texts, as Calderwood suggests, the spontaneous nature of Hamlet's words is recovered, expressing not just conclusions of thought but the thought themselves, because he is witness and narrator to both internal and an external dimensions of reality. Hamlet painfully leads us into experiences in the past and the here and now, the better to understand his feelings and character. Unable to fully reconstruct his childhood (Paris, 1991), we are able to infer from evidence in the text the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of life that Hamlet holds as a late

adolescent, that have been undermined by the events following the death of his father.

Just prior to his first soliloquy, Hamlet, in an altercation with his mother, responds to her comments about his grief and mourning with a tirade on the subject of human emotions in which he spells out 'like a psychosomaticist' (Eissler 1971, p. 98) the physiological manifestations of grief and sorrow. Mercer (1987, p. 145) summarises this basic point by suggesting that Hamlet's distrust of the show of grief as a certain sign of true sorrow, is ironically also its only sign; 'the reality lies beyond all shows, all signs'. Eissler (1971) contends that Hamlet's general doubt regarding human emotions might also, it could be inferred, be extended to his own emotions. Certainly, the metatext of SE supports Hamlet's conscious and unconscious suspicions that both people and their emotions are not what they 'seem', and raises the possibility that there is more than one alternative reality and therefore more than one answer to the meaning of existence.

Hamlet's most recent experience of loss leads him to question everything and reinforces his belief that if things can change then they can no longer be relied upon to be the same. Hamlet is clearly disturbed by both his outward change of circumstances and the precipitated inner change into which he is thrown headlong. Accepting the natural and necessary losses of adolescence, Hamlet is subjected to forces over which he appears to have no control and which dominate his search for meaning. He is absolutely overwhelmed by his losses, compounded by an already vulnerable adolescent state of dissatisfaction with self and others. In other words, the trauma of his father's death has induced a regression that not only means a renewal of infantile-genital and oedipal conflicts but a loss of 'competence' (Erikson, 1982, p. 75) in which he can no longer verify or master 'factuality' or share others' 'actuality'. Similarly, the very nature and process of the adolescent development project might be restated in terms of the process involved for an individual at the onset of SE;

The individual begins to inquire into the origin and the purpose of life; to ask what is the reason for so many things he formerly took for granted; to question, for instance, the meaning of his own sufferings and those of

others, and what justification there may be for so many inequalities in the destinies of men. (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 32)

The soliloquies provide opportunities for Hamlet to process his experience without necessarily committing himself to a particular course of action, and to creatively examine his position and relationships. This would be consistent with Erikson's (1982, p. 75) adolescent 'psychosocial moratorium', a period of sexual and cognitive maturation and a sanctioned postponement of definite commitment. Similarly, Marcia (1966,1980, in McAdams, 1988, p. 16) suggests that the process of identity formation in adolescence and young adulthood follows a two-step sequence: 'exploration' where the adolescent will have provisionally broken from the past, and the second step 'commitment', where he discovers a self-defining niche in an adult world where he is now fully integrated.

However, sustaining a level of 'identity confusion' prompted by his grief and loss, Hamlet is particularly anxious to address existential issues of 'being and value' (Washburn, 1994, p. 174). This will be problematic if he is unable to use his peers to reflect his being and value, and if he fails to engage with his parents in a way that provides positive reflections. He certainly presents as profoundly isolated, contentious and unhappy. The self-psychologist Horney (1950, pp. 157-8) regards 'healthy' human development as a process of 'self-realization' and 'unhealthy' as a process of 'self-alienation', which begins as a defence against basic anxiety. She contends that self-alienation springs from feelings of isolation, helplessness, fear and hostility. Developed further, this sense of alienation derives from the struggle Hamlet has in initially managing his existence in more than one reality, and a perception that others will be unable to understand what is happening to him. It is Hamlet's experience of the 'dark night of the soul'. Most certainly the circumstances of Old Hamlet's death have created a void in his life. The unexpected nature of the death and his mother's marriage to his uncle has added to his sense of inadequacy, and lack of control further isolates him. He is fearful of the future, angry at the speed of events, and is unable to openly voice his true feelings. To resolve issues of self-alienation counselling should not only support Hamlet to fulfil frustrated and highly intensified needs for safety, love and belonging, and self-esteem, but also provide important information about his SE.

By providing a 'holding environment' (Moddell, 1976, in Pollack & Levant, 1998, p. 154) within the therapeutic relationship, designed to reduce anxiety, and provide a safe outlet for hostility and self object transference (Wolf, 1999, p. 9), and to supply strategies for the individual to use which will enhance and bring to completion the emergence process (Grof & Grof, 1990), the counsellor helps the individual to self actualise.

Hamlet presents as a very 'knowing' and 'aware' (Bloom, 1998, p. 404) individual and it is convincingly argued that his cognitive capacity is inspired by a full understanding of his emotions. However, it is equally true that there is a dislocation between what he consciously believes he feels and what in actuality he may consciously feel. His doubting of emotions (Eissler, 1971; Erikson, 1977) as real signals of distress in others may mean that Hamlet has not achieved enough affect maturation to make his own emotions useful as signals to himself (Krystal, 1988).

In the literature the condition of 'alexithymia' is variously described as an inability 'to know, recognise or express emotions' (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999, p. 192): an individual experiences 'an absence of structure and representable experience' in the region of the self (Krystal 1988, p. 264), and the repression of 'shameful, vulnerable emotions which it is too unmanly to express directly' (Levant, 1998, p. 44). It is suggested that this is a traditional way in which men deal with their emotional life (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999; Pollack, 1998), and that if emotions cannot be recognised or handled appropriately they are either stored in the body in stress-related illnesses, or unconsciously manifested in unhealthy behaviours. Krystal (1988) suggests that, *in extremis*, alexithymia is a serious obstacle to Hamlet's capacity to utilise counselling and particularly psychoanalytic psychotherapy. In short, if Hamlet is alexithymic he will be socialised to channel his natural male emotionality into either an action orientated variant of empathy (Levant, 1998), or if he cannot readily sense feelings and put them into words, channel his vulnerable feelings into anger, and his caring feelings into sexuality. What is described as normal alexithymia in men is possibly an initial characteristic of SE for both males and females but if it continues it must be regarded as a negative influence, representing resistance to the process.

Equally, it may also be seen as a characteristic of how men particularly are perceived to grieve, which is discussed further in Chapter 13.

Reviewing the literature particularly related to adolescent development and loss, Dickinson (2000), states that the challenges of adapting to the transitions and changes that occur during the adolescent years may stretch some young people beyond their capacities to cope. Significant change and loss, especially when it is choiceless, added to normal developmental, cognitive and psychosocial changes associated with adolescence, can leave some young people feeling fragile, helpless, lonely and confused, out of control and disempowered. Whilst Hamlet may retain his position in the social hierarchy as a prince of the realm it is questionable whether this any longer has any significance for him. He regards himself as a prisoner in Denmark and Denmark itself is a place where he mourns.

Mourning is a key adolescent developmental task (Krystal, 1988) that is associated with giving up attachments to infantile and childhood self, and object, representations (Erikson, 1987). Hamlet has been forced to regress, to revisit this developmental stage when his father dies, but is unable to carry out these tasks so analogously represented in normal development. This regression, rather than being representative of a blocked process is internally reactivated. Instead it becomes regression in the service of development, the internalised transformation through SE.

The following chapters describe Hamlet's experience in terms of a holotropic state of consciousness. The seven soliloquies are used to demonstrate an understanding and explanation of Hamlet in all three of the domains found in Grof's extended cartography of the psyche. The analysis assumes that Hamlet, through his SE, is able to fully experience a holotropic state of consciousness. As all aspects of Grof's psyche for each complex individual overlap and overlay one another, and are unified by the COEX systems, the following readings are offered under their separate categories to show how the components may be considered as independent parts of a more homogenous whole. It is also

understood that although Grof does not necessarily indicate BPM in a stage proces, Hamlet's experiences may be presented chronologically to the reader.

CHAPTER SIX

WHO'S THERE? THE HAMLET WITHIN *HAMLET*

Introduction

In the next three chapters Hamlet's seven soliloquies are presented for analysis chronologically, and each is accompanied by conventional psychoanalytic and literary readings under the 'Biographical' sections and then extended by independent holotropic analyses of the 'transpersonal' and 'perinatal' dimensions of Hamlet's experiences. This chapter analyses the first two soliloquies which appear in Act I of the play. The first soliloquy illustrates some pre-episode functioning and a transition stage between Grof's first Basic Perinatal Matrix (BPM) and his second BPM. The second soliloquy, firmly embedded in BPM II, significantly illustrates Grof's characteristics of this experience.

Soliloquy One (1.2.129-149)

O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew, (130)
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this,
But two months dead, nay not so much, not two,
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother, (140)
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly-heaven and earth
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on, and yet within a month,
Let me not think on't...frailty thy name is woman!
A little month or ere those shoes were old

With which she followed my poor father's body
Like Niobe all tears, why she, even she-
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer-married with my (150)
uncle
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules, within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes
She married. O most wicked speed...to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Hamlet's First Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

Hamlet's first appearance is marked by his sombre black attire and downcast eyes, as much the disgruntled adolescent undergraduate scholar as the melancholic prince as the university is the 'characteristic ante-room or waiting-place for the life of mature years: the life of power' (Everett, 1989, p. 19). Immediately Hamlet's first soliloquy provides a passionate contrast to the controlled and artificial dialogue that he must exchange with Claudius and his Court. As Newell (1991) notes it is 'an intensely private, unregulated, welling up of utterances full of despair, disgust, anger, and anguish of grief' (p. 28). The soliloquy reveals Hamlet's profound melancholia and the reasons for his despair. In this outpouring Hamlet explains that everything in his world, indeed in all existence, lacks substance and is only worthy of contempt. Hamlet is tormented, and torments himself, with the remembered images of Gertrude's tender affections toward his father. He has recently experienced the death of his father, Old Hamlet, and a disruption to his future prospects of kingship by the usurpation of the throne by his uncle, Claudius. As Everett (1989) indicates, by Elizabethan thinking an individual's maturity dictated both status and power. Consequently, Hamlet is instantly disenfranchised by the weakness of his youth and immaturity, and his apparent 'sonship', for being 'too much in the "son"' (1.2.67), to Gertrude and now to Claudius. Although the 'young Hamlet' may have expected to be

politically disempowered it is still a position that obviously rankles. It is not until Act V when, on his return, he feels that with greater maturity he can truly claim his father's royal title of 'Hamlet the Dane'.

The first soliloquy challenges the perceived public view of the practice of mourning, the nature of memory and the function of reason in the consensus reality of the Danish Court. Hamlet's sense of isolation, and his legitimacy as a witness, are immediately established by the marked difference in attitude of Claudius' glib and business-like approach to his brother's death, Gertrude's seeming indifference to her late husband's demise, and Hamlet's deeper personal mourning of his father's death through his far-less-restrained show of grief. The nature of that grief is soon disclosed, as we learn that his mother, Gertrude, has married that same uncle, her own brother-in-law, only two months after the death of Hamlet's father. He feels that he has lost his mother, and, by his identification and competition with his father, lost a sympathetic partner.

Hamlet, as an adolescent, is working through extremely painful grief and loss issues in a stage of the human life cycle, which is already characterised by bio-developmental change and loss, concerns about image, and periods of deep introspection. The death naturally reactivates scenes, feelings, and memories of his mother and father from infancy and childhood, prior to the trauma. Hamlet recalls a previous state of being unsullied by his presently corrupt flesh, represented as a pure 'dew' (130), comfortable and safe, a place of contentment. He wishes to leave the confines of his 'skin-encapsulated ego' (Grof, 2000a, 2000b) body and to return to the previously comfortable fluid existence of another dimension.

The counterpointing between things divine and things earthly or profane is apparent from the opening sentence of the soliloquy, in which Hamlet expresses his anguished sense of being captive to his flesh. His desire for dissolution into dew, an impermanent substance, is expressive of his desire to escape from the corporeality into a process suggestive of spiritual release. Immediately juxtaposed to this notion, and standing in contrast to 'flesh', is his reference to the 'Everlasting', the spiritual term for the duality. Paradoxically, in his aversion from the flesh, his body must seem to him to possess a state of permanence, closer to something everlasting than to the ephemeral nature of the dew he yearns to become. (Newell, 1991, p. 35)

In identifying the access point for this opportunity as 'self-slaughter' Hamlet recognises the desire for a symbolic death and rebirth for himself, and acknowledges the possibility of this concept of a cyclical transformational process for others. It is not surprising to see this adolescent confronted with the death of his father seeking to actively escape from the objective fact of a lost object and the attendant physical and emotional loss that he must be feeling. Newell (1991) notes that 'Hamlet's memory triggers an emotional recall of his father that is almost too much for him to bear' (p. 31) as he exclaims 'heaven and earth, / Must I remember?' (142-3). Viewed through the distorted lens of SE, as well as grief and loss Hamlet elevates his dead father to 'Hyperion' (140) an archetype of wholesomeness, the Titan god of light who represents honour, virtue, and royalty. This is the language of the super-ego known to Freudians. His uncle he regards as a 'satyr' beast-demon, the half-human and half-beast companion of the wine-god Dionysus, who represents lasciviousness and over indulgence. It is not surprising that Hamlet develops disgust for Claudius the man, and all of the behaviours and excesses associated with him. In other passages from the play we see that Hamlet has begun to find revelry of any kind unacceptable, and, in particular, he loathes drinking and sensual dancing. In admonishing his uncle for these offences he is intuitively condemning a world that has irretrievably changed for him.

His mother is suspiciously viewed by Hamlet as being totally dependent upon his father. He describes Old Hamlet as the absolute god-like centre of her world, a powerful protector, and yet upon his death Hamlet rather cynically ascribes to her the qualities and character of her new husband. Clearly, although Shakespeare permits us to recognise the ascendant qualities of kingship, Old Hamlet appears to be a faultlessly perfect polar-opposite of his lustful brother, the archetypes of good and evil. Similarly, just as kingship is fully appraised, Gertrude is painted as two different aspects of the same woman. As their son Hamlet too is a full portrayal in which either good or evil may have the possibility of existence. He is also a convincing example of how developmental trauma and loss in adolescence can drive an individual into a relationship that seeks to explore that whole universe of expression and feeling.

At this point, for example, Hamlet feels the confusion, anger, and frustration of existence in the past, the present, and the future, and he most clearly describes these vulnerabilities. Back in the recent past there is some comfort from memories but the past is no longer accessible and life cannot be viewed in the same way. The present is intolerable. The adolescent Hamlet exists in a world that disappoints him and with a self that he considers deserves destroying. The future is unknowable, pointless and lacks the vitality that he used to enjoy. Hamlet so aware (Bloom, 1998), both fully experiences, and, at the same time, condemns, his mother's faithlessness and 'frailty' (146), and in the next moment is able to sympathetically anticipate, and feel, the heart break and futility of her new relationship when he says 'it cannot come to good' (158). Powerless to be nothing but a witness to painful events, Hamlet's disenfranchised position is finely echoed in his final line 'But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.' (159). Lee (2000) notes that Hamlet's 'desire for words' (p. 223) is only momentarily thwarted by the social conditions of the Court and his silence contradicted by the next soliloquy. Nevertheless, the passivity of the witness has become the bitter anger of the unwilling victim. In his preoccupation with his own corrupted and 'sullied flesh' Hamlet resolves that it is his mother's sexually corrupted conduct, which is responsible for the condition he wishes to escape, and of which he is also not allowed to speak. Alexander (1971) adds that it is not the sexual act itself but the underpinning lack of other feelings that most appals him (p. 54). It is this lack of feeling that implies a deficiency in her 'discourse of reason' (149) that makes her worse than a beast.

Prior to his father's death Hamlet was engaged upon a normal adolescent developmental project. With the untimely demise of his father, the existing subtle effects and intrusions of spiritual emergence are developing to a point where Hamlet is subsumed by the paradoxical experience of existence in the different and unfamiliar dimensions of SE.

Hamlet's First Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

Throughout the trauma of loss Hamlet naturally requires support and in this situation Hamlet calls upon God (132,149) to witness his distress, assist him to make sense of his creation, and, perhaps, give him something to anchor himself to. It is not unusual for individuals in crisis to ask for support from transpersonal sources, and it is not necessary to get into a lengthy discourse about Hamlet's faith, or religious ideation, to understand that he clearly believes that there are forces greater than he is. *Hamlet's* theological sources on their own pose questions for the scholar that defy logical resolution, summarised by Greenblatt's (2001) Hamlet 'a young man from Wittenberg, with a distinctly Protestant temperament, is haunted by a distinctly Catholic ghost' (p. 240). Such considerations are worthy of explanation by the Shakespeare scholar but distract us from the purpose, which is to explore Hamlet's unconscious acceptance of this phenomenon which is not entirely derived from his wish to be reunited with his lost father or his religious beliefs.

Greenblatt (2001) suggests that Horatio's exclamation of "'tis strange' (1.1.64) is reiterated in the psychological register of this soliloquy as Hamlet discloses himself as tortured by obsessive recollections of his father. There is an evident synchronicity with Horatio and the nightwatch's encounter with a similar figure, and Hamlet driven by repeated and unbidden recollections to consider his own mortality as quite literally 'He cannot get his father out of his mind' (p. 213).

At this moment in the 'unweeded garden' (135) of his future expectations he is a sole witness to the world's decay and he identifies, even experientially, with part or all of creation. Faced with actual death the adolescent Hamlet, no longer immortal, faces psychospiritual and existential crises. This inner experience of crises, more than just colouring his perceptions, informs them in a profound way that there exists a deeper knowledge, a transpersonal dimension that connects with and identifies with all aspects of nature, people, and plants. Drawn into this

dimension Hamlet can see that beneath the previously superficial veneer of his existence is a nightmare world inhabited by demonic things that are 'rank and gross in nature' (136). Thus Hamlet perceives that Denmark is an Eden gone to Hell and peopled by demons. It is from this inner perception of the world that Hamlet struggles to make sense of his father's death and his mother's hasty marriage. Unfortunately, Hamlet has not yet reached a place where he is able to distinguish his inner process from outside influences.

Systemic use of the mechanism of projection – disowning one's inner experience and attributing them to influences coming from other people and from external circumstances – is a severe obstacle to the kind of psychological approach we described here. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 44)

At present he assumes that Gertrude and Claudius are responsible for his altered perception of the world and he looks outward for a solution to this problem or to assign blame. Consequently, in the Garden of Denmark, his mother, like Eve, bears the archetypal weakness of all her gender 'frailty thy name is woman!' (140), and Claudius, the serpent-like 'satyr' (140), an unworthy substitute to Hamlet's 'Hyperion' (140) father, is typically the seducer and initiator of a speedy coupling with Gertrude in 'incestuous sheets!' (156). The duality of the imagery is so full of Hamlet's experience of alienation and spiritual conflict that he sees Claudius and Gertrude as less than human and the very opposite of 'God'.

Hamlet is a puzzled and an angry adolescent who is unable to forgive or understand the behaviour of those around him simply because they do not respond in ways that he has conceived as appropriate. In addition, he is struggling with reconciling what are familiar and defined roles and responsibilities with the unknown and the unfamiliar, experienced as an inner realm of the unconscious beneath the thin layer of ordinary existence that now begins to strongly interfere with his normal understanding and functioning. His cognitive abilities appear unimpaired, his communication is skilful and logical, and he is extremely perceptive. Hamlet is in the early stages of SE where the notion of the inner world of the unconscious intruding upon ordinary awareness can still be resisted. He has not yet clearly recognised that he is living in more than one

world because the boundaries between them have not yet finally collapsed, but COEX systems of memory and feeling are already intruding.

From a transpersonal perspective, the good versus evil motif is part of the same COEX system in which the biographical memories exist. Such elements include, for example, Hamlet's father, his mother, and their life together in Denmark constellated with mythical visions, from the transpersonal. As Newell (1991) indicates, the 'counterpoint between things divine and things earthly or profane is apparent from the opening sentence of the soliloquy,' (p. 35) juxtaposing, as it does, the corporeality of 'flesh' with the transpersonal dimension of the 'Everlasting'. Hamlet's soliloquy encompasses his childhood fantasies of living in a golden and shining world populated by gods and goddesses dissolving into an unfamiliar, dark, and indistinct world because of the trauma of loss. 'All the uses of this world', the once familiar and predictable relationships with people and things have become untrustworthy, and malevolent. The time is 'out of joint', no longer stable and no longer convincingly under Hamlet's control.

This is the point at which Hamlet discloses himself fully to us in the first soliloquy. Burdened by loss he begins to examine his context and the spiritual void in his life. Crisis has occasioned a new understanding that all is not well in both his inner and outer worlds. Externally his heightening sensitivities forbid him to share in the happiness of his mother, or to participate in managing the kingdom, or to completely bring closure to his own mourning. The same emerging elements that prevent and mar his enjoyment of his 'old' life also allow him to closely review himself and scrutinise others in a new and frightening way. Thus he is alienated from himself and others, stunned by previous loss and both terrified and exhilarated by the emergence of a new understanding of life he quite rightly tries to run away. Typically, an individual in Hamlet's position, Grof (1998) suggests, uses his family or friendships as symbols of the restrictions he or she is wishing to detach from. Loss during adolescent development may trigger the impulses to sever bonds in individuation or test them. Grof suggests that safe detachment can be completed internally rather than jeopardising relationships with the external world.

Thus, Hamlet, in the process of his transformation, confuses freeing himself from internal limitations with disassociation from the family. Inevitably, dissatisfied with ways of being that are no longer compatible with his worldview, he blames his discontent on his mother who is the most caring person in his life.

Consequently, his level of detachment, already publicly very high, becomes an excuse to flaunt his contempt for the parent figures both in attitude and dress. He finds present attachments painful and his reaction, fuelled by his fear of loss, is to use the concept of revenge to further power his detachment externally and to resist his SE internally. In this way all of his relationships with the external world are jeopardised, and his internal process becomes painfully slow and difficult. As Horwich (1988) states, Hamlet experiences a 'kind of psychic exile to a point outside the boundaries of the play' (p. 168).

Hamlet's First Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

This reading assumes that Hamlet's SE is triggered by his father's untimely death prior to the beginning of the play. Consequently, he would already have been exhibiting characteristics of psychospiritual emergence or distress before his first introduction in Act I. As the opening lines indicate a need to regress to a perinatal or perhaps even prenatal condition, this locates his experiential state as in or around the first perinatal matrix, 'Oh that this too too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,' (I. 2, 129-130). In actively seeking a return to the source of his creation, to the bodiless nothingness and safe comfort of being at one with the amniotic universe, Hamlet's deep introspection argues his return to the womb. Hamlet in crisis wishes to escape to the 'undisturbed intrauterine life', of "'good womb" experiences' and an "'oceanic" type of ecstasy' as described in BPM I, in Grof's *Table 2.1, Basic Perinatal Matrices* (Grof, 2000a, p. 35), or to the oblivion of 'self-slaughter'. Hamlet would rather be anywhere other than the here and now, and his SE reveals to him the dual possibilities of birth and death through the experiential opening of BPM I, 'a sublime spiritual

release from corporeal existence' (Newell, 1991, p. 32). Grof explains, generally, that the perinatal level of the unconscious reveals to the individual emotional and physical sensations of extreme intensity;

At this point, the experiences become a strange mixture of the themes of birth and death. They involve a sense of a severe, life threatening confinement and a desperate and determined struggle to free ourselves and survive. (Grof, 2000a, p. 29)

The associated memories from postnatal life that Grof links with BPM I constellate around harmony and beauty, comfort and security. Although we cannot know, we might consider that Hamlet's childhood memories corresponding to these, especially as they are strongly indicated by this first soliloquy. If this is the case much of what Grof has to say about memories might be true of Hamlet's postnatal life, for example,

... important needs are satisfied, such as happy moments from infancy and childhood (good mothering, play with peers, harmonious periods in the family, etc), fulfilling love, romances; trips or vacations in beautiful natural settings; exposure to artistic creations of high aesthetic value; swimming in the ocean and clear lakes, etc. (Grof, 2000, p. 35)

In the life that we can know about there is no doubt of Hamlet's exposure to the most aesthetic and intellectual concepts, the most sumptuous and beautiful creations of the period, within Denmark and in, and from, other parts of the world. As a scholar at Wittenberg University, as the Prince of Denmark, and as heir apparent, he would have been trained in and exposed to all aspects of kingship. As a teenager, the young Hamlet would be expected to demonstrate his leadership, and warrior skills, and some statecraft (*The Prince*, 1972). However, it is perhaps not so hard to predict the closeness of his relationships with parents and friends. The text again indicates that he is universally liked by his people and personally admired by peers of both sexes. Eissler (1971) even suggests that, according to the discussion in the Graveyard Scene with the Clowns, Gertrude was abandoned by Old Hamlet to have the baby Hamlet whilst he fought a battle to the death with Fortinbras' father. Eissler only briefly develops this theme which goes on to consider the possibility that Hamlet feels guilt attached to his

recollection of the primal scene in which saw his father's absence and his mother suffering as contributing to his birth.

It is interesting to note that 'cosmic engulfment' featured in Grof's (1996) earlier working of BPM I, now finds itself as part of the phenomenology of BPM II (Grof, 2000a).

Soliloquy Two (1.5.92-112.)

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
But bear me stiffly up...Remember thee?
Ay thou poor ghost whiles memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past (100)
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter - yes by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables, meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain,
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark...
So, uncle, there you are. Now, to my Word, (110)
It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me.'...
I have sworn't.

Hamlet's Second Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

A reading of Hamlet's experience at a biographical level must deal with the fact that Hamlet believes that he has spoken to the ghost of his father, and to decide what might be the underlying cause of this manifestation. This immediately poses a dilemma for the depth psychologist in terms of diagnosing Hamlet's

mental fitness. Since any judgement of Hamlet's behaviour must rest upon his biographical and biomedical history, it is likely at this level that the professional helper will consider what is real for the client measured against what is real in actuality. This ultimately leads to a position that both prejudices the Ghost and limits Hamlet's engagement with it as delusional, rather than an evocation of 'a mysterious realm beyond the bounds of ordinary happenings' (Newell, 1991, p. 41). Consequently, from this position the Ghost is a problem that requires fixing rather than understanding. As Grof and Grof have strenuously asserted, recent science has always regarded religion and mystical phenomena, the intangible, the immaterial and the unreal, as

... products of superstition that suggest a lack of education, irrationality, and a tendency toward primitive magical thinking. When they occur in intelligent, well-educated individuals, they are attributed to emotional immaturity and unresolved infantile conflicts with parental authorities.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 42)

Certainly, in its context, such manifestations would have been far more congruent with the Elizabethan world view, and yet even here Hamlet is conveniently diagnosed by Claudius and Polonius as having a mental disease, or a psychotic episode. Such a modern reading disguises the abnormality of their judgement upon him, and it is interesting that our modern audience doesn't question the plausibility of such a diagnosis. Consequently, it is easier to find solutions to the Ghost problem via medication, brief therapy, and or, proper mourning, to inhibit its influence on the individual. In any event it is more than likely that Hamlet's difficulties are to be viewed as having their source in his self rather than in exterior circumstances.

A very good example of this way of thinking is exemplified by Jones' (1949, p. 51) hypothesis that Hamlet is a 'psychoneurotic'. He proposed that Hamlet, suffering from an Oedipus complex, had not resolved his unconscious infantile desires to kill his father and marry his mother. While it is not necessary to negate infantile oedipal experience as a necessary stage of normal psychological development it is questionable that it is revived in 'an aberrant neurotic form' in some men during late adolescence (King, 1982). However, Jones' (1949) response is that the trauma of loss is enough to activate repressed desires.

Helping Hamlet to manage and understand these desires could become a goal of therapy, but initially 'holding' the individual through the trauma of loss and subsequent circumstances is more appropriate in Hamlet's case (Herman, 1992; Malicoat, 2001; Pollack & Levant 1998; Wolf, 1999).

What becomes clear is that the individual becomes associated with his or her responses to life's circumstances. Notably, Hamlet is viewed from the position of his apparent passivity to the Ghost's news. We speak of Hamlet's delay, his inability to act, and rather than see him caught in a developing process of transformation he is regarded as blocked in his developmental process. Equally, we might regard his repressed anger as a potent product of his grief and loss, and begin to work with Hamlet's relationship and memories of his father, positioning him in a place of acceptance and closure, and/or incorporation to strengthen his engagement with the real world. However, Alexander (1971) in critiquing Jones' theory claims that Jones allows us to assume that Hamlet's seeking to avenge his father's murder is 'normal' behaviour. He continues that 'unthinking aggression is not always necessarily a sign of mental health' (p. 11). Thus, conventional therapy in spite of its contradictions in its avoidance of the acceptance of a transpersonal answer must be limited by and satisfied with an answer sought from the postnatal factors that influence and drive Hamlet.

It is interesting to note that in considering whether the Ghost represents a psychotic episode for Hamlet, commentators have preferred to argue that his madness is a deceit, or the product of his overwhelmed reason, but few if any have regarded the Ghost as a symptom of madness. Murray (1996) suspects that Hamlet's later 'madness' is a result of his mourning, masking and responses to others. Byles (1994, p. 126) contends strongly that the Ghost represents 'unrepressed hostility towards the father', in which case there may be a way of mediating between the externalised fragment of self and Hamlet's self as the witness. Russell (1995) argues that the Ghost is an idealised figure of power and potency. This is reiterated by Armstrong (2000) as he cites Freud's model of the Ghost as 'superego' and Lacan's 'nom-du pere' (name or law of the father) as paternal law. In contrast Eissler (1971) argues that Hamlet 'loathes and seeks to destroy' the Ghost which he suggests, in common with Charnes (2000), Hamlet

has totally assimilated into his own personality. It could be supposed that the 'madness', if it is so, externalised as the paternal self object, is fighting for supremacy to possess and subordinate him, as he would in the post-oedipal framework. This comes closer to the perinatal reading discussed later.

The second soliloquy occurs immediately after Hamlet believes he has encountered the ghost of his father. In the interim between the two soliloquies his friend and confidante, Horatio, meets with him. Although Hamlet has just disclosed his anger and contempt for his mother's actions the soliloquy has allowed him to clarify and express material that previously confused him. It is a cathartic moment and he, once removed from his introspective position, greets his friend with relief and pleasure. In the soliloquy it is clear that Hamlet has by no means disconnected from his father. Horatio's arrival coincides with the conscious need to maintain bonds, and the unconscious need to engage with his father. At present there appears to be no means of doing so and his frustration at not being able to vent his feelings is still not resolved, as his inner turmoil is fuelled by the news that his father may have been seen. For a moment Hamlet is held spellbound by the 'synchronicity' of the moment, his imagination has moved from the dead father in memory to the possibility of a living father in actuality. At this point the barrier between desire and gratification momentarily dissolves.

The Grofs define 'synchronicity' as 'an acausal connecting principle that accounts for meaningful coincidences linking individuals and situations in separate locations or across time' they add that extraordinary synchronicities accompany many forms of SE (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 92). In this moment the bond between father and son is strong and it anticipates Hamlet's ability to contact his father, and the father's communication with the son across time, space, and dimensions. In the past, psychiatrists have dismissed meaningful coincidence for their clients as a delusion of reference. It is therefore understood that it could be possible that the Ghost is a delusion of reference for Hamlet, seeing connections where there are really none. However, the Ghost can also be seen as an agent of synchronicity.

Jung, as the humanistic psychologists would argue, felt that the unconscious could be a source of health and vitality rather than a pathological force. However, Jung also felt that the unconscious holds the potential for evil as well as good. Hamlet later comments, 'Ay thou poor ghost' (96), confirming that he presently regards the Ghost as retaining the potential for good. It is a deeply sympathetic response and momentarily reverses the father-son roles as he pities the father and will carry out his will in order to protect and preserve him. It is entirely possible that as circumstances change, the Ghost's purpose for Hamlet may also be reframed.

Also a common characteristic of bereavement is that the bereaved often experience the presence of the dead visually and auditorily. It is a common experience that in the process of searching for the lost object, the bereaved, according to Bowlby (1980, in Normand, et al., 1996), locates the deceased, visualises a form the dead may take, and attributes a purpose to the spirit of the dead 'according to his needs, and dictates of his present position, culture and beliefs' (p. 98). Nevertheless, at this stage Hamlet is able to begin putting together the elements that project him suddenly into a NOSC. Preparing to meet the ghost of your father cannot be easy but as Murray indicates, 'Hamlet is eager especially because in his frustration he finds it very reinforcing to take action that links him with his father and confirms his feeling that the world is corrupt' (Murray, 1996, p. 64).

Hamlet agrees to meet with his friend and other colleagues at the point where his father's presence had been seen before. Rejecting his companion's warnings he flees the group, pursuing what he perceives is the ghost of his father. At this point he is on his own and the dialogue between himself and the shadow can only be corroborated by Hamlet himself. Certainly, what he sees and believes he discusses with the Ghost is pivotal, not just to his personal narrative but, in psychological and developmental terms, to his understanding of 'identity' (Erikson, 1982) and 'meaning' (King, 1992). Through this 'epigenesis of identity' (Erikson, 1982), he will acquire self-confidence and self-respect in his 'real self' (Horney, 1950). It could, however, be argued that an individual's 'neurotic pride'

might prevent him from achieving this goal. It would not be inconsistent with Hamlet's experiences at this point, that having endured deep humiliation at the hands of his mother and Claudius, and heaped upon himself an unbearable sadness at his father's loss, that he should wish to limit his pain and defend himself. Byles (1994) contends that the ego defends itself by directing anger outwards. Horney (1950) warns that in therapy the client's defensive strategy would be to restore pride when it is hurt, and avoid injuries when endangered. She adds, 'the most effective and, it seems, almost ubiquitous one [defence strategy] is interlinked with the impulse to take revenge for what is felt as humiliation' (Horney, 1950, p. 103). Only in this case, in order to rationalise his actions, the revenger has irrationally and paradoxically submitted himself in this act of violence to what he regards as potentially a divine command.

It is also almost certain that as a surviving son Hamlet will feel that strong compulsion to redress the wrong that he feels his mother has done to his father in remarrying with such speed and incestuously. The drive will be further compounded and enforced by the image of a father who is a 'castrated, weak, and defeated father' (Eissler, 1971, p. 68) who in symbolising pain and dispensing it 'will not be pitied' though he pities himself (Pennington, 1996, p. 54). Furthermore, Hamlet will identify with the father – a father who so represents the unconscious shadows of the son.

Hamlet's bond runs deep and his meeting with the Ghost is at once cathartic and at the same level deeply disturbing and challenging. The Ghost is an 'opportunity' (Grof & Grof, 1989), but as Lesser so sagely warns, 'we spend a great deal of psychic energy in the endeavor not to see certain things' (Lesser, 1977, p. 22). Remembrance, therefore, is pivotal to this encounter and from both the therapeutic and grieving perspectives, provides a vehicle central to the adolescent's healing process and his narrative (Alexander, 1971). The first soliloquy expresses Hamlet's concern to maintain memory and once again it provides a motive for action. Stockholder (1987) adds that the Ghost is generated from a need to restore Hamlet's idealised father-figure, but that instead it 'activates the very associations it was designed to repress' (p. 46). As a strategy to combat the deep melancholy of his loss it failed. Consequently, it is

worth considering that after his encounter with the Ghost Hamlet's attention may have become refocused from intense grief over the lost object to an all-consuming rage at his new discovery, linking it to the idea of madness. Thus the vital recollections of his father are superseded by new grotesque and powerful memories, which distort previously treasured thoughts and represent a different but no less significant and personally disturbing image of the father.

Memories are probably the most precious gifts that survivors of loss are left with (Normand, Silverman & Nickman, 1996), and bad memories of trauma may be the most dangerous to revisit for Hamlet (Herman, 1992; Krystal, 1988). Death may have robbed Hamlet of his father but it has no firm grip on the past. In a healthy model (Normand, 1996) the continuing connection between father and son, even after death, seems to be part of a functional adaptation to, not a denial of, life without the father. Since grief has no end, likewise parents become immortal, as memories but also as witnesses and guides for the living. This may have been so for Hamlet up to the point that the Ghost appeared.

Hamlet is confronted with the person of his father changed by his imprisonment in Hell or Purgatory. This is not the sensitive, handsome warrior king of the earlier speech. This father, loathsomely disfigured, appears to care nothing for his son, whom he doesn't even address affectionately (Bloom, 1998; Charnes, 2000). The Ghost provides him quite selfishly with the information that demands that he avenge his murder without providing information as to how he might protect himself and fulfil the task (Eissler, 1971). Returning to the oedipal theory, Hamlet has unconsciously represented and distorted the memory of his father's image to interpret his new situation. The father becomes a weapon to punish his mother and destroy his uncle while he, the father, is dispatched to Hell. Initially the motive is revenge but becomes increasingly overlaid with a higher notion that he narcissistically is the instrument of God. Lost in the fantasy of revenge Hamlet will become dangerous to others and also to himself (Horney, 1950; Krystal, 1988; Perelberg, 1999).

In their work with bereaved children Yates and Bannard (1988, in Normand, et al., 1996), interpreting the construction of the deceased as a ghost, explain that

the ghost expresses the child's desire to negate death and maintain as close as possible attachment to the deceased. In Hamlet's case this is supported by the facts and by his own words. However, in some cases the children perceived the ghosts not as benign but as fearful, and were scared to do things that might reactivate the ghost in their presence. In psychoanalytic terms this may be regarded as a projection of the anger and ambivalence felt by the bereaved toward the deceased. In Hamlet's case this raises important issues about his relationship with his father. The image the Ghost presents is fearful and may reflect unconsciously the repressed memories of a poor relationship with the father. Hamlet might be reluctant to reactivate his father's presence in the future by not responding to his will. Hamlet is no longer in control but the father controls the son from beyond the grave. Lambeck, in summary, notes that 'Spirits often specifically represent a difference that has invaded the self and that has become personally problematic' (1996, p. 239).

At the conclusion of their engagement Hamlet appears to be returning to his former self: his language is loquacious and extreme, his ideas passionate and emphatic. He is theatrical rather than practical. He contends that in order to prioritise his father's memory he will renounce his own history and, as Charnes (2000) states, retroactively ratify 'all trivial fond records' and in their place download his father's history along with his father's sexual jealousy of Claudius and Gertrude. Lee (2000) supports this view, from the Elizabethan perspective that the 'commonplace book' that Hamlet wishes to wipe away is not just his mind but very specifically the sixteenth-century rhetorical system and body of knowledge (p. 226). It is an extreme claim unsupported by his reasoning in the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy. Here is more evidence of his struggle for balance. It appears that, as was evidenced in the first soliloquy, he cannot think moderately, mediating between one extreme and another. Hamlet's language may reflect, in psychological terms, the internal struggle between the superego, ego, and id. Murray (1996) quite rightly warns that Hamlet, in wiping from his mind what he has already learned, might become dangerously obsessed. In his excited state, he might be excused for thinking that absolute single-mindedness regarding his purpose is fitting. Such single-mindedness would not only be

dangerous psychologically but also morally and practically in making him unable to gain a perspective on what he has to do.

Hamlet reaffirms his belief that 'observation' is not proof, that all of his previous experience is negated by the new knowledge. He is intentionally placing his self in a perilous position. His 'self experience' is weakened by his sense of alienation and his perception of appearance and reality placed in doubt, leading him to throw out everything except the Ghost's revelation. It is ironic that in his paranoid state of assuming all as false he has allowed himself to believe that the Ghost's commandment stems from the truth. He is at a point that Erikson describes as 'totalism', that is 'a totalisation of a world image so illusory that it lacks the power of self-renewal and can become destructively fanatic' (1982, p. 74).

Placed in a context of a counselling relationship and expressed in terms of self-psychology, this moment in a client's process might be explained as a 'disruptive experience' (Wolf, 1999, p. 9). This causes a 'regression which could then be reversed' by adaptation to the 'analytic experience' which would yield a new 'better adopted organization of the self experience'. Wolfe confirms that the absence of feeling understood and accepted weakens the self-experience and facilitates 'regression and disorganization, disintegration and fragmentation of the self-experience' into its consistent parts, that were initially integrated into the organisation of the self-experience. What Wolf suggests is an opportunity for the counsellor to initiate change in the individual. In opening himself to the potential of 'totalism' Hamlet prepares himself to engage in the hazardous and unpredictable experience of having to relearn the world (Attig, 1996) and begin a new story (McAdams, 1988).

Typically, the story provides a coherent narrative framework within which the disparate events and various roles of a person's life can be embedded and given meaning (McAdams, 1988; Neimeyer & Keesee, 1988). In developmental terms too it is a natural task in late adolescence (Erikson, 1972, p. 71) to find 'new connections to the separated', and in grief and mourning theory a way of 'continuing bonds'. In mirroring both the developmental needs and therapeutic

process, this mytho-poetic condition in some instances compares strongly with a SE (Culbertson, 1998; Grof & Grof, 1990), and a mystical experience (Hollenback, 1996).

However, left to itself without the benefit of counselling support or intervention, the new story might prove to be unsettled, an 'unhelpful legacy' (Waldegrave, 2000) which will eventually impact severely upon client and 'family experience'. A sensitive challenge within the therapeutic holding environment could usefully help Hamlet to reassess the appropriateness of the story, whilst enabling him to own it for himself, and assist in reframing it so that it still meets his needs.

Inconsistently, having vowed to 'wipe away' (99) his memory of the past he returns to the themes of his previous soliloquy. He perhaps pictures Claudius and his mother together as victims of his and his father's revenge: she wicked and hurtful, he a damned spirit like his father. The exclamations are directed at the two of them, as if they are present. He would have continued talking to them if he had not been distracted by the vision of his uncle's smile, the public face of a statesman covering an enormous secret, the absolute epitome of appearance masking reality.

Alternatively, Eissler (1971) suggests that Hamlet's words about his mother short-circuit his intention to carry out the Ghost's commandment because he is unable to complete the act of revenge before he more adequately deals with his mother's behaviour. However, his father's commandment includes leaving his mother alone. He is caught in a loop of unreliable emotions so vividly illustrated by his desire to please his father, at once defeated by his need to punish his mother. Perhaps the imagined figure of Claudius, recognising his would-be murderer's dilemma, smiles even more broadly. Hamlet's response is deliberate and unnatural. He too makes a show of writing down on his 'tables' (107) that one 'may smile' and still 'be a villain' (108), just as one may quietly write and yet be plotting high treason. Not surprisingly, writing on his 'tables' may also be construed as a way for Hamlet to attempt his reconstruction and gain stability. However, as Armstrong (2001) suggests, in Freudian terms, this represents 'the inscription on the psyche of the superegoic law of the father' (p. 52), and is

therefore more likely to be overlaying the father's demands over the psyche and limiting its response. Alternatively Maher (1992, p. 129) comments that in the act of writing, Hamlet becomes a 'complete, bitter cynic' who has to revise all that he has known and all that he has learned. Pennington (1999) confirms that this is a deliberate affectation on Hamlet's part since he is hardly going to forget what he has learned.

At this stage Hamlet is only just beginning to realise the danger he is placed in if this information is true, or if he tries to verify or publish it. Claudius is the king now and has ultimate power over him. This little show simply confirms that Hamlet cannot trust what he sees and that perhaps the people of Denmark, particularly his mother and the king, should not trust what they see or indeed what they believe they see as him. This indicates a change in Hamlet as he adopts the role of the avenger to be more like Claudius himself: 'so, uncle there you are' (110). As Russell (1995) so clearly comments 'the ghost has learned and teaches the son that a relative, professing loyal and subservient allegiance, may, behind his façade of fidelity, nurture the most incestuous and wicked designs' (p. 100). Consequently, Claudius may become the new role model. Certainly, Hamlet suddenly adopts the role of the psychoanalyst in this rather bizarre parody of the therapeutic encounter. If he is able to counsel his own father then they might together rewrite the narrative. However, if the Ghost is a counterfeit of the man he remembers (Pennington, 1996) Hamlet might be attempting to create a relationship with an untrue and highly dangerous copy of his absent father. Far from idealised (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999) the Ghost is a replica of his father drawn from the shadow, his paternal self-object 'narcissistically self-absorbed and oedipally vindictive' (Russell, 1995, p. 101). Garber (1987, p. 163), suggests that the Ghost is supposed to know, to confirm, 'what Hamlet did not know he knew'. This, once again, focuses upon a therapeutic relationship. If Hamlet were to counsel the Ghost when does he enter into a transference relationship with him when he is given to think that his own authority is confirmed?

The self-psychologist Horney (1950, p. 155) might well regard Hamlet's acceptance of the new role as his being drawn into a fateful relationship with 'the

other' which she describes as 'the devil's pact'. The individual abandons the 'real self' and becomes alienated from it. He seeks in its 'remoteness' from his own 'feelings, wishes, beliefs and energies' to become the 'idealized self' which draws him even further away from wholeness and fulfilment, growth and identification, but, perhaps, closer to the self expressed by Claudius. In Hamlet's world it is the boundaries, seen from a biographical perspective, and not the dimensions, that may have become blurred simply because he is no longer sure what identity to take. Cox and Theilgaard (1994, p. 7) illuminate this predicament. They recall that a client embarking upon a psychotherapeutic exploration may often comment that they are not really living their lives and that much of their existence has the quality of 'an un-lived life'. This conveys an impression of being his own understudy, 'unable to assume his true shape, presence and communicative place in a fabric of relationships'. Exposed to at least three strong male role identities – the real and idealised father, the shadow generated father and the father's brother Claudius – Hamlet, it could be concluded, has lost sight of his real self.

Corneau (1991) explains that Hamlet must first of all become the father that he lacks by forgiving Old Hamlet, not by recreating him as a god. By denouncing the myth of the ideal father he should be prepared to 'endure the solitude that results from this'. Tacey (1997, p. 66), conscious of Hamlet's need to honour the father but also of his developmental task to separate his identity, suggests that the spirit of the father is 'redeemed by the liberating achievements of the son, who becomes the new father'. This leads us to challenge Hamlet's assumption that to avenge his father's death he must murder Claudius. Using Tacey's advice the client must consider what is most likely to be a 'liberating achievement'. For example, the decision to confront the father could be read as a form of neurosis and the avoidance of the fight might be seen in similar terms. Perhaps, the answer to Hamlet's dilemma is this, 'the supreme paradox is that in holding fast to our own authority, we redeem and further the spirit of the father' (Tacey, 1997, p. 67).

Hamlet begins to recognise the true nature of Claudius' power but also fixes him in a particular position to be scrutinised. His comment reflects this new reversal

of roles, and perception. Now he can become the observer and his observations will be deepened by this new knowledge. Suddenly, Hamlet has information that is powerful but as yet unconfirmed. Cox and Theilgaard (1994, p. 395) relate that often patients who are deeply disturbed, at the same time are perfectly capable of seeing through those who are sent to 'observe' them. Who is seeing through whom? They state that awareness of this type of bewilderment is not uncommon in a 'therapeutic dialogue with the psychotic'.

In terms of Hamlet's functioning Lesser (1997, p. 25) submits that he 'shows skill and decision'. Murray (1996, p. 57) claims he has a 'complex interiority' but can still 'think for himself'. Bloom (1998, p. 404) describes him as 'most aware and knowing' and as having 'consciousness' as his 'most salient characteristic'. However, Erikson (King, 1982, p. 126) believes that his functioning might have been inhibited by his parents because they did not, and do not, respond to him as an individual who they value and 'whose gradual growth and transformation' is important to them. Nevertheless, there is already ample evidence to suggest that he is able to revise his opinion of the world with every 'self overhearing' (Bloom 1998, p. 423).

Hamlet completes this second soliloquy with a prayer. The prayer itself is unrecorded and probably would give a strong indication of Hamlet's current thinking, his needs and his trajectory. Hoff (1988) suggests that it is in fulfilment of his duty that he makes intercessory prayers to relieve the Ghost's purgatorial torment, in effect to 'remember me' to God. It has also been speculated that he is praying to seek further confirmation that he undertake the questionable act of revenge (Paris 1991; Stockholder, 1987), to ask God to strengthen him in his purpose (Byles 1994; Russell, 1995), that the task be taken from him (Nuttall, 1998), and that he may be forgiven.

Hamlet closes with a flourish, his father's final and departing line, which allows him once more to assume a role in distancing emotion and playing a part. In this penultimate line he allows someone else's words to describe his feelings, as he is still unable to directly locate or verbalise them. Through the Ghost he has been able to vent his unconscious feelings, but his conscious need for control,

focused upon the deed of revenge, is paramount. An added complication for Hamlet, and one that repeats itself, is his perception that to think something presupposes the ability to do it, that the cognitive act produces the physical act. As Murray (1996, p. 65) points out, there is certainly a need to challenge his perceptions about the relationship between 'thoughts and deeds'.

In closure Hamlet farewells his father's shadow and internalises its message. The final line is both decisive and bitter. He confirms that his 'Word' (110) has been given; he has made a bargain to 'remember' (111) and has sworn to God to keep it. It is deliberately ambiguous. At best Hamlet confirms that he will maintain his bonds with a lost parent and at worst he has pledged, by spiritual authority higher than the king, his determination to mount a murderous crusade against his uncle the king. His previous soliloquy describes a similar meaning and process to this final line, which submits him to an external force without necessarily involving his individuality. Eissler (1971, pp. 101-102) contends that Hamlet is neither calm enough to remain passively accepting nor able to spontaneously spring to action in fulfilment of his task; 'he is in a psychological impasse' ripe for therapy. To take action he would first need to take ownership of the deed to satisfy his need to become independent of his father. Nevertheless, whatever course of action he decides to take will be the expression of his current needs in the light of his perception of the current situation.

Although later Hamlet is convinced that it is an 'honest ghost', it is arguable as to whether he totally believes it conscious that, if he is not to be easily betrayed by his own reason, he will need to somehow prove the substance of what he has heard. Interestingly in providing both motive and task (Kerrigan, 1994) the Ghost permits Hamlet to fulfil his most immediate personal needs and the nation's (James, 1989). This is a compelling enough reason for a project that enables Hamlet, in Stockholder's (1987) view, to achieve his maturity and his 'self-cure' (Bloom, 1998, p. 429).

Hamlet's Second Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

Bloom's (1986) deceptively simple comment that 'The prime requisite for an understanding of *Hamlet* is a belief in Ghosts' is central to this debate and the core to accepting the validity of spiritual emergence. Certainly, the possibility of a spiritual realm of some kind, both reasoned and based on experience, is crucial to an understanding of Hamlet. He continues, 'If "a belief in ghosts" sounds too old-fashioned or superstitious, call it, more pedantically, a belief in the autonomous character of the unconscious. The two are the same' (p. 24). However, Bloom's failure to notice this as a contradiction reflects the notion that there is no real distinction between a transpersonal experience and the unfathomable workings of the unconscious. Unlike Bloom, this researcher contends that understanding of Hamlet is not simply reducible to an examination of the unconscious but that the Ghost provides access to a much wider realm of experience and inquiry. Hamlet's meeting with and belief in the Ghost represents a key challenge to our own beliefs and understanding of the 'autonomous character of the unconscious', or perhaps the autonomous character of the available states of consciousness offered by the collective unconscious, and the nature of conscious experience and spirituality.

Hamlet is transformed through a process of normal biological development in a context and presence of supernormal circumstances. Arguably, this transformation has deep origins and these origins can be located and identified in the transpersonal dimension because Hamlet has had a significant non-ordinary experience. He is able to engage with the spirit of his father, Old Hamlet. As indicated above, current orthodoxy creates serious limitations to the acceptability and understanding of these kinds of experiences. Generally, the modern world still does not regard non-ordinary experiences as real and often regards them as indicating a potential for psychosis. As a result it is difficult just to accept that Hamlet has seen a Ghost without having to consider, and here we take Claudius' and Gertrude's position, that Hamlet is mad. This must lead to the understanding that the Ghost cannot be independent of Hamlet's rational experience, as he was

when he was alive, since when an organism is physically dead it cannot be reanimated or return to life – this is the stuff of fantasy, mythology, and wishful thinking and therefore not real. The remaining possibility is that the Ghost is somehow a product of Hamlet's psychology; he does not have substance in consensus reality but he does exist in Hamlet's head. A couple of points from the play, however, do bewilder this normally straightforward hypothesis: the Ghost is observed by soldiers on night duty prior to Hamlet's meeting with it, and the Ghost is seen a second time not just by Hamlet but also by Horatio, and Marcellus. According to the theory, either they are all sharing a collective form of insanity or they are impossibly observing something that cannot be explained in terms of physical reality. Grof (1996a, 2000a) has gone as far as suggesting that perinatal trauma, in activating the collective unconscious, may have the power to influence not just an individual but a group, or whole culture, enacting in their behaviour important mythological themes. Greenblatt (2001) similarly notes that Horatio's 'Stay illusion!' (1.1.127) indicates that what is seen is not the physical reality, however lifelike the resemblance, but an 'embodied memory' (p. 212). This might equally be used to describe the non-corporeal manifestation of COEX. It is also possible that Hamlet's isolated desire to reconnect with his father the king is shared by others in the kingdom and acted out in their consciousness too. Seizing upon either notion requires an enormous shift in reasoning and viewpoint to be able to equate the theories of transpersonal psychology with the cultural norms of pre-industrial civilisations.

'I have that within which passeth show' (1.2.85) is Hamlet's way of expressing the peculiar depth of experience an individual might have who is simultaneously encountering grief and loss and SE. Nuttall (1998) has argued in terms of metaphysical affinity that Hamlet in meeting with his father 'who no longer is', then must become 'one with death and un-being' (p. 71). Thus, Hamlet's ability to enter the transpersonal dimension is as acceptable as the Ghost existing in consensus reality. It is in just this way, Nuttall argues, that we slide uncritically from the mystery of the Ghost to the mystery of Hamlet. He suggests that when individuals are seduced by the anticipation of understanding the unknowable, 'Together with the negatives of death, darkness, the unknown, we are offered possible positives. There seem to be shapes in this darkness and the good critic

knows that such seeming must be respected' (p. 75). Nuttall also argues that Hamlet's apparent paralysis is because he has become 'a dead man walking among the living' (p. 80), as he dresses in grief, talks to the dead, handles their bones, and undertakes the task of wrestling with the Ghost.

A transpersonal interpretation of Hamlet's meeting with the Ghost would certainly recognise the significance of his non-ordinary state of consciousness experience. Grof indicates that NOSC fall into any of the following wide variety of categories: parapsychological, religious, magical, spiritual, mystical, or paranormal. Hamlet's transpersonal encounter would be generally described by Grof as including 'beings and realities that, according to the western view, do not have independent objective existence' (1996b, p. 512). His experience could certainly be classed by Grof as, 'Communicating with Spirit Guides and Channelling' (Grof & Grof, 1990: Grof, 1996b):

However, occasionally one can come into contact with an entity that appears to be entirely separate from and independent of one's own inner processes. He offers a personal relationship and continues to play the role of guide, teacher, or superior source of information.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 93)

Grof's earlier comments are expanded in his later work with the useful qualification that in SE an individual may encounter apparitions who 'convey some specific and accurate new information that can be verified or is linked with an extraordinary synchronicity.' (2000a, p. 243). This is certainly applicable in Hamlet's case.

It is appropriate at this point to attempt a definition of 'inner' and 'outer' worlds, realms or dimensions of experience. Grof and Grof (1990) in discussing SE and an individual's ability to differentiate between inner experiences and the world of consensus reality, suggest that the 'outer' is the 'experiential world' (p. 44) and that the 'inner' involves a 'psychological process' (p. 173). Grof (1996a) explains Hamlet's relationship with the Ghost as a NOSC that has activated 'the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche and of the body' and initiated a transformative process guided by what he terms 'deep inner intelligence' (p. 516). Thus the 'inner' dimension for Grof is one in which spontaneous healing

occurs. This process allows that 'unconscious material with strong emotional charge and relevance will automatically emerge into consciousness and become available for fuller experience and integration' (p. 516). Laing (1989) clarifies the 'inner' by suggesting that it is an active consciousness, which 'is aware of us' but of which we are unaware. He argues that 'we need not be unaware of the inner world' but that 'many people enter it – unfortunately without guides, confusing outer realities, and inner with outer – and generally lose their capacity to function competently in ordinary relations.' (p. 57) Thus, it might be argued that, though it is not entirely independent of Hamlet's inner processes as elements of his bereavement might have conjured up a desire to see his father again, the Ghost is also experienced in the 'outer' world, appearing as a shadow his father.

Greenblatt observes (2001) that although Hamlet has no stabilising hold on the distinction between shadow and substance, and no stoical apathy, he submits to 'an uncanny and yet actual link between himself and his dead father, a link manifested in terror, commandment, and the inescapable obligation to remember' (pp. 217-8). Truly the Ghost displays no fatherly affection or desire to protect his son; his warning speaks of filial duty, of revenge and not safety. He wears the old king's armour but his appearance is ghastly, this is no loving recreation but a nightmarish travesty in the guise of his father come straight from Hell. Considering the Ghost as a form of spirit guide who is offering a brief relationship from whom Hamlet channels non-ordinary information is perhaps accurate. The guide, according to Grof, sometimes resembles a human being, and occasionally has a human voice, and sends verbal messages. In this case the Ghost also appears to be an accurate, if tortured, version of the original. There is, I would suggest, the possibility of some degree of distortion occurring in the description of NOSC experiences as each account is witnessed and experienced from each individual's unique perspective. In this case, the recipient is a damaged adolescent who already sees the world differently as a result of his loss. It is also possible that the Ghost offers the promise of a relationship that Hamlet initially attempts to resist. Certainly, Hamlet in his helpless condition does not want to accept the simple clarity and power of a message that compounds his problems and risks his safety and security.

On a conscious level the Ghost is a very real response to Hamlet's fears. It appears to superficially guide and warn him, rather than encouraging him to master his disappointment and grief. It creates new difficulties for Hamlet in terms of presenting him with a more uncomfortable role, and a different image of himself to fulfil. It is important to note that the function of the Ghost is to focus Hamlet's attention upon action rather than thinking. In other words, the Ghost signifies that a necessary inner reorganisation may have begun, but suggests that inner peace may only be satisfied by an act of appalling violence. Assagioli usefully suggests that,

In some sensitive individuals there is an awakening of parapsychological perceptions. They have visions, which they believe to be of exalted beings; they may hear voices...No validity should be attributed to messages containing definite orders and commanding blind obedience, and to those tending to exalt the personality of the recipient. (Assagioli, 1989, p. 37)

Realistically, Hamlet is unable to carry out these direct orders in the way that he initially interprets them. However, the Ghost means more to Hamlet than the message he brings. His validity for Hamlet is that he symbolically represents the inherent paradox at the heart of the SE process. The Ghost presents two obvious contradictions: the first is that violence must be used to achieve peace, and, secondly, that change is necessary to achieve stability. Perhaps the contradictions inherent in the process of development are similarly defined. In the latter, throughout the process the individual is forced to acknowledge that inner changes are necessary for personal stability but struggles with the notion of passivity, finding it difficult to accept that the process will conduct itself without conscious interference.

NOSC tend to activate the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche and of the body and initiate a transformative process guided by deep inner intelligence. In this process, unconscious material with strong emotional charge and relevance will automatically emerge into consciousness and become available for fuller experience and integration. (Grof, 1996b, p. 516)

It would seem that Hamlet's imperative, as an organism, is to seek to control that process. Consequently, Hamlet associates change with struggle and control, and not with passivity and acceptance. The process of SE also models the former contradiction in the way that the experiential process is violent and painful but

results in a deep inner peace. In the world of everyday experience it is natural for all human beings to avoid confrontation and pain. However, in the teachings of most western religions we are paradoxically encouraged to regard suffering as a path to spiritual enlightenment. The Ghost reflects these inner contradictions imprinted at the deepest levels of the psyche. In the longer term Hamlet is urged to sacrifice himself for the sake of the country in order, ultimately, to do good but in the shorter term what the Ghost suggests is unthinkable: Hamlet would be damned. It is easy, therefore, to argue that the Ghost itself is a paradox, as it embodies both good and evil qualities. Nevertheless the Ghost symbolically offers Hamlet a challenge to make meaning of his tragic circumstances, the exact same challenge offered by the sudden appearance of the SE that the Ghost is derived from. The Ghost is clearly more of an example of the expanding possibilities available to Hamlet at the start of his SE, a reliable source of information, but in practice, it is not a reliable advisor. If we can draw a parallel with best counselling practice, as client to the counsellor/Ghost Hamlet's most successful outcome will not be determined by how the counsellor might advise him to deal with the issue but how the client himself feels most comfortable in tackling it. Consequently, Hamlet is better off interpreting and using the information in the way that he sees fit.

Hamlet's alertness indicates the heightened awareness commensurate with SE (Grof & Grof, 1990; Rebillot, 1989) or exposure to a 'psychic opening' whereby in Jungian terms 'synchronicity' can occur (Jung, 1973). Synchronicity, Jung explains, relates inner mind to the external world – a vehicle whereby the ego, if it is open, can glimpse the self, the archetypal organisation of the person, the unity of the whole towards which the individuation process strives for balance and harmony. Jung suggests that it is strongest when an emotional attachment exists and when there is an element of risk or death. Horwich (1988) describes Hamlet's 'prophetic soul' (1.5.41) as an ability to apprehend reality not with eyes but an inward vision that informs him of the true state of affairs (p. 160). It is with this sixth sense that Hamlet sees his father prior to Horatio's prompting, predicts Claudius' guilt, and has a premonition of his final entrapment – 'such a kind of gain-giving, as would trouble a woman' (5.2.213-4) – and his relationships are dictated by this inner knowledge. Indeed his inner vision of reality is imposed on

others simply because 'thinking makes it so'. Horwich claims that Hamlet's subjectivity is independent of the world of external reality altogether, 'I could be bounded in a nut-shell' (2.2.257). He considers everything and every place to be within 'both the world Hamlet's body inhabits and the world of his dreams are self-created' (p. 163). He considers that Hamlet's subjectivity is the ultimate form of absolutism.

A further issue that critically complicates Hamlet's SE experience and his misinterpretation of synchronicity is his mistaken call to revenge. As he appears to accept the ethical question of revenge with no great thought in the biographical dimension of the external world, the question for Hamlet still remains yet to be answered in the transpersonal dimension as the management of change. At present he sees that management as the wiping of previous data and the reformatting of the self with the incorrect command - to avenge. Consequently, the exercise precludes the possibility of resolving the question or properly acknowledging and accommodating the correct command that is to 'remember me' (111). Ultimately, Newell (1991) contends, the revenge question is linked to the theme of providence and that 'the providential dimension' (p. 52) is inseparable from the central moral issue. It could be argued that the central issue for Hamlet, however, is his psyche's reintegration of what is lost and his continuing developmental process. In other words, the revenge question is a shadow of the real concern, and its link with the providential dimension is the result of the interpretation of synchronicity applied to the main theme of loss and not revenge. Thus the synchronistical linkage of providence with revenge should be superseded by the more realistic relationship between loss and providence defined through the SE process.

Finally, the following from Grof and Grof's (1989) list of important varieties of SE are helpful in summarising Hamlet's experiences at this level:

- 1) *Awakening of Extrasensory Perception (Psychic Opening)* – The prophetic quality of the soliloquies, summed up in Hamlet's comment 'it is not, nor it cannot come to good' (1.2.58), is coupled with Hamlet's growing ability or capacity to 'tune so deeply into the inner processes of others, that it results in telepathy' Hollenback (1996, p. 40). This confirms that this is no mere

'perception' of another domain of experience but a revelation of supreme significance for this individual's particular cultural and religious community, which is in this case the murder of God's highest representative in Denmark, and the crime of incest. Grof and Grof (1990) claim that the individual's insights can be remarkably accurate and may focus on areas or issues that people ordinarily hide.

- 2) *Communication with Spirit Guides and Channeling* – Whilst the Ghost could be interpreted as an entity entirely separate from and independent of Hamlet's inner process, it does not offer a personal relationship or play a role of guide or protector in this encounter. It might be that the relationship could be allowed to develop positively in these areas in the future. As a 'superior source of information' the entity does appear to have access to supernatural resources. However, Hamlet might wish to challenge or test their veracity. In Hamlet's case, the experience of channeling has seriously interfered with his belief system and worldview. It also fulfils the *Seven Common Characteristics* of mystical experience described by Hollenback (1996). The experience occurs 'while he is awake', the privileged knowledge is of such significance to the community that it 'compels a response', it is clearly 'laden with affect', and its illustration is 'both literal and metaphorical' and leads Hamlet from 'experience' to 'interpretation', having its 'genesis in the recollective act' (pp. 40-1). Grof and Grof (1989) indicate that as a channeler Hamlet might suffer from ego inflation, a sense of superiority at having been chosen by an entity that is perceived to have a 'high level of consciousness', 'superior intelligence' and 'extraordinary normal integrity' (p. 95).
- 3) *Possession States* – It is possible that Hamlet's 'psyche and body' might have been 'invaded' or even controlled for a short time an 'alien entity or energy that has personal characteristics' (p. 98). However, it is difficult to determine whether the Ghost is ultimately 'malevolent', hostile' or 'disturbing'. At a present it could be viewed either as part of Hamlet's personality or what Grof and Grof describe as an 'ego alien' – coming from the outside. A 'possessed person' experiences true loneliness, separateness and anxiety associated with this condition, accompanied by physical distress. However, it is suggested that when an individual is able to confront and express this disturbing energy in a supportive and understanding setting the encounter

can prompt a 'profound positive experience'. Lambeck (1996) confirms that, 'As a mimesis of power and a discourse on morality, possession is attuned to contemporary circumstances. Frequently bringing the authority of the past to bear on the present, it is also highly flexible and ready to change' (Lambeck, 1996, p. 239).

Hamlet's Second Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

In BPM II, the birth process begins with the first uterine spasms with as yet 'no way out', which may lead to experiences of being caught hopelessly in a dangerous and grotesque world of nightmare creatures and images, or 'Dark Night of the Soul' (John of the Cross). Hamlet experiences an 'apocalyptic view of the world', an unending hell, and connects with his own loneliness, existential depression, despair and guilt in the form of his father's Ghost. Denmark has become the Hell/womb/prison from which there is no escape. Grof (2000a) suggests that individuals like Hamlet become so overwhelmed by what they perceive as a threat to themselves that they exhibit 'intense anxiety and a general mistrust bordering on paranoia' (p. 41). Hamlet's speeches reflect these preoccupations.

Prior to the appearance of the Ghost, and immediately after his first soliloquy Hamlet speaks freely to Horatio, a fragment of Act I, scene 2 that presents Hamlet's psychological position and his immediate concerns. Deeply suspicious of his friend Horatio, at this their first meeting, he questions his motives in attending him at Elsinore and it soon becomes clear early on in the piece that Hamlet's concerns, often well founded, are supported by his mistrust of those around him. He goes on to summarise views about the proximity of the funeral to the marriage, previously expressed in the first soliloquy. At this point Hamlet's recollection of both events brings to mind attendant COEX and their subject. Momentarily Hamlet is caught in a place where the temporal and spatial boundaries have somehow dissolved and in a NOSC he is able to experience his

father, 'My father, methinks I see my father...In my mind's eye, Horatio' (183-5). This is an awkward and surprising moment for Hamlet as the transpersonal and perinatal dimensions meet in the here and now of the biographical present. The vivid quality of the experience evidently requires effective self protection and immediate denial, perhaps even to himself as well as to a diffident and potentially alien world. However, Horatio intuitively understands, and shares his news that he, amongst others, has witnessed a transpersonal phenomenon, an apparition so identical in a number of details that he is able to identify it as Old Hamlet. Not surprisingly Hamlet's closing rhyming couplet acknowledges the dark side of BPM II, 'Till then sit still my soul, foul deeds will rise, / Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes' (258-9). This describes the dynamic tension that exists in SE between the conscious and the unconscious, the experience of consensus reality, and other realms of experience available to the human psyche. It is understandable that under the influence of the hellish inner world of BPM II Hamlet is inclined to view his father's ghost as a spirit from the same infernal region.

Conventionally, Hamlet, like many in contemporary society, could be perceived as having difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is not. However, it should be noted that it is Hamlet who is able to share in the psychosis of Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo who, in their turn, are willing to support him by keeping such a powerful sign a secret. At the same time they all naturally accept that this visitor from the transpersonal dimension is symbolic of some disease in the State of Denmark. As indicated in Chapter 4, the Elizabethans of seventeenth century England were able to incorporate elements of the transpersonal into their understanding of the psyche far more easily than our present civilisation can manage. Like our contemporary political spin-doctors, it becomes the job of Claudius and Gertrude to deny their own guilt and to cure, medicate, and sanitise the trauma of the state by scapegoating Hamlet.

The meeting with the Ghost fulfils one of Grof's (2000a) experiential variants which can occur at the start of the second matrix. This is usually expressed for the individual in 'the theme of descending into the depths of the underworld, the realm of death, or hell', the 'universal motif in the mythologies of the hero's

journey' (p. 41). Campbell's (1969) monomyth of the hero's journey provides an interesting comparative model for Hamlet's story, and it is covered in more detail in Chapter 3. Certainly, the Ghost has undeniably all of the qualities one would associate with a creature living in the 'sulph'rous and tormenting flames' (4) of hell, 'confined to fast in fires, / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purged away' (11-13). Forbidden to disclose the 'secrets' of his hellish 'prison-house' (14), Hamlet is denied the details of his father's torment in 'this eternal blazon' (21). However, following Grof's theory, Hamlet may not receive the full details verbally but he could feel his father as a powerful physical presence experience his father's suffering, perhaps as a 'claustrophobic nightmare', 'one of the worst experiences we can have during self-exploration that involves holotropic states' (Grof, 2000a, p. 41). As Hamlet is 'bound to hear' (6), his responses to the Ghost are minimal except when he is told of his father's murder. His enthusiastic reaction to 'sweep to my revenge' (31) indicates Hamlet's childish desire to please immediately, and a strong need to close the conversation and remove himself from further pain. However, there is no way out and the Ghost presses him with the graphic and disturbing details of his murderous poisoning by Claudius. Poison as the murder weapon of choice and the threatening posture of the assailant match Hamlet's fears precisely. 'The persons reliving episodes of intrauterine disturbances, or "bad womb" experiences, have a sense of dark and ominous threat and often feel they are being poisoned' (Grof and Grof, 1990, p.147). Denmark, no longer the safe womb of BPM I holding the rich promise of a satisfying future, has become a corrupted seedbed, 'A couch for luxury and damned incest...' (83).

Consequently, the COEX system that is Old Hamlet affects Hamlet and determines his experiential stage in this SE process in the perinatal dimension. Unfortunately, in insisting that he react to a transpersonal dimensional influence in the context of the dimension of consensus reality, the Ghost as an organising COEX system in his internal process becomes the Ghost personified. At this point it is impossible for Hamlet to distinguish between the two realities represented by each dimension, and he finds himself unable to choose between either reality as he now must fully live in both.

The Ghost speaks only to Hamlet and reactivates his sense of loss and feelings of loneliness. However, this time Hamlet seems to experience a kind of catharsis. The experience for Hamlet is exhausting and corresponds to the enormous physicality of spiritual emergence noted by Grof and Grof (1990). Physically shattered by the engagement, Hamlet surfaces bringing with him not just the baggage from his NOSC experience but an opened portal into an inner process that will consciously influence him for the rest of his life. Hamlet's second soliloquy begins as he wrestles with overwhelming physical exhaustion. On his knees he summons angels to protect him against further fiends coming from Hell, and questions whether he can expect more or if indeed his senses are functioning normally. In shock, reality for him is completely disrupted as he finds himself the isolated witness, this time without words to narrate the actual experience; he is upstaged by his own inner process. Paris (1991) argues that in this position Hamlet is powerless because he is not just alienated from the others, he is alienated from self. However, if the Ghost is a split-off fragment of Hamlet's personality it then, by definition, becomes a differentiated part of self. In this reading the Ghost is an active COEX constellation, and rather than being alien to Hamlet the Ghost represents concepts that are accepted by him as in urgent need of conscious integration. To suggest that the Ghost is separate from Hamlet is to resist the impetus of it as a process. In the same way, to encourage Hamlet to move on with his life after the death of his father without allowing him to integrate the deceased into an expanded understanding of the world without him, as Claudius and Gertrude try to do, is to frustrate his grief and loss process. In the same way as the Ghost's command to 'remember me' (91) is a call to further integration of both the father's loss and resolution of the SE experience, Hamlet's initial misinterpretation of the command as revenge creates an unhealthy connection with the father from which he is never completely freed, and an interruption in the process. In this sense, Hamlet must learn to discern how his feelings of love and loss for his father might be realistically reconciled. This is problematic when he is faced with a Ghost from hell whose purpose seems to be on the one hand to recover Hamlet's loss of self and on the other to destroy it. A similar promise of rebirth, coupled with the pain that accompanies the fear of annihilation, compels Hamlet to understand his SE as it is experienced in the paradoxical state of 'No Exit' in BPM II.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STAND AND UNFOLD YOURSELF

Introduction

Continuing with the analysis of Hamlet's soliloquies this chapter considers the third soliloquy as indicative of a further transition between BPM II and III, whilst the fourth and fifth soliloquies are viewed as resonant with the characteristics of experience so clearly representative of BPM III. These soliloquies appear in Acts II and III of the play.

Soliloquy Three (2.2.555-612)

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wanned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit; and all for nothing! (560)
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? what would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? he would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears; yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak, (570)
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made: am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face,
 Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i' th' throat
 As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
 Ha,
 'swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
 But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall (580)
 To make oppression bitter, or ere this
 I should have fatted all the region kites
 With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
 O, vengeance!
 Why, what an ass am I. This is most brave,
 That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a-cursing like a very drab: (590)
 A stallion ! fie upon't! foh!
 About, my brain; hum, I have heard
 That guilty creatures sitting at a play
 Have by the very cunning of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul, that presently
 They have proclaimed their malefactions:
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father
 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks; (600)
 I'll tent him to the quick: if a' do blench
 I know my course.... The spirit that I have seen
 May be the devil, and the devil hath power
 T' assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses me to damn me; I'll have grounds
 More relative than this - the play's the thing
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Hamlet's Third Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

The third soliloquy is a link between the revelatory tension of Hamlet's meeting with the Ghost in the preceding soliloquy and the famously 'measured intellectuality' of the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy (Newell, 1991). This soliloquy concentrates on the relationship between the actor, the action and the audience.

It reveals the contrast, Newell suggests, between 'disorderly passion' and 'orderly reason' unified and inspired by the Players' performance, particularly in the former, and Hamlet's formulation of a rational plan in the latter.

In addition to revealing Hamlet's plot to catch the king in his guilt, Hamlet's third soliloquy uncovers the very essence of Hamlet's true conflict. For he appears to be undeniably committed to seeking revenge for his father, yet he cannot act on behalf of his father due to his revulsion toward enacting that cold and calculating revenge.

Hamlet's sense of himself as a coward is derived from a crude, simplistic judgement turning on whether or not he has yet taken any action against the man who murdered his father. His self-condemnation takes several bizarre forms, including histrionic imaginings of a series of demeaning insults that he absorbs like a coward because he feels he has done nothing to take revenge on Claudius. (Newell, 1991, p. 61)

Newell determines that the crux of Hamlet's motivation is his struggle between passion and reason. According to Newell, Hamlet, because of his commitment to revenge, is tragically ensnared in a battle between his revenge passion and his sane reason. This dynamic conflict reflects a conscious determination in Hamlet not to be 'passion's slave' (3.2.70). Thus Hamlet struggles with his passion and applies his reason so that he may not succumb to the influence of Fortune and, at the expense of his mind, become her fool but rather be strong enough to accept, as Horatio does, 'Fortune's buffets and rewards.... with equal thanks' (3.2.65-6). Indeed through his fascinating and detailed work on all of the soliloquies in *Hamlet* Newell carefully tries to show that their dramatic rationale reveals that the defeat of Hamlet's mind constitutes the essence of his tragedy. 'For in Hamlet Shakespeare is primarily concerned with revenge not as a matter of what the revenger does to his victim but of what the revenger does to himself through his obsession with revenge' (1991, p. 73).

Consequently, guilty and determined to convince himself to carry out the premeditated murder of his uncle, Hamlet appears to work himself into a frenzy of self-repudiating contempt, culminating in the self-conscious realisation that his immediate behaviour is in itself a kind of theatrical counterfeit of the real thing.

Deeply troubled by his lack of action to avenge his father's murder, the first part of the soliloquy enables Hamlet to express some of the thoughts, feelings, and attendant emotions he has experienced whilst hearing the Players. Hamlet's recitation of Pyrrhus' speech for the First Player reactivates his own anger and frustration. In addition it discharges in Hamlet a profound understanding that in order to be a revenger he must have the capacity to be as horrifically violent as the 'hellish Pyrrhus' (2.2.467). Newell (1991) notes that Hamlet unwittingly betrays a link with himself and Claudius by his use of the same words in referring to himself and the king when he 'calls himself a "peasant slave" (553) and subsequently refers to "this slave's [Claudius'] offal" (583), and also when he calls Claudius a "kindless villain" (583) after having asked: "who calls me villain?" (575)' (p. 59). He goes on to suggest that Hamlet's blinding passion, and by this he means Hamlet's self-inflicted state of excitement, 'obstructs perceptions and rational extrapolations of how the revenge passion is now making him more of Claudius' kind rather than less' (p. 60).

Hamlet's very deliberate debate, however, reveals through a self-diagnosis using the theory of humours, that his lack of passion for revenge is explained by his being 'pigeon-livered' and lacking 'gall', or he would have 'fatted all the regions kites / With this slave's [Claudius'] offal' (580-3). However, his murder of Polonius later in the play and his despatching of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern convincingly ratify the latter personality. Lee (2000) explains that the theory of humours provides a rich 'vocabulary of interiority which describes how a person's inner-life works' (p. 155) and that an individual is defined by what he is rather than who. The theory is essentially physiological rather than psychological in its concerns and tends to be generally applied to mankind rather than specifically applicable to individuals. It may be that Hamlet wishes to indicate that his present condition prevents him from eliciting the passion required of a revenger, or it could be that this comment is simply the excited excess of adolescent bravado, or a deliberate attempt at irony. Resonating with the satirical tone of the first part of this soliloquy, he is satirising his attempts at playing the part of the stage avenger (565-9) and melodramatically pours scorn on a past self that may or may not have been heroic. In Hamlet's quixotic state he appears to question the mixture of his four cardinal humours, deliberately doubting his true interiority, and

satirising the subject. Eissler (1971, p. 108) observes that this extends Hamlet's discourse on the conflict between observable physiognomic data and the genuineness of the underlying emotion. Hamlet has learned what he should be rather than who he should be. He has become changed by his experiences and his self-mocking, rather than a spur to his passion, as Newell suggests. It is a strategy Hamlet uses to inhibit this resolve. Turned upon himself, the source of this mockery is his wicked wit and the pain of loss derived from a more self-limiting sense of his own mortality, as well as an abhorrence of dishonour. Certainly there is an argument between the passion to revenge and the intellect being played forward in this soliloquy, finally achieving an equilibrium when he says 'About, my brains: hum, I have heard / That guilty creatures sitting at a play' (592-3). Wilson (2000) suggests that Shakespeare's inclusion of the word 'hum' 'discloses in pure form the intrusion of the temporal logic of compositional activity into the temporality of dramatic representation' (p. 33). In disclosing Hamlet's intention to compose lines to be inserted into Gonzago's speech, it abruptly moves him from an overtly exteriorised representation of action to the creative and cognitive activity of composition, from the exercise of reciting a speculatively self-exposing script to one of composing a script which speculates upon Claudius' exposure. More specifically, it might be argued that Hamlet's reference to 'brains: hum' is a reaction to his heightened intuition suggested by excessive non-ordinary information derived from the perinatal experience of SE.

It is perhaps typical of an individual who, torn between the guilt of the revenge passion and the self-protective strategy of thinking too much, either commits acts of self-harm or, as in Hamlet's case, uses self-abuse as a weapon. In this self-mockery he seems to shift further and further away from the Hamlet that he recognises. It is as if he wishes to hide his true self in another role. At first he tries out Pyrrhus, but the effort to assume a character and a passion is thwarted by the reality that his honest self-contempt draws along with it, a realisation that he is no longer playing himself, the prince in mourning or the bloody revenger but the misplaced and disassociated roles, and using the powerless invective of the 'whore' (589), 'drab' (590), and 'stallion' (591) in the service of, and not in opposition to, Claudius in his role as the 'Bloody, bawdy villain!' (583). As Lee (2000) indicates, Hamlet might be disillusioned with language itself, and is

certainly keenly aware of its limitations. In this case Hamlet might well be aware of how language can control an individual and force him to play a role, and subsequently commit him to behaviour or action that is entirely incompatible with his true orientation. Armstrong (2001) supports this contention by suggesting that the acting out of Pyrrhus' 'dream of passion' before Hamlet suggests an 'imaginary identification with the dramatic "fiction" produces in its spectator only a disabling fantasy, a speechless fascination' (p. 15). Mercer (1987) suggests that Hamlet is speechless because of 'the unreal language of the stage' and the powerless effect it has upon reality, a fact which is ironically contradicted by Hamlet's later plan to use that same language to entrap Claudius (p. 193). However, Murray (1996) adds to the argument that Hamlet's acknowledgement of the power of vivid language to move a speaker merely illuminates his lack of emotion. Certainly his own use of words begins to intrude and the pain of his self-abuse leads him to recognise that instead of acting against Claudius he is conspiring with him against himself. The dramatic fiction has failed to configure any kind of imitative behaviour at all and Hamlet must secure another means of controlling the situation by use of reason. As Eissler (1971) suggests, it supports Hamlet's contention in his first soliloquy that feelings, including his own, are not an adequate starting point for planned action, and that, either false or genuine, emotions are unreliable incentives to action in general 'whether the goals they serve are real or fictitious' (p. 108). What he has learned from his experience of being trapped in his own emotions is that in being exposed to them he was made vulnerable to them. The same might occur, Hamlet intuits, if he is similarly able to trap Claudius in his own emotions.

King (1982) indicates that Hamlet is struggling with, in Erikson's terms, an 'acute identity confusion', and 'The objectivity necessary for interpretation of the art of the theater has been subverted by Hamlet's subjective response to an action he cannot bring himself to undertake' (p. 62). Thus Hamlet's understanding of the power of a fictional drama to affect the mind, more than reality itself, leads him to discard all former roles, as he does in his previous soliloquy. Hamlet adopts the one role that brings him most comfort, that of the stoic and indifferent witness (Kerrigan, 1994), and narrator of his own drama. In the second part of the speech, and further to this thought, the rational Hamlet lays aside the passion of

the revenger and employs the deductive reasoning of the sleuth. At this point the soliloquy, superficially, supports Newell's notion that Hamlet is obsessed with revenge.

However, it could be argued that it might make more sense to view the soliloquies as an opportunity for Hamlet to explore and experience ideas, as one would do in therapy. The soliloquy might be used as a safe holding environment where the only judgements made are those that an individual can make about himself (Winnicott, 1965). Those who work with adolescents and are parents can hardly have avoided noticing how overly critical and self-conscious they can be (Bird & Drewery, 2000: Blos, 1962: Washburn, 1994). Perhaps it is so with Hamlet. Certainly he moves effortlessly from his furious fantasy of revenge and self-satirising to the cold deliberation of the 'mousetrap' play. Newell, amongst many commentators, seems to regard this as a significant 'dramatic shift from the rule of passion to the rule of reason that takes place in the speech' (p. 67). He uses Clemen's (1987) comment that in a soliloquy the speaker is somehow 'split into selves which are in conflict with one another' (p. 6) to support this distinction. Unlike Newell, I cannot agree that reason does not underpin the whole speech, and that it may be that in the absence of counterfeit passion that reason appears to take up new residence. The conflictual selves of Clemen are evidenced by the alacrity with which Hamlet assumes guises, and discards them not according to the demands of passion but at the behest of reason. Hamlet's passion is fully subsumed by the necessity of managing the affects of his powerful losses.

He focuses his attention on a plan to ensure Claudius admits his own guilt. He returns to an idea that had crossed his mind earlier, that of staging the play *The Murder of Gonzago*, with lines inserted by himself that will be 'something like the murder of my father' (599). Hamlet is convinced that, as Claudius watches a re-enactment of his crime, he will reveal his own guilt. Hamlet cannot take the word of his father's ghost, who really might be 'the devil' (603), tricking him into damning himself. Thus, he must have more material proof before he takes Claudius' life. It is certain that 'the play's the thing' (609), but it does not necessarily follow that, as Newell evenly maintains, Hamlet will pursue his obsession with revenge, whether or not he should 'catch the conscience of the

king' (609). Hamlet gives Claudius the benefit of doubt whilst he assembles and fully convinces himself of the facts. It might even be argued that Hamlet has already dispensed with the revenger role in reality, if not in his private thoughts. Leaving judgement to God and, should Claudius convincingly fail the test, to the realm of the public gaze, giving him 'grounds / More relative than this' (608-9), should be a satisfactory resolution at this point both for Hamlet and his audience.

Hamlet's Third Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

Many critics observe that the Ghost's veracity as a witness is crucial to Hamlet's action in the play but it is of course the other way round. The Ghost represents not only a different dimension of existence but also a different way of thinking about self in a wider context that is both familiar and threatening. This Ghost that in consensus reality does but does not exist, instigates Hamlet's famous preoccupation with revenge. It is in fact 'nothing'. In his loss Hamlet believes himself to have 'nothing' and, since Claudius has usurped the accoutrements and trappings of power, he is 'nothing'. If Hamlet is obsessed at all he is obsessed with the notion of 'nothing' in all its dimensions. This 'nothing' is a state of non-existence and death, a state of lacking position or 'advancement', what an individual is left with when he experiences loss, the shallow and empty posturing of the Danish Court, the fictional conceit and nothingness of a man's life. It is possible that Hamlet's experience of SE has taught him to regard anything with a substance as cognitively and perceptually challenging.

Hamlet's concern for his altered state of consciousness is understandable. If he accepts the apparent reality of his engagement with a Ghost, what to others might be an encounter with airy nothingness, he may also have to deal with enormous perceptual difficulties in all the areas that others have consigned to the unexplained domain of 'nothing'. Hamlet's close consideration of 'nothing' is perhaps the prime focus of this soliloquy. Hamlet initially deals with the subject

of theatre. Having been audience to the Player's convincing portrayal of Pyrrus he is impressed by its forced 'conceit' (556). He describes the performance as 'a fiction' and a 'dream of passion' (555) and 'all for nothing' (560). Its sole purpose, for Hamlet, is to 'Make mad the guilty' (567). This precognitive comment subtly encapsulates the essence of the plan to catch Claudius' 'conscience' and echoes almost thirty lines later the notion that the force of a performance may make 'guilty creatures sitting at a play' (593) proclaim 'their malefactions' (596). On the basis of a message delivered by a thing 'more than fantasy' (1.1.54) Hamlet devises a plan using a trap whose content is a 'fiction' and at its core is 'nothing'.

Grof and Grof (1989) observe that in the crisis of 'psychic opening' there is a marked increase in intuitive abilities and that the occurrences of psychic or 'paranormal' phenomena are common during SE. They note that 'in some instances the influx of information from non-ordinary sources, such as precognition, telepathy, or clairvoyance, becomes so overwhelming and confusing that it dominates the picture and constitutes a major problem' (p. 18). One might add that this is so in Hamlet's case, especially if the information provides unsubstantiated evidence of a father's murder and might lead to the disclosure of a mother/wife's betrayal.

Alternatively, Newell (1991) pragmatically describes Hamlet's cognitive process as lapsing 'into the fallacious equation in which the distinctions between life and art are broken down' (p. 66), but Newell does not explain why this should be so and what has triggered it. He simply states that it does. It is understood that this 'fallacious equation' is a judgement made by consensus reality on all other forms of reality. Hamlet does not choose to fall into this trap, as he has no choice. At this stage in SE he finds it remarkably hard to make the distinctions that Newell calls 'fallacious' because to Hamlet they are not. The world of the Ghost and the world of his imagination are almost as real as the world that the Player presents. It is interesting that Hamlet consciously chooses an alternative dimension of reality to catch the conscience of the king and prove the providence of a Ghost that should only exist in a transpersonal realm but has crossed into the Hamlet's biographical world. Hamlet's ability even at this stage to think and manipulate

alternate realities indicates their particular influence over his decision making and his need to respect and use them. Clearly, Hamlet is cognisant of a dimension beyond the ordinary and is beginning to use it to counteract the detachment he must be experiencing.

In whatever manner the transpersonal disruption is frightening to Hamlet; his perception seems to have increased at the cost of his control over his emotional involvement in life. Indeed, Freund (1991) reads Hamlet's detachment as psychic incompleteness, that Hamlet's liminality prevents him from fully engaging in life. Viewed from a transpersonal position, Hamlet's perceived liminality is in fact due to over stimulation from dimensional influences over and above that of the biographical. In short, with only the Ghost's commandment living in his brain and the fact that the Ghost provides an opportunity, or medium, in which that material may be accessed, Hamlet's brain re-experiences a number of emotions. Rather than destroying the 'baser matter' of previously held memory and experience, the existing emotions of loss and sadness projected onto the body of the father from the son cannot co-exist with the unconscious emotions of anger and rage as they rise into consciousness in the Ghost's command.

It has been suggested that Hamlet's inability to respond coherently to these conflicting emotions is represented in his adoption of different roles. Freund (1991) notes that Hamlet appears to 'stage himself' and that each 'performance' is really 'an unsatisfactory rehearsal' (p. 153). Quoting McLuhan, Freund suggests that Hamlet is 'always in the process of getting ready to live' (p.154). Certainly there is much evidence of Hamlet's mistrust of emotion as indicators of truth, or even mental fitness. His performance in this soliloquy is a pastiche of the tragedy that he is unwittingly plunged into as the main character. His apparently incoherent behaviour has a physicality of one wrestling with a number of roles and powerful and contradictory emotions. Newell rightly argues that Hamlet's confusion rests upon his judgement that the greater the tragedy one experiences the greater must be the emotion (p. 65). Hamlet's problem is that in comparing the fiction of Pyrrhus with the reality of his own experience, he finds that not only is Hecuba's fictional loss of Priam greater but that the Player's emotional response impoverishes his own. Placed in the context of a

transpersonal reading, the confusion of Hamlet's judgement is entirely explained in his growing inability to make distinctions between dimensions.

Before the Player's recitation Hamlet, the would-be revenger, has already become associated with the figure of Pyrrhus by reciting the grotesque description of this revenger (2.2.456-68). The language is redolent of the frustration of the No Exit or Hell qualifications of BPM II. It is a

... satanic description that is entirely Shakespeare's invention, not Virgil's. It is therefore significant Shakespeare has selected material with a pagan revenger but deliberately rendered the description of Pyrrus in Christian terms that condemn him through his "hellish" features which produce a "damned" light. The horrific description of this revenger, slayer of families, "trick'd [decorated] / with blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons" mocks the chivalric notion of family honor connoted by the term "heraldy" in the grim description. The pagan-Christian combination is a deft touch consistent with the contradictions of the Ghost, who may himself be a "goblin damned." (Newell, 1991, p. 57)

However, much like the sympathies evoked by the Ghost's account, our sympathies are meant to be with Priam, thus Priam might be said to represent Old Hamlet, the satanic form of Pyrrus the bloody murderer becomes Claudius, and Hecuba is analogous to Gertrude. At this point Hamlet accepts that to beat Claudius he must become like Claudius, and his violent stream of epithets, whilst aimed at his uncle, are used by Hamlet to raise his own anger to a pitch and action that might match Claudius' villainy – 'remorseless', 'treacherous' and 'kindless' (584). Hamlet's language of self-torture is significant as it touches the mythological conceit with the hellish character of a murdered father damned to Purgatory and connects it back to his vivid transpersonal experience.

Newell suggests that Hamlet's emotional frenzy is a release of the 'pent-up rage incubating within the revenge obsession that took hold of his mind in his previous soliloquy' (p. 60). Newell consistently argues that Hamlet is obsessed with the act of revenge but the transpersonal reading indicates that revenge, far from being an obsession, is a necessary way of interpreting what to do about events in his life. Hamlet's mind, it must be assumed, regards revenge as one of a number of options available to it to maintain integrity. However, later in his work Newell

observes 'that the revenger is not a persona that finds easy accommodation in Hamlet's personality' (p. 66), and that much later in his work he concedes that a tragically weakened Hamlet allows providence to take control of this particular issue for him.

Examples of the existence of the other dimensions available to Hamlet are to be found everywhere in the language of *Hamlet*. It is argued by Ghose (1978) that such a rich inner life represented by the text is not immediately visible in what we know of Hamlet's experience. It may be that his deep inner life is not accessible except through language, and only the language he is prepared to give us. As an intervention, the language of the 'talking-cure' is consequently relatively limited. Yet Hamlet is the master of language, both accessible and deliberately evasive. Ghose recollects that,

The subject-matter of one's own life, however strong, can never match the force of literary invention; to approach a truth concerning human existence, the best medium is that special type of language which is not concerned with existing humans, but which, drawing its imagery from life, assembles those universals which are descriptive of the human race.

(Ghose, 1978, p. 56)

What Ghose is describing is the familiar language of universal religious belief, mythology and Grof's glossary of holotropic terms. Thus in this soliloquy, 'Two languages come together in the idea of the play; that of make-believe...and that which is the source of belief'. We are concerned with belief but Ghose suggests that Hamlet has constructed a reality 'made accessible and then believable by one making up a fiction, one who has never suggested he was doing anything other than telling a story, a lie' (p. 58). Thus in Ghose's terms Hamlet's new construction of reality is less potent than a fiction and yet has the ingredients of a fiction itself. Fact is stranger than fiction and it becomes much less believable, even to the individual who experiences it. Hamlet has been made to believe that he must exchange his authentically real emotions, derided by Claudius and Gertrude, and to disenfranchise them for those of the lie. In other words, the language and emotions of grief and loss must be subjugated by the transpersonal message to the fictional language and the superficially assumed emotions of the revenge tragedy. In his own form of narrative therapy, Hamlet

reframes his bereavement to revenge but is frustrated by his inability to reframe his emotions that must remain consistent with his original experience.

Hamlet's Third Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

The third soliloquy marks the transition phase between BPM II (Cosmic Engulfment and No Exit or Hell) and BPM III (The Death-Rebirth Struggle). The first half of the soliloquy is characteristic of matrix II, and combines deeply personal aspects of Hamlet's inner process with a strong sense of detachment from self. Here Hamlet manages to contain rather than experience the agonising emotions and physical pain of what he still considers to be normal for his present existence. His sense of utter futility, compounded by the guilt of his continuing inaction, makes him even more acutely aware that the world beyond him functions according to rules that he understands but is now unable to fully reconcile with his new perceptions and ways of being. In short, the world is not as it appears and Hamlet is challenged to accept a new role, a role which must accommodate and integrate the old ways of thinking, the new information, and his deeper understanding of reality. Hamlet's perception of the world has shifted and his inner transformation has to be effectively balanced with his outer engagement with the world.

The first part of this soliloquy is an argument in which Hamlet not only questions the validity of emotion as an indicator of true feeling but he also considers what are the cause and effect of normal human behaviour in the fully functioning individual. Influenced by BPM II he is severed from all that is positive in human life and alienated from the richness and security of feeling his own emotions. He has also become disconnected from the Court and consequently from society at large. Hamlet has journeyed to the realm of the dead and makes his ascent, tortured by what he has seen and heard. Re-emerging into a world that is blatantly false, he continues to witness day to day existence as profoundly superficial. In his temporary role as narrator, he is not only able to admire the

player for the skill of his craft, but can also regard this counterfeit expression of emotion with envy both at the ease of its facilitation, and with disgust and amazement at the way in which its apparent sincerity is universally accepted as genuine. Whilst this is certainly ironic it also reveals Hamlet's deeper preoccupations with the issues of a meaningful rather than affected existence, appearance and reality of the self and perceptual judgement, as they all contribute to his ability to manage the SE.

Through the prism of this matrix (BPM II), life seems to be a meaningless Theatre of the Absurd, a farce staging cardboard characters and mindless robots, or a cruel circus sideshow. In this state of mind, existential philosophy appears to be the only adequate and relevant description of existence. (Grof, 2000a, p. 44)

In this transition from BPM II to BPM III Hamlet appears to experience a moment of clarity in which he believes that there is a simple resolution to his condition. If he is able to properly define the source of his new perceptions, then he may be better able to accept the possibility of painful change or, by denying the validity of the source, arrest the process before it becomes too difficult. Grof (2000a) suggests that an individual confronted with the painful perinatal influences of the psyche would naturally feel a great reluctance to confront it 'Going deeper into this experience seems like meeting eternal damnation' (p. 44). For Hamlet, then, such reluctance is understandable and need not be regarded as a symptom of weakness. In SE individuals are notably sane and logical in their thinking. Hamlet is able to connect with the cognitive and rational, as he does momentarily when meeting the Ghost for the first time in the previous soliloquy. This time, however, instead of the wiping away of 'all trivial fond records' (1.5.99), he calls upon memory to provide a solution. Indeed, it is somewhat paradoxical that Hamlet is able to employ the knowledge and acute perception that he has acquired in the process of spiritual emergence which has directly facilitated the relationship with the Ghost to judge the validity of that same experience. From a counselling perspective, what is even more interesting is that Hamlet thinks that it is important to examine, explore, and test his sanity. In this respect, in his willingness to test the transpersonal material in the postnatal biographical dimension, he shows a greater acceptance of this unbearable state of

consciousness. As a consequence, instead of resisting the process of psychic opening he permits the valuable possibility of the purgation and liberation of dark experiential material from the psyche. He is exhilarated by his plan, and justification of having 'grounds more relative' satisfies both his drives for sanity and his need to trust his new and enlarged understanding of the world.

Grof and Grof (1989) have observed that individuals in SE may experience a number of extreme physical sensations at its start, such as 'feelings of oneness' and 'spasms and violent trembling', and those that accompany visions and images of 'deities, demigods, and demons'. What is particularly important for the study of Hamlet is that individuals inevitably are called to face their 'fears of impending insanity, even death'. However, in spite of 'plunging irrevocably into insanity, they often emerge from these extraordinary states of mind with an increased sense of well-being, and a higher level of functioning in daily life' (p. 2). Laing (1989), in his excellent essay on *Transcendental Experience in Relation to Religion and Psychosis* could be describing Hamlet's sudden confrontation with an insane world,

True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the 'inner' archetypal mediators of divine power, and through this death a rebirth, and the eventual reestablishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant to the Divine, no longer its betrayer. (Laing, 1989, p. 60)

The third perinatal matrix offers escape down the birth canal from the constricting prison of the uterus. This perinatal pattern mirrors Hamlet's trajectory that is his need to free himself from the prison of Claudius' Denmark, which is reflected in his inner struggle to establish a new kind of ego-functioning and is similar in many aspects. It does not, however, ease Hamlet's path but merely clarifies his short-term objective to verify Claudius' guilt, which he already intuitively feels, and to surrender to the process of re-living biological birth. The intense experiences of Hell provide Hamlet with the necessary support to encourage him to move on in his journey. The deep experiential trauma of loss that initiated Hamlet's spiritual emergence in BPM I, has given way to the Hellish visions, constellated around the figure of the father in BPM II. Moving into BPM III, on the perinatal level,

Hamlet embarks upon a personal struggle for survival, on the transpersonal level an intense battle of wills between the Ghost and his transpersonal self, and on the biographical level an active engagement with his major antagonist, Claudius.

Soliloquy Four (3.1.56-89)

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep - (60)
No more, and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished to die to sleep!
To sleep, perchance to dream, ay there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause - there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, (70)
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will, (80)
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.... Soft you now,
The fair Ophelia - Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.

Hamlet's Fourth Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

The interim between Hamlet's appearances is a day and it provides a good opportunity to assess his state of mind, examine his internal journey, and take comments from his family. Claudius, speaking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, describes Hamlet as putting on 'confusion', 'Grating so harshly all his days of quiet / With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?' (3.1.2-4). However Hamlet's madness is portrayed it suits Claudius to regard it as potentially 'dangerous'. Gertrude for her part believes that it is Ophelia who, in being the object of her son's affections, is the catalyst of his apparent 'wildness' (40), which is a reason with least claim to challenging Claudius and consequently where his best chance of safety would lie. Guildenstern, Mercer (1987) claims, is unconvinced by Hamlet's performance and describes it as a 'crafty madness' (8). Commentators describe this period of Hamlet's development as a feigned, false, madness that Hamlet adopts to give himself time to organise his actions and thoughts prior to revenge. Indeed Murray (1996) proposes that Hamlet is so preoccupied with maintaining this fiction that this absorption tends to displace the thoughts that might lead to his taking revenge (p. 74).

Not all agree with Bloom (1998) that in this, his most famous soliloquy, Hamlet is most acutely aware and reasoning. Mercer (1987) claims that Hamlet, for all of his philosophical posturing, is 'working by analogy' and 'not really thinking logically' (p. 202), whereas Newell (1991) confirms that this soliloquy is 'entirely motivated by reason untouched by passion' (p. 75) although it is not free of the emotion of his 'unhappy sense of life' that taints his otherwise rigorous logic. Naming Newell's 'emotion' in this case as grief and loss is to recognise and underline the very important significance of this 'emotion' to an understanding of Hamlet's particular response.

Unlike Hamlet's first two major soliloquies, the fourth seems to be governed by reason and not frenzied emotion. Able to do little but wait for completion of his plan to 'catch the conscience of the king', Hamlet initiates an internal

philosophical debate on the advantages and disadvantages of existence, and whether it is one's right to end one's own life. The soliloquy begins by formally posing a 'question' or topic for debate and as King (1982) notes, issues of a metaphysical nature such as this were commonly debated by sixteenth-century English undergraduates seeking the B.A. degree. Hamlet is responding to traditional questions – What is the value of death? What is the value of life? Ethically and morally, according to his circumstances, which of the two is preferable? Wilson (2000) adds that Hamlet's debate recalls St Augustine's in *De libero arbitrio*, where he 'shows why one cannot prefer not to be than to be unhappy'. Wilson continues that Hamlet's reasoning runs 'one could only will not to be... before one had the will to will it'. Wilson argues that although the soliloquy is belated, because it is retroactively future orientated 'it is a perfect example of the temporality of intentional action' (p. 36). Using rationality as a medium for the discussion almost negates the element of action so central to his concerns, but not the passion, and in this sense follows on neatly from the last soliloquy. As Newell observes, the scene projects the image of a man who is 'noble in reason' (2.2.307-8) and seeking wisdom. Clemen (1987) adds that in no other soliloquy 'do the audience have such a clear sense of being present at the conception of thoughts and ideas' (p. 136).

Newell's argument hinges upon Hamlet's capacity to use his mind and our 'comprehension of the tragedy which is the defeat of the mind by passion' (p. 76). Thus the soliloquy expresses in structure and dramatic presentation the central dramatic conflict between reason and passion. Newell contends that the context of the speech is significant to its interpretation and that both Clemen (1987) and Schucking (1937, in Newell, 1991), failed to see the connection between this and the last soliloquy simply because in the former scholar's opinion Hamlet does not follow through with developing his plan and in the latter's the speech does not fit naturally into its context.

Newell points out many commentators and scholars 'adopt a dubious procedure in reading the "To be" soliloquy too strongly in terms of Hamlet's psychological outlook in his first soliloquy, as though what happens to him subsequently were irrelevant' (p. 78). Newell argues, for example, that by examining the 'To be'

question in this soliloquy Hamlet is preparing himself for the mousetrap play and anticipating his first action against Claudius. Clemen (1987) disagrees and states that there is no 'anticipation of future events' or 'purposeful planning' (p. 133), adding that the soliloquy raises more questions about Hamlet and the play than it answers. It is well worth adding that Newell, with other distinguished commentators, gives surprisingly scant recognition to the significance of Hamlet's grief and loss as a context for the formulation of his ideas and their underlying dynamic emotion. For example, Hamlet's grief and loss are cursorily dealt with and 'subsequently were irrelevant' to Newell's more focussed study of Hamlet's reason, his mind, and his passion. Whereas Clement at least acknowledges that there is a tone of 'personal grief' (p. 138) in the imagery that permeates the language, for example the use of the verb 'to bear' in replacing 'to suffer' (70, 76, 81) and in the injustices and miseries enumerated in the 'six successive phrases, which categorize human behaviour and social standing' (p. 139).

To return to the first line upon whose meaning the entire soliloquy depends, Newell agreeably suggests that it is a highly subjective abstraction of the major implications Hamlet senses and finds in the dilemma of whether or not to proceed with the presentation of his version of *The Murder of Gonzago*. Eissler (1971) regards the soliloquy as a psychological continuation of the Hecuba monologue; in the former he dispenses with emotion and in this he identifies the one regulating emotion of action which is 'fear' as a first step in overcoming it (p. 113). Mercer (1987) contends that Hamlet's meditation carefully avoids tackling the question of 'revenge or no revenge', couching itself instead on the 'comfortably theoretical' and 'traditional, debating-topic of whether it is better for man to live or die' (p. 202). This is certainly not a debate that includes the taking of his own life. The previous day his mood was buoyant and he anticipated with excitement his plan to catch the conscience of the king being put into action. He also recognises the importance of verifying both the Ghost's provenance and the consequent truth of his message. As Jenkins (1982) rightly suggests, 'Yet nothing anywhere in the speech relates it to Hamlet's individual case. He uses the pronouns *we* and *us*, the indefinite *who*, the impersonal infinitive. He speaks explicitly of *us all*, of what *flesh* is heir to, of what *we* suffer at the hands of *time* or *fortune* - which serves incidentally to indicate what for Hamlet is meant by *to*

be' (p. 489). Pennington (1996) adds that it is puzzling that the qualities we are most moved by in Hamlet such as 'courage, wit, human optimism' are almost completely lacking in this soliloquy (p. 80). Lee (2000), commenting upon language use, states that 'I' or 'me' is not found once in this soliloquy, as a defining marks of 'Hamlet's inner nature', and argues that it makes all of the soliloquies 'remarkably general' (p. 154). However, later in his work Lee helpfully adds that although essentially 'non-narrative', this soliloquy 'gives us a portion of Hamlet's philosophy of the world', and consequently, citing Kelly's *Clinical Psychology and Personality* (1979), the 'philosophy... is Hamlet's personality' (p. 181). Finally, Clemen (1987) suggests in a similar vein that the fact that the 'logical and syntactic cohesion' is lacking reflects Shakespeare's intention to make the implicit more effective than the explicit, and 'the particular effect of this soliloquy is founded on the very fact that the cohesion is not explicit' (p. 134). Clemen's reading therefore emphasises the impression the soliloquy makes on the mind of the listener as he asks the question, 'what is conveyed to our imaginations and emotions?' (p. 134).

Hamlet hypothesises as to 'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer /The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, /Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, /And by opposing end them?' (60). He suggests that to live nobly is problematic when one has to contend with multiple misfortunes. This mirrors his current position and circumstances as he ponders, in a similar vein to the wiping away of 'all trivial fond records' (1.5.99), and resolving his 'flesh into a dew' (1.2.130) of two earlier soliloquies, that death might be a welcome release from earthly 'heart-ache' (62) and 'a consummation / Devoutly to be wished' (63-4). Mercer (1987) observes that in *The Spanish Tragedy* Hieronimo longed for 'the blossoms of oblivion' before he turned back to the path of revenge (p. 201). Hamlet's reluctance, in this respect, typifies a stage revenger as he studies the temptations of oblivion. It is an indication of his anxiety about the guilt that he has not as yet accrued that he should anticipate his damnation even before the performance of a damnable act. His consideration of death as a 'sleep' swiftly and succinctly resolves his earlier rhetorical question by the examination of his expressed fear that in 'that sleep of death' (66) one is unable to control 'what dreams may come' (66) which 'must give us pause' (68). In anticipating his guilt,

he is not even able to contemplate the final prize of a Christian Heaven but fixes upon a dubious image of an unrewarding and potentially punishing afterlife. He confirms later in the soliloquy that the 'rub' (65), the thing that prevents humanity from embracing death too quickly, is that it is 'an undiscovered country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns' (80). As Freund (1991) notes, Hamlet's father does return. It might therefore be suggested that Hamlet has still not fully incorporated the notion of the Ghost as his father. Nevertheless, for Hamlet at least there is some indication that fears of the unknown outcome, of further change, must be a considerably limiting factor to the continuing momentum of his inner process. He is caught momentarily between that which is known and that which may be. In his usually thorough audit he lists what he does know of the cause of man's suffering and all but three, 'Th'oppressor's wrong,' (71) and 'the pangs of disprized love' (72), suggested by Ghose (1978, p. 61), and a third 'The insolence of office' (73), have little real reference to Hamlet's own life. It is the text of intellectual inquiry with an unconscious sub-text that discloses anxiety about how dangerous living a life can be. He is fearful of the predictable outcome of his dramatic trap, both in terms of what Claudius' reactions might be, and the inevitability of his next step should Claudius be proved guilty, either of which would certainly be threatening to Hamlet's life.

However, Newell and Ghose both share the opinion that to read this soliloquy as a contemplation *of* suicide rather than *on* suicide is erroneous as the theme is on the one hand 'deficient in dramatic relevance and faulty in explaining Hamlet's behavior' (Newell, 1991), and on the other 'Hamlet is not contemplating suicide but testing the meaning of life' (p. 87). Ghose (1978) continues that if Hamlet has begun to realise that life is meaningless then he will have no expectations that death will solve anything either. The 'pale cast of thought' (85) makes all action including self-murder futile (p. 62). There does not seem to be any evidence in the text that would suggest that Hamlet might need to abruptly change his plans, or that suicide suddenly provides a more attractive and acceptable option. Russell (1995) more than cynically proposes that Hamlet's fantasy of death is marked by its narcissistic characteristics. He suggests that Hamlet is too terrified by the possibility that his persistent desire might never be gratified if the objects designed to gratify them are annihilated, and that Hamlet could not face 'the

prospect of total isolation in the midst of infinite void' (p. 151). His hesitation is based upon fear that he is able to counter with reason until Ophelia enters.

The concluding point of the soliloquy is to state that the use of suicide, as an example of avoidance in the face of the unknown, necessarily 'puzzles the will' (80). Hamlet recognises that if death were like a dreamless sleep then it might more readily be considered as an option. The 'rub' or obstacle Hamlet faces is the fear of 'what dreams may come' (66), which is the 'dread of something after death' (78) - the 'fear' of experiencing God's wrath and the tortures of Hell assigned to all that commit suicide. The text of the play very consciously discusses the act of suicide as a sin against God condemned by the Church. Ophelia ironically is shown as the individual who actions suicide whereas Hamlet, all reason, merely theorises about it. At the very start of the final act it is no accident that the same ethical deliberations over Ophelia's burial arrangements are being discussed by the gravediggers overheard by a thinly disguised Hamlet returned from his sea voyage. Almost as a direct answer to Hamlet's more thorough analysis, we learn through the First Gravedigger's comments that it is customary for a suicide victim not to be allowed full 'Christian burial' (5.1.1) rites, which supports Hamlet's original contention that the 'self-slaughter' (1.2.132) that he discusses within the first few lines of his first soliloquy is forbidden by God. What is perhaps not so obvious is the gravedigger's cynical quip that suggests that those of noble birth may somehow avoid the standard torture of the 'Everlasting' by using loopholes in canon law to be buried as naturally deceased Christians. Of Ophelia, the Second Gravedigger states, 'if this had not / been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out a Christian burial' (5.1. 34-5). It is worth noting that Hamlet, although he might have been aware of a similar legal dispensation in accordance with his position, had to balance a far greater demand upon him as an heir apparent to the Danish throne. With a God-given responsibility to serve Denmark's people he would be doubly offending God.

The final part of the soliloquy recapitulates his previous example and articulates the answer that he seems to be seeking that 'conscience does make cowards of us all' (83). Just as our 'conscience' prevents us from performing acts that offend God, he associates 'thought' (85) not with the vigour of inner processes but as a

disease to 'resolution' (84). Thus in this almost ironic soliloquy, Hamlet painfully assures himself that action without thought must become the new the goal of an individual intent upon revenge in Denmark. Hamlet must painfully change himself from the unhealthy introspective coward 'To be' the thoughtless avenging hero, the very antithesis of the Hamlet that has been presenting itself so far. Hamlet implies so persuasively that might is right in this soliloquy that it is difficult as an observer not to genuinely agree with his rational self-condemnation and the logic that he will, in the service of what is noble, become something he is not.

Mercer (1987) concludes that in a failure of logic, Hamlet has distorted the original opposition and that 'both passivity and activity have been now defined in explicitly heroic, even stoic, terms' as a choice between 'noble suffering' and 'heroic action' (p. 202). However, it seems that the most accommodating and noble resolution that Hamlet can arrive at by the end of this soliloquy is that not to act is cowardly and that action should not be preceded by too much thought. He is certainly aware that what he may have regarded as his inaction derives from a deeper fear of the known factors but more specifically of 'others that we know not of' (82). Thus as Lee (2000) indicates, 'conscience' has metamorphosed from fear finally into thought. Hamlet has not only failed to answer his original proposition, the question that really matters about performing the act of revenge, but almost seems to have failed to recognise it by his ability to use words that mask or avoid the issue for himself.

Ophelia, who has been placed to test whether unrequited love is the source of Hamlet's feigned madness, is herself feigning the saying of her prayers. She interrupts Hamlet's soliloquy. Hamlet addresses her as 'Nymph' (89), a courtly salutation common in the Renaissance. Some critics argue that Hamlet's greeting is strained and coolly polite, and his request that she remember him in her prayers is sarcastic. However, the claim that Hamlet, emerging from his moment of intense personal reflection, genuinely implores the gentle and innocent Ophelia to pray for him would be more consistent with Hamlet's decision to test himself against Christian law as the pagan revenger. As Pennington (1996) rightly points out 'The Christian inhibition against self-slaughter which Hamlet

recognised in his first soliloquy has gone now, replaced by fear, and his typical strengths have deserted him' (p. 80).

Finally, regarding the last two lines of this soliloquy, 'The fair Ophelia – Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered' (89-90), Mercer (1987) contends it is not revenge that Hamlet swears to do in the previous soliloquy but to 'remember' the 'pathos' and 'pain' of his father's self – to internalise them and integrate them or adopt them as his own. Perhaps Mercer is correct. Ghose (1993, p. 21) argues that Hamlet's solemn resolution to 'remember' should not be confused with his intention to 'revenge' which he dismisses as made 'only in the heat of the moment'. Nuttall (1998, p. 80) goes as far as to suggest that Hamlet in remembering submits himself entirely to the world of the dead. He says that Hamlet's paralysis, or delay, is partly because he has become as powerless as his father, 'a dead man walking among the living, opposite to life'.

Greenblatt (2001), however, presents a convincing discussion on the significance of grief and loss in the sixteenth century and is usefully included in this thesis. Greenblatt submits that even in the sixteenth century people were preoccupied with being remembered after their death. This suggests that Hamlet will be absorbed in how he will be remembered whilst haunted by the shade of his father to 'remember me'. This begs the question are bonds continued with the dead to honour those who demand to be honoured or are they really honouring the lost and disconnected parts of self whilst satisfying the need to affirm that they too will be remembered? Greenblatt (2001) continues that:

The overwhelming emphasis on the psychological dimension, crowned by psychoanalytical readings of the play in the twentieth century, has the odd effect of eliminating the Ghost as ghost, turning it into the prince's traumatic memory or, alternatively, into a conventional piece of dispensable stage machinery... the psychological in Shakespeare's tragedy is constructed almost entirely out of the theological, and specifically out of the issue of remembrance that, as we have seen, lay at the heart of the crucial early-sixteenth-century debate about Purgatory. (Greenblatt, 2001, p. 229)

More's souls are in panic that they are forgotten, erased by 'slothful oblivion'. They are heartsick that they will fade from the minds of the living, that their wives will remarry, that their children will mention them only, if at

all, 'so coldly and with so dull affection that it lies but in the lips, and comes not near the heart' (149)... (Greenblatt, 2001, pp. 229-30)

Hamlet's Fourth Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

Hamlet as Grof and Grof (1990) indicate, finds himself in 'the dark areas' and must go through them before he reaches a state of 'freedom, light, and serenity' (p. 46). It is clear from the Grof's work that for those who follow this route the resulting 'positive feelings often seem all the more significant and intense when contrasted with the difficult ones they encountered previously' (p. 46). Engaging these dark internal territories can be problematic for an individual and may, as in Hamlet's case, be interpreted by others outside of the experience as 'madness'. Day to day functioning becomes hard to balance with the internal territory of a psychic opening. As with Hamlet, concentration is difficult to maintain and he experiences frequent and spontaneous changes of mind. Individuals in SE may panic and experience feelings of powerlessness, guilt, and ineffectiveness. Commonly, individuals confront a sense of fear and loneliness, which can range from, 'a vague perception of separateness from other people and the world to a deep and encompassing engulfment by existential alienation' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 52). However, Hamlet in denying the fear's source, has mistakenly associated these sudden and new attendant sensations and emotions with his immediate life's circumstance. As boundaries that have been previously maintained between the consensus reality of Hamlet's biographical dimension and the transpersonal and perinatal have begun to dissolve, so Hamlet's worldview is disintegrating, increasing emotional responses, physical stresses and pain. Grof and Grof (1990) caution that 'The transpersonal realms contain both light and dark elements, and both the 'positive' and the 'negative' can inspire fear' (p. 48).

It is possible that in an attempt to disassociate himself from emerging memories, which are associated with or contain some fear, Hamlet has become alienated

from himself. Certainly, right from the start, Hamlet has sensed and has behaved as if he does not fit. Clemen (1987) concurs with many commentators when he observes that 'Hamlet now seems to be governed by a great calm, to be distancing himself in contemplation both from himself and from what is happening around him, although we sense deep within the torment still persists. Absorbed in thought he seems to be isolated from everything around him' (p. 135). Minimal surface emotion and inner torment would be consistent with an individual who is trying to govern an emerging SE and who is fearful of exposing himself and these new holotropic experiences to a less than sympathetic audience.

Hamlet's adolescent 'identity project' may also be perceived as contributing to this. His dress and attitude are also an affront to the Danish Court. Consequently, to the outside world Hamlet's self-isolating behaviour may be regarded as different or potentially threatening, and it is not unusual for individuals, as Grof notes, to question their sanity or even temporarily experience insanity, and to consider suicide, or to become preoccupied with death. In this much Hamlet's fourth soliloquy is the text book example of an individual's experience of SE: 'Confrontation with the issue of death is a pivotal part of the transformation process and an integral component of most spiritual emergencies' (Grof and Grof, 1990, p. 57).

Hamlet's philosophical contemplation on the subject of existence can be explained as a way of accommodating his inner turmoil and accepting it as a natural cycle of death and rebirth. Familiarity and acceptance of death liberates Hamlet from the fear of death by opening him 'to the experience of immortality' (p. 58). The death-rebirth paradigm, noted earlier, is a core belief in many cultures and the hallmark of many faiths. Consequently, in his soliloquy, Hamlet considers death but not as suicide, the source of his concern is how to let go of worldly pain whilst remaining linked to the world and at the same time transcend its 'ills'.

During transition toward this experience, individuals must undergo a painful procedure of letting go of worldly concerns that keep them attached, thereby

perpetuating suffering. The process of detachment is itself a form of death, the death of attachment. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 60)

In SE detachment occurs regularly throughout the process which will be confusing and distressing for Hamlet. SE provides a further, unasked-for opportunity for Hamlet to experience multiple grief and loss events that have occurred in the biographical dimension and are also essentially part of the transpersonal process that occurs over the death of the old self. In dealing with the traumas of the birth of the new Hamlet, he will necessarily have to come to terms with mourning the passing of the old. In the process of transformational healing detached from the world and its relationships Hamlet is experiencing another form of death which is symbolic.

Hamlet appears to be undergoing what Grof describes as 'ego-death', which is the ultimate detachment from the old and familiar existence. In this process, the ego is destroyed in order to accommodate a more expanded self-definition. Thus it is not surprising that commentators confuse Hamlet's 'ego-death' with contemplation of suicide. It is significant that Hamlet expresses his 'ego-death' by the gentle term 'sleep' as a escape from his untenable biographical position, a notion not unlike the wish to 'resolve into a dew' expressed in his first soliloquy. In Grof's experience, 'ego death' can leave a body potentially much more able to function effectively than before. However, what may also occur through this process is that the individual may confuse the inner event with the outer reality and come to believe that the whole of existence is on the point of being wiped out. It is true that Hamlet, in his expression of his circumstances, is drawn to descriptive language that universalises both his personal and his unconscious experiences.

It should be noted that Hamlet's 'ego-death' is not the same as his drive toward 'egocide', and equally neither is a wish for death by means of suicide. The two drives are not the same and neither is the outcome. However if the drive toward ego death is powerful enough, the individual may be confused, 'If the internal pressure is strong enough and if there is no understanding of the dynamics of the ego death, they may misread these feelings and act them out through self-

destructive behavior' (Grof & Grof, 1990p. 62). Stockholder (1987), understanding the implications of Hamlet's inner torment, helpfully suggests that for Hamlet 'to die is to be entrapped in a dream, or in his imagination, which may be 'as foul as Vulcan's stithy' (p. 50). In extending this idea it is possible to say that Hamlet's experience of SE 'in the mind' (57) has combined elements normally associate with dreams with those of his existential fears and that he feels trapped in a living nightmare which surpasses his worst fears. Nuttall (1998) further suggests of Hamlet that, 'bounded by a nutshell he would count himself king of infinite space, but for his bad dreams' (2.2.257), and that his perception of reality 'as persists' is by now a 'mere nightmare to Hamlet' who cannot tell what is real and what unreal, what is waking, what dream' (p. 70). It is certainly worth considering that Hamlet could be driving himself to 'egocide' if one considers his desire for self-destructive behaviour and his desire to escape from his SE.

However, as the Grofs point out, Hamlet's current experience can be balanced, if guided purposefully: 'Just as one may encounter the desolate area of ego death during the dark night of the soul, one can also encounter a kind of positive ego death in transcendental realms' (1990, p. 67). This is supported by King's (1982) contention that "'To be" need not mean suffering in an afterlife, but rather a transcendence of earthly consciousness into a heavenly one' (p. 76).

It is worth commenting that Hamlet uses a richly philosophical form of the language to express and to detail his growing awareness of the dimensions of experience that he is encountering in SE, as noted above. Dover Wilson (1972, p. 127, in Newell, 1991, pp. 77-8) suggests that 'the only thing that holds his [Hamlet's] arm from striking home with *the bare bodkin* is the thought of *what dreams may come, the dread of something after death*'. Hamlet associates with feelings that support his contention that life is a burden: 'suffer,' 'troubles,' 'heart-ache,' 'shocks,' 'calamity,' 'fardels,' 'weary,' 'bear,' and others. Newell notes that the language used is 'expressing the quasi-philosophical foundation for these feelings, a view of life that sees it exposed to the chaos of malicious chance happenings: *the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to, the whips and scorns of time.*' (p. 80). This is the vocabulary and language of SE as well as the 'To be' soliloquy. The verb 'to be'

is seen again but this time, in the infinitive. There are a number of these, such as 'to suffer... to take arms... to die... to sleep... to be wished... to say'. Although this vocabulary is totally apposite to Hamlet's condition it is framed in such a way that his SE is never totally disclosed and therefore cannot be understood by anyone such as Claudius or Polonius in overhearing it.

It is useful to note here that the last encounter with Hamlet was, according to the text, a day ago when he was alone and giving his third soliloquy. Newell, (1991) citing the critics Schucking and Levin, notes that there is an argument that suggests that this fourth soliloquy is misplaced and that it should occur prior to Hamlet's meeting with the Ghost (p. 78). This argument is supported by a number of points. For example, the content of the soliloquy has more in common, and directly links, with that of the first soliloquy. It is reasonable and controlled and has none of the frenzied excitement of the later soliloquies. Finally, and most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, it seems to contain more elements of the second perinatal matrix than the third perinatal matrix. Consequently, although it still fits into the scheme of speeches in the text, it would be more comfortably placed at the end of Act I, Scene 2.

Hamlet's Fourth Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

Richly coloured by an underlying intensity of anxiety, the third perinatal matrix is noted by Grof (2000a) for its potential to be extremely dangerous to the developing foetus and simultaneously the developed individual. Uterine contractions and compression can compromise the foetus' blood supply, or the placenta may prematurely detach blocking the way out. There can be suffocation, and/or strangulation from the twisting or squeezing of the umbilical chord, or in the inhalation of various forms of biological material, which intensifies feelings of discomfort and can occur in the final stages of the process.

The issues considered in Hamlet's speech are reflected directly in the *titanic aspect* of Grof's (2000a) BPM III experience. Albeit calm and fiercely controlled on the surface, the soliloquy draws deeply from perinatal experience and attendant COEX. Although Hamlet draws upon his own existential crisis so predominant in previous speeches, there is the detachment of the witness once more, as he philosophically determines the pros and cons not just of his own but of mankind's future existence. Famously unfathomable, this speech gives little away about Hamlet's own state of mind except to say that fear or 'conscience' prevents him and humanity from exploring too far into the transpersonal domain. However, it is much more than an exercise in logic as it succinctly summarises the human condition. In the perinatal context 'the question' of whether to exist is closely followed by 'the question' of the meaning of that existence. It is, perhaps, the foetus having second thoughts, already wishing to escape its present pain and needing to regress to the first perinatal matrix or even to the celestial oblivion of pre-perinatal existence. Clearly, Hamlet's thoughts may cover the options but these are the thoughts of an adolescent already deeply embedded in a process of transformational change, which he seems to have accepted. Consequently, whilst the death of his old self may serve his developmental needs, add meaning to life and thus be ultimately attractive, the possibility of actual physical death cannot be contemplated as it prevents the whole process from reaching its meaningful conclusion. Hamlet describes death as 'The undiscovered country'. Most importantly, he comments, from his own experience, that to actively seek that which consensus reality accepts as unknowable 'puzzles the will'. Although this is a good explanation of Hamlet's famous inability to act, it also provides us with the information that Hamlet has a more complete understanding of the way in which his SE informs his wider development. As Hamlet's loss has dissolved the temporal and spatial barriers to the holotropic he is able to note that, in most cases, it is the regularity of day to day existence that keeps individuals in ignorance of the holotropic. The fear of death too, and the physicality of the 'skin encapsulated ego' can become a major barrier to the accessing the transpersonal and perinatal dimensions. Underlying this insight, Hamlet must be indicating his uncertainty about how others regard individuals who are in the process of SE.

Hamlet's non-ordinary state of consciousness is responsible for his growing perception that the two-dimensional world of everyday reality does 'make cowards of us all', because without the understanding and benefit of the broader picture, intelligent individuals 'bear those ills we have'. He also seems to be arguing that it is perhaps better 'to be' rather than to think, and that thinking traps an individual into a relationship with his conscience, or the superego, which prohibits action and spontaneity. It is an appeal for the use of intuition rather than logic and gut-reaction rather than intellectual consideration as a reaction to a particular set of circumstances. Drawing upon his own energetic and natural playfulness, he views the world's potential for 'enterprises of great pitch and moment' as being eroded by too much thinking. He may be criticising himself but he also refers to his uncle's court which is clearly a place of much intrigue and talk, having the substance but none of the action. The Danish Court is a place of paranoia, and reflects Hamlet's state of mind perfectly.

In BPM III Hamlet encounters massive forces of energy that can be quite overwhelming in their intensity. The *titanic aspect* is most clearly recognised in Hamlet's 'death-rebirth struggle' with himself, as it engages powerful issues of life and death, and good and evil, already presented in terms of the paradoxical circumstances Old Hamlet and Claudius. The soliloquy engages elements of BPM I as Hamlet turns from the bad womb experience of 'a sea of troubles' to the forgiving nature of a 'sleep of death'. However the paranoia of BPM II intrudes and the 'sleep' becomes a perilous place where we may experience 'dreams', which it seems by their very nature are more to be feared than 'The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to'. Hamlet's soliloquy comes straight from his immediate experiences. He is suffering the visions and experiencing the feelings of a NOSC. The soliloquy provides Hamlet with an opportunity to explain this experience in some detail. In this therapeutic interchange with the self Hamlet describes his main experiences, and suggests his fears: to quit the process; to regress rather than develop; to avoid further painful experiences; to value life and bear its disappointments and humiliations; to fear the unknown and the possibility of change; and the recognition that the process of thought can inhibit further spiritual development.

Soliloquy Five (3.2.391- 402)

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on: soft, now to my mother -
O heart, lose not thy nature, let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom,
Let me be cruel not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none,
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites, (400)
How in my words some ever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

Hamlet's Fifth Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

Hamlet's plan to 'catch the conscience of the king' has been a success, and Claudius has retired, distraught, to his chamber. However, as Pennington (1976) so rightly points out, 'He has given himself away to Claudius at the moment he hoped Claudius would give himself away to him; his mousetrap now awaits only his own foot on the trap' (p. 93). This short soliloquy ends the play scene and reveals Hamlet's 'readiness to kill with bestial fury' (Newell, 1991, p. 101). Thrilled that his scheme has worked, Hamlet experiences a sudden surge of confidence that prompts the first half of this soliloquy and reflects the conventional murderer's speech, which is similar to that in *The Murder of Gonzago*. In this way, Newell (1991) suggests, Hamlet sounds like a stage murderer, a tone which he believes continues into the next two soliloquies, in the mistaken murder of Polonius and 'wildly murderous spirit of wreaking vengeance' (p. 101). Hamlet appears to have taken to himself the role and spirit of the revenger but it is not fully integrated as part of his personality. It is almost as if he does this self-consciously in his unwillingness to be totally consumed by the role. Newell (1991) suggests that 'characteristically' in an attempt to control his readiness for violence he reverts 'to analogical and analytical thoughts in hopes

of achieving an adequate measure of control over his feelings.’ (p. 105). More plainly, Mercer (1987) judges Hamlet’s savagery as ‘safely conditional, still at the hypothetical distance of “Now could I”’ (393). Hamlet begins by disassociating himself from the reflective and reasoning individual of the previous speech, and closes with a perilously small degree of control over his feelings.

At the start of the soliloquy Hamlet has asked to be left alone and his tone is forthright and purposeful. Identifying and initially submitting to the role that he must play, Hamlet assures himself that the requirements for staging a revenger’s murder are all in place. The ‘witching time’ (391) is perfectly in accord with the initiation of the ‘bitter business’ (394) he proposes. His description of the incipient release of hellish contamination into an unsuspecting world ‘When churchyards yawn’ (392), reflects his belief that Claudius’ influence is contagious, or literally poisonous to the body of Denmark, and mirrors the circumstances of his father’s death. The immediacy of ‘now’ (391, 393) expresses Hamlet’s readiness for revenge as he positions that action within the darker dimension of Charnley’s (1969) ‘Doomsday’. Newell (1991) contends that in his extremely excitable state Hamlet’s revenge passion supersedes his cognition, particularly as it relates to his own mortality. As the barriers to reason are broken down he must manage his grief while balancing a new worldview.

Hamlet is now sure that he can easily complete the ‘bitter business’ of revenge and murder his uncle without hesitation. Momentarily, he finds that Claudius is out of reach and so Hamlet turns his attention to his mother, revealing in the second half of the soliloquy his intentions to force Gertrude to make a full confession. Accompanying his murderous thoughts is the reasoned resolution that his ‘heart’ should ‘lose not thy nature’ (396), or control, as if he is consciously aware of his potential to commit matricide, by becoming the mad ‘Nero’. He resolves that, although he still loves his mother, he must be ‘cruel not unnatural’ (398) to her in order to facilitate the admission of her guilt. However in stating quite perversely that ‘My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites’ (400), Hamlet, as Newell (1991) notes, is really saying that ‘his soul contradicts his tongue, making each hypocritical in relation to the other’ and that Hamlet ‘betrays that the matricidal soul of Nero may indeed have entered his bosom’ (p. 105). This time

Hamlet in his anger is becoming more like the player who 'But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, / Could force his soul so to his own conceit' (2.2.555-6).

Hamlet, his puzzled will caught up in the reality of his own dramatic narrative and the nightmare of his reality, is about to feign violent intentions towards his mother and use words expressing these false intentions. It is right to question the implicit rather than the explicit meaning of his closing couplet and consider Hamlet's expressed ability to control his own behaviour. Certainly Newell (1991) suggests that the 'growing crescendo of Hamlet's menacing passion', in the next scene with Gertrude, establishes the relationship between the 'revenger's fury and the spirit of revenge symbolized by the Ghost' (p. 107).

A Hamlet's Fifth Soliloquy

Transpersonal Reading

The first part of this soliloquy reveals a transpersonal dimension that is becoming increasingly familiar to Hamlet since meeting his deceased father. Dwelling in both the hellish world of death and the increasingly unstable and disturbing environment of the once familiar biographical dimension, Hamlet, by his use of language, begins to subvert and control the SE visions. The alternative reality of Hell begins to strongly intrude and is interpreted and reconstructed as a stage on which to perform at long last his fantasies. This boundary confusion as Hamlet mismanages his perceptions by applying consensus reality's rules to those in the transpersonal, and vice versa, proves ultimately disastrous. 'The image of "churchyards yawn" suggestive of the previous appearance of the Ghost, links the Ghost with hell and perhaps foreshadows the reappearance of the Ghost when Hamlet is with his mother.' Here Newell (1991, p. 102) rightly links the Ghost with hell but unaware of Hamlet's access to the transpersonal dimension, does not link them both to Hamlet's interior experience.

It is assumed that the Ghost is only present at key moments in the play. The transpersonal reading suggests that the Ghost as first manifest in the early

stages of SE maintains its influence over Hamlet up until his sending to England. Indeed, Hamlet's return through the graveyard and his bemusing acceptance of death might indicate that the shadow of the Ghost still falls on him. Hamlet's reference to 'hell' in this soliloquy, in recalling the question he posed in making his original commitment to revenge, 'And shall I couple hell?' also discloses his fear of this interior dimension. His original question raised the possibility that the Ghost might be a 'goblin damned,' and not 'a spirit of health' (1.5.40). For the transpersonal reader it must additionally beg the question as to whether the SE experience is continuing to trouble Hamlet. In a recent conversation with Rosencrantz he replies that he cannot 'Make you a wholesome answer – my wits diseased' (3.2.322). This comment although intended to puzzle Rosencrantz with his dark and angry wit, might well be thinly disguising Hamlet's more serious concerns. He is on the edge of taking risks, fully aware of his inner self-destructive promptings to commit 'egocide'. It no longer seems ironic, as Newell would have it, that the act of revenge that the Ghost called for, and that Hamlet is now ready to carry out, remains associated with hell and the sinister qualities of 'the witching time of night' (p. 102). However Newell is right to point out that 'Hamlet's mentioning "hell" and "night" in connection with his readiness for vengeance is also in touch with the satanic description of the "hellish" Pyrrhus, whom he associates with the night' (p. 103).

Perhaps the most marked additional feature of this soliloquy from a transpersonal perspective is its inference of ritual blood sacrifice and its relationship to both violence and renewal. Newell reminds us that 'Hamlet's distinctly bestial image of drinking hot blood' (p. 103), citing Charnley (*Mosaic* 10, Spring 1977, p. 81), is derived from the pagan practice of drinking 'the blood of a newly killed enemy, whom you humiliate beyond death by ritually partaking of his life-blood, still warm and bubbling – an outrage he is powerless to prevent'. In Perry's (Grof & Grof, 1990) work on transformational crisis that he has termed the 'renewal process' he describes people who feel that they are involved in experiences of cosmic relevance that put them at the centre of events. For them the psyche becomes a battlefield on which Good and Evil fight for control of the world. This assumption is supported by Hamlet's reference to Doomsday. The 'churchyards yawn' (392) and the incursions of hellish forces from another dimension are both reminiscent

of Judgement Day and the fears of experiencing apocalyptic visions as part of the SE process.

Individuals engaged in this type of crisis might feel that it is essential for them to understand the nature of death and what functions these have in the universal order. They might experience a connection with the afterlife and communication with their ancestors. The idea of killing, sacrifice, and martyrdom seems particularly significant and appealing.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 87)

Significantly, Hamlet feels that he has been offered the opportunity to correct the wrongs committed upon himself, his immediate family, and the nation as a saviour to establish a better world. As in Perry's renewal process there is a particularly heavy preoccupation with the function of life, death, and dying in Hamlet's soliloquies. The concept of Hamlet's renewal in terms of the nation's renewal has not yet been introduced implicitly. However, Hamlet as heir apparent may understand that his transformational crisis in turn affects the well being of the nation.

Hamlet's Fifth Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

Falling further under the influence of the third perinatal matrix, Hamlet encounters, in the first part of the soliloquy, what Grof (2000a) calls the *demonic aspect* of BPM III. This aspect, although only briefly referred to by Hamlet, is particularly problematic for the contemporary 'experiencer' and the therapist as the manifestations involved are often extremely difficult to endure. Hamlet refers to the 'very witching time of night', to 'hell' and to his drinking of 'hot blood', to common themes experienced in this aspect of BPM III.

... scenes of the Sabbath of the Witches (*Walpurgi's Night*), satanic orgies and Black Mass rituals, and temptation by evil forces. The common denominator connecting this stage of childbirth with the themes of the Sabbath or with the Black Mass rituals is the peculiar amalgam of death, deviant sexuality, pain, fear, aggression, scatology, and distorted spiritual impulse that they share. (Grof, 2000a, p. 47)

Drawing upon Grof's knowledge we are able to identify Hamlet's behaviour as acting out, or synchronistic with, this aspect of BPM III. The closing line in this first part of the soliloquy must lead to a consideration of another characteristic of the third matrix which is *aggressive and sadomasochistic aspects*. Hamlet toys with the idea of doing 'such bitter business as the day / Would quake to look on' and in the same line calms himself prior to announcing that he will visit his mother. This juxtaposition of images brings to mind Stockholder's comment that in Hamlet's imagination, sexuality equates with death, the notion of death not as dissolution but as 'the corrupted body' (p. 45). It suggests Hamlet's sexual arousal as he imagines himself as Nero murdering his own mother, converted to the violence he convinces himself he will not use.

On this perinatal level Hamlet is, perhaps, experiencing the full biological fury of uterine contractions and threats of suffocation, the full force of his fear of death. Facing this aspect of the matrix Hamlet could be experiencing 'cruelties of astonishing proportions, manifesting in scenes of violent murder and suicide, mutilation and automutilation, massacre of various kinds, and bloody wars and revolutions' (Grof, 2000a, p. 46). His decision to meet with his mother, in this context, must either be regarded as a calculated challenge to control and pursue his process and the activation of his unconscious desire to seek the original birthing relationship, or a folly of potentially epic proportions. In preparation he gives himself guidelines to be present at all times and in all respects as a natural son towards his mother, and to avoid anger and harm towards her. However his apposite comparison to Nero is a sardonic and dangerous judgement of Gertrude's complicity since Nero, in 64 A.D., murdered his own mother, who had poisoned her husband the Emperor Claudius. Once more Hamlet must feel the tension between what he is experiencing in his interior reality of SE and what he normally might have done before the onset of this condition. This contradiction

therefore is picked up by the violent imagery of 'I will speak daggers to her, but use none'. Lethally angry with Claudius, and potentially very violent, he is determined to speak with Gertrude about the now-confirmed facts of his father's death and so he goes to her. Hamlet's position is reflected in the *aggressive and sadomasochistic aspects* of BPM III which are often experienced as self-sacrifice, execution, bloody man-to-man combats, sadomasochistic practices, ritual sacrifice, and torture, which importantly prefigure the actual events of Act V Scene V. Hamlet's approach to Gertrude is therefore a true test of his ability to balance the inner and outer realities of his psyche.

It is important to remember at this point that Hamlet's re-experiencing of perinatal events is just that, and that these experiences may or may not intrude into the world of consensus reality. This will depend upon Hamlet's ability to manage his turbulent inner process and would normally rely heavily upon the quality and nature of the support that he should be receiving. Hamlet is a classic case of a self-managed SE. In his earlier speech he recognises that 'conscience does make cowards of us all' and it is this recognition, positively applied, that acts as a special feature of Hamlet's management of his process.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LONG LIVE THE KING!

Introduction

This chapter establishes Hamlet's positioning in BPM III with the sixth soliloquy and considers his seventh soliloquy in Act IV as a further transition between Grof's BPM III and IV. This concludes the analysis of the soliloquies and prepares the reader to view Hamlet in Act V illuminated by these significant transformative experiences. The next and final chapter will discuss Act V in terms of BPM IV and will draw some conclusions about Hamlet's holotropic experience.

Soliloquy Six (3.3.72-96)

Now might I do it pat, now a' is a-praying -
And now I'll do't, and so a' goes to heaven,
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:
A villain kills my father, and for that
I his sole son do this same villain send
To heaven....
Why, this is bait and salary, not revenge.
A' took my father grossly, full of bread, (80)
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May,
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No!
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent,
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed, (90)
At game, a-swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't,
Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,

And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell whereto it goes; my mother stays,
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Hamlet's Sixth Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

Claudius has instructed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to escort Hamlet on a 'speedy voyage' (3.3.24) to the English who are to be commissioned to kill him. Meanwhile, Hamlet has already gone to meet with his mother in her closet. On his way he encounters Claudius who he believes is praying. Hamlet has thought himself prepared to 'drink hot blood' (3.2.382) and carry out the murder of the King. Now, as he happens upon the unattended Claudius in the audience chamber, the time has come to take action but Hamlet finds that he is unable to kill in cold blood.

Hamlet's reason for delay is that Claudius is in the midst of praying (Brown, 2001). The image of the praying Claudius and a potentially murderous Hamlet, sword drawn and poised to deliver the final blow, fully realises Hamlet's revenge fantasy and concludes his mousetrap stratagem. The roles are completely reversed and as Newell (1991) suggests this stage image 'gives the sharpest possible focus to the two disparate moralities on exhibit in the play' (p. 119). The tough language of 'Now might / I do it pat, now a' is a-praying – ' (73-4) contrasts with the normal idiom of Hamlet's former fine expression. Newell (1991) comments that this 'cruel tone' indicates Hamlet's distracted focus on controlling his violence, and of his growing brutalisation as a revenger. In addition his language expresses the suddenness, surprise, disappointment, and frustration of his discovery. Having articulated his desire to murder Claudius he is then providentially presented with the opportunity to do so and the synchronicity is too bittersweet for even Hamlet to fully articulate. The first section of the soliloquy reveals Hamlet's immediate pattern of thought as he happens upon Claudius and is placed in a position to kill him, to 'do it'. The impact of the repetition of 'it' (1-2) is the recognition of an opportunity followed by its subsequent action. The

repetition of 'and' (2-3), according to Newell (1991), gives this sequence its emotional momentum and the repetition of 'now' (1-2) discloses the 'concomitant conflict in Hamlet about doing "it" "now"' (p. 121). The opening line 'Now' becomes conflictually constrained by its conclusion in 'now a' is a-praying'. The phrase 'do it' quite ironically finds its fullest expression in Claudius' soliloquy in Act four scene three. He anticipates with relish the final demise of Hamlet at the hands of the English and says decisively, 'Do it England' (64) 'till I know 'tis done, / Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun' (66-7).

Hamlet, characteristically, is caught between having 'will, and strength, and means, / To do't' (4.4.45-6) but, in conscience, unable to dispatch Claudius at prayer because it will 'send' him 'To heaven' (78). Mercer (1987) advances that it would not only be unsatisfying for the revenger, as Hamlet would like to think he is, but also unthinkable for the moral being that in fact he is (p. 216). Newell describes the situation perfectly:

The mean-minded callousness of Hamlet's vengeful considerations in this soliloquy stands in harsh contrast to the penitential tone just established by Claudius' soliloquy, a contrast also sustained visually by the dramatic image of the helpless king on his knees while Hamlet, sword drawn and with blasphemous arrogance, engages in a qualitative analysis of what constitutes genuine revenge. On the one hand, Claudius has been seen sympathetically in his attempt to extricate himself from the passion that makes him feel like a 'limed soul'; on the other hand, Hamlet is seen violating the spirit of Christian penitence (albeit it is merely an appearance) and luxuriating in the passion for revenge that is seething in him.

(Newell, 1991, p. 120)

Sword in hand, Hamlet checks himself to ponder the ramifications of murdering his uncle and to consider how it might make him look to the world, how 'That would be scanned' (76). In this speech Hamlet conspicuously fails in his analysis to consider how becoming a murderer might affect his soul. Instead his mind tells him that this act of revenge that he so anxiously sought would appear to others merely as 'bate and salary' (79), base and silly. Hamlet might well reflect that a parody of revenge would not sit well with either his father's command or his damnation. Not knowing 'how his audit stands' because 'who knows save heaven?' (82) but knowing "'Tis heavy with him' (84), Hamlet weighs his father's position in hell with Claudius going to heaven and it immediately appears unfair.

However, it should be remembered that the reason he gives for his decision to stay his hand is firmly based upon his interpretation and subsequent subversion of Christian belief. He is only prepared to commit murder in the optimum circumstance for sending Claudius to hell. As Eissler (1971) notes 'what Hamlet has contemplated is actually the worst revenge that a Christian can take' (p. 116). Consequently, according to Christian belief, in committing murder Hamlet also condemns himself to hell, which proves again that although his logic is perverse it may be increasingly consistent with his 'more horrid' (88) passion.

The crux of Newell's detailed hypothesis is that Hamlet's intellect is subverted by his passion and at this point is revealed with such vengeful pride that Hamlet 'not only preempts for himself vengeance, which the Lord says is His, but also intends to preempt God's exclusive power to judge a human soul after death' (p. 124). King (1982) alternatively contends that to admit the ambiguities of 'divine determinism and man's moral freedom' is to accept that Hamlet's postponement may be read as his understanding that providence will provide further and more appropriate opportunity. In other words, even by this stage Hamlet is beginning to believe in the existence of providence and that it cares for him particularly. Murray (1996), in tackling the problem from a different position, suggests that Hamlet's delay is not a weakness as many commentators argue but a deliberate decision to 'cool off and think better about what to do'. He implies that Hamlet's decision is quite rational, for whatever reason he may give, as it prevents the real weakness of 'furious anger' and unthinking revenge from occurring (p. 76).

In order for Hamlet to complete his revenge the King must be engaged in some sinful act such as sex, gambling, or drinking, and thus be condemned to eternal damnation (89-92). While it is true that similar reasoning is common in other revenge plays, such vengeance seems unworthy and needlessly extreme. However, it is worth considering that in the context of Christian belief Hamlet's decision and desires to damn Claudius eternally now becomes a far more terrible revenge than the taking of his life. Many commentators believe that Hamlet uses Claudius' praying as an excuse for further delay because his conscience will not allow him to commit premeditated murder. Others claim that it is not Hamlet's altruism which saves Claudius in this scene, but his own paralysing habit of

'thinking too precisely on th'event' (4.4.41). Indeed Ghose (1978) proposes that Hamlet is deliberately indulging his weakness for language in an exercise in syllogism (p. 74). In the first part of the soliloquy Hamlet finds the propositions in his mind do not match the reality, and so in the second part he invents a preferred reality. Eissler (1971) proposes that his readiness to carry out the deed rests upon his achievement of internal development 'prerequisite to ego-syntonic action'. He suggests that action on Hamlet's part must be an outgrowth of his own individual decision and not the consequence of an external command (pp. 115-6). In the course of the play Hamlet's inner readiness and capacity to carry out the necessary action has grown. The psychological point is that at the start of the play, Hamlet is responding to a command from the super-ego but that it has now become a task that the ego chooses to fulfil. Indeed Eissler (1971) contends that Hamlet is in control enough to put off the murder simply because he wishes to delay his gratification for the sadistic pleasure of toying with Claudius before he kills him. This view implies that Hamlet narcissistically believes that his power over Claudius is total, and that he is unable to predict the logical outcome of his present action. In his current condition the former is a logical response and the latter is consistent with his desire for gratification in the here and now. This suggests that Hamlet's emotions, his 'passion' as Newell would have it, now rules his ego and the 'native hue of resolution' is at last recognised by Hamlet for what it is. The control and diminution of the ego in this way, discussed later in the thesis, is not only reflected in Grof's work but is found in a range of spiritual perspectives.

Ironically, Hamlet's soliloquy could be regarded as ultimately irrelevant, for Claudius is not sincerely repentant, as he reveals in the concluding couplet of scene three: 'My words fly up, my thoughts remain below, / Words without thoughts never to heaven go' (97-8). However, as he prepares to go to his mother, the final line 'This physic but prolongs thy sickly days' (96) is an assured threat by Hamlet that leaves him in no doubt as to his eventual revenge and Claudius' assignment to hell.

Hamlet's Sixth Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

In his comprehensive analysis of holotropic states Grof is careful to distinguish between verbal therapies and holotropic experience:

... unlike in verbal therapy, one does not just remember emotionally significant events or reconstruct them indirectly from dreams, slips of tongue, or from transference distortions. One experiences the original emotions, physical sensations, and even sensory perceptions in full age regression. That means that during the reliving of an important trauma from infancy or childhood, one actually has the body image, the naïve perception of the world, sensations, and emotions corresponding to the age he or she was at that time. (Grof, 2000, p. 21)

Hamlet's holotropic experience has included a direct engagement with his father with all its attendant emotional baggage. Hamlet is invited into the world that the Ghost inhabits and he is suddenly and shockingly physically and emotionally aware of a new dimension. The father and son meeting, the renewed expectations of a relationship, the exchange of news, and the consequent physical and emotional trauma of being confronted with a figure that is loved and feared, living and dead, are re-experienced in the transpersonal dimension. He is able to experience the future and past simultaneously in the present, which is a hallmark of several forms of spiritual understanding and experience. The Ghost is still the fearsome father figure of childhood and is also the pathetic and tormented spirit-guide of the present; perhaps he is even the image of what Hamlet fears he might become in the future. This transpersonal relationship is an ongoing feature of Hamlet's SE and directly influences his suddenly self-conscious pause in this soliloquy. The researcher is indebted to Stockholder (1987) for observing that Hamlet, at the point at which he is about to murder Claudius, falls into a trance of the kind the Ghost claims he would experience if he should see his purgatorial sufferings. It is properly claimed that 'These horrifying trances suggest the mind momentarily captured by a vision of what is at once fiercely desired and feared as antithetical to all conscious definition of self and espoused values' (p. 51).

Grof confirms that Hamlet's holotropic experiences can easily incorporate physical traumas that should be released by means of intensive body and breath work, and normal healthy physical activities,

... besides confronting the usual psychotraumas known from the handbooks of psychology, we often have to relive and integrate traumas that were primarily of a physical nature... As it surfaces, we realize that these physical traumas had a strong psychotraumatic impact on us and that they played a significant role in the psychogenesis of our emotional and psychosomatic problems. (Grof, 2000a, p. 21)

Looking at Hamlet's subsequent behaviour, it is manic and could be regarded as a necessary and normal response to stress – fight or flight – or equally a need for the body to literally work out previously unconsciously withheld physical and emotional constrictions that his earlier mood fought to contain. The NOSC released by the Ghost has been both terrifying and liberating, and a source of much of the psychic energy released in the frenetic bodywork of the subsequent scenes.

In his SE, Hamlet may have encountered other dimensions of transcendence but it is often experienced too briefly in the initial stage of the process, and the frequency will increase as Hamlet moves on. In the specific area of mystical or transcendental experiences the Grofs note that, 'Many people feel unprepared for the scope of the sacred realms' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 68). Assagioli (1989) remarks that if individuals who, during SE, are unable to assimilate this influx of power from the superconscious to the conscious levels, it may be for a number of reasons. According to Assagioli's conditions this occurs when the intellect is not well co-ordinated and developed, when emotions and the imagination are uncontrolled, or when the nervous system is too sensitive. Hamlet appears to enjoy control over his intellect and imagination and it would be hard to judge the sensitivity of his nervous system. However, Assagioli adds, 'when the inrush of spiritual energy is overwhelming in its suddenness and intensity' then there develops 'a tendency to self-centredness or conceit, [which] may cause the experience to be wrongly interpreted' (p. 35). In this sense Assagioli refers to the 'energy' of the transpersonal experience that inflates the ego and distorts the individual's judgement. Certainly in general terms it is clear that Hamlet has been

totally overwhelmed by the Ghost's presence and its commands. Similarly, Hamlet has taken it upon himself quite narcissistically to be God's scourge and minister and not just to kill Claudius but to premeditatedly wait for a time 'When he is fit and seasoned for his passage' (86). Hamlet believes himself to be uniquely blessed and is already embarked upon a messianic mission which alienates him, and makes him potentially very dangerous.

In the context of counselling, Kohut (1977) warns that the observer of clients in therapy with narcissistic personalities may get the impression that the individual behaves as if he or she were insane but that in reality he is not. Outside of the counselling room the client may engage in dangerous activities, but in counselling the client usually has sufficient 'reality sense' to prevent dangerous acting out, limiting behaviour to the verbal sphere. This is manifested as a range of behaviours 'from sarcastic punning to reckless, aggressive, outbursts' and by 'retreat phenomena' from 'brooding' to melancholia (p. 235).

If Hamlet is, as Kohut (1977) states, a 'narcissistic personality' it will be essential to support and encourage him in the growth of the 'real self' rather than allowing him to protect his 'idealized self' as Horney (1950) suggests. His anger is controlled by agencies outside of self, such as Claudius, Polonius and even his peers because they watch him and they restrict him because this threatens them. Nevertheless, although Hamlet appears to master his anger he might express it violently if a situation presents itself. Often in therapy channels are opened where anger can be more safely and properly vented. Perelberg (1999) in his study of violence and suicide suggests, with reference to Kohut (1977), that narcissistic clients, are sensitive to external provocations and have 'rage and rage-and-revenge-prone personalities' (p. 32). Such individuals desire to turn a passive experience into an active one, identifying with the aggressor, and inflict on others that which the individual is afraid of suffering himself.

Hamlet, like other adolescents, does not have the protection of a secure holding environment in which to undergo the process of transformation in peace and safety. 'He must remain where he is in life' (Assagioli, 1989, p. 41) and continue with everyday responsibilities. Thus his transformation process must be

undertaken covertly without derailing his life. However, Hamlet is openly and closely observed by the same agencies that control him and he often resorts to subterfuge to hide his true feelings and disguise his needs. It is not surprising that in individuals with less control and more opportunity there is a huge tendency to indulge in unexplainable and at risk behaviours that mask their fears, vent their anger and alleviate their personal sense of isolation and feelings of meaninglessness.

Thus, Hamlet's response to his father's death is simply, by sensing his own mortality, to become fearful of death himself. Suicidal ideation is narcissistically dismissed in favour of murder, an act provoked by anger and his father's replacement. Unable to despatch his mother or himself, it is easy to see who he might most wish to eliminate. However, since he is fearful of Claudius' power and his mother's rejection, he represses this wish. Further provoked by Claudius' guilty response to the play and having the means to realise his goal, he must pause over a chasm opened by a momentary influx of non-ordinary consciousness. What Hamlet experiences may be the purgatorial nexus with the Ghost or a transcendent joy that he narcissistically misinterprets as a providential intervention. Assagioli (1989) cautions that if Hamlet is unable to fully assimilate the non-ordinary material there could be 'a confusion of levels', between the superconscious 'Self', the seat of spiritual experience, and 'I', so that the absolute truth experienced in the former and relative truths experienced in the latter become indistinguishable from each other. The result is that Hamlet's personal ego, fed by this energy, becomes dangerously inflated and his inner world might, therefore, be fairly described as follows: 'The inner experience of the spiritual Self, and its intimate association with the personal self, gives a sense of internal expansion, of universality, and the conviction of participating in some way in the divine nature' (Assagioli, 1989, p. 35).

How far Hamlet believes that he acts for God or a higher purpose becomes clearer when we observe his agony from the confused avenger at the start to the resignation of an accepting vessel at the end of the play. In the former he is the unwilling angel of death, in the latter the willing victim of fate. It is characteristic of all human life that it struggles by whatever means it can in its own strength to

find that there is already an existing plan for those who are prepared to submit themselves to a higher power. Equally, adolescents in the process of differentiation from the influence of their parents may not be sufficiently trusting or self-confident to give their own selves over to God, for example, until they have fully experienced what it is to be truly dependent on themselves.

Certainly, as Assagioli has previously noted, having experienced the power of the transpersonal dimension, Hamlet's personality may have emerged with a distorted view of truth combined with a renewed need to address his losses.

... experiencing the withdrawal of the transpersonal energies and the loss of one's exalted state of being is necessarily painful, and is apt in some cases to produce strong reactions and serious troubles. The personality reawakens and asserts itself with renewed force. (Assagioli, 1989, p. 39)

Hamlet's Sixth Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

Hamlet's behaviour seems to have reached a pitch at this point. All of the constellations of COEX make a nexus and there appears to be a perfect synchronicity of all of the dimensions. Focused upon revenge for the loss of his father Hamlet finds the object of that revenge vulnerably before him in the biographical dimension. Supported by his transpersonal experience and new knowledge, a strong identification with his father, drawn from the biographical, and his current suffering taken from the transpersonal, he feels justified and capable of committing the deed. However, his perinatal process creates ambivalence for him. On the one hand it assures him that he should be capable of asserting his right to retribution as both the victim and witness of the extremely painful experience of spiritual rebirth. On the other, the process continues actively, and fiercely to engage him as an aggressor. Thus Hamlet's 'delay' is clearly explained by the opposing demands of his roles in the reorganisation of the psyche.

Grof suggests that an important characteristic of the third matrix, which distinguishes it from the no-exit constellation of the previous matrix, is that the situation is challenging and difficult but not hopeless, and the individual is not helpless. Hamlet's suffering, he suggests, will have a definite direction, meaning, and goal. 'In religious terms, this situation relates to the concept of purgatory rather than hell' (Grof, 2000a, p. 49), which corresponds perfectly to the way that Hamlet experiences and positions his father's ghost. Grof identifies three different roles that become available to the individual during this matrix. All three are played out consecutively in this soliloquy. First he is the aggressor, but soon he is identifying with his father as the victim and Claudius as the aggressor. Momentarily he must stand aside as the observer to restrain his hand unless his action makes him a victim. Finally, the aggressor is both victim and bystander as he plans a vengeance that he thinks appropriate to Claudius' damnation. Hamlet is not confined to the role of helpless victim but may change as he continues to observe and comment upon his current status and logically argues his position. Grof (2000a) describes the third role that leads Hamlet to strongly identify with the aggressor, as well as the victim as an experience in SE that 'may be so convincing that it might be difficult to distinguish and separate the roles' (p. 50).

Thus Hamlet, in the perinatal process of rebirth, a parallel of the adolescent development process, not only plays the central character in his own life's tragedy but identifies himself with and experiments with all of the other major characters that have influence in his life too. On the biographical level the soliloquies function as self-conscious observations of these developmental processes and on the perinatal Hamlet's narration describes not only his tragedy but because of its interconnectedness with the collective unconscious suggests Denmark's as well.

In the sixth soliloquy it is less difficult to identify the source of Hamlet's role confusion when his behaviour and thoughts are observed closely through the lens of the third perinatal matrix. It is clear that Hamlet is aware of his good fortune in encountering an unattended and unaware Claudius. As the aggressor he willingly outlines a satisfyingly simple act of revenge. However, the victim, identifying with the father, is not so easily satisfied. Claudius' death must

guarantee his consignment to hell. The observer in taking up the arguments, attempts to meet the needs of both and as a result the murder is suspended until a more opportune moment when one from the list of the many qualifying scenarios occurs.

The language and tone of the soliloquy replicate the birth process at this stage. The 'crushing mechanical pressures, pains, and often a high degree of anoxia and suffocation' (Grof, 2000a, p. 45) in BPM III provides an experiential and emotional subtext for Hamlet's death-rebirth struggle. In the first section of the speech Hamlet is caught up in the excitement and expectation of propulsion down the birth canal toward the final resolution of his needs and the goal of his existence. Suddenly his passage is disturbed by the anxiety of the life-threatening situation. He is crushed by his own fear and strangled by a suffocating image of his father taken 'grossly, full of bread, / With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May' (80-1). He is constrained by his discomfort and he as a foetus and Claudius become as one. Hamlet determines to prevent a Claudius 'fit and seasoned in his passage' from being birthed into the salvation of heaven by containing him in the impotent womb of Denmark in which Hamlet feels he too is imprisoned, until 'his soul may be damned and black / As hell whereto it goes' (94-5).

In some ways his delay, rather than put off an inevitable outcome enables Hamlet to remove himself from the demands of the revenger role and its place in the biographical dimension. For a moment he painfully withdraws into the world of the dead where he too yearns for life so that he may study Claudius from his father's tortured perspective, coloured by the existential anxiety of the third BPM. Hamlet's delay is a salutary opportunity in his transformational process.

Soliloquy Seven (4.4.33-66)

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more:
 Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
 Looking before and after, gave us not
 That capability and god-like reason
 To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple (40)
 Of thinking too precisely on th' event
 A thought which quartered hath but one
 part wisdom,
 And ever three parts coward - I do not know
 Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,'
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
 To do't... Examples gross as earth exhort me.
 Witness this army of such mass and charge
 Led by a delicate and tender prince,
 Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
 Makes mouths at the invisible event, (50)
 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
 To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
 Even for an egg-shell.... Rightly to be great
 Is not to stir without great argument,
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father killed, a mother stained,
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men, (60)
 That for a fantasy and trick of fame
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough and continent
 To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Hamlet's Seventh Soliloquy

A Postnatal Biographical Reading

Hamlet's final soliloquy appears in Quarto 2 but not in the First Folio. Some critics argue that Shakespeare himself cut the passage from the Folio as he made revisions to his work over the years before his death. It is possible that the editors of the Folio printed a copy revised by Shakespeare, but arguably it is unlikely that Shakespeare would mutilate his own work by removing such an

integral part of the play. Hamlet's last soliloquy is crucial to our understanding of his character development. Newell (1991) claims that it is the 'logical and grand culmination of one of the most important dramatic developments in the play – the subjugation of Hamlet's reason by his passion for revenge' (p. 133). By the end of the soliloquy, Hamlet brings to a halt his solemn contemplation on the immoral act of murderous revenge, and finally seems to accept it as his duty. However as there are no further soliloquies of his it could be argued that his view of 'providence' might simply be a covertly narcissistic fantasy of the control he still feels he has as 'God's scourge and minister'. It is not that Hamlet has presented a solid and reasonable argument to convince himself of his terrible responsibility; rather he has driven himself to the conclusion with intense and distorted thoughts.

Newell (1991) suggests that this soliloquy is 'mutely recapitulatory' (p. 133), as it resembles dramatically the 'rogue and peasant slave' soliloquy in the way that it draws upon Hamlet's most recent experience. His encounter with Fortinbras' army, and his current emotions such as self-reproach become synthesised into a personal example. Eissler (1971) agrees that the two soliloquies are superficially similar but that it raises the question of action in a more universal context, that being the difference between man and beast. The latter, Hamlet deduces, is compelled by its nature to do nothing but gratify its basic needs. Newell (1991) notes that the recurrence of 'beast' (35), 'discourse' (36), and 'reason' (38) when associated with 'revenge' (33) bring to mind 'a beast that wants discourse of reason' from the first soliloquy. This soliloquy recalls the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy in its rational and transparent contemplation of cowardice, and the existential nature of Man. The previous two soliloquies provide links for the context and subsequent development of his thought process, indicating to Newell (1991) that 'his reason is in fact no less subjugated by passion here than in the other two' (p. 134).

However, this view is modified by Hamlet's murder of Polonius, which although consistent with the theory of overwhelming passion, was still mistaken. As Falco (2000) observes, the killing of the wrong man does not serve vengeance but merely 'underscores the tragic misdirection of Hamlet's violence' (p. 117). The

murder, rather than creating a context that generates sympathy for him as a tragic character as Newell suggests, might incline a previously sympathetic viewer to think that this attractive dreamer has finally assumed the nightmare role he had been conceiving for himself since his first appearance. Falco adds that Hamlet's violence goes further to alienate himself from his audience to the point where 'Hamlet's overwhelming psychological presence tends to marginalize all except transcendental bonds' (p. 103). This soliloquy on the face of it does nothing to indicate that Hamlet's intention to commit revenge is in any way diminished with his final lines as he renews his resolution 'O, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!' (65-6). In his lucidity he consigns himself tragically to damnation. This soliloquy allows Hamlet's tragic obsession to exist alongside his fine reason.

Hamlet immediately returns to the subject of revenge. He is on the road to a port, under armed escort to England. Hamlet's future is uncertain and his power to engage with Claudius diminishing. He witnesses the passage of Fortinbras' army, which revives his self-loathing and guilt. His first words, 'How all occasions do inform me against me, / And spur my dull revenge!' (32-3) are the visible facts of this world, and Hamlet's despair, according to Ghose (1978), is that he cannot escape the trivial banality of day to day existence. This sentiment is re-echoed in the middle of the speech and consolidated at the end of the soliloquy.

Whilst contributing to the structure and theme of this soliloquy 'I do not know / Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do," / Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means, / To do't...' (43-6) also draws its inspiration from the tone and language of his last and most violent soliloquy. The *thing* which occupies Hamlet's mind the most is still *to do* and the *do it* of the previous soliloquy holds its imperative to command Hamlet to revenge and echoes the Ghost's 'remember me' (1.5.91) and 'Do not forget!' (3.4.110). Ghose (1978) holds that this statement by Hamlet is the truth and that his 'failure comes from his desire to discover from the rational processes within his own mind that statement which would be an absolute irrefutable instruction that he perform the action' (p. 86). King (1982) comments that Hamlet, in these lines, is advancing beyond a

previous impasse, 'This admission is an affirmative, not a negative statement' as it centres on man's 'affirmative possibilities' (p. 97).

His final couplet that 'from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!' (pp. 65-6) is made all the more ironic as hours before he coldly murdered Polonius and dragged the bloody body from his mother's chamber. It is difficult to understand why Hamlet should continue to torture himself unless it is a means to 'spur his dull revenge!' (33) as he does after the player's scene. The decreasing likelihood of realising Claudius' death, the hollowness of his threats against him, and the reality that he does not have 'strength' and 'means' (45), makes it increasingly difficult for him to continue with this plan. Newell (1991) speculates that Hamlet may have an 'unexpressed thought or fantasy of achieving revenge after making an escape from his escort' (p.138). In any event the obvious imprisonment and vacuum left by this imposed helplessness makes way for the self-recrimination and guilt that has been reinforced by the Ghost's impatience concerning Hamlet's 'almost blunted purpose' (3.4.111). Within Hamlet's ethical dilemma both revenge and reason coexist and it is yet to be revealed whether one or the other will finally gain supremacy over him.

Hamlet begins by accusing all men, and therefore himself, of the contradiction of not using their 'god-like reason' (38) but instead engaging in the day to day inaction of 'Bestial oblivion' (40), or at the other extreme of 'thinking too precisely on the event' (41). Hamlet seeks to understand which of these characteristics he is most guilty of (King, 1982). Newell suggests that,

The paradox in Hamlet's confusion at this moment is that on the one hand he dissociates himself from what is bestial while on the other hand he denigrates the exercise of thought, yet all the while he believes he is engaged dispassionately in the use of god-like reason, looking before and after. (Newell, 1991, p. 139)

It is, perhaps, from this logically untenable and contradictory position that Hamlet is expressing that fear, from the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, is the main obstacle to action and that thinking conjures the fear that 'does make cowards of us all' (3.1.83). Borrowing from St Augustine (Alexander, 1971) the precise

'thinking' (41) which he emphasises reveals the inevitability of its attendant fear 'A thought which quartered hath but one part wisdom, / And ever three parts coward' (42-43). It is certain that Hamlet's fear did not stand in the way of his meeting the Ghost, his presentation of the mousetrap play, the confrontation of his mother or his murder of Polonius. However he has still been unable to directly engage with Claudius and his anger at not killing him when he had the opportunity reinforces not the fear of revenge so much as the fear of Claudius himself and what he represents. It is worth considering King's (1982) position that it is Hamlet's continuously introspective searching for meaning that 'has protected him from what would have been a monstrously meaningless action' (p. 98).

It is after Fortinbras' short speech that opens the scene that he exits as Hamlet enters. Hamlet has seen Fortinbras only for a moment earlier in the play and knows nothing of his true motives for going to war. He convinces himself that Fortinbras is 'Rightly to be great' (53) as his motive for fighting is when 'honour's at the stake' (56). To be 'great' therefore, is equated in Hamlet's mind with 'honour'. In an ironic sketch Hamlet describes Fortinbras as the perfect and fearless prince that commentators (Brown, 2001) assume Hamlet wishes himself to be, 'delicate and tender' (48) yet 'Exposing what is mortal and unsure / To all that fortune, death, and danger dare' (51-2). Hamlet's wish to be Fortinbras honours their similarity and reveals the foolishness of both their great positions. Hamlet's belief that to be someone requires action is set against the 'ambition puffed' (49) Fortinbras' disastrously bloody military campaign fought more for the sake of honour rather than of necessity 'Even for an egg-shell' (53). Later in the speech Hamlet logically conveys the idea that what he initially surmised as honourable will ultimately risk 'The imminent death of twenty thousand men' (60) for a tiny scrap of land. Earlier in the scene, Hamlet questions the Captain as to whether the Polack would defend such a 'little patch of ground' (18) and is assured he will. Hamlet sensibly concludes that the resultant worthless carnage can only be derived from 'th'imposthume of much wealth and peace' (27). It is certain that, as Newell (1991) notes, 'there is no basis for Hamlet's thinking that the men go willingly or heroically to their deaths "for a fantasy and trick of fame"' (p. 143). Importantly, the effect of this line is that Hamlet succeeds in

questioning and denigrating honour as a justification for murder. Eissler (1971) concurs that Hamlet characterises such actions as the products of 'degenerative disease' (p. 117). His impression of a thoroughly corrupted Denmark now becomes extended to include Norway and its Prince.

Hamlet's true feelings about the impending carnage already revealed in his conversation with the Captain must now find accommodation for both the heroic and the corrupted images of Fortinbras in his reasoning. King (1982) brilliantly describes Fortinbras as 'the man of action stripped down to utter meaninglessness' (p. 94). Towards the end of the soliloquy Hamlet's former admiration seems to be deliberately granted a superficial gloss as he is satirising rather than deifying Fortinbras' gross example. Eissler (1971) suggests that the soliloquy's effect of judging this example as seemingly acceptable and valid, yet both the context and the way in which it is presented, makes it clear that the statement is actually being negated, is similar to a process in psychoanalysis. When a repressed thought returns to consciousness and is accepted as valid it ceases, from that moment, to have further power over the ego. Eissler explains that in Hamlet's case, 'repression has here become replaced, not by negation but by dismissal' (p. 119), and that it is the haunting power of Hamlet's father that is finally dismissed, showing the absurdity of these superego demands. However deliberately ambiguous, the final couplet discloses Hamlet's ironic dismissal of all further bloody thoughts and his final acceptance of the worth of 'nothing' (66).

The picture of a prince performing bloody business driven only by honour, where even Newell agrees there is none (p. 143), powerfully impacts upon Hamlet's consciousness and his reason prevails. Calling into question whether there is honour in his own cause, he has begun to free himself from his father's ghost, representative of the superego command to 'remember' but 'Taint not thy mind'. With the introduction of the providential element Hamlet is able to turn away from his obsessive notion of revenge. By evolving in himself a more fully integrated superego, independent of the lost love object, his father, Hamlet can embrace his fate without further recourse to recollections of his father.

Hamlet's Seventh Soliloquy

A Transpersonal Reading

This final soliloquy considers the two aspects of man's rational 'soul', the spirituality of the mind as the Elizabethans understood it, which are the 'discursive' and the 'intuitive'. Newell (1991) in making the following case also confirms Grof and Grof's (1990) contention that during SE the logical mind can be bypassed and intuition, inspiration, and imagination assert themselves.

Thus, the last soliloquy delineates the contrast between the Hamlet who is no longer able to think straight because he is so obsessed with revenge... and the Hamlet who, through the still unimpaired intuitive capacity of his mind, finds "heaven ordinant" in everything and affirms the working of a "special providence," "a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough hew them how we will" (5.2.48; 219-20; 10-11). (Newell, 1991, p. 135)

Grof and Grof's (1990) argument is strikingly similar to Newell's except that he regards the fact that Hamlet's reason is subjugated by the passion of revenge as Hamlet's tragedy, whereas it is the survival of Hamlet's intuition which allows him to execute his final transformation. In Grof's experience the intellect, in Hamlet's case obsessed and distracted by thoughts of revenge, is superseded by true insightfulness during SE. This dissolution of the old ways of thinking so vividly described in Hamlet's second soliloquy seems to be 'mandatory before a new expanded understanding and increased inspiration can take its place' (p. 56). Since his encounter with the Ghost Hamlet's discursive aspect has necessarily made way for his expanded consciousness and growing intuition. Newell has mistaken the process of spiritual emergence for madness. The Grofs are at pains to point out that,

What is actually disappearing is not one's reasoning ability, although it may seem that way for a while, but the cognitive limitations that keep one constricted and unchanged. While this is happening, linear thinking is at times impossible, and the person feels mentally agitated as the conscious mind is bombarded with unblocked material from the unconscious. Strange and disturbing emotions are suddenly available, and once-familiar rationality is useless in explaining such occurrences.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 56)

It seems that old patterns of thinking that block the transformational process are destroyed by it, in order that new learning, experience and insights may take their place. In the context of Hamlet's experience there is a consistency with 'interference' theories of memory or forgetting. Interference theories (Barnes & Underwood, 1959, in Smidt, 2004) state that two kinds of interference are always operating. Proactive interference works from the past to the present. Retroactive interference works from the present back to the past. Most memory items are subject to both kinds of interference. In Hamlet's case the items that the revenge represents retroactively interfere with the items held in Hamlet's memory before the Ghost's appearance. However, since interference theory works both ways, Hamlet again makes a conscious decision to forget past items that might proactively interfere with the new items. Although forgetting is important, however, the question of how forgetting takes place is far from resolved (Smidt, 2004). Another unresolved theoretical issue is whether forgetting really takes place; for example, retrieval-failure theories state that memories never disappear, they just cannot be found. Sturt (2004) concludes that the human mind forgets items in its memory for many different reasons.

Theory of mind (TOM) theory offers a further interpretation and a reframing of Hamlet's SE transformation experience. TOM suggests that an individual's ability to interpret other people's actions and intentions, and thus coherently understand the social world, should be viewed as a competence, a specific endowment of the human mind specialised to understand self and others in terms of mental states. TOM is a specific cognitive ability to understand others as intentional agents, to interpret their minds in terms of theoretical concepts of intentional states such as beliefs and desires. In philosophy this ability is viewed as being intrinsically dependent upon linguistic abilities as it provides a representational medium for meaning and intentionality. Thus Hamlet's language is used to describe his own and other people's actions in an intentional way, which links the Elizabethan notions of discourse, in terms of language and meaning, and intuition to the ability to read intention. Woodruff and Premack (1978) have suggested that having a TOM implies at least three things: understanding (i) the links between beliefs and behaviour; (ii) the logic of mental state language; and (iii) that beliefs are only possibly true, as they can be false as well as true.

The importance of these theories to SE is that TOM is viewed as a specialised competence with an underlying cognitive structure which is an innate module that is dedicated, specific, fast, automatic, at least partly encapsulated, and its functioning is largely independent of intellectual general capacities of the individual. Thus it can be specifically impaired or function in the presence of other mental impairments. According to Grof's observations it would seem that this competence is over time enhanced rather than diminished by transformational process.

Consequently, the unblocking process only temporarily confuses Hamlet's facility to reason. It is interesting that the new items don't simply overlay, improve, or supersede existing items but from Hamlet's perspective, the previous items must be removed because they are no longer required. Through the process of SE it is recognised that the reasons that placed them there are, at this crucial stage, causing unnecessary restrictions on Hamlet's continuing expansion or growth in consciousness. Hamlet's previous memory items are recognised as simply the result of previous defensive strategies, or developmental tasks that are becoming or are already redundant. Similarly, adolescents in the course of their development have to make enormous changes in their thinking, which must raise important questions about cognitive process. Do they simply try out new ideas and integrate them if they seem useful, or do they sometimes in the face of loss, for example, have to revise their cognitive schema and totally re-programme themselves? If this is so, what is the difference between this proactive interference initiated by loss and the SE process? Is it possible that the SE process may provide a model for adolescent cognition in a crisis of development?

Returning to Hamlet's seventh soliloquy, again his attention is drawn to the subject of revenge and the philosophical question of 'What is a man?' (33). If we were to follow Newell's argument Hamlet's speech might indicate a lack of linear thinking and changes that signify either new thinking or shifts in reason forced by emotion. However, this non-linearity disguises a subtext rich in intuitive reasoning and fully synchronistic with Hamlet's parallel process of spiritual emergence and transformation. This subtext describes an inner dynamic of the SE that is making

a connection with Hamlet's perceived everyday reality. Hamlet's expression of this material according to Grof and Grof (1990) is a healthy way of allowing the process of spiritual emergence to continue: 'if the inner world that is causing the discomfort is fully expressed, you will reconnect with the daily world' (p. 159).

Hamlet's inner struggle is exemplified by the futile battle for land that engages the lives of 'twenty thousand men' (60). This apocalyptic image is a scene from a nightmare and a further echo of his preoccupation with death and Doomsday from previous soliloquies. The struggle finds a chilling resonance in Hamlet's deepest fear that his existence is in the hands of others. His existential concerns override even his passion and he realises that he is struggling to achieve a goal just as worthy of 'honour' (56) as Fortinbras in his desire to revenge a 'father killed, mother stained' (57) and equally futile. He is going into exile and knows that Claudius intends to hand him into the hands of the English to be killed – his intuition couched in transpersonal, precognitive terms as 'I see a cherub that sees them' (4.3.47). He is totally vulnerable and has run out of strategies; he is already dead.

Perry (1989) has developed an eastern metaphor of 'spirit', derived from Oriental philosophy and culture which summarises Hamlet's experiences up to this point. Perry defines spirit as 'a strongly moving dynamism that is free of material structure' (65). His understanding suggests that Hamlet, in order to liberate his spirit, which is not a terminal event but a process known as 'transfiguration', has to encounter themes of death, world destruction, and emotional experiences that highlight the disintegrative and reintegrative aspects of this sequence.

Consequently, to accomplish this transformation the self-image must dissolve. In severe visionary states Perry adds that just like Hamlet, 'one may feel one has crossed over into the realm of death and is living among the spirits of the deceased. One is forced to let go of old expectations of oneself and to let oneself be tossed about by the winds of change' (1989, p. 67). As the inner transformation begins to occur so the visionary experience can extend outwardly to experience a world dissolving into chaos. Certainly, Hamlet experiences a world in a malaise, a poisoned father in a poisoned Kingdom inhabited by the

'rank and gross', and his new vision of two enormous armies intent on gaining 'a little patch of ground' (18) that is worth less than nothing is of the same chaotic nature. 'Thus in an individual's life, when a transformation of one's inner culture is under way, dissolution of the world image is the harbinger of change. Expressions of cultural reform are explicit' (Perry, 1989, p. 67)

Denmark as it exists must be swept away. Hamlet as he did exist, is about to exist no more. The irony of Hamlet's condition is that he is also part of the old structure and also needs to be transformed and removed. The subtlety is that as the other characters, whilst remaining much the same, are relatively unaware that Hamlet is going through a traumatic transformational process. This is perhaps why the audience is so sympathetic to Hamlet and why he is somehow redeemed to himself and to them.

He has intuitively understood that he can no longer 'take arms against' his 'sea of troubles' (3.1 .59) if he wishes to 'be' (56). He has called off the inner battle caused by his intellectual resistance to his spiritual emergence that blocked its process and caused his SE. His cavalier satirical acceptance of his role of revenger at the end of the soliloquy is yet another expression of his resignation and of his dismissal of Claudius' power over him. It is implicit in the text that Hamlet is to be the instrument by which revenge is accomplished and unwittingly achieved and yet at this point he has abdicated his role. His final acceptance of an inner purpose through an experience of total annihilation supersedes even the superegoic command of the Ghost and prepares him for the final stage of inner and outer transformation. The tragedy is that having transcended his present state he is forced to return to it later in his life narrative.

Hamlet's Seventh Soliloquy

A Perinatal Reading

Towards the end of BPM III Hamlet's experience becomes less urgent, disturbing, and violent. Perhaps as a result, in preparation for the third clinical

stage of delivery which is the expulsion from the birth canal, the individual anticipates a purposeful and unimpeded progress. 'The prevailing atmosphere is that of extreme passion and driving energy of intoxicating intensity' (Grof, 2000a, p. 48). Hamlet, as he enters BPM IV, begins to understand that his attitudes toward the world were contaminated by a constant reminder of the experiences that he felt at birth of helplessness, weakness, inadequacy, and vulnerability. As he struggles through the process of assimilating and digesting these hitherto unexpressed extreme emotions and intense physical reactions he comes to terms with the fact of his own birth. However, as Grof and Perry's observations suggest, an individual may experience this as a form of death. In order for the individual to be fully re-birthed the ego must, in a sense, die. The ego, in this case, is represented by previously held beliefs of what the world is like and existential concerns 'forged by the traumatic imprint of birth' sustained by memory and kept alive in the unconscious and felt as an end to his existence, or the end of the world, as he passes from the third matrix to the fourth.

Thus, Hamlet is sensitised not just to the consensus reality of Denmark but also to the holotropic realm. However, it is the false ego, which up to this point he has mistakenly taken for his true self, which dies through this process. The transformative and healing power of his journey will reveal and liberate Hamlet's true self. However, fear of the unknown may be enough to create an enormous resistance to completing this experience. Although Hamlet may acknowledge the false nature of what he had previously assumed as true, he could become psychologically stuck without appropriate guidance. One frightening step away from 'radical liberation', Hamlet might unwittingly choose to endure a sense of impending catastrophe and all-embracing anxiety rather than complete his process.

From the perspective of his final soliloquy Hamlet finds himself a witness to what he is now able to understand is an appalling waste of human life. Hamlet's previously held views on honour and revenge are superseded by new concepts that arise from a deeper understanding directly due to his perinatal experience. That experience informs him that he no longer has to fight. His revenge is 'dull' not because of his lassitude but because it ceases to have meaning. The

'occasions' may accuse him but the accusations are as hollow and empty as the futility of this armed struggle for an 'egg-shell' that presents itself as a metaphor for all human existence. Momentarily, exposure to this scene of such epic folly runs counterpoint to those experienced in BPM III. His painful personal experiences of loss set against humanity's unnecessary capacity for self-destruction ironically suggest to him that his inaction is shameful. He describes the army's leader Fortinbras, a prince in many ways resembling Hamlet, as the perfect example of the larger than life, fearless, warrior who cares less for his own safety and the uncertainty of the battle than for the honour, and fame of leadership. Indeed, Hamlet does not ask the Captain what issue of honour is being satisfied by the senseless slaughter of thousands of men because he already knows, probably from his own intelligence, that this show of arms is inspired by one man's vanity rather than a nation's honour. Fortinbras' Polish incursion falsely justified and excused in the name of 'honour' provides Hamlet with yet another example that life's circumstances cannot be judged by appearance. In identifying the apparently shameless qualities of a prince bent upon such a selfish act Hamlet inevitably turns his attention to his own situation and, perhaps here too, his motivation for action is no longer as justifiable and straightforward as it appeared to be. Faced with the possibility that reality may no longer be trustworthy, Hamlet's final lines are spoken with sardonic humour. Hamlet fully understands that violence begets violence. His line, 'My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!' indicates that in the world, if he is to survive his perilous journey to England, retain his current position as heir apparent, and return to Denmark, he must match his thoughts to those around him.

At last, he enters the fourth matrix, BPM IV 'the death rebirth experience', anticipating liberation from his false self and the experience of differentiation from his family ties. Hamlet intuitively realises that both his inner and external processes have their own corresponding rhythms and that he must surrender to them if he is to progress rather than to continue in his struggle against them. In doing so, he can comfortably acknowledge the loss of his father without having to associate it with the necessity for revenge and deal with its accompanying guilt.

The next chapter completes the analysis of Hamlet's SE by drawing together the threads of his holotropic journey and by providing three conclusions to his experience. Each offers a uniquely different perspective and together they provide an original analysis of trans-dimensional transformation.

CHAPTER NINE

BUT I DO PROPHECY: HAMLET'S DEATH-REBIRTH EXPERIENCE IN *HAMLET* ACT V

Hamlet becomes a type whose history allegorizes a developmental progression – whether through the Oedipus complex or into the Symbolic of language – one cannot choose not to follow. (Warner, 1986, p. 275)

Introduction

The following chapter acts as a conclusion to the analysis of Hamlet's SE by drawing together the threads of his holotropic journey and by providing three conclusions to his experience. Each offers a uniquely different perspective and together they provide an original analysis of trans-dimensional transformation.

A Postnatal Biographical Conclusion to Hamlet's Spiritual Emergency

This thesis considers Hamlet's transformation as it relates to the spontaneous inner transformative process, or journey, that Grof (1989) calls SE. Traditional arguments about transformation that turn on the problem of 'readiness' are not incompatible with this new reading. This approach synthesises the irrationalists' proposal that Hamlet accepts that his ideals are immature and resubmits them to the authority of the self and the ego, and the rationalist position that Hamlet submits himself entirely to God's authority. Hamlet experiences a parallel process that is directed from within the psyche and from without, in linked dimensions of experience played out upon the stage of adolescent development with its corresponding losses and gains.

When Hamlet appears again he is, as many commentators observe, a changed man not only in his attire but also in attitude. As Russell (1995) dryly notes 'A few

critics, to their credit, have found the Hamlet of Act V as desultory and ineffectual as the Hamlet of the prevoyage scenes' (p. 210). However, the consensus of critical opinion 'has been long established' that Hamlet has achieved 'heroic stature'. Russell observes that critical agreement between irrationalist and rationalist approaches to Hamlet's delay reach the same conclusion that Hamlet has reconciled himself to the impediment that has prevented him from discharging his father's command and now stands poised and ready to act. As a result he will meet his death but he will do so heroically and thus triumph over death and achieve a completion of the self (p. 211). Amongst many commentators, therefore, there is a suggestion that Hamlet's delayed gratification for revenge is somehow rewarded by an heroic death.

In Mack's (1952) proposition, Hamlet is not so much transformed as reconstructed, his original adolescent, idealistic, and egocentric moral framework is altered to more realistically accommodate the act of murder. This position describes Hamlet's transformation as it is determined by experiential tasks given to him in the course of his maturation. Thus he 'confronts, recognizes, and accepts the condition of being a man' (p. 522). Much the same occurs in Eissler's (1971) ego psychology approach, which draws from the tradition of Freud's and Jones' psychoanalysis that turns Hamlet into a 'case' of hysteria readied for dispassionate analysis of his oedipal desire and psychoneurosis respectively. Eissler observes that Hamlet assimilates his father's superego command into the moral framework of his ego and reconciled prepares to guiltlessly dispatch Claudius. 'Psychologically, he has reached something akin to the stage that Fortinbras had been given by circumstances. Thus the finale symbolizes at once death, incest and rebirth' (p. 129). In short, from Eissler's perspective, Hamlet has achieved full psychic balance he is able to accept death and is reconciled to a reality that he cannot completely change, having made the transition from an optimistic to a pessimistic state and finally to a state of serenity.

Newell's (1991) popular rationalist approach favours the notion of Hamlet's behaviour as a moral revenger. His delay is motivated by a fear that murder pre-emptly damnation and that God, or providence must be actively enlisted to supply

the means and opportunity in which revenge can occur if Hamlet can only be patient and wait. Hamlet intuits the danger he is in from Claudius but does not actively plot against him. Hamlet's demise is a triumph of grace over death; his submission to God set against human weakness and the corruption of the flesh. Thus, heroism equals humility.

Horwich (1988) also subscribes to the view that Hamlet's dilemma is transcended by his acceptance of the role of God's minister (p. 179). Thus Hamlet, in a fatalist trance, is directed in his motion and God shapes his ends. Like Newell, Horwich explains the question of revenge in terms of the biological imperative to survive. Thus Hamlet's actions from here on in become simply mechanistic responses to fear, which are in reality predetermined by his new role. Horwich suggests, citing what Forker calls the 'Platonic Ladder', that Hamlet's journey takes him from our world to the 'play-world' to the world of 'ultimate reality' (p. 182). Fernie (2002) accepts the rationalist position that Hamlet submits his will to God, for the irrationalist reason that he has become liberated from his paralysing condition of shame. This is able to occur because of his exposure to the ambivalent nature of mortality, which reconfigures his once shameful notion of revenge into one that is no longer an obsession.

In his final chapter of *The Soliloquies in Hamlet* Newell (1991) argues that the Ghost should not be confused with the introduction of the mystery of providence in the last movement of the play. He infers that often commentators, expressed in terms of the nature of the relationship between the two, confuse the Ghost's imperious command with Hamlet's fatalistic notion of himself that he is 'born to set...right' a world that is 'out of joint' (1.5.188-9). A superficial reading of *Hamlet* might lead one to assume that the authentic providential role assigned to him is one of revenge and that the play is about his mental and physical struggle with the assumption and completion of that role. Rightly Newell differentiates between the providential process of 'divine justice in punishing the initial wrong-doer' and Hamlet's 'personal revenge'. However, he maintains that the distinction is important to his argument that Hamlet's position must be seen as a 'tragic deterioration' of his 'noble mind' and 'godlike reason', and not linked to what he calls the 'fallacious notion of the passion-driven Ghost that revenge can

somehow be pursued without tainting the mind' (p. 148). It is alternatively argued here that Hamlet's tainted mind cannot be so easily differentiated from its ghostly COEX. Hamlet's deteriorating reason is not a fact because it appears to return, making Newell and other commentators guilty of value-judging its debilitating effect on Hamlet. By assuming that Hamlet's mental health must be becoming increasingly disturbed, measured against that of the prevailing culture of Denmark and their own eurocentric cultural positions, they find quite conclusively that Hamlet is or was suffering from some level of 'madness' caused by melancholia, or depression. The Ghost is therefore to be regarded as a quite separate from Hamlet and independent of Hamlet's inner process and not a symptom as in the rationalist's view of Hamlet's development.

Newell (1991) contends that the Ghost is simply a recognisable device of the genre of revenge tragedy that Shakespeare has rendered through his art as a mystery, 'as something unfathomable' (p. 149), which requires an act of faith rather than understanding. In order to make his point Newell is both influenced and limited by the biographical framework of his reading.

The Ghost, from a holotropic perspective, is so much more than a device and need not be dismissed so quickly. It lingers in Hamlet's consciousness where its influence is invasive. As a result of his encounter with the transpersonal dimension, Hamlet's moral conscience becomes more refined and exacting, and his thirst for perfection becomes more intense as he judges with greater severity and condemns his personality with a new vehemence. The Ghost assists him to judge himself and others more harshly – perhaps to the point of inaction. Like all adolescents he will go through the motions of obeying his superego father but through his transformation, whilst reaffirming old personality traits, it also becomes harder for him to accept them. He is morally tuned enough to delay the Ghost's wishes and it is inevitable that his thoughtful rejection of them does not necessarily diminish his ability to respond efficiently and brutally since those elements of personality still exist. When he is caught unawares by the poisoning of his mother by Claudius these elements momentarily re-emerge. However, once the energy of the self withdraws, Hamlet, given more time, would have been the same as before but more sensible to his immediate position.

The Ghost is not merely a device, a source of Hamlet's assigned role, but a manifestation of Hamlet's unconscious or even its gatekeeper. Certainly in Hamlet's final encounter the Ghost appears as a counsellor to help Hamlet externalise and objectify his passion into serving some socially useful end. The Ghost is an agent of Hamlet's psyche just as much as his inner visions of perinatal and transpersonal experience find purchase in and support his growing understanding of an organised collective unconscious. Simply, the systems of COEX that organise his loss, the Ghost, and the notion of providence are anchored above his SE and interpret his newly forming responses to the world before and upon his return to Denmark.

To assume, as Newell does, that the mystery of providence generated by the play is an unfathomable 'chance-ridden' effect then is to dismiss the intrusion of the transpersonal dimension and its profound influence on Hamlet's process and the authenticity of his SE. This thesis of course contends that such a 'mystery' is served and explained by holotropic theory. However, earlier in his work, Newell in his consideration of Hamlet's change in Act V does briefly acknowledge the possibility of transcendence in Hamlet's 'personal growth' but only, it seems, on a biographical level:

After his return, instead of pressing on in pursuit of revenge, as is his intention at the end of the soliloquy, Hamlet has faith that providence will provide the right opportunity for it, although again he seems to confuse his commitment to revenge with the independent process of divine justice. Despite this confusion, his alteration upon his return suggests that he may have been on the verge of profound personal growth, of perhaps even transcending the revenger's obsession, at the very time when he was tragically doomed. (Newell, 1991, p. 135)

Newell's attempts to dismiss the transpersonal Ghost and an active role for 'the Everlasting' still allows for a paradoxical acceptance of the role of the Christian moral code in *Hamlet* to be used as a backdrop or context for Shakespeare's discussion of revenge.

Influenced by Frankl and Erikson, King (1982) asserts that because Hamlet is a 'religiously sensitive young man struggling... to make sense of his world and his

own conscience-torn personality' he develops an unshakeable conviction that providence exists and cares for mankind and that it is this that opens spiritual doors that enable him to free himself from 'mental debility' (p. 19). King's satisfying argument infers that Hamlet desires to be led rather than to act in his own power, that providence is the same as the Christian God, and that his mental debility no longer significantly impairs his perceptions or actions, as Newell has previously suggested.

In the last third of *Hamlet* there are no soliloquies. Providential occurrences seem to shape the design of the play from here on and where once the soliloquies revealed the inner lives of the characters, only Hamlet is truly revealed as changed. After escaping death at sea, mainly due to the propitious use of his father's signet ring to dispatch Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and the subsequently fortuitous bargain with the pirates, Hamlet symbolically re-enters the narrative through the graveyard. Hamlet's meditative speeches, his sense of 'heaven ordinant' in all that happens and 'special providence in the fall of a sparrow' (5.2.48, 217-8), are further examples of his intuitive recognition of important events to come. The soliloquies have disappeared and so too have any further references to his father and mother, 'no more melancholy broodings on his father's nobility or manly virtue, no more loving descriptions of his appearance, no more tortured recollections of the love he bore for his mother' (Greenblatt, 2001, p. 226). It may be inferred from this that the occasionally disclosed disturbing inner world of Hamlet has finally become closed, masked by the face of an impossibly calm and implacable assassin or angel. Hamlet redirects the observer from his inner state to the universal outer process. Yet in his intuitive moods Hamlet discloses his anxiety and dismisses it more than once, 'thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart - but it is no matter... It is but foolery, but it is such gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman' (5.2.210-1, 213-4).

Newell (1991) argues that Hamlet no longer relies upon his reason, which he suggests is impaired, but chooses to be more reliant upon his intuition. Einstein calls it 'the really valuable thing intuition' (Goldberg, 1983) and it is defined as instinctive knowledge or insight without conscious reasoning. More specifically

Steiner (1970) suggests that as thinking occurs as a formless inward event, so intuition provides knowledge that it exists, and that intuition works with observation to make sense of what is observed. He suggests that full reality remains inaccessible to anyone who is incapable of finding intuitions corresponding to things.

Hamlet's transformation might be reframed, as the growing consciousness of his own unconscious other, which he intuits from his point of loss at the very start of the play. He names it 'divine providence' or 'fate' or 'ghost' and it represents an intuitive resource, a guiding sense of direction. This guiding sense of direction might equally be described as 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi, 1967) since Hamlet's knowledge of his father's murder is not entirely 'focal', 'knowledge by attending to', but is also 'subsidiary', 'knowledge by relying on'. Hamlet's knowledge therefore is not just based on explicit reasoning but also on personal judgement which defies the rules of reason. Briefly, in terms of contemporary philosophical concepts of truth and knowing (Kremer, 1992), Hamlet as a scholar has been successful in deconstructing the singular truth of the modern model represented by Claudius and his court. He has steered between that and the postmodern image of 'fundamental truthlessness', expressed so clearly in his earlier soliloquies, by confronting 'the other' as a vital part of his knowing activity.

Thus, Hamlet has not become the 'beast' from the first soliloquy 'who wants discourse of reason' (1.2.150) or a man 'beast' from the seventh soliloquy fit only 'to sleep and feed' (4.4.35). Reason now superseded by an intuitive sense allows him to link his final act of passionate and personal revenge with Claudius' as 'divine retribution'. Hamlet's case confirms the view of education that reason must predominate if knowledge is to be acquired. Unfortunately, on a simple level *Hamlet* has become an exemplar of what occurs when reason is abandoned and intuition and emotion are given free reign. As noted above, a mind 'o'erthrown' is a short-cut to 'madness'. This further illustrates and reinforces the prevailing view that the rational mind needs to dominate intuition and protect itself from the part of the human mind that it cannot know, the part in which Kal (1988) suggests exists the perpetually recurring, eternal principles, forms, or species.

A useful perspective on transformative education led by Boyd that focuses on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning, that many have suggested are underdeveloped in dominant conceptions of transformative learning (Dirkx, 2000), is helpful here. In his analysis of Boyd's work, much of which is theoretical, Dirkx suggests that many learning situations are capable of evoking unconscious aspects of the psyche that may be expressed, for example, through story, myth, poetry, music, and performance. He continues that, 'Engaging in dialogue with these structures is a way of consciously participating in the process of individuation and integrating them more fully within our conscious lives' (p. 2).

If intuition is the means to access a higher sensate realm, as Kal suggests, and this engagement allows integration and individuation, then it might be worth exploring transformative learning and the roles of intuition in adolescent development and in educational settings. In Hamlet's process the 'readiness' that he expresses is far from a simple acquiescence to the irrational in terms of a descent into madness; it is an acknowledgement of an understanding that transformational learning has and will continue to occur. Hamlet, in addition to his knowledge, has positively expanded his consciousness. He deliberately uses the products of intuition to explore and invoke further options and his creative use of this intuitive source of information from beyond the self changes his consciousness and his state of being, and consequently his view of the world.

Returning to Hamlet, Newell (1991) explains that although the ethic of revenge is irreconcilable with the Christian moral code, Shakespeare uses the latter as a backdrop against which he discusses the repulsive nature of the former. It is a deliberate 'artistic counterpointing of the two irreconcilable moral codes' (p. 153) and thus juxtaposed, both may co-exist in the service of the other. Newell explains the way in which this works when he states that 'Shakespeare associates revenge with hell, bestial violence, a breakdown of rationality, and both de facto and explicit defiance of God as the ultimate judge.' (p. 155). Misdiagnosed as a psychotic, already guilty of manslaughter, and caught in an ethical double bind, Hamlet is condemned either way.

However, Newell (1991) notes optimistically that in his warm apology to Laertes, Hamlet is able to link his madness with the revenge passion and reveals an understanding of this condition that 'shows insight and suggests a possibility of growth, along with a prospect of mastery over the revenger's passion' (p.161). Here, Newell gets close to excusing Hamlet's temporary insanity but it is reasonably clear in his discussion with Horatio in the play's last scene that he is not about to forgive Claudius or allow his witnesses to forget how Claudius has abused him:

He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother,
Popped in between th'election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage – is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil? (5.2.65-70)

After such a litany of losses and disappointments the rage that still lies beneath the surface acceptance of providence is easily justified and roused to revenge in the confusion of the Fencing Scene. Newell (1991) suggests that this justification of revenge is final proof that Hamlet feels the rightness of his continuing passion and shows how he perverts reason to serve his cause. All too soon Hamlet appears superficially to revert to the revenger of earlier acts but reframed, it could be seen that finding himself the victim of Claudius' murder plot, Hamlet is acting in self-defence against both that and a mortal wounding given to him by Laertes. Nevertheless, the outcome is the same.

King (1982) argues against Newell's point, with assistance from Frankl, that in spite of Hamlet's inability to escape from inevitable disaster, his unreasonable suffering, and his unjust death, he can 'freely adopt an affirmative attitude that gives meaning to his life' (p. 164), which requires his use of reason once more. If, as Newell seems to be saying, Hamlet may only derive meaning from using passion to complete his revenge, then King submits that Hamlet has also the free will to dignify his existence with meaning from another source that allows him the possibility of spiritual self-determination and self-transcendence. Similarly, Ghose (1978) proposes that Hamlet has finally resolved by means of his 'verbal formula'

on the theme of providence to choose to accept the inevitability of action rather than to purposely engage in it (p. 104). Hamlet, Ghose continues, is only able to do so by clearing his mind and automatically placing himself in the hands of his murderers. King argues conclusively that, before his death, Hamlet has sufficient freedom of will and control over his passion to free his true self from his false self and reconcile that self with Laertes in the final scene of Act V.

Herein lies the spiritual gain that is possible in necessary and unavoidable suffering. And herein lies the route toward awareness of a supra-meaning above and beyond existential experience.... What he learned is not the totality of truth, but enough of the truth so that he could posit meaning, free himself from himself, and begin to be what he ought to be and to do what it was incumbent upon him to do in his immediate present.

(King, 1982, pp. 164-5)

Hamlet intuits that he must overcome a final hurdle. Faced with public evidence of his uncle's guilt, he confronts Claudius at last 'With all his crimes broad blown' (3.3. 81). Man's 'will', like God's, is free (Hooker, in Tillyard, 1946) and Hamlet swiftly makes a decision based upon the will's judgement 'to do good' (p. 81) and sweeps to righteous revenge.

A Transpersonal Conclusion to Hamlet's Spiritual Emergency

Therefore seeing that thou hast taken upon thee war against thyself, and the chief hope and comfort of victory is if thou know thyself to the uttermost, I will paint a certain image of thyself, as it were in a table, and set it before thine eyes that thou mayst perfectly know what thou art inwardly and within thy skin. (Erasmus, 1533/1905, *Manual of the Christian Soldier*, p. 81)

Barnardo. Who's there?

Francisco. Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

(*Hamlet*, 1.1.1-2)

Confronted by the awesome magnitude of the unknown it is right that an individual be charged with the responsibility of knowing and understanding both self and the world in which he lives. Humanness, however, complicates any straightforward engagement in this process as the individual strives to identify and challenge knowledge and question its reality. As Barnardo confronts his

mirror image in Francisco, so as individuals we too challenge the darkness to disclose what is real in the hall of transpersonal mirror dimensions. Whatever is yet to be known exists within and beyond the biographical dimension. Our unconscious is yet to come into consciousness and the foundation structures of the transpersonal and perinatal are the critical access points to that revelation mediated by the complex dimensionality of COEX in the psyche. Laing describes this paradigm beautifully: 'Our minds are conscious of us. Ask yourself who and what it is that dreams our dreams. Our conscious minds? The Dreamer who dreams our dreams knows far more of us than we know of it.' (Laing, 1989, p. 56)

If the 'Dreamer', as Laing seems to be suggesting, is the unconscious then what we perceive as the biographical dimension of existence is but a small part, a dream of what really exists. As the Dreamer, to extend the metaphor, the awakening will 'unfold' and expand the awareness of the unconscious self. This expansion of consciousness, therefore, more fully responds to the question 'Who's there?' in both the conscious biographical dimension of experience and in corresponding dimensions. Transformation of the unconscious to consciousness reveals that the Dreamer is, like the dream, only part of a higher faculty and power within the collective unconscious that dreams the Dreamer. Freud similarly argues that,

Dreams then, are often the most profound when they seem most crazy... The Prince in the play, who had to disguise himself as a madman, was behaving just as dreams do in reality; so that we can say of dreams what Hamlet said of himself, concealing the true circumstances under a cloak of wit and unintelligibility: 'I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw!'

(Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, PFL 4, pp. 575-6, in Armstrong, 2001, p. 44)

Freud suggests that the madness of dreams, after Polonius, is not without method, and may be simulated to hide the true nature of an individual. In this case even the Elizabethan Hamlet must hide the scatological content of his SE by feigning its more socially acceptable counterpart in the madness experience. Then as now, it is interesting to note that mental health practitioners prior to Freud and psychologists since Freud have preferred to understand individuals in terms of biographical malfunction rather than from their NOSC experiences which

are perhaps too diverse and more problematic to treat. Usefully, like Laing, Freud compares the structure *Hamlet*, as a fiction, with that of a dream and connects the 'madman' Hamlet with the 'crazy' content of a dream dimension. In such a way, *Hamlet* the fiction, madness, and the dream are all connected by Freud in his *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Armstrong, 2001, p. 44). What can be inferred from these connections is that Hamlet's madness is in fact a tangible symptom of his SE and that the interior characteristics of his SE are also synchronistically present in the dream-like qualities of the play itself. The normal rules of time and space which dissolve in Hamlet's interior experience of SE also influence and speak to the characters and images in the exterior world of the play. Similarly, experience without boundary is a place where the individual no longer shares the same communal understanding and sense of the world as he believes others do. Dreams and visions become direct communications and imagination becomes objective reality, and ontological foundations previously familiar are shaken. 'No one who has not experienced how insubstantial the pageant of external reality can be, how it may fade, can fully realise the sublime and grotesque presences that can replace it, or exist alongside it' (Laing, 1989, p. 53).

As Warner (1986) notes it is as a direct consequence of the dissolution of dimensional boundaries that 'The Ghost and Hamlet conspire to imagine this crime as nonhistorical, outside of time, and gratuitous. In this way the crime authorizes the extremity of their indignation and the task of revenge as a way to cleanse Denmark of sin.' (p. 298) Warner's acknowledgement of a 'crime...outside of time' is of interest here, especially if it is interpreted as a crime that may be committed in another dimension without causing offence in the biographical realm. Claudius must be made to exist in another dimension, and it is most certain from Hamlet's use of language and his observations that Claudius appears in the transpersonal and the perinatal dimensions in various guises. If Claudius can be destroyed in one dimension then may he cease to exist or at least have less influence over the Hamlets that exist in the others? Could it be that Hamlet's return marks a change that indicates a cooling of concern for the act of revenge because he has already faced up to and defeated in the process of SE the evil that Claudius represents in other dimensions?

Fortunately Hamlet has not become so absorbed in the work of inner self-transformation that his normal life has become impaired. Adolescents, particularly, seem to enjoy periods of healthy introversion that are natural in human growth as illustrated by Hamlet's soliloquies. If they last for too long, or become too regular, then the complexities of the task of transformation could be being underestimated, not recognised or accepted for what they are, and may impede the process. The fact that Hamlet has almost dismissed his previously overt introspection may mean that he is functioning normally or that he is so overwhelmed by the demands of his unconscious that he seeks to depress it with disassociative behaviours. Newell's previous contention that Hamlet's reason is debilitated and that this lessens his ability to activate his will, is born out by the following, and underpins the proposition that Hamlet is engaged in a SE:

Observed from the outside and gauged in terms of ordinary, task-oriented efficiency, he may seem temporarily to have become less capable than before. During this transitory stage, he may not be spared unfair judgement on the part of well-meaning but unenlightened friends or therapists, and he may become the target of pungent and sarcastic remarks...

(Assagioli, 1989, p. 42)

Assagioli's work indicates that in Act V Hamlet's acquiescence in submitting himself to a higher power activates his superconscious functions, which are derived from a source of high feelings and capacities such as intuition and inspiration. In doing so he unconsciously helps himself to facilitate a harmonious integration of his experiences in all dimensions by deliberately reaching towards what Assagioli calls the 'transpersonal self'. For Assagioli, the conscious self, which is the point of pure awareness, is separated from the transpersonal or 'higher Self', which exists apart from the conscious mind and body, but both are shared with other parts and enveloped in the collective unconscious. 'These larger and higher interests act as a magnet which draws up the 'libido' or the psychic energy invested in the 'lower' drives' (1989, p. 44). Hamlet must have engaged in some or nearly all of a process towards a complete regeneration and transmutation of his personality, in the goal toward the high achievement of 'self-realisation'. This long process leads to periods in which Hamlet has allowed the 'higher Self' to work, exemplified by his submission and receptiveness to providence, and his acknowledgement that his madness is over. The new state

allows him to be caring towards others like Laertes, even when he knows keenly that they mean him harm. He cannot act otherwise when prompted by his higher Self.

In his original analysis of Hamlet, Jones (1949) usefully contributes to this work's argument by his judgement that Hamlet's 'psychoneurosis' is an 'intermediate plight, in the toils of which perhaps the greater part of mankind struggles and suffers... where the person is unduly, and often painfully, driven or thwarted by the "unconscious" part of his mind' (p. 69). Laing and Grof regard this psychoneurotic process positively, not as an impediment to performance but as a necessary break-through to greater potential performance. Similarly, Assagioli's (1989) observations of individuals in psychospiritual crisis go a long way to explaining why conventional analysis has claimed Hamlet's melancholic disposition as psychotic. The basic characteristics of psychosis and SE are very similar in this explanation. Assagioli notes that exposed to other dimensions an individual might well become melancholic as,

In extreme cases, the reaction can be so intense as to become pathological, producing a state of depression and even despair, with suicidal impulses. This state bears a close resemblance to psychotic depression – once called 'melancholia' – characterised by an acute sense of unworthiness, a systematic self-deprecation and self-accusation, which may become so vivid as to produce the delusion that one is in hell, irretrievably damned. There is also an acute and painful sense of intellectual incompetence; a paralysis of the will power accompanied by indecision and inability to act.

(Assagioli, 1989, p. 40)

Commentators who have previously supported Hamlet's melancholic position and regard his tragedy as a failure of action and reason may wish to reconsider their position.

The absence of soliloquies in Act V may infer that Hamlet no longer needs to share his inner torment since it either no longer exists or it ceases to trouble him. It may simply indicate that Hamlet's losses are becoming more successfully integrated into his worldview and the transpersonal dimension no longer troubles Hamlet's relationship with the biographical dimension as they are nicely balanced within his psyche. At the start of BPM IV as Hamlet left for England, Grof (2000a)

notes that he would have undergone a process of 'ego death'. By 'clearing these old programs' of what the world was like 'by letting them emerge into consciousness,' Hamlet experienced the death of the 'old concepts' of who he was, and the associated loss of their 'emotional charge' also felt like a death (p. 52). The perinatal process has reached a point in BPM IV where it no longer painfully intrudes physically. Indeed the effects of the spiritual emergence are beginning to carry Hamlet into a more relaxed, transcendent state of being with the result that he is altogether happier and more stable. Typically BPM IV is associated with experiences of ego death and rebirth, sacrifice, redemption, and salvation, visions of brilliant light, or ecstatic union with specific deities, God or the Divine Self. It is associated with experiences of spiritual liberation, following the experience of total annihilation. Hamlet, in turning specifically to providence, which like any cosmic force or deity provides a necessary 'window into the Absolute' (Grof, 1998), mediates his new sense of balance between the inner and outer world. In his essay *Motifs of Self-image and World Image* Perry (1989) recounts that individuals like Hamlet experience being brought into a 'hieros gamos', or a sacred, or heavenly marriage with the Divine. He states that,

In this messianic role, one also believes oneself especially elected to bring about reforms of religion or society on a world scale, thus effecting a significant aspect of world regeneration. The self-image is renewed in a rebirth or sometimes a new birth brought about by a fruitful event of the sacred marriage. (Perry, 1989, p. 70)

Wedded to providence, Hamlet is in a transcendent reality where all is understood and accounted for. It is not that Hamlet wishes for Claudius' death or not, it is simply that all will be as it must be with or without Hamlet's intervention. Lukacher in his scholarly work *Daemonic Figures: Shakespeare and the Question of Conscience* (1994) usefully suggests that Hamlet's 'divinity' is not a confusion of Senecan fate and the God of Calvin but their 'transforming reinvention'. Lukacher proposes that,

Hamlet abandons himself to the idiom and the singular experience of time to which he now realizes he has already been abandoned. It is his vision of the unreadable singularity to which chance and fate have delivered him that constitutes the essence of his transformation in Act 5. (Lukacher, 1994, p. 153)

Newell (1991) citing Elton's (1971) essay *Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age* explains that 'Elizabethans saw man's mind as divided into "the intuitive and the angelic, whose knowledge was immediately infused, without any intervening process; and the discursive, involving rational effort and sense data"' (p. 150). Newell accepts that in his last soliloquy Hamlet uses his intuitive sense that 'accounts for his fatalistic calm and his comprehension of things divine, although it does not dispel his residual desire for revenge' (p. 151).

...we defy augury. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come – if it be not to come, it will be now – if it be not now, yet it will come – the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows what is't to leave betimes, let be. (*Hamlet*, 5.2.217-22)

Lukacher's (1994) more subjective argument tends to exclude Newell's dichotomy of external forces by stating that Hamlet is redeemed by his rare gift of being able to understand his life 'in its singular configuration...beyond both pagan fear and Christian guilt'. He goes on to propose that 'To read readiness is to be ready for oneself' that there is 'nothing else, no knowledge to be had of what we leave behind at death but only our readiness to pass beneath the "face of the absent god"' (p. 153).

To conclude, the 'To be, or not to be' of the fourth soliloquy has finally resolved itself into the acceptance state of 'let be' first figured in soliloquy one and so apposite to his condition in BPM I. The 'let be' gently dismisses all further propositions from his mind as he goes to make his peace with Laertes (Ghose, 1978, p. 103). Hamlet intuitively realises that Laertes will be Claudius' instrument in a murder plan and yet he is still able to ask his forgiveness and implicitly forgives Laertes as his 'brother' (5.2.241, 252) for what might happen next. Bloom (1989) notes that 'a mysterious and beautiful disinterestedness dominates this truer Hamlet' (p. 57). Is this calmer mood of reflective resignation indicative of a coming storm? Hamlet's explanation that the 'madness' (235) of his SE has caused 'Hamlet from himself be ta'en away' (232) resonates with Hamlet's more excited claim that he will 'wipe away all trivial fond records' (99) in soliloquy two. It reveals that he now believes that he has mastered this 'enemy' (237), the condition of madness, which has previously separated him from his reason.

However, rather than integrating the experience, Hamlet again appears to be resisting his SE. Grof takes care to remind us that an individual losing all known reference points, with the death of the 'false ego', may be presented with a profound sense of fear. 'This fear tends to create enormous resistance to continue and complete the experience. As a result, without appropriate guidance many people can remain psychologically stuck in this problematic territory' (Grof, 2000a, p. 53).

Nevertheless, even if this transcendent calm disguises and somehow dismisses a fearful resistance that must prefigure his inability to complete the process, conventionally it still derives from the same source. The less publicly introspective adolescent is growing into a more experienced, intuitive, and thoughtful young man whose responses are consistent with inner transformation and development but who may be unable to complete that development because of his metaphysical fear.

Hamlet's intuitive comments anticipate and reflect a growing understanding and acceptance of the influence of the transpersonal dimension on his life, particularly in the Fencing Scene when there is the possibility of some kind of definite outcome for him personally. Finally, the situation provides the realisation of his fears, and simultaneously and almost coincidentally satisfies his previous desire for revenge. Newell (1991) states, 'Thus the drama is framed by the mysterious effect of the supernatural, with Hamlet's intuitive sense linked directly to it at both ends' (p. 151). What Newell calls 'divine providence' becomes prominent in the last movement of the play but the contention of this thesis is that Hamlet has been responsive to his spiritual emergency throughout the play and not subject to it. It is further argued that divine providence is another way of describing Hamlet's understanding of his experiential engagement with the transpersonal and perinatal dimensions and of the way in which they function. They have allowed his inward transformation and his outward consciousness that has linked him directly to usually inaccessible material from the collective unconscious represented by these dimensions. Newell seems to regard Hamlet's intuitive capacity as a neat device to introduce the effect of fate or providence in the final part of the play. It is this work's contention, however, that the last act

resolves some of the questions raised by the effects of dimensional influence on spiritual emergence asked in the very first line of the play, which simply sums up all humanity's fears about the dark unknown in its challenge, 'Who's there?'

A Perinatal Conclusion to Hamlet's Spiritual Emergency

The powerful journey of Hamlet in Shakespeare's dream of *Hamlet* is mediated by the transformational process of Grof's spiritual emergence and emergency in the context of his holotropic theory. At the level of the transpersonal, Hamlet the Dreamer must first be dreamed and at the perinatal level Hamlet's pre-perinatal state is located in Grof's BPM I. It is significant to note that this dream-like lambent stage of BPM I seems to encompass both the pre-perinatal characteristics of Hamlet as God's dream through to Hamlet's conception and self-individuation as he becomes the Dreamer who is dreamed in BPM IV. However, in the most overt matrices, Hamlet's evolution takes him through the fear of BPM II and the violence of BPM III that actively stimulates enormous growth and transformation. Shakespeare's linking of revenge with hell throughout the play also reinforces the configuration of BPM II and III within Hamlet's experience. However, the introduction of transcendent features in BPM IV confirms the authority of a religious code over one based upon violence.

The final stage of Grof's perinatal progress finds Hamlet having literally nearly died and rebirthed on his native shore like a foetus resting helpless and passively in the hands of whatever directs life. Almost symbolically he re-enters the dream through the graveyard of Elsinore accompanied by childhood memories and the death of his adolescent love. In the dream of the journey of his life he at last dispenses with his egoic selfhood and submits himself to what is variously called 'the Everlasting', 'God', 'providence', and 'Fortune'. He has returned to Denmark and his psychospiritual renewal is more apparent in his greater inner calm and stability. Fernie (2002) concurs that

Hamlet is now able to identify with all mortal creatures. He has shrugged off the burden of mere filial obligations, substituting his heavenly father for an earthly one. He will not exact revenge on his own behalf, but as the

trusting agent of the higher power when he is called to do so, as apparently he knows he will be. (Fernie, 2002, p. 133)

As Hamlet enters the final movement of the dream journey he perceives darkly through the glass of the biographical and transpersonal dimensions and from the position of the fourth perinatal matrix of the Death-Rebirth experience his submission is tempered by the fear, noted earlier, and with anxiety at what completed rebirth might mean.

Another possibility is a failure to complete the journey; in that case, one delves deep into the abyss of the unconscious and is unable to return to full functioning in ordinary reality. This, unfortunately, is the fate of many people in our culture who have to face a spiritual emergency without proper understanding and support.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 129)

Structurally Grof's perinatal model in respect to Hamlet is distinguished by a number of points. BPM IV is not as active as matrices II and III but more like a passive or transition stage or period after the transformation has occurred or similar to BPM I prior to the transformative process. As BPM I is pre-egoic and pre-transformative in nature and BPM IV is principally non-egoic and trans-transformative, they appear to share similarities consistent with their being in a cycle as in the body and the affect. Therefore, it might be argued that Grof's model is circular or even spiral in its movement rather than a stage model. Certainly, Hamlet bears out the point that an individual cannot fully express his completion until he rejoins the source of its origin. The Dreamer is himself joined with the initiator of the dream. It is inferred that the model is capable of reverse motion, particularly, in the most obviously active stages from BPM III to BPM II, when reintegration might fail and becomes regression, degeneration and devolution to psychosis. Grof's model anticipates that an individual might need to re-experience any stage at any time and accepts that regression must occur in the service of development as a natural expedient of human growth. However, individuals can become disturbingly stuck even in this naturally evolving process.

In Hamlet's case scholars and critics alike have puzzled over *Hamlet's* final Act. Is Hamlet finally, tragically, and heroically redeemed? As noted earlier, Hamlet's finest moment is when he is at great pains to exchange apologies with Laertes

immediately before their fencing match (5.2.224-41). Hamlet is repentant and Laertes all but forgives him for the murder of his father Polonius, even though subsequent events almost prove Laertes a hypocrite in this. At this point it would be fair to surmise Hamlet's redemption as a repentant murderer. If we consider the life story of St. Paul, for example, repentant murderers can transcend their previous life-style choices. Thus with Hamlet he achieves the goal of rebirth but fails to maintain his position by his sudden if justifiable slaughter of Claudius by poison and the sword. Although this is no common murder, as Hamlet fights for his own life against an evil that has already destroyed him, there is no doubting his intention to commit the act which is an active expression of regression to a previous state or stage of being. It is arguable, therefore, that Hamlet's movement through the matrices has culminated in a false BPM IV that fails to fully reintegrate and regresses to BPM III or II. Hamlet's repentance, like a flash of insight, allows him to perceive or encounter a brief experience of spiritual liberation, redemption, and salvation.

Developmental psychologists would argue that Hamlet's regression at the point of transcendence is perhaps typical, as adolescents are developmentally unable to maintain or make a final break-through towards self-enlightenment. In Hamlet's case Grof's theory might be amended to apply 'false' or 'regressive' values to the model of existing matrices. Thus Hamlet has attained a False BPM IV or BPM IV with Regressive BPM III and II values. Equally it might be argued that Hamlet's flawed nature prevents him from completing BPM IV. In which case we might continue that all humanity is flawed and perhaps completion of BPM IV may only be possible when it coincides with an individual's physical death or a powerful event that enables an individual to overcome his metaphysical fear. Tillyard (1946) notes that to the Elizabethan, and therefore to Hamlet, the understanding of the self was a paramount human task. 'To know your self was not egoism but the gateway to all virtue' (p. 79).

Hamlet's death or his performance of his father's revenge may have enabled him to complete his perinatal transformation. In the performance of revenge, particularly, he denies his eternal inheritance for the sake of purging his material kingdom of its evils and, as Perry (1989) notes, to bring about reforms of society

and the world. It is perhaps the mystery or paradox of Hamlet that he simultaneously encounters and understands his true self, reclaims his divine nature and cosmic status, and embraces his own physical death and full spiritual birth.

The next Part addresses adolescent grief and loss literature and research together with theories of adolescent development. These theories, providing explanations of the factors that cause some adolescent responses to occur, are critical to the understanding of the causes of development. In integrating information about a subject like SE they may predict when and under what circumstances it might occur. Typically, for the study of adolescence at this time, this normally translates into explaining the importance and impact of biological and social change. Such a reading is limited if it is unable to accommodate the spiritual changes that also occur as part of development and as part of an adolescent's search for meaning and as a source of inner healing. The holotropic perspective enhances this position. The use of a holotropic tool therefore may extend models of grief and loss in much the same way as a holotropic analysis of Hamlet extends understanding of his grief and loss experiences. It also allows a closer examination of the links between grief and loss experiences, SE, and their function as models or processes that permit and assist adolescent development.

In the next chapter literature about adolescent development is reviewed alongside a discussion on the developmental tasks which must be negotiated in the face of the 'choiceless' trauma which accompanies bereavement and loss.

PART THREE

ADOLESCENCE AND GRIEF AND LOSS

CHAPTER TEN

REVIEWING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND CRITICAL LIFE TASKS IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND GRIEF AND LOSS

A few studies have examined adolescent bereavement within the context of adolescent development. However, most studies have not explicitly examined adolescent bereavement within the notion of developmental phases and critical life tasks. (Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 201)

It has been common for theorists to write about adolescence as a primary time of transition from childhood to adulthood, placing adolescents in a kind of 'no person's land' between the two. The so-called transition might never be as clear as such theories suggest. Indeed, it is questionable whether identity is ever so fully and completely formed - at any time in the lifespan! (Bird & Drewery, 2000, p.159)

Introduction

It is the contention of this thesis that Grof's holotropic model may be usefully considered alongside conventional grief and loss models to provide insights into the inner experiences and the development of adolescents that can help counsellors, other professionals, and families to avoid putting adolescents in harm's way during SE and in the aftermath of bereavement. But first this chapter discusses a number of influential theories of adolescent development alongside the management of unanticipated, traumatic life events for adolescents. These events, it is supposed, usually complicate normal development but it is suggested here that their initial disruption should give way to a more sensible and enhanced view of the world. This discussion develops the material presented in Part One and in the illustrative case analysis.

Balk and Corr (2001) argue that research into loss and bereavement during adolescence needs a 'theoretical synthesis' with adolescent development theory

before it can 'provide clear explanation'. They continue, however, that there is not at present a fully established and comprehensive adolescent development theory with which to support this 'synthesis'. Nevertheless, such work, according to Balk and Corr (2001) is crucial in suggesting 'the course intervention should take with grieving adolescents at risk for pathological reactions, and prompt further studies' (p. 212).

Broadly, the term 'adolescence' refers to a period in the human life cycle between childhood and adulthood, or maturity. It is a relatively new developmental component, so much so that up until recent human history and still in some contemporary cultural groups and societies this extended transition period does not exist. Balk and Corr (1996, 2001) propose that adolescent development can be divided into three phases: early adolescence, middle adolescence, and later adolescence. Early adolescence extends approximately from the ages of 10 to 14, marked by the onset of puberty, middle adolescence extends from the ages of 15 to 17, and later adolescence extends from 18 to 22. As Balk and Corr (2001) clearly state the age range itself and the designation of ages for each sub-period are conditioned by Western cultural biases in developed countries. The 'coming of age', in some cultures is marked by a ritual, or rite of passage, and a three-part phase does not apply to or reflect the developmental process of young people within these cultures (p. 200).

It is easy to identify the transition marker from childhood to early adolescence by using the onset of puberty as an indicator but the transition to adulthood, when it does occur, is not so clearly defined. Balk and Corr (1996) note that many developmental psychologists define the end of adolescence as the point at which the individual leaves home and/or the family of origin. Unfortunately, this definition is extremely variable and influenced by individual, economic and cultural factors. For the purposes of this thesis it is important to note that many eurocentric cultures identify a transitional period of time between childhood and adulthood, but that we cannot assume that all individuals achieve all the developmental markers across the full life cycle. Thus some adolescents may not achieve adulthood for a significant and extended period of time.

Reaching the age of 22 does not propel one automatically out of later adolescence and into responsible adulthood. Some persons throughout their adult years remain ambivalent about accepting responsibility, forging a separate identity, and sustaining interpersonal intimacy. In short, the end of adolescence is less easily identified than its beginning, although separation from home and financial independence are the typical markers that herald an individual's passage from later adolescence to young adulthood.

(Balk, 1995, p. 7, in Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 200)

Adolescent Development Theory

Given the significant manner in which loss impacts upon development in both the inner and outer dimensions of adolescent experience, it is important to understand the way in which adolescent development theory has influenced the study of spirituality, religious experience, and grief and loss in adolescence.

The following will outline how theories of human development have provided a number of discrete frameworks in which to observe adolescent experience.

Adolescent Development Theory, Spirituality, and Religious Experience

Tamminen and Nurmi (1995) suggest that even by examining comparative religions using the existing research paradigms we still cannot be sure what constitutes religious development. 'The central phenomenon for developmental explanations is systemic change. Not all changes are developmental' (p. 271). They contend that such a question relies heavily on either finding a minimal common pattern and order of general cognitive stages, or a differentiated hypothesis from culturally based models of socialisation.

Certainly, Piaget's theory of 'operational thinking' has been influential in emphasising the cognitive aspects of religious development and supporting other theories of reference regarding cognitive domains for measuring religious behaviour through the concepts of 'cognitive consistency' and 'attitude'. Depth psychology has also contributed much to the study of religious experience and its development.

A major contribution to theories of adolescent development has been made by Erickson's (1963, 1977) influential eight stage psychosocial theory of identity development. Each stage is associated with a crisis, or a psychosocial task to be accomplished, which involves conflict and has two possible outcomes. Consequently, the more positive the outcome the more that quality becomes part of the ego and of healthy development. If the less desirable outcome is uppermost the quality is incorporated into the ego and subsequently interferes with further healthy development. Stage five, which most applies to adolescence, is characterised by a crisis of 'identity versus role confusion'. Thus the challenge for the adolescent is to develop towards 'identity' rather than 'role confusion', to develop an awareness of self, through time, with a continuity that is reciprocally acknowledged both by his or her own perceptions of self-hood and, coincidentally, by the perceptions of significant others.

In his theoretical expansion Marcia (1980) defines Erikson's identity theory as a continually changing organisation of an adolescent's attitudes, values, and beliefs. In his model the adolescent faces a 'crisis', which he describes as a period of reflection, information gathering, and questioning and makes a 'commitment', an adoption of a set of values. This normally occurs in the areas of religion, vocation, and politics. This process involves research and making final decisions and that it is directly by going through the process of wrestling with these concerns and resolving them that identity is achieved.

Erikson's psychosocial theory has provided a crucial starting point for Fowler's (1981) structural theory of faith development that covers the entire life span. Fowler's theory, which will be covered in greater detail shortly, is linked to Piaget's genetic epistemology and Kohlberg's conceptualisation of the development of moral judgement. Tamminen and Nurmi (1995) contend that some research paradigms can seem actively hostile to religion. They cite behavioural psychology as an example but explain that it is understandable because of the experimental-deductive nature of this paradigm. However, they conclude that since the dominant theoretical paradigm for examining religious development appears to be Piagetian cognitivism in most studies the general line

of development is similar. Thus, conventional research tends to equate religiosity or spirituality with cognitive development rather than consciousness.

However, in its widest sense Tamminen and Nurmi (1995) note that religious experiences in childhood and adolescence cover practically the full spectrum of religious orientation. Contrary to earlier limited research, they suggest conversion experiences (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984) have been frequently reported to occur before, during, and after adolescence.

It seems that though for many the puberty and adolescence years are a time of clear religious decisions, conversion and salvation experiences are not concentrated at that age, but are dispersed over almost the entire age range.

In empirical studies of older adolescent and adults, a great number of respondents claimed to have had 'a religious or mystical experience,' felt the 'the presence of God' or experienced 'close contact with something holy and sacred'.
(Tamminen & Nurmi, 1995, pp. 295-8)

Tamminen's (1983,1991) studies with 7 to 20 year olds recognises and confirms the occurrence of mild holotropic experience stimulated by crises in middle and late adolescence.

The most common situations of God's closeness were in almost all age groups those involving an emergency. In puberty, with 13-15 year olds, more than 50 percent of the responses belonged to this category...older students spoke more frequently of various internal difficulties or encounters with death and sorrow. This tendency may reflect on the one hand the development of thinking from a concrete level to a more abstract level, on the other hand the struggle with inner problems typical of adolescents.
(p. 296)

What is useful to note again is that in this kind of research, unless the response is properly articulated in the abstract concepts typically assigned to spiritual experiences, then they might not be quantifiable as viable experiences. Thus we rely heavily upon language to mediate this kind of experience and to mark an adolescent's developmental passage to maturity.

As a consequence of both maturation and experience, a new mental system emerges in adolescence which enables the young person to accomplish feats of thought that far surpass the elementary reasonings of the child.

One feat that makes its appearance is the capacity to introspect, to take one's thoughts and feelings as if they were external objects and to examine and reason about them. Still another feat is the capacity to construct ideal or contrary-to-fact situations, to conceive of utopian societies, ideal mates, and preeminent careers. Finally in problem-solving situations the adolescent, in contrast to the child, can take all of the possible factors into account and test their possibilities in a systemic fashion.

(Inhelder & Piaget, 1958, in Elkind, 1977, pp. 275-6)

Elkind has noted that the capacity to think about overarching theories enables adolescents to think about relationships between concepts whilst grasping the underlying reasons for them. Adolescents therefore have the capacity for theory construction and the corresponding need to search for comprehension. However, the search for comprehension, Elkind argues, is like the other need capacities in the sense that it never meets with complete success. The adolescent may have a concept of personality that enables him to understand people in depth but he still encounters human eccentricities and foibles that defy generalisations, each new effort raising more questions and puzzles than answers. Influenced by Piaget and Kohlberg, and in turn an influence on the work of Neimeyer, Kegan's (1994) constructive developmental theory suggests that this might be because the adolescent is in a sense a vessel who derives purpose and meaning from being filled by others. Having no self to share with another, the other is required to bring the self into being. Kegan describes the adolescent as negotiating a sequence of transitions and balances between what he or she considers self and what are others. Thus, an understanding of an adolescent is predicated on an understanding of where he or she is in this initial meaning-making balance.

Elkind (1977) notes that in the domain of religion the need to search for comprehension is expressed in terms of comprehending God in his various aspects. In modern religion the pathway along which the problem of comprehension is finally answered is provided by theology. Elkind maintains that religion has

...evolved to provide solutions to the problems of adaptation posed by these need capacities.... Once the concept of God or Spirit is accepted as the ultimate conservation, it necessarily entails genuine religious problems for the other emerging need capacities. (Elkind, 1977, p. 177)

Conversely, Beit-Hallahmi argues more in favour of an object relations perspective but one that bears some similarity with Grof's notion of the perinatal as she observes that the need to, and experience of engaging with God is a form of regressive behaviour. This point is more fully developed earlier in the thesis in the examination of Wilber and Washburn's transpersonal theories.

The experience of communion, merger, or 'encounter,' reported in many religious traditions, is to be interpreted as either a return to what once was infantile reality, or, more likely, an attempt to recreate imagined infantile bliss that never was. (Beit-Hallahmi, 1995, p. 261)

This particular argument supports the theory that the Ghost in *Hamlet* is part of Hamlet's mind and not apart from his mind and suggests that adolescents' experience of the transpersonal is a means of communication with what Winnicott (1965) calls a 'satisfying object'. If the ghost is merely illusory, then conventionally Hamlet suffers from a profound trauma, but since we are led through the play through his perception of events it is hard to deny its reality and potency as the instigator of his actions. Here, Beit-Hallahmi makes a distinction between perceptions of loved objects in subjective 'higher' mystical states and the objectivity of concrete visions, whereas Grof concerns himself with the dimensionality of these experiences whether they are ultimately subjective or objective.

The perception of fusion with loved objects in 'higher' mystical states, which are characterised by an indescribable ecstasy, and not by concrete visions was interpreted by Lewin (1950) as a regression to the early infant-mother symbiotic relationship in nursing. (p. 261)

In discussing Winnicott's (1971) notion of a 'transitional state and transitional objects', Beit-Hallahmi refers to Horton's (1973, 1974) interesting and original theoretical idea that the mystical experience itself may have the character of a potential transitional phenomenon. This resonates with Klass' (1999) discussion on 'solace' as 'the sense of transcendent reality experienced in the midst of devastation' (p. 95). For Horton this transitional event is a 'reliably soothing inner experience' that the individual may wish to return to (p. 261). On the face of it, Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost is a distortion of a typical transitional state

and transitional object. It is not soothing and yet, with some anxiety, he does return to it.

In terms of experiences such as SE, Beit-Hallahmi clearly confirms Grof's proposition that, aside from unanticipated and traumatic life events, 'Denial and projected rage, resulting from the pain and disappointment of a ruptured symbiosis (i.e., pre-oedipal), lead to mystical experiences' (p. 261). Alternatively, from a different perspective, SE can be triggered by the death of the loved object and death imitates a ruptured bond that might have occurred in very early childhood. This is rather similar to the Grofs' thinking about the traumatic rift that can occur in the process of childbirth.

Predicting the personality dynamics of individuals reporting mystical experiences, Beit-Hallahmi cites Allison's (1969) study of adolescent conversion that proposes that conversion can be interpreted as changing the perception of an individual's actual father. The example cited here is that the father is either weak, ineffective or absent, and that the process of creating an internal representation of a strong and principled substitute father with clear values and firm judgement embodies the conversion experience. Beit-Hallahmi suggests that,

This paternal image is crucial in helping the adolescent to achieve individuation and differentiation, and avoiding a sense of undifferentiated union with the maternal figure. Similar suggestions were made by Olsson (1983), who stated that adolescent preoccupation with 'supernatural' objects is actually a mental representation of failed symbolic attempts to create separation from maternal and paternal objects.

(Beit-Hallahmi, 1995, p. 262)

Read in terms of the case study, the adolescent Hamlet, in failing to fully separate from the suffocating influence of parent figures, who are in some ways perceived as weak, becomes preoccupied with the supernatural and bonds with a new construct of the loved lost object. This transitional object, rather than reflecting the noble figure of Hamlet's conscious thoughts, reflects the true nature of his father in their unconscious representation of the Ghost, and perhaps reflects or superimposes upon this figure his own unworthiness, his thwarted ambitions, which his parents have successfully imposed upon him.

Either way, Hamlet is a very vulnerable adolescent whose inner world begins to suggest that somehow his everyday reality has traded places with a nightmare - an inversion of his outer world of everyday objective experience with his subjective inner world - a SE. However, his profound expansion of consciousness from a disturbing holotropic experience to an untrained-sensate mystical state (Deikman, 1963) is necessary to its full integration through a mourning process illuminated by truth.

We should have to use its [mystical] experiences by selecting and subordinating and substituting just as is our custom in this ordinary naturalistic world; we should be liable to error just as we are now; yet the counting in of that wider world of meanings, and the serious dealing with it, might, in spite of all the perplexity, be indispensable stages in our approach to the final fullness of the truth. (James, 1901-2, p. 13)

Clearly, mourning as an outward aspect of the inner SE could be regarded as a parallel process. Thus mystical experiences of the kind described by Grof and others are the observable effects of an individual's goal towards reconstruction and renewal in pursuit of that 'fullness of truth'. Thus mysticism is a means through which mourning may effectively and purposefully be processed.

The connections and similarities between mysticism and mourning were explored by Aberbach (1987), through testimonials and literary works. Mysticism is said to provide an effective outlet for grief, satisfying the need for an orderly, goal oriented form of mourning. (Beit-Hallahmi, 1995, p. 263)

Finally, Lerner (2002) takes up this positive theme in adolescent development. In his developmental contextual theory Lerner is very critical of theories that position youth as problems to be managed that he considers have so far been the focus of this field. He suggests a strength-based perspective of identity that precludes the emphasis on the 'storm and stress' of adolescence, Erikson's identity crisis as the development stage of adolescence, and Anna Freud's notion of adolescence as a developmental disturbance. In order to understand links between moral, civic, and spiritual engagement and positive youth development, Lerner argues that we need to transcend Erikson's notion of fidelity, which, he asserts, was derived from a deficit model. Lerner's strength-based perspective about identity development focuses on the adolescent on a path to becoming a contributing member of civil

society, and to discovering a personal pathway to meaning and mattering. He assigns the adolescent three developmental tasks that involve coping with changing biology, coping with psychology, and coping with context. Lerner particularly emphasises that spirituality and spiritual development can be thought of as a transcendent commitment to beliefs and experiences that extend beyond self, time, place, and matter, and that lead young people to contribute positively to society.

Adolescent Development and Grief and Loss: Developmental Tasks in Three Sub-groups

According to Balk and Corr (1996), during adolescence normal life transitions are usually described in terms of developmental tasks. Oltjenbruns (2001) very clearly describes these developmental tasks as,

Those major tasks, defined by one's culture, that are mastered at a specific life stage if one is to be successful in a particular society. These tasks relate to various developmental realms including the physical, social, emotional, and psychological. Failure to master tasks at a particular stage leads to greater difficulty in dealing successfully with those of later life stages.

(Oltjenbruns, 2001, p. 174)

In their work with adolescents who have encountered death and bereavement Balk and Corr (1996, 2001) have created their own three sub-period model of adolescent development based upon their understanding of adolescence and influenced by the work of Blos. In his psychodynamic interpretation of adolescence Blos (1979) views development in terms of adjustment to sexual and biological maturation. He describes five stages of adolescence and their tasks. His 'latency' stage, in which sexual inhibition is prevalent as the ego and the superego control the instincts, ends at the onset of puberty with its increase in sex drive, and prefigures the next stage, and Balk and Corr's first sub-group of 'early adolescence'.

This next stage is consistent with other psychodynamic theorists. Indeed, Anna Freud has even suggested that the balance between the superego, id, and ego is

destroyed with the onset of adolescence because of new pressures on the ego. She suggests that adolescent behaviour is caused by a sudden upsurge of sexuality, an increase in sex drive that results from the biological changes of pubescence. The biological changes of the maturation process therefore directly influence psychological functioning. Increase in sex drive causes stress and anxieties, calling into play one or more defence mechanisms, which restore equilibrium and protect against anxiety (Lerner & Lerner 1999). Lerner (2002), however, proposes that it is a weakness in her theory that she presents adolescence as a time of imbalance and upheaval. Nevertheless, her view corresponds with Washburn's (1994) who states that with the awakening of sexuality in puberty the adolescent experiences an upsurge from the 'nonegoic sphere', or domain of the unconscious, which 'has the effect of loosening primal repression' and stimulating the body, energy, instincts, feelings, and the creative... process' (p. 125). Washburn's position that regression occurs as part of the awakening of the self-conscious and nonegoic life, which he calls 'regression in the service of development', is important to this thesis, and the notion of SE as *regression in the service of development* has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Erikson (1963) suggests that in general adolescents are in search of a separate ego identity that will lead them to adulthood, and distinguish them from their parents. This means development of an ego that has the characteristics of centrality, initiative and wholeness. This is consistent with a new level of self-respect and ability to reality test events and situations that appear to be threatening while, at the same time, keeping fluid and open boundaries. It also means knowing when and where boundaries need to be drawn and/or defended. He emphasises the importance of culture, rather than the adolescent's sexual nature highlighted in previous psychoanalytic theories, in determining how the ego identity is established. The healthy resolution of earlier conflicts, Erikson notes, can now serve as a foundation for the search for an identity. Achievement of this developmental task, according to Erickson, puts the adolescent on the road to mature individuation and social responsibility. Failure may result in time diffusion, characterised as marking time and going nowhere, role fixation, which is an abnormal preoccupation with identity, work paralysis, confusion about sex

roles, authority confusion, and confusion of values. Adolescents at some point experience most of these dilemmas as they navigate this stage of development, and not all come out of it successfully. As Dusek (1996) suggests, 'If the adolescent is not capable of forming a coherent and acceptable identity, self-doubt, role diffusion, and indulgence in self-destructive activities may result' (p. 29). However, as Lerner (2002) observes, other development will proceed even if the capability is not achieved but the ego will not fully develop.

As a rare example of how responses to adolescent bereavement might be examined within the context of adolescent development Fleming and Adolf (1986) have proposed a model that links the two. They suggest that grief and loss, when they occur alongside normal developmental tasks, force adolescents to cope behaviourally, cognitively, and affectively with five core issues that vary according to their maturation phase. These five core issues are (a) trusting in the predictability of events, (b) gaining a sense of mastery and control, (c) forging relationships marked by belonging, (d) believing the world is fair and just, and (e) developing a confident self-image (Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 201).

Certainly, adolescence is characterised by many theorists as a hugely important developmental period, marked by the turbulence of transformation, and of loss and gain. Adolescence as a field of research continues to invite further and extensive examination. For example, in terms of the question of identity in adolescence, Bird and Drewery (2000) note that theorists have treated adolescence as a kind of 'no person's land' between childhood and adulthood. It should also be reiterated that not all adolescents in the world experience the largely Western psychological construct that we call 'identity crises'. It appears to be a culturally instigated process of personality development that has the goal of preparing individuals to become autonomous enough to meet the challenges they will face in adult life.

Balk and Corr's three sub-groups:

1.) Early Adolescence

Identification of the early adolescent sub-group was driven by the middle schooling movement, which supported the childhood to early adolescent transition in the United States in the late 1950s, by providing an appropriate educational setting for this age group to realise its developmental tasks. This sub-group, aged between 10 and 14, is dominated by the normal life transition of puberty that is unique in terms of its onset and its response from each adolescent. Balk and Corr (1996) suggest that 'on-time' maturing is seen as a positive experience for both males and females, and that early-maturing girls and late-maturing boys turn 'initial distress into later social and personal competencies' (p. 9).

The main task of adolescents in this sub-group is their management and response to physical maturation. Blos' (1979) 'early adolescent' stage, which is similar to Balk and Corr's, emphasises same-sex friendships, the adoption of opposing values to parents, and as those values are questioned, so the superego and ego are weakened and delinquent behaviours may emerge. Blos suggests that if an adolescent fails to overcome the difficulties inherent in this phase of adolescence it could lead to ongoing difficulties with maturity.

Typically attitudes toward religion and religious beliefs, especially between 13 and 15, become more negative (Turner, 1970; 1980). Indeed, according to some research (Greer, 1981) these attitudes become more negative from age 10 onwards in fairly even increments. Tamminen's (1991) research suggests that the negative attitude from puberty onwards does not necessarily represent a denial of religious beliefs, but more an increase in doubt and critical thinking (Turner, 1970, Hyde, 1990). This may be linked to the development of cognition from concrete to abstract and to the fact that young people are seeking individuation and noticing the contradictions of values and norms evident in a pluralistic society. In addition, gender differences universally suggest that boys

and men are less positive toward religion than girls and women (Richmond, 1970; Hyde, 1965).

Hilliard (1960, in Tamminen & Nurmi, 1995) suggests that the development of religious concepts such as 'anthropomorphism', which in this case is the conceptualisation of God as a version of the adolescent's father, begins between the ages of 11 and 16. Hilliard observes that during this time the number of anthropomorphic descriptions clearly decreases, whereas spiritual and abstract descriptions increase. However in Tamminen's (1991) study the opposite occurred. Around the ages 13 to 16 they were a little more common, although rather negative in attitude, which suggests that the anthropomorphic view is a remnant from an earlier age. Goldman (1964, in Tamminen and Nurmi, 1995), goes on to state that if anthropomorphic cognition occurs at the middle adolescent stage it represents a distortion in thinking. Consequently, applied to Hamlet's case, it could be read that God in the guise of Old Hamlet is characterised as a negative, vindictive father figure. This might suggest that Hamlet's view of God concurs with what Hall (1990) terms 'legalism', the concept of a strict punishing God developed in late childhood which gives way to the concept of a loving forgiving God in later childhood and adolescence. This might suggest that Hamlet was subject to a negative experience at an earlier age and that he was unable to fully comprehend God in purely abstract terms until he experienced SE, and/or attained maturity. Certainly, the concept of God as a parent (Godin & Hallez, 1965), which is the connection between the idea of God and the idea of parent weakens with age. This is confirmed by Tamminen's (1991) subsequent study that shows that the correlation was strongest in the younger ages (Tamminen & Nurmi, 1995).

Balk and Corr (1996) conclude that adolescents' experiences with loss, particularly when associated with death do have significance in their developmental work. In Hamlet's case, in 'middle' or 'late adolescence', it is suggested that the death of his father at a point when he might still be striving for emotional emancipation from his parents might cause complications such as a sense of abandonment and insecurity.

2.) Middle Adolescence

In common with all adolescent development literature, Balk and Corr (1996, 2001) have designated 'middle adolescence' to cover the high school years from 15 to 17. In this sub-group the most central task for adolescents is to begin to master skills in self-governing and being independent. Associated with this major developmental task are those that involve identity formation, what Erikson (1963) describes as those involving 'identity and intimacy'. However, Balk and Corr (1996) contend that there is sufficient data, citing Erikson (1963), Josselson (1987), and Marcia (1964, 1980), to indicate that rather than reaching closure in middle adolescence, identity formation can extend into late adolescence. They suggest that this is 'an indication of unreflective acceptance of the values and beliefs of others' (p. 10).

In his 'adolescent' stage Blos (1979) describes the emergence of heterosexual love relationships and an increased interest in the self, including issues of autonomy and identity. However, in an interesting break with traditional psychodynamic approaches, Blos (1979) proposes that this stage provides a 'second individuation' process for adolescents as it initiates a further opportunity for the reorganising of those super-ego values internalised from parents. It is the contention of this thesis that Blos' second individuation process might also permit a reorganisation or restructuring of the psyche in some situations where the life circumstances of an individual are too overwhelming for the ego to deal with. This might be especially true in circumstances of personal loss if it triggers a powerful influx of unconscious and conscious materials experienced as regression in the service of development as Washburn (1995) suggests.

In this sub-group and the next there is significant interest by developmentalists in adolescent changes in cognition that signify and force normal transitions. Piaget's (1972) influential four stage theory of cognitive development emphasises 'concrete operations', characterised by 7 types of conservation which demonstrate intelligence through logical and systemic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. Piaget's penultimate stage refers to the early adolescence (6-10) sub-group where egocentric thought diminishes and Piaget's

fourth and final stages correspond to the middle and late adolescent sub-group, and adulthood, (11+) which concentrates on an adolescent's ability to perform 'formal operations'. From middle adolescence onwards intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract concepts.

Piaget (1972) has observed that early in this period there is a return to egocentric thought. Elkind (1976, in Bird, & Drewery, 2000) has extended Piaget's notion of egocentrism, which is a central characteristic of adolescence and adolescent risk taking, which suggests to the adolescent that others are as preoccupied with him as he is with himself. Elkind proposes two new aspects of egocentrism. In the first the adolescent has an 'imaginary audience', where everything he or she does is seen by this imaginary audience as if he or she is on stage. The second aspect is represented by a 'personal fable' in which the adolescent sees himself as the star of his own life. In the latter case adolescents find it difficult to believe that anything can go wrong with their lives and that they are immune to risk and immortal in the face of danger. This is a particular problem in adolescence especially when the focus on self may tend toward the grandiose before settling into something more realistic, or when the euphoria is breached by an unanticipated event such as death. It may lead a youngster to take chances with his or her life with disastrous consequences.

Used as an explanation for a high level of risk-taking, Elkind's theory suggests that adolescents are unable to learn less risk-prone behaviours. 'Egocentrism' also implies that those adolescents are troublesome to their parents, selfish, and, taken literally, completely irrational (Bird & Drewery, 2000). All of these factors, of course, contribute to identity development, the outcome of which is most favourable if the adolescent's fantasies are reality-tested in the real world. Wilber (1983) in summing up this process makes the subject of this activity the 'self' and not the thought process itself. He says,

In essence, the self simply starts to differentiate from the concrete thought process. And because the self starts to differentiate itself from the concrete thought process, it can to a certain degree transcend that thought process and therefore operate upon it ... one can operate on one's own thought.

(Wilber, 1983, p. 89)

Cognitively individuals during middle adolescence have the capability to form symbolic, abstract and complex representations of reality and they also understand and accept that their interpersonal relationships are marked by ineffable qualities of profound dimensionality (Balk & Corr, 1996, p. 10). That is, that the adolescent is able to perceive once simple one-dimensional relationships as having become multidimensional and therefore inexplicably complex. Thus, by middle adolescence individuals are aware of a greater dimensionality of experience even if they exhibit extremes of cognition that are characterised either by poor focus or over-preoccupation.

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory provided a starting point for Fowler's (1981) six stage structural theory of faith development covering the entire life span. Fowler's theory is also linked to Piaget's genetic epistemology and Kohlberg's conceptualisation of the development of moral judgement. In terms of the development of religious concepts such as the 'Image of God', it has been suggested that the concept of God becomes more internalised, reaching its conclusion at 15-16 years (Deconchy, 1965; 1967, in Tamminen & Nurmi, 1995). Just as Elkind contends that egocentrism explains risky behaviour, so Fowler's (1981, 1991, in Muuss, 1996) theory suggests that for adolescents faith increases as egocentrism diminishes, or as egocentric limitations are surmounted. Fowler's stages not only refer to cognitive development, they also reflect the interpretation of cognition and affection. Fowler has suggested that most adults find it difficult to pass beyond the third stage and yet he proposes that this stage of 'synthetic-conventional faith' is most appropriate to the cognitive levels of early and middle adolescence. In this stage adolescents are able to compose 'a story of my stories', which is essentially what Neimeyer (2001) terms a 'life narrative' except that Fowler sees this as a synthesis of beliefs and values derived from significant others but not yet objectified for critical reflection.

In Kegan's (1982) constructivist theory of the evolving self, adolescent identity is explored from late adolescence to adulthood as 'the shift from the interpersonal balance to the institutional one, balance 3 to balance 4' (p. 143). He suggests that the adolescent 'self' relies on its relationship with others to evolve its own unique identity. He contends that adolescence is not a replay of the oedipal relationship,

as psychoanalytic theory would have it, but that these two periods have common evolutionary features. He reinterprets Piaget in terms of the psychological and the metaphysical self. Not only does the self-reflecting adolescent look at himself from the perspective of a witness using egocentric thought to place him at the centre of his universe, but he also recognises the adolescent's 'interpersonal self'.

In 'balance 3 concrete (interpersonal)', which is in the early to middle adolescent sub-group, Lerner suggests that, by way of an example,

When fifth graders are asked what they want to know about themselves, their answers concern the concrete activities, capacities, limits, and transformations of the physical body . . . it is an exploration along a plane without the recognition of a third dimension. (Lerner, 1982, p. 36)

Thus he describes the 'interpersonal self' as mutual with other people; having needs, interests and wishes, with an ability to negotiate needs that lead to mutuality and the entering into empathetic and reciprocal obligations. He also stresses that the interpersonal self of the adolescent is not intimate but embodies many different voices of 'interpersonality'. What is significant is that Kegan contends that the adolescent has no self to share with an other, instead the other is required to bring the self into being. In other words 'You are the other needed to complete me'. The shift to balance 4 (institutional), late adolescence to early adulthood and the hallmark of adolescence, in unhinging the concrete world of the 'interpersonal' young person makes 'what is' a mere instance of 'what might be' (Lerner, 1982, p.38). Consequently, as the young person shifts from the interpersonal framework of adolescence to the institutional balance of adulthood the self evolves, and the adolescent is revealed 'the infinite array of the "possible". The underlying psychologic is transformed from the physical to the metaphysical, and a whole new way of making meaning comes into being.' (Lerner, 1982, p. 38). Thus, the adolescent self evolves from the question 'do you like me?' to 'does my government still stand?' and self is reconstructed as identity, or 'psychic administration', and ideology. The adolescent self as it begins to be the adult self has relationships, which it 'regulates' as an 'administrator', with other people becoming self-reflective of its role, norms and self-concept. In this shift the self enters an ideological state where truth is dependent upon faction,

class, or group, and where there is a heightened sensitivity to threats against its newly evolving and balancing being.

Balk and Corr (1996) add that middle adolescents who are seeking to achieve mastery, control and competency whilst enjoying a degree of autonomy can have this shattered by the effects of a sudden, unexpected and often violent and traumatic death of a friend or peer. As observed above from Hamlet's case study the sudden disruption of the adolescent's assumptive world can trigger conflicting, dangerous behaviours. In considering the changes in social understanding that can emerge in the life of bereaved middle adolescents Balk and Corr observe that, 'A major transformation in social consciousness does seem to occur in the lives of bereaved adolescents, a transformation seen as a reaching out to and appreciation for the experiences of others' (Balk & Corr, 1996, p. 11). It is the contention of this thesis that not only does a transformation of social consciousness occur but also a transformation of those deeper unconscious inner structures that constitute the psyche.

3.) Late Adolescence

Balk and Corr (1996) indicate that many late adolescents, in the 18 to 22 age ranges, are either in further education or have joined the world of work full time (p. 12). In late adolescence the pressing issues of establishing intimate relationships, making career choices, and gaining autonomy from the family of origin, and notably from parents, supersede the previous sub-group's concerns with social understanding.

The major focus of Blos' (1979) 'late adolescence' stage is to answer the question 'who am I?' so that self-esteem becomes balanced and a stable personality develops. This is achieved by meeting and overcoming four challenges: the second individuation process; sexual identity as it is linked to maturation; historical continuity that involves acceptance of one's past and consequently frees one from it; and coping with traumatic life events. The latter, Blos argues, gives adolescents the means of achieving personal strength.

For Blos (1979) the normal life transition of separating from the parents and achieving autonomy is seen as a matter of individuation. Such individuation is supported by a sense of control over one's destiny and augmented by mutually respectful relations with parents. To a greater extent the research, according to Balk and Corr (1996), indicates that most late adolescents attain individuation successfully whilst maintaining close and warm relationships with their parents. However, in some circumstances separation is achieved through a process of emotional detachment which results in less harmonious relations prevailing. They also note that females, because they internalise richer emotional relationships with other people than can males, are more able to call upon these reserves which help insulate them from emotional dependency during separation (p. 13), through what Blos calls 'postadolescence'. In his final stage the individual straddles late adolescence and adulthood by completing the goals set for the self, including entrance into adulthood roles of marriage and parenthood, and the further development of a sex-role image, including that of being a mother or a father.

Fowler's (1981) fourth stage of faith development, 'individual-reflective faith', is truly centred in the later adolescent sub-group and espouses individuality and autonomy and, at the same time, a third person perspective similar to Piaget's witness, alongside an ability to critically examine inherited beliefs and values. This stage, Balk and Corr (1996) suggest, relies upon an adolescent's ability to evaluate and restructure beliefs and values. Similarly, and in some of the same circumstances, Attig (2001) has proposed that the process of relearning the world after normal life transitions or unanticipated life events have occurred, occurs quite naturally, and it is through this restructuring that the core foundational structures of an adolescent's life are reformulated. The completion of this restructuring process may also have links to Blos' second individuation process, discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

In summary, and using Erickson's (1968) work as an anchor, the outcomes of successful identity resolution in adolescence include transcending old roles and taking on new, more meaningful and reciprocal relationships with the society in which one is embedded. This means taking on responsibility for the well-being of

society and for maintaining oneself financially. Further outcomes include: securing freedom of choice and the self-confidence to make decisions that affect one's life; feeling a sense of self-sameness even while actively choosing to play different roles depending upon the social context; having a philosophy of life based on significant values that are important to one, so that one has a goal in life and a sense of direction; engaging in intimate relationships with others without fear of loss of identity or engulfment because one's personality is intact, integrated, secure and flexible; and finally, achieving a new balance between individuation and socialisation based upon mutuality in relationships with others because one's unique gifts are recognised and appreciated. In order to achieve this last goal, to gain self-respect and status or prestige, the adolescent finds it necessary to free his or her self from the inappropriate need for approval from or dependency upon others.

Balk and Corr (1996) propose that the demarcations of early, middle, and late adolescent sub-groups are more than simply arbitrary when they argue their particular usefulness when dealing with adolescent who are psychologically disturbed. In assuming the importance of a life span developmental focus, they suggest that grief and loss influence adolescent development. They conclude that adolescent grief responses may conform to the developmental characteristics of adolescence and its sub-periods, and that adolescent mourning process and grief responses do not, therefore, exactly parallel those of adults (p. 23). Similarly, it might be argued that adolescent SE might not necessarily parallel the experiences of those in adulthood. Balk and Corr certainly concur with Grof and Grof (1989), Oltjenbruns (2001), and other scholars whose work is cited in this thesis. They state that a poor response to the mastery of the process, whether it be having difficulties with developmental tasks in each sub-group, or by impeding a SE's passage to its transformational goal, can indicate the presence of psychological problems during adolescence or earlier and can cause difficulties in subsequent sub-groups and adulthood. Clearly, the achievement of developmental tasks becomes much more complicated when an adolescent also has to manage unanticipated and traumatic life events, or experiences.

Unanticipated and Traumatic Life Events in Adolescence

When exploring adolescent loss we should consider their attendant developmental losses and their propensity to cope with change.
(Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 212)

From the case study of Hamlet, and the work of developmental as well as grief and loss theorists, it is clear that normal life transitions and developmental tasks can be influenced by unanticipated and traumatic life events such as the death of a parent. This thesis contends that normal developmental tasks of adolescence may be complicated by such an event, which may itself be impeded in its process by the 'choiceless' emergence of a SE. This hypothesis suggests that SE may be part of an adolescent's complicated response to loss as it occurs in association with unanticipated and traumatic life events. Thus, in certain circumstances it may be initially difficult for the griever and the counsellor to differentiate between grief and loss and SE experiences. In such a case the attendant effects may belong to either or both of these experiences. It has been argued here that Hamlet's loneliness and alienation, depression, guilt, and disruptions in interpersonal relationships and self-esteem, as well as being the effects of bereavement, are also the effects of SE. Indeed, these effects, which are particularly characteristic of Grof's 'No Exit' BPM II, are also and not surprisingly, significantly present in Hamlet's first three soliloquies after the death of his father and the loss of his expected legacy. Research suggests that for adolescents generally,

The effects of bereavement are severe, and unresolved bereavement has been linked to agitated depression, chronic illness, enduring and intense clinical reactions such as guilt, and significant disturbances in self esteem, job and school performance, and interpersonal relationships. Unanticipated negative outcomes can include secondary losses and incremental grief as unaffected friends fear coming into contact with a grieving adolescent, frequently dismiss the intensity and duration of grief, find an adolescent's ongoing grief both disquieting and wearisome, and shun the griever.
(Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 200)

Balk and Corr (1996) have also suggested that during adolescence the death of a parent, a sibling, a friend, or one's own dying process might be considered as good examples of unanticipated life crises, and as such they are turning points.

Grof and Grof (1989) liken the unanticipated SE experience to the Chinese pictogram for crisis as it is composed of two basic signs, or radicals, 'one of them means "danger" and the other "opportunity"' (p. 7). Balk and Corr (1996) propose a similar notion that normal life transitions and unanticipated, traumatic life events share the same common characteristic of being 'dangerous opportunities' (p. 5):

They evoke growth and maturity if responded to well, but presage harm and maldevelopment if responded to poorly. Consequently, the occurrence of a traumatic, unanticipated life event in the life of an adolescent – such as the death of the individual's mother or father – might threaten healthy resolution of his or her developmental tasks. (Balk & Corr, 1996, pp. 5-6)

Grof (2000a) has certainly observed that when individuals who are experiencing SE are dealt with respectfully and receive appropriate support it 'can result in remarkable healing, deep positive transformation, and a higher level of functioning in everyday life' (p. 177). Similarly, in a review of the literature, Schaeffer and Moos (2001) conclude that through the process following bereavement, successful adaptation and personal growth can occur across the life span. They state that 'Some adolescents also showed improved relationships with family and friends and learned the importance of valuing people while they are alive' (p. 149). Citing a study by Oltjenbruns (1991) they note that 95% of later adolescents could identify at least one positive outcome following the death of a family member or friend.

The most commonly cited positive outcome was a deeper appreciation of life. Other outcomes included better communication skills, stronger bonds with other people, increased emotional strength, and greater empathy. Some adolescents also noted that they were less afraid of death, more independent, and clearer about priorities. (Schaeffer & Moos, 2001, p. 150)

It is important to remember, however, that an unanticipated life event may be the trigger that radically shifts the balance between an individual's unconscious and conscious processes but that the occurrence of SE does not generally rely upon the influence of external stimuli. Most commonly, SE can only occur when the individual is ready for inner transformation. Therefore, the culturally appropriate display of an individual's responses to grief and loss may also facilitate the

disclosure of the less culturally accepted but already existent parallel process of SE, as a bereaved individual could be caught up in this dual process.

In addition to this dual process, adolescents are also engaged in their normal developmental tasks. As Balk and Corr (2001) note, 'Adolescent bereavement cannot reliably be understood or investigated unless placed in the overall context of the developmental tasks and transitions facing adolescents' (p. 119). Coping with bereavement, therefore, during adolescence not only involves the interplay of tasks and conflicts of each maturation phase of adolescence but must also involve the potential for SE either as an inner imbalance caused by bereavement or as a the focus of developmental tasks. This suggests, then, that researchers need to study how, why, and when such dynamics occur as bereaved and non-bereaved adolescents mature.

However, it is also extremely important that connections are made between bereavement and personal transformation alongside models of adolescent development. As Schaeffer and Moos observe,

Empirical research in this area has focused primarily on how life crises, including bereavement, lead to distress, depression, and impaired functioning. Research on the potential connections between bereavement and personal growth necessitates a fundamental paradigm shift. Because this area of research is still in the early stage of development, we focus more on conceptual issues than on the complex methodological problems that also must be addressed. (Schaeffer & Moos, 2001, pp. 158-9)

In conclusion, adolescent development is divided into three phases: early adolescence, middle adolescence, and later adolescence and Hamlet's case corresponds largely to the last two phases. Each phase has its particular developmental tasks that may or may not incorporate the process and experience of SE. Part of this discussion has acknowledged that unanticipated and traumatic life events in adolescence contribute to development and suggests why adolescents may be experiencing SE. Here the knowledge presented by holotropic theory and grief and loss psychology begins to integrate into a coherent theory of adolescent SE.

The following chapter specifically deals with current models of grief and loss and extends the theoretical positions of three significant models. Consistent with Balk and Corr's (2001) contention that through research a 'theoretical synthesis will provide clear explanation', Grof's holotropic research and practice is applied to Hamlet's adolescent loss and is examined alongside the following complex models of grief and loss experience: Klass' (1996, 1999, 2001a) 'Continuing Bonds'; Neimeyer's (1998, 2001, 2002) 'Meaning Reconstruction'; and Attig's (1991, 1996, 2000, 2001) 'Relearning the World '. These experiences may originate in the COEX and, as such, can be understood and therapeutically influenced by relating them to Grof's BPM.

This different perspective presents a new understanding of the relationship between loss and psycho-spiritual transformation in adolescence and will illuminate adolescent development and critical life tasks in the context of both religious experience and grief and loss. The outcomes will clarify the experience of grief and loss in adolescence and establish important links between these difficult experiences and those of SE.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EXTENDING POSTMODERN MODELS OF GRIEF AND LOSS: A HOLOTROPIC ANALYSIS

Introduction

Theory is the way we try to make sense out of the patterns we think we see in our experience. (Klass, 2001a, p. 13)

I would like to propose that central to understanding our lives is understanding how we deal with loss... that the people we are and the lives that we lead are determined, for better and worse, by our loss experiences (Viorst, 1986, p. 17)

The argument of this thesis is that multiple losses in adolescence may trigger a transformational crisis for an adolescent. This chapter examines the connections between contemporary grief and loss theory and Grof's holotropic model of the 'transpersonal' and 'perinatal' dimensions. The following will draw substantially upon the work of three influential postmodern, thinkers and practitioners in the area of grief and loss. Examined through Grof's holotropic lens the loss experiences of SE will be discussed in terms of the work of Klass, Attig, and Neimeyer. The overarching rationale here is that the adolescent experience of loss as observed by Grof, because it is trans-dimensional, raises important questions about the nature of adolescent loss, and when to intervene effectively. If current theory may be broadened to acknowledge the SE experience as a facet of the loss experience, then the work of counsellors and educators will require rethinking. This thesis proposes that it is possible to understand, develop, and extend current theories by acknowledging and then incorporating the notion that adolescents have access to the holotropic aspects of experience.

The Postmodern Perspective

It is useful to consider, very generally, what the postmodern perspective is and how it impacts on current educational and psychotherapeutic philosophies. However, it is also important to note that although the postmodern formulation of Lyotard is being used here, there is no single postmodern perspective and that, as a definitional term, it is used by different disciplines to emphasise subtle differences of meaning. Furthermore, using the term postmodern is problematic for the very reason that postmodernism distrusts grand narratives, master discourses, overarching labels and any inherent connection between language and the world that legitimates knowledge.

Lyotard presented his initial and influential formulation of postmodernism in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, published in 1979. He famously claims that postmodernism is an 'incredulity towards metanarratives,' where metanarratives are understood as totalising stories about history and the goals of the human race that ground and legitimise knowledges and cultural practises. The two metanarratives that Lyotard regards as having been the most important and influential in the past are: history as progressing towards social enlightenment and emancipation; and knowledge as progressing towards 'totalisation'. Consequently modernity is defined as the age of 'metanarrative legitimation', and postmodernity as the age in which metanarratives have become redundant. Consequently, Lyotard suggests that 'progress' has been made obsolete by the scientific, technological, political and cultural changes of the late twentieth century.

However, what is meant by the terms 'modern' and 'postmodern' is not always clear (Hufford, 2004). Hufford and Lemke (1994) trace the 'idea' of the postmodern back to Nietzsche's anti-modern challenges to nineteenth century ideologies of rational and scientific certainties, which were further articulated and expanded on by the French intellectuals Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard in the 1960s and 1970s. Hufford (2004) also notes that Freud, Weber, and Croce could also be viewed as articulating postmodernist challenges to enlightenment presuppositions and further adds that 'education has been influenced by a

postmodern critical pedagogy inspired by the critical theory philosophy of the Frankfurt School 'represented by Horkheimer and Adorno, and the practical theories of Freire' (p. 2).

However, in his discussion of metanarratives, Lyotard develops his own version of what tends to be a consensus among theorists of the postmodern, that postmodernity is an age of fragmentation and pluralism (Woodward, 2004). Postmodernists, in this sense, are therefore eclectic and gather their beliefs from a variety of sources while treating the resulting compilation as tentative. Lyotard identifies the 'legitimation' of the status of knowledge as the central question for postmodernity (Woodward, 2004). For Lyotard, this is a question of both knowledge and power, which he suggests are simply two sides of the same question: who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided? (Peters, 1989).

Lyotard's use of language games, derived from Wittgenstein, is central to his investigations and in his methodology (Peters, 1989; Woodward, 2004). He argues that transformations in postmodernity, such as scientific, have been largely concerned with language. Likewise, Lyotard argues that the nature of the social bond has changed in the same way as the status of knowledge. Lyotard's postmodern representation of society is composed of multifarious and fragmented language games, which control the moves which can be made within them by reference to narratives of legitimation which are deemed appropriate by their respective institutions. Accordingly, 'performativity' rather than metanarrative is what legitimates science in postmodernity, identified in what he calls the 'mercantilization' of knowledge. In other words, knowledge in postmodernity becomes primarily a saleable commodity. Knowledge is produced in order to be sold, and is consumed in order to stimulate new production. According to Lyotard knowledge in postmodernity has largely lost its truth-value, or rather, the production of knowledge is no longer an aspiration to produce truth. Today students no longer ask if something is true, but what use it is to them (Woodward, 2004). Therefore, knowledge is transformed in education by a commodity relationship between the 'knower' and the 'learner' whose goal becomes the production, exchange and consumption of knowledge. In this

manner, Lyotard suggests that if knowledge is the 'principal force of production' it has implications for use by 'public power and civil institutions' (Peters, 1989, p.101).

In his analysis of the state of knowledge in postmodernity, Lyotard distinguishes between 'narrative' and 'scientific' knowledge. Narrative knowledge is the kind of knowledge prevalent in 'primitive' or 'traditional' societies, and is based on storytelling, sometimes in the form of ritual, music and dance. Narrative knowledge has no recourse to legitimation as its legitimation is immediate within the narrative itself. Narrative knowledge is as 'timeless' and as enduring as tradition, and told by people who once heard it to listeners who will one day tell it themselves. There is no question of questioning it. Indeed, Lyotard suggests that there is incommensurability between the question of legitimation itself and the authority of narrative knowledge (Woodward, 2004). Thus, Lyotard questions reason and asserts the importance of nonrational forces, like sensations and emotions, rejecting humanism and the traditional philosophical notion of the human being as the central subject of knowledge. This is a useful tenet for this thesis as it advocates for positive human engagement with nonrational forces as long as it continues to validate the traditional worldviews from which they derive.

The distinction between narrative and scientific knowledge is a crucial point in Lyotard's theory of postmodernism, and one of the defining features of postmodernity is the dominance of scientific knowledge over narrative knowledge. He does not believe that science has any justification in claiming to be a more legitimate form of knowledge than narrative. As Woodward (2004) suggests, part of Lyotard's work in *The Postmodern Condition* can be read as a defence of narrative knowledge from the increasing dominance of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, Woodward notes Lyotard's concern for the future of academic research legitimated only by performativity. Lyotard suggests that 'paralogy' - movement against an established way of reasoning - is a preferred method of legitimating knowledge, by producing new ideas by going against or outside established norms, by changing and making new rules of language games and inventing new games.

In general terms, postmodernism is associated with subtle definitional differences depending on its use in a particular academic discipline, for example, to 'be' postmodern in education 'is to infuse the historical and the aesthetic into the sociopolitical and moral discourse' (Hufford, p. 1). Consequently, in education, the postmodern worldview widely celebrates the importance of an entire range of 'experience' for the individual and encourages the breakdown of barriers that enclose and separate academic disciplines, to provide a broader environment where even the spiritual has a place. Hufford optimistically anticipates that postmodernism may recover an educational democracy, as Dewey conceived it, which offers liberal democratic societies the opportunity to recover their spiritual centres.

The democratic way involves full integration of religious life and secular life. Democratic transformation means commitment to the creation of social institutions (i.e., schools) that will enable all human beings to develop fully their capacities for spiritual freedom, intelligent judgment, aesthetic enjoyment, creating, sharing, cooperating, and loving. (Hufford, 2004, p. 3)

In the context of counselling and psychotherapy, Neimeyer and Mahoney (1995) clearly define 'postmodern' as a philosophical perspective that 'acknowledges the complexity, relativity, and intersubjectivity of all human experience'. They add that it 'accepts the lack of any ultimate foundation for the multiplicity of human belief systems and calls into question the idea of an essential self' (p. 407). This creative worldview contrasts with the modernist belief that individuals have specifiable characteristics and exist in a knowable world. For example, the postmodern constructivist perspective, which is the main underlying learning theory in postmodern education, maintains that truth and knowledge are not discovered but invented or created. Consequently, reality is formulated in collective and individual, local and specific constructions that emerge from personal experiences (Arvay, 2001) and constructivist research uses narrative as a form of inquiry.

Finally, due in part to its 'broad theoretical reach, its political anarchism, and its challenge to "legislating" intellectuals', it is not surprising that there has been a 'growing movement on the part of diverse critics to distance themselves from postmodernism' (Giroux, 1994, p.1). By its very nature postmodernism draws not

only positive but negative criticism to itself. Not surprisingly, a major difficulty about postmodern theory is that there is no one unified postmodern theory (Best & Kellner, 1991) and neither does postmodernism represent a single point of view. However, more pertinent to the purpose of this thesis is the valuable role that the spirit of postmodern thinking plays in critiquing dominant practices and ideologies by questioning the modern empiricist-dominated approach to grief and loss, and to educational theory and practice, that has limited discussion and exploration of the contextual validity of spiritual experiences around the social reality of loss events for adolescents.

Reviewing Adolescent Grief and Loss Literature and Research

The unique developmental challenges facing persons during the formative adolescent years distinguish bereavement during this period from other portions of the life cycle, even though, understandably, there are some similarities between bereaved adolescents and bereaved adults. Thus the study of bereavement during adolescence deserves the particular attention of researchers. (Balk & Corr, 2001, p. 199)

Balk and Corr (2001), in their review of research and literature concerning adolescent grief and loss, begin by asserting that in its short history adolescent bereavement research and theory cannot be reliably understood or investigated unless placed in the context of the transitional and developmental tasks facing adolescents. Concluding their wide-ranging research review, Balk and Corr (2001) contend that the research up to now into bereavement during adolescence needs a 'theoretical synthesis that will provide clear explanation, suggest the course intervention should take with grieving adolescents at risk for pathological reactions, and prompt further studies' (p. 212). Aside from the writings of Fleming and Adolph (1986) and Hogan and DeSantis (1996a, 1996b), Balk and Corr readily acknowledge the incredible paucity of research into adolescent loss and grief, and they outline their requirements for a 'theoretical synthesis'. In summary, they would like to see theorists researching the way in which grief influences adolescent developmental tasks and transitions, specifically in terms of a life-span developmental focus that identifies changes particularly attributable to coping with grief and those that are not. They stress

the importance of both qualitative and quantitative longitudinal studies that chart the trajectory of adolescent grief. Somewhat paradoxically, they suggest testing hypotheses, which they agree, implies the existence of a comprehensive theoretical perspective, an established theory of adolescent development that does not at present exist to be tested. Finally, and importantly for this work, they propose that adolescent tasks and transitions can be seen as intertwining with the demands and the effects of grief (pp. 212-3). Balk and Corr are certain that the consequences of bereavement are unique for adolescents, 'given the momentous developmental tasks that poorly managed grief can obstruct (perhaps that even well managed grief can obstruct)' (p. 213). However, they do not make the case, largely because there is not the evidence, that in their uniqueness adolescents experience a greater intensity of grief than those individuals in other phases of the life-cycle. They, nevertheless, suggest that it would be a mistake to assume that bereavement does not place adolescents in harm's way.

Neimeyer's (2001) humanist relational focus supports a contextualist, interpretative, and constructivist approach to grief theory, particularly as it reflects a changing attitude amongst researchers and practitioners about the role of loss in human experience. Klass (1994, 1996, 2001) more specifically confirms that the conceptualisation of what he calls 'healthy resolution' that incorporates rather than rejects the deceased, although in the minority in the 20th century, is supported by existing models of grief across a number of cultures and in a number of times. He suggests that in considering the role of the 'inner representation' of the deceased we are provided with a theoretical framework for thinking about the place of the deceased in the ongoing lives of the living. What is particularly pertinent to Klass' work and this thesis is Balk and Corr's (2001) suggestion that when exploring adolescent loss we should consider their attendant developmental losses and their propensity to cope with change. Indeed, Klass contends that, contrary to the myth of grieving, it is the individual's positive attachment to the lost object and his community that may assist in strengthening an individual's position to manage change over time. Attig (2001) equally maintains that it is by drawing upon the support of the inner

representation of the deceased that an individual enhances his own life by this inwardly illuminating, transforming and constantly fresh relationship.

Hagman (2001) notes that in the 'standard psychoanalytic' model of grief and loss influenced by Freud (1917/1958), the process of therapy is one of working through and resolving feelings. In this model grief is assigned a purpose which is to reconstruct the individual so that the deceased may be comfortably left behind and the autonomy of the now-detached individual becomes unimpaired to make new living attachments. 'When the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again' (Freud, p. 245). However, in a substantial review of the literature Schuchter and Zisook state that 'The empirical reality is that people do not relinquish their ties to the deceased, withdraw their cathexis, or "let them go"' (Schuster & Zisook, in Klass, et al, 1996, p. 39). Moreover, in a recent critical review of grief literature, Neimeyer (2002, p. 2) proposes that more traditional theory has a number of shortcomings. It views death or loss as objective reality and assumes universal stages or tasks of recovery. Indeed, Corr (1995) has argued that stage models for grief and loss are far too rigid, too linear, and 'too passive a metaphor' for the rich, active processes that are involved in coping with dying. Traditional theory also casts the griever in a passive role and is prescriptive, particularly as it pathologises 'abnormal grieving'. Finally, according to Neimeyer, traditional theory in focusing on emotional reactions to loss rather than to its meaning and actions, tends to privatise grief as the experience of an isolated individual and emphasises an efficient return to 'normal' functioning.

Nevertheless the legacy of Freud's classical theory impacts widely. For example, Bowlby's (1980) work on attachment theory continues to influence contemporary bereavement research. He extended Freud's theme of 'decathexis' in his work *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds* (Bowlby, 1979). Incidentally, it is interesting to note that in their retrospective editorial in the *Handbook of Bereavement Research*, Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe, and Schut (2001) implicitly recognise the work of Freud by their observation that continuing bonds theorists should be more generous in crediting Bowlby with recognising 'the adaptive function of retaining bonds' (p. 756).

Stroebe et al. argue that it is important to move the field forward by examining to what extent and under what circumstances bonds continue to be retained rather than relinquished, and to look into the functions that these might serve for bereaved individuals. They also note that postmodern theorists present a reading of attachment theory that focuses too much on Bowlby's concern with why individuals come to break, detach, and withdraw from deceased loved ones in order to emphasise their position that individuals by necessity make and continue affectionate bonds. Supported by the work of Parkes, and Shaver and Tancredy (2001) in the same volume, they suggest that,

Secure individuals might be expected to oscillate between relinquishing and retaining bonds – perhaps best described as a healthy 'relocation' of the deceased; insecure – anxious/ambivalent people would be expected to retain their bond in an extreme (clinging) manner, whereas the insecure – avoidant people would be likely to relinquish their ties completely. Insecure – disorganised/disoriented people would display disturbed, somewhat incoherent attempts to retain versus break the bond with the deceased. Such hypotheses can be further explored and empirically tested.

(Stroebe et al., 2001, p. 757)

Similarly, adolescents might relinquish and retain bonds for any number of reasons. It is the contention of this thesis that in the course of developmental adolescents might either 'decathect' from lost objects, things, places, or people that are naturally lost in the course of normal development or seek to maintain their bonds with what is lost. Those things that have a significant inner representation, or become, or have been part of self only to be prematurely lost could, therefore, in the process of change and loss present the adolescent with a suddenly traumatic experience that stimulates a SE.

What, then, becomes of adolescents who use 'decathexis' as a means of withdrawing emotional energy, which they may view as finite, from one experience or relationship in order to invest in a new experience or relationship at the expense of losing the value of a continuing relationship with that which is lost? The postmodern grief and loss theorists alongside Grof argue that an individual's use of 'decathexis' represents a deliberate denial or repression of a natural and potentially transformative process, and that that denial prevents the individual from fully realising inner and then outer transformation. Thus, it is

argued that unless an adolescent finds his or her self in a safe holding environment with full support, there is no possibility of acceptance of a process that will cause prolonged and avoidable pain. In other words, adolescents might benefit from retaining material from previous life-cycle stages and transitions rather than discarding or losing it into an unconscious that will inevitably raise it to consciousness again if it remains unresolved or retains its psychic power.

Practitioners would benefit their adolescent clients by understanding that they could discard and retain experience on different dimensional levels and not necessarily at the same time. As we observed earlier, Hamlet's loss impacted upon different dimensions of experience in a number of different ways. The trajectory of this thesis is that loss and grief, and particularly the notion of continuing bonds, may naturally be coupled with developmental tasks and transitions in adolescence and that they are not incompatible with normal life-cycle projects at this stage. The claim of this work is that to understand that adolescents may operate trans-dimensionally gives the individual, family and friends, as well as the wider community of support, a closer understanding of the dimensions in which, theoretically, grief and loss may be experienced.

Postmodern Theory through a Holotropic Lens: Three Theories of Grief and Loss

In the following, three prominent postmodern theorists in the field of grief and loss illustrate how individuals can be supported in their adaptation to the experience of another's death. Their work raises interesting questions about adolescent loss in the process of normal development. Klass' (1996) approach is particularly useful to this thesis. He argues that the practitioner who develops a postmodern consciousness has a vastly increased range of variable perspectives. Postmodern, constructivist psychotherapy, by this definition, adheres firmly to the belief that human knowing is deeply personal and social, anchored in both an individual's assumptions and communal agreements that cannot simply be disputed with reference to some 'objective' external criterion (Neimeyer, 1998). Traditionally, individuals experiencing losses have been

encouraged to 'work through' that loss and therapists have measured their effectiveness against how successful their clients have been in relocating the deceased and moving on. However, it is the contention of these theorists that the experience of grief and loss, whilst highly subjective and unique for each individual, should not be isolating but shared and affirmed. The griever is cast in an active role, which focuses on meaning, and what constitutes 'normal' functioning is non-prescriptive and is mediated between the individual and his or her community. Thus the individual who is bereaved or in loss of another kind may experience a full range of possible positions from the meaninglessness characterised in Grof's (2000a) BPM II to the insightful and meaningful experience of BPM IV.

Broadly, the following is an analysis and discussion of three interrelated theories of grief and loss in relation to Grof's holotropic theory. It is proposed that complex modes of adolescent experience, particularly those originating in COEX suggested by loss, can be understood and therapeutically influenced by relating them to Grof's foundational BPM structure. Rather than by simply regarding these deep structures in a cause and effect biographical fashion, BPM may be viewed as a critical access point to the adolescent psyche.

What follows shows how existing models of grief and loss might be usefully extended in their application to and use with adolescents, and how holotropic analysis makes sense of patterns which emerge from the various processes of grieving.

Dennis Klass, Continuing Bonds

Continuing bonds often have a sense of the uncanny about them. A sense of wonder and mystery that feels like we are in touch with something primal.
(Klass, 2001b, p. 113)

Klass (1999, 2001a, 2001b) proposes, in a theory developed with colleagues Silverman and Nickman (1996), that individuals do not develop alone. He proposes the postmodern view that the individual is not just a receiver of experience and knowledge but to be a person he or she must be seen in

relationships with others. His work suggests that grief over losses does not end. In continuing a bond with the lost object, because a physical presence is not required, individuals derive enormous spiritual support by maintaining a natural relationship with the deceased.

Klass suggests that by enabling a relationship with the dead to continue in our lives, an individual experiences what he calls 'solace', which is a 'pleasure, enjoyment or delight in the face of hopelessness and despair' (2001a, p. 124), 'the sense of transcendent reality experienced in the midst of devastation' (1999, p. 95). Solace does not remove the existing pain but soothes it, moving into the pain and imbuing it with a greater meaning. The source of solace for Klass is 'within the sense of being connected to a reality that transcends the self'. For Hamlet, for example, the solace should have been in the continued transpersonal interactions with his dead father. Paths to solace may be recognised in linking objects, religious ideas and devotion, memory, and identification and in and through rituals. The role of the deceased may change or be renegotiated, he or she may continue to be as he was or become a role model, give situation-specific guidance, clarify values, and aid the survivor in remembrance formation – not unlike a transpersonal description of the Ghost, Old Hamlet.

Klass recognises that there is developing consensus amongst bereavement scholars that, and here he cites Hagman (2001a), that grief is beginning to be regarded as 'the experience of disruption in self-organization due to loss of the function of the relationship with the other in sustaining self-experience' (p. 11). This position supports Neimeyer's proposition that 'Meaning reconstruction in response to a loss is the central process in grieving' (2001, 1998, p. 4). Referring to Walter's and Neimeyer's work, Klass (2001a, p. 78) notes that 'Walter says construct a durable biography. Neimeyer says reconstruct our life's narrative. They mean the same thing'. For Klass the durable biography and the reconstructed narrative must include, or even use, the continuing bonds that are maintained with the deceased. Klass therefore advocates the efficacy to the individual of a sustained transpersonal relationship in the biographical dimension that provides guidance, presumably from a dimension beyond the merely biographical.

Through his research preceded by years of involvement with groups of bereaved parents, Klass (1999), alongside Silverman's substantial research with children and men, has assisted in adding to the concept of continuing bonds. Taking Attig's description of a spider's web as a way to show how we are each connected by countless radiating threads by which we 'attach ourselves to the world' (Attig, 1996, p. 135), Klass extends this metaphoric model. In his self-conscious intersubjective approach he suggests that shared lives are narrated within a web of bonds and meanings and that problems that exist in one set of meanings and bonds can be resolved in any other. That is that the entire web responds sensitively, like a spider's web, to any change made in any one set of bonds and meanings. This web must include an understanding of how the universe works and the individual's role and place in it, the meaning of the bond between the living and the dead, the meaning of that death, and the meaning given to the survivor's life. In this respect Klass infers that the web is a trans-dimensional model as it connects with aspects of subjective existence beyond the consensus reality of biographic narrative. It is Klass' particular concern to clarify the particular bond that amalgamates solace with what he calls 'transcendent reality' which supports a similarity between it and experience of the holotropic dimensions. It is clear from Klass' research that a bond is actively pursued on the part of the griever with the deceased. He applies the term 'inner representation', which he defines as the 'part of the self actualized in the bond with the [deceased] person' (2001a, p. 78) but acknowledges that the term 'inner' is to some extent misleading, however, since 'Our psychic life is structured to a great extent by social bonds' (p. 79). It is useful though to consider what might be occurring in Klass' inner representational bond by looking at it from a perinatal perspective.

If loss triggers perinatal COEX, which anchor themselves over the new relationship with the deceased, then the griever experiences both the physical manifestations of birth trauma alongside a restructuring of the psyche. This would inevitably be problematic for the griever if it constrains that individual from fully integrating the inner representation of the deceased into his or her social world. What also becomes interesting is the interplay between the transpersonal and biographical dimensions. If an individual experiences continuing bonds with

an inner representation of the deceased that has become part of the idealised self, is the individual then grieving for the deceased or for the old self that has been lost because of a changed relationship with the new self or both? In Hamlet's case, how does one seek solace in the face of continuing a bond that is potentially so self-destructive? Klass (1999) suggests that this 'negative solace' in the face of transcendent reality is a spiritual issue. It is caused when the solace of the inner representation, combined with the drive for revenge and a spiritual feeling of 'peoplehood' perpetuate a cycle of violence which is believed by its perpetrators to be divinely sanctioned. Klass advises, borne out of received wisdom and research, that to hope for retribution or revenge is both literally and metaphorically a 'dead end'.

The consolation of revenge or retribution fantasies, like actions of revenge or retribution, seldom grow into positive resolution because, as many spiritual traditions teach, hate harms the hater more than the one hated.

(Klass, 1999, p. 120)

Klass' web and its organisation raise significant questions about the spiritual relationship between the living and the dead. In his studies with bereaved parents Klass found that the relationship between the bereaved and their deceased children had enormous spiritual significance. The children had become channels to a more meaningful and 'solace' filled existence for the survivors that also imbued the children with a continuing transcendental existence in the perceptions of the parents. Thus Klass' web affirms the significance of the wider community or family membership in the biographical dimension but also confirms the positive energy and support of further relational dimensions. He calls these further dimensions 'transcendent reality' as they bridge the gap between everyday and transcendent dimensions of existence in which the living and the deceased may meet and continue their relationship. The deceased exist in both the biographical dimension and the transcendental 'because they participate in both realms' (p. 43). 'Transcendent reality' he insists, is not an illusion or regressive but a social rather than an ontological reality actualised in the continuing bond between child and parent. It is a dimension in which both the living and the dead may meet and continue their relationship. Thus the dead become trans-dimensional beings living in heaven and also in the

hearts of parents, children, and friends. Equally the living have dimensional access to the dead and, as in SE, the sudden experience of living in more than one dimension can at best, according to Klass, be reassuringly satisfying and at worst, according to Grof, painfully and sometimes frighteningly disorientating.

In a new life that sometimes feels neither sure nor safe, the immortal children and the transcendent reality of which they are a part provide solace-filled reality which feels inside and outside the self, a reality that does not change, and the truth of which cannot be challenged.

(Klass, 1999, p. 125)

Like Grof, Klass also recognises the possibility of critical access points to the psyche's complex dimensionality. Conscious that in our perceptions the majority of the population who are 'healthy-minded' and the minority 'sick soul' travel different paths on their spiritual journeys, Klass urges the professional to offer an understanding of and familiarity with the many spiritual paths available to the bereaved individual. He states, however, that it is important that this be engaged 'not as a philosophical theory or as a theological doctrine, but as the lived experience of real human beings' (p. 204). Klass confirms the requirement of all supportive professionals be educated and to educate about spiritual paths to healing.

Clearly this implies that adolescents deserve the well-informed support of those who have 'the lived experience of real human beings'. In this confirmation of variety in spiritual experience Klass affirms Grof's contention that in a holotropic cosmos all individuals have the ability, either willingly or unwillingly, to travel to many places by paths that do not all necessarily exist purely in the biographical dimension. This too has clear implications for working with clients of all age groups and cultures.

From a practitioner's point of view, Klass' model accepts greater competence on the part of the individual in one part of the web than perhaps in another. As the web is uniformly responsive to change, if an individual gets psychologically stuck in one part that then, Klass suggests, the focus can be shifted to another without effort or impairment of the support process. 'Spiritual lives are played out in a web of bonds and meanings. If any one of these bonds and meanings change,

there is a corresponding change in each of the other bonds and meanings' (Klass, 1999, p. 43).

It could be argued that such bonds and meanings appear to constellate in a fully integrated web, something like Grof's COEX. These meanings and bonds that Klass refers to and Grof's COEX both appear to share the qualities of being aggregates of significantly deep memory. As such they would specifically enable engagement with the deceased and assist an individual to preserve memory, maintain a bond, and locate and integrate other dimensions of related experience. Solace then may become associated with a 'soothing' COEX constellated around the inner representation of the deceased. However Grof's COEX are anchored in a particular aspect of the trauma of birth, represented by one or more of the BPM, and also reach deep into various forms of transpersonal phenomena, such as past-life experiences, Jungian archetypes, conscious identification with animals, and others (Grof, 2000a). Klass' appear to be anchored to each other in a closed system of mutually dependent bonds and meanings that may or may not correspond to, or take meaning from an archetypal and developmental structure with religious, philosophical, and psychological implications. However, like the COEX constellation, the web similarly is a structure in which the individual may play out his life in more than one dimension, although Klass' model more specifically focuses upon the spiritual aspect of a bereaved parent's life. Grof maintains that COEX systems are the general organising principle of the psyche, and there appears to be a similar dynamic interplay between Klass' web and the external world. Grof contends that COEX systems can be activated that influence how we perceive ourselves, other people, the world, how we feel and how we act. Inside the web how an individual's bonds and meanings simultaneously interact with the external world either strengthens or weakens the structure and the bond with the deceased. This may help to organise the psyche, make sense of loss, and maintain and balance relationships across dimensions.

Significantly, Klass supports Grof's view that by its sharing within a community individual pain is successfully mitigated. He stresses the importance of building and supporting communities that are healing and recommends that practitioners

become sympathetically linked to them to share the continuing bond, experience the pain, check the path ahead, and look for opportunities to help individuals integrate their grief into their family and community.

Robert Neimeyer, Meaning Reconstruction

Constructivist psychologist Neimeyer (2001, 2002) describes grief therapy as a process of meaning reconstruction in the wake of loss. He proposes that death as an event can validate or invalidate beliefs that hold our assumptive world together. Thus as a meaning-maker the individual is forced by the circumstances of death into re-examining and reconstructing his assumptive world. Neimeyer suggests, therefore, that we use the grieving process to name the loss, reconstruct our identity as survivors, and restore our personal world of meaning. Language and narrative configure and order experience and beliefs into a meaningful life story that articulates our deepest understandings of self in relationship with others. For Neimeyer, this approach focuses on an individual's personal narrative expressed through a desire to make sense of changes in reality supported by those in the individual's social context. Something similar occurs for an individual who is experiencing a SE. In constructing a narrative account of experience and seeking an audience, individuals can position themselves with reference to others who not only validate their identity but also witness the story's continuity. 'In general, the act of narration can be viewed as a social performance, which if successful confers on its author a provisional fictional identity that meets with social validation' (2000, p. 237). Although the individual seeks social validation his or her reconstructed life narrative need not it seems be wholly in tune with the perceptions of society or others.

Constructivist metatheory takes the position that an individual's narrative, in order that it makes sense to the individual, must have a ring of 'narrative truth' regardless of whether it corresponds to historical truth. However, Neimeyer (2002) argues that cognitive accounts, generally, are often simplistic and assume that meaning making is a logical, 'verbalizeable' process. Whereas, Neimeyer continues, a belief system relies upon a 'deep structure' that is tacit and

preverbal drawing upon the linguistically rich and metaphoric that 'stretches' the expressive power of public language particularly (p. 13). Therefore, narrative that makes meaning and constellates belief alongside the biographical, the transpersonal, and the prepersonal, prerational, perinatal dimensions of experience must draw its language and ideas from both conscious experience and the experience of the collective unconscious.

Thus, from a metatheoretical standpoint, human beings are viewed as (co) authors of their life stories, struggling to compose a meaningful account of the important events of their lives and revising, editing, or even dramatically rewriting these when the presuppositions that sustain these accounts are challenged by unanticipated or incongruous events.

(Neimeyer, 2001, p. 263)

Loss therefore not only presents a challenge to an individual's identity and narrative coherence, as Neimeyer affirms, but also an individual's perceived existence. Consistent with Grof's, this approach implies that personality is a relatively stable structure that can bear the process of self-deconstruction and self-reconstruction.

From Neimeyer's research the necessity to re-author and edit aspects of one's life story, or 'master narrative', is as important in encompassing traumatic loss as it is in normal loss experiences. This suggests that, as Attig (1996) proposes, meaningful stories are at the very 'heart' of the matter. Neimeyer's work (2002) identifies two types of narrative disruption. The first represents trauma for an individual and is characterised by disorganised narratives and loss of coherence. The second narrative disruption contains dominant narratives and stories that constrict, which are typically associated with depression. Jones (1949) has argued that Hamlet is psychoneurotic which might mean that, in terms of holotropic and meaning reconstruction theories, he has acquired a dominant and constrictive transpersonal narrative requiring a substantial re-authoring before he could effectively complete his transformational crisis of SE.

Like Grof, Neimeyer's (2002) concern with the constructive function of beliefs implies a positive psychology and not one exclusively focused on pathology. In its consistency with Grof, such an approach implies that counsellors should be

prepared to engage deeply in a 'client's experiential world as a precondition to its reconstruction' (Neimeyer, 2001, p. 261). Klass has usefully summarised the approach of Neimeyer to therapy:

Therapy, he says is science, albeit, a personal science. In the therapeutic relationship, the client is a scientist, formulating, testing, revising, and elaborating personal hypotheses that will serve as constructs that guide behavior and emotions after therapy. The client comes to therapy because of the constructs that had been guiding the client's life do not seem to be working, possibly because they were developed in dysfunctional relationships early in the client's life, possibly because the current relationships are dysfunctional so healthy patterns do not work, and possibly because traumatic life changes, such as the death of a child, have thrown previous constructs or worldviews as we have called them, into question. The function of therapy, therefore is narrative reconstruction. The therapist attempts to help the client get free from the problematic life story or find better ways to resist demands the story makes on the client's life. The special alliance between the therapist and the client facilitate the scientific process, because the key dynamic in the alliance is the dialectical interplay between the therapist's and the client's experiences, self-observation, and critical self-reflection. (Klass, 1999, pp. 215-6)

In the case of a client seeking support in his or her SE, Grof and Grof (1990) have outlined a therapeutic contract between the counsellor and client that bears some similarity to Neimeyer's (2001) clinical position. The Grofs suggest that both parties to the therapeutic relationship agree to accept certain basic concepts. The first accepts that the client's difficulties are not the manifestations of disease, or necessarily pathological, and that the process will be healing and transformative. Neimeyer suggests that the client, as he struggles to articulate changes in selfhood, in response to a new worldview, will necessarily meaningfully reconstruct his life narrative and develop his 'text of identity'. In Grof's work there is also an understanding and agreement that all emergent experiences, biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal, are normal constituents of the human psyche. Neimeyer agrees that life-enhancing 'post-traumatic growth' may occur but that it is both the integration and disintegration of aspects or fragments of meaning, which may often provide an opportunity to develop the complexity and progressive evolution of the self-narrative story in its retelling. Although he is referring to the meaning embedded in culture, Neimeyer might equally be making reference to Grof's holotropic organisation of the psyche when he states that,

Personal reconstruction draws upon frameworks of meaning that are too large to be confined to a single network of relationships, and too enduring to be accumulated in a single generation. Grieving individuals routinely innovate upon discourses and rituals of the cultural traditions in which they are situated. (Neimeyer, 2002, p. 16)

Grof and Grof (1990) indicate that although SE is not pathological, both client and counsellor should agree that it is inappropriate under everyday life conditions. As the counsellor is an important 'validating agent' for Neimeyer (2001), who assists rather than advises, he may encourage his client to articulate meaning by symbolising, and reflexively examining his experience. Neimeyer has observed that making meaning of life transitions requires the 'delicate interplay between explicit redefinition of our identities' and 'implicit reweaving of our ways of anticipating and engaging the world' (2001, p. 266). Grof proposes that confronting the condition of SE needs to be limited, as much as possible, to times when and where support is available. Neimeyer places a good deal of emphasis upon the relational needs of individuals experiencing grief. However, he also affirms that grief is a personal process, thus 'grieving is the act of affirming or reconstructing a personal world of meaning that has been challenged by loss' and 'we construct and reconstruct our identities as survivors in connection with others' (2002, p. 10). Thus, in order to adapt to loss an individual restores coherence to a life narrative both in private and in the company of others. Similarly, the Grofs agree that clients in SE should not confuse the worlds of consensus reality with the archetypal; they complement each other but they are not the same. They add that to respond to them simultaneously will be confusing, and impair functioning in life, until a balance is achieved. Neimeyer's constructivist position is not incompatible with recognition of alternative and coexisting realities or dimensions of experience.

Constructivist metatheory argues that 'whatever the status of an external reality it's meaning for us is determined by our constructions of its significance'. If the mind, as Kant suggests, 'actively structures experience according to its own principles and procedures' (Neimeyer, 2001, p. 263), then perhaps narratives like COEX are organising principles of the psyche. Like COEX, narratives must articulate, or reframe, the memories or systems of condensed experiences,

which are made available to the conscious mind from, as Grof suggests, a number of dimensions triggered by the trauma of loss. Also like COEX the demands of guiding narratives seem to dominate a therapeutic encounter. Neimeyer proposes that the objective event initiates the need for the subjective reconstruction of identity and meaning. Whereas, Grof notes that often a traumatic event may trigger a restructuring of the psyche, not because the event itself needs a coherent response, although it too clearly does, but because the psyche is ready to reconfigure itself. In SE the psyche seeks to purge itself of unconscious materials at a deep level that are allowed to pass into consciousness by a weakening of the ego's control. This provides the conscious mind with access to non-ordinary realities and experiences, which, once they are exposed to individual consciousness, lose their power to influence in a negative way and simplify functioning (Grof & Grof, 1990, pp. 39-40).

Briefly, the individual is healed by a spontaneous event initiated by the psyche itself. Therefore it is conceivable that the distinction between SE and the experiences of loss and grief is that SE is an experience that may occur in any individual who is readied circumstantially by the state of their psyche to receive it without necessarily experiencing an external trigger as traumatic as bereavement. Perhaps, according to the Grofs (1990), another way of understanding this process, albeit that SE occurs spontaneously, is by the way in which depth psychology seeks to partially imitate it and the fact that it can be fully experienced through the Grofs' therapeutic intervention procedure of holotropic breathwork.

It is noted that postmodern grief and loss theorists rely heavily on the individual's social context. Interestingly, the Grofs' explanation of Laing's definition of psychoses appears to advance both Neimeyer's concept of reconstructing narrative that has become a dysfunctional relational pattern and/or worldview, and Klass' concern that theory should be supported by the lived experience of real human beings. Laing's rather radical perspective regards society as founded on the denial of the self and of experience. Consequently, it is society that is insane and the psychotic is the individual who finds it difficult to accommodate society's values and norms. Psychoses, therefore, according to Laing,

...cannot be understood in terms of abnormal biological processes inside the human body, but are products of disturbed patterns of human communication. They reflect problems in important relationships with individuals, small groups such as family, and society as a whole.

(Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 50)

Clearly, for both Neimeyer and Klass, clients require time to construct a new narrative from their multiple meanings of loss and to satisfy themselves that the new story, after rehearsal and revisions, works for them and is consensually validated within their cultures, subcultures, communities, and families. However, if the narrative acceptable to the individual is not validated by society, or it puts the individual at odds with society's current values and norms, does that mean that the individual's story remains problematic?

Certainly, in our schools, for example, there are adolescents whose loss-related life narratives place them in positions where they are unable to follow the rules and are regarded as at risk, as either potentially dangerous to themselves or to others. We are unable to accommodate or reframe these adolescents' life narratives and are forced to exclude them from school and therefore from mainstream society when what is really required is increased understanding and community support. Put simply, some of our adolescents find themselves excluded from society and even from their own families because their life narrative fails to measure up to the culturally sanctioned, consensual narrative. Paradoxically, adolescents are only too anxious to fit in, but they will not comply with expectations that they have no understanding of or share in. As a society, as communities, and as families we have a duty of care to provide love that begins to repair the damage caused by multiple loss and trauma, and that assists adolescents as unique individuals to reconnect to a viable life narrative, as well as education that gives that narrative understanding and meaning. These points are more fully discussed in Chapters 12 and 15.

Neimeyer (2002) argues that just as one cannot 'corner the market' of truth, so there is no 'grand narrative' of grief. He contends that each individual constructs his or her own unique response to loss, which distills its meaning from 'a panoply of perspectives within which any family or individual is positioned', and contains a

description of how that loss is to be accommodated (2001, p. 264). Taking on the role of a responsive audience the counsellor must adopt the position of 'not knowing' in relation to the worlds of meaning of others and cultivate curiosity rather than expertise. In this way a counsellor concentrates upon understanding the meaning conveyed by the client's story, identifying discrepancies between its 'content' and its 'emotional modulation' and the use of 'quality terms' that reveal the client's position with clarity. This will assist the counsellor in the therapeutic negotiation of meaning.

Unlike the psychodynamic view that meaning is placed beneath the spoken word, or the social constructionist approach that places meaning on the surface of language, constructivism links the significance of speech to the domain of implicit meaning, which is neither obvious nor obscure. Language therefore has texture that invites exploration. Indeed, the client is respectfully encouraged to symbolise experience as a precondition to its reflexive examination.

Similar to Grof and unlike conventional humanist models, Neimeyer's (2000) takes the position that internal complexity in the 'text of identity' presents an opportunity for a story to develop into a more complex narrative rather than as a set of problems to be integrated or resolved. In terms of the relational self, the individual who experiences loss has to renegotiate his or her identity as a survivor and gather that which remains which is viable in the previous life, together with new ways of being and roles more accommodating of the new change of circumstances. Neimeyer senses the irony of the survivor's new position when he, in interpreting Klass' (1996) model, indicates that the audience for this new narrative must still include the person that has been lost, but that the relationship is 'transformed from one based on their physical presence to one predicated on their symbolic participation in our lives' (2001, p. 267). In terms of the relational basis of selfhood the counsellor needs to be aware of the client's wish to articulate the changed sense of self within safe and validating bonds with others. In understanding the reality-shaping role of meaning constructions the counsellor recognises that the therapeutic relationship provides the client with a context in which to explore meaning, safely shape and perform narrative

constructions, and seek approval and affirmation for the newly emerging 'text of identity'.

Finally, following adaptation to loss, the counsellor is in a position through questioning strategies and reflective practices to raise client consciousness of the need for narrative repair, revision, and restoration. Much like Grof's (2000) support through an individual's radical personality transformation and spiritual opening, Neimeyer's counsellor, in nurturing the progressive evolution of the self-narrative towards posttraumatic growth, assists the client in the development of a subsequently richer and more elaborate text of identity and fuller functioning (Neimeyer, 2000, 2001).

Thomas Attig, Relearning the World

It has been noted there is a tradition in psychotherapy of models for dealing with loss and grief. Freud (1917, in Klass, et al., 1996), in his work *Grief and Melancholie*, regarded the psychological function of grief as freeing the individual from his or her ties to the deceased. Subsequently, therapists have used this model in various ways to achieve this goal. New thinking such as that of Neimeyer, Klass and their colleagues recognises that this may no longer be the healthiest or most natural path for an individual in loss to take. Attig (1991, 1996, 2000 & 2001) conceives of grief as an active process in which an individual relearns the world. Attig proposes that maintaining connections with those we have cared for and lost augments rather than reduces our quality of life. He argues that the traditional belief that it is necessary to 'decathect', that is to withdraw emotional energy from the deceased in order to invest in new relationships, is unnecessary and prevents new learning and the discovery of new meaning in the face of loss.

Attig (2001) asserts that grieving is almost always 'complicated' because it requires the griever to relearn the world (1996) of experience in response to the compound suffering that bereavement introduces into one's life. However, in Attig's terms 'complicated' does not mean pathological but refers to instances of

preoccupation with the deceased, with unfinished business, dysfunction in the relationship, and longing for their return. Attig, in common with the other postmodern grief and loss theorists, is reluctant to admit the presence of pathology except in extreme cases. Similarly, Grof has determined that if an individual experiences a NOSC it does not indicate the presence of pathology. For Attig, relearning is a multidimensional process as it 'involves simultaneously finding and making meaning on many levels' (2001, p. 33) and making the transition from loving in *presence* to loving in *absence*.

The central challenge as we grieve is learning to love in a new way, to love someone in separation, at least as long as we walk this earth. Nothing is more difficult. Nothing is more important. Nothing is more rewarding.
(Attig, 2000, p. 282)

As Attig (1996) proposes, for an individual the relearning of his or her assumptive world after loss is the central task of the individual's grieving process and, like Neimeyer's model, it requires the griever to be proactive. Attig agrees with Neimeyer's notion of the individual as a 'meaning-maker' because, as he states, we attribute new meaning to our actions and experiences, and particularly to our suffering. However, Attig proposes that in the 'meaning-making' the individual self-consciously brings new meaning into existence as he or she grieves. For the more passive activity of unreflectively gazing upon that which is already known and that that is already established, which is both familiar and 'choiceless' (1991,1996), Attig uses the term 'meaning-finding' (2001). Loss of a loved one is therefore experienced as a loss of wholeness, and meaning must be found and reweaved into the damaged whole. Thus individuals' daily lives and life stories are filled with the weaving and reweaving of webs of connection and patterns of caring in which meaning is found and remade. This process is reflected in Grof and Grof's (1990) support for individuals experiencing SE and their suggestions strongly indicate that the day to day encounter with new meaning is also best experienced proactively.

Create a situation in which you can fully confront the inner experiences that are trying to surface, thereby moving through them and learning from their content. ...Take measures that will inhibit the emergence process and temporarily lessen its impact on daily life when circumstances require it.
(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 160)

Attig (2001) contends that meanings arise spontaneously and are accepted in our suffering much like the issues that arise in the process of SE. That is to say that an individual's response to the experience of loss may be similar to that of an individual who experiences a NOSC. Grof (1996b) observes that the experience activates the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche and of the body and initiates a transformative process guided by deep inner intelligence. Similarly, for Attig (2001), in loss the individual experiences the spontaneous emergence of meaning. What Grof states might be true of both processes. 'In this process, unconscious material with strong emotional charge and relevance will automatically emerge into consciousness and become available for fuller experience and integration' (Grof, 1996, p. 516).

The unconscious prioritises material that requires attention and assigns meaning in the conscious revelation of it. However, the newly bereaved individual actively responds to loss and must negotiate meaning from existence in the here and now.

We find our way home within surroundings filled with well-established meanings. We learn to trust elements of our daily life patterns that remain viable. We find that some long-held hopes and aspirations still move us down familiar life paths. We recognize meaningful continuity in our life narratives and the characters we embody in them. And we often deepen our appreciation of familiar understandings of our place in the larger scheme of things. (Attig, 2001, p. 34)

Attig's description of an individual's growing awareness of an inner will to meaning is reminiscent of Grof's observations on the nature of the transformative experience in holotropic states.

Holotropic states are characterized by a specific transformation of consciousness associated with perceptual changes in all sensory areas, intense and often unusual emotions, and profound alterations in the thought processes... We can reach profound psychological insights concerning our personal history, unconscious dynamics, emotional difficulties, and interpersonal problems. We can also experience extraordinary revelations concerning various aspects of nature and the cosmos that transcend our educational and intellectual background. (Grof, 1998, p. 7)

In both the state of loss and the holotropic experience of SE individuals find themselves in a 'choiceless event' in which he or she can either resist or actively participate. Grof insists that resistance delays the process of healing and the same might be said of the process of grieving after a loss. The difference between the two processes might be conceived of as follows: 'Persons who are having a spiritual emergency are typically aware of the fact that the changes in their experiential world are due to their own inner processes and are not caused by events in the outside world' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 44).

Attig (1996) regards those who grieve as beginning anew, washed up on the shore after having nearly drowned. In Grof's perinatal terms the relative tranquillity of BPM I is replaced by the anxiety of the unknown in BPM II. Finding themselves no longer at sea in BPM III, individuals recover and find their wholeness as part of a larger whole in a reconnection with family, friends old and new, community, and the other, through BPM IV. As noted in the case of Hamlet, as a bereaved person, he experiences a similar homecoming, a relearning of his world, a reconnection with life using existing connecting threads and establishing new threads that either bypass redundant points or make more appropriate, meaningful, and direct links. However, while Hamlet willingly creates new threads that lead toward meaningful reconciliation and redemption he is not the only force in control of his world.

Attig (1996, 2000, & 2001) articulates the growing understanding amongst scholars that positive outcomes derive from the positive aspects of grief. These come about as a result of a process of relearning and reconnecting in a new way with family, friends, one's community through work, volunteering, social, creative, and recreational activities, and a reconnecting with God that reconstructs a person's belief system. Similarly, in his discussion of transpersonal experiences that include encounters with the deceased, Grof proposes that such experiences open access points for the psyche to acquire knowledge and meaning, so that an individual may more closely understand his place in the universe.

It clearly shows that, in a mysterious and yet unexplained way, each of us contains the information about the entire universe and all of existence, has potential experiential access to all of its parts, and in a sense is the whole

cosmic network, as much as he or she is just an infinitesimal part of it, a separate and insignificant biological entity. (Grof, 1996a, p. 53)

The functions of grieving, in response to bereavement, according to Attig (2001), are to broadly serve the goal of relearning the world and reshaping and restoring integrity to life by a blend of meaning finding and meaning making. These functions are broadened and clarified by an acceptance of Grof's cartography of the mind. The hardest task of grieving is, as Attig explains, to come to terms with the devastation of 'being our pain' and to subsequently overcome its totality and move to the less totally absorbing state of 'having our pain'. In Grof's holotropic language an individual is exposed to COEX who's associated thematic memories and physical experiences are constellated around 'pain' with its inevitable mixture of birth and death themes. Consequently, the initial and impossible task for a bereaved person is to come to terms with the universally overwhelming sensation of pain with its physical discomfort and its highly charged material from the perinatal and transpersonal dimensions as they emerge into biographical consciousness. As Grof (2000) and Niemeyer (2001) indicate, each individual's experience and response to loss will be unique because of the 'experiential logic' of the experience. The themes are not based on some formal external similarity, but on the fact that they share the same emotional feelings and physical sensation (p. 33). Attig (2001) suggests that accommodating the pain 'as residual sadness and heartache in our hearts' allows the individual 'to find and give meaning to suffering' (p. 38). The process of *being* the pain to *having* the pain seems to contain a natural resolution toward the finding and making of wholeness, similar to the dissolution of cosmic engulfment in Grof's BPM II, and the resolution of the death-rebirth struggle towards the end of BPM III.

Further similarities are to be found in Attig's (2001) more recent work where he describes the disconnected feeling of 'soul pain'. It is a form of suffering whose qualities of 'uprootedness' and 'homesickness' seems comparable to the sense of self-alienation and literally the 'dark night of the soul' experience described by St. John of the Cross and others (Grof & Grof, 1989). Attig (2000) suggests that there is also 'spiritual pain', which 'resonates deeply within' a person who is responding to loss and 'reflects some of our most profound fears' (p. 249). This

pain particularly resonates with Grof's (2000a) BPM IV, a point at which the individual simultaneously links rebirth with fear as he or she anticipates the exciting revelations of rebirth whilst experiencing profound anxiety about the experience of ego-death as 'total annihilation on all imaginable levels' (p. 53) that precedes it. Attig (2001) notes that these fears are associated with the loss of our easy 'familiarity' with our now disrupted lives and that an individual in this position finds it 'difficult to care about anything at all' (p. 37). In both examples the individual in varying degrees experiences a deep loss of self when confronting the possibility of change that is both threatening but also presents new opportunities. It is important to note that Attig links spiritual pain with a lack of motivation to find meaning in life and consequently he links grief to existential fear.

We feel dispirited, joyless, hopeless. Life seems drained of meaning. We wonder whether we have the courage and motivation to face the challenge of daily life, much less relearning the world we now experience. We are afraid. (Attig, 2001, pp. 37-8)

In keeping with Grof's complex dimensional approach, in 'relearning the world' Attig considers the need for an individual to relearn a number of worlds. The individual must come to terms with the cognitive, physical, spiritual, and temporal effects of loss and of the loss of the deceased and the changes that that loss has made to the biographical world of consensus reality, a reality that is transformed by absence. Attig indicates that although the loss is fully experienced in the biographical dimension it is not the only dimension in which, as Grof suggests, individuals operate. Attig observes that objects that trigger memories of the lost, places of importance, and times that are of special significance, challenge individuals to find and make new meaning of the changed relationships they represent, even as they continue to grieve. It is necessary to relearn social surroundings, surviving relationships and their attendant memories, and individuals are left to decide what meaning they now have for themselves. Attig conceives of grief in loss as an opportunity to 'relearn' the self, whereas under some circumstances Grof sees grief after loss as a manifestation of relearning self. For Attig (2001) 'in grieving we must learn our very selves, including our characters, histories and roles, and identities that we find in them' (p. 40), and

give shape to a life which is to begin in the presence of loss and in the absence of the familiar. However, Attig reassuringly notes that human beings are used to loving in absence in their normal lives, and that when another dies, loving them in their absence is not so different than loving them in their presence.

Attig, in expressing Klass' opinion that the connections forged in life, although transformed, need not be relinquished, also supports Grof's trans-dimensional theme of knowing when he states that 'We can sense that they [the deceased] reciprocate in the living energy of our memory of them' (p. 46). For Attig the deceased's legacy is in their role as a mentor, a witness and as a support to the living, and perhaps even integrated into a superego role as part of the conscience of the individual and, by extension, the whole community. Thus the deceased supports the griever in mediating between the known of the biographical dimensions and the unknown of the transpersonal and perinatal domains. This legacy, as noted in Hamlet's case, is held within both the memory's inner representation of the deceased and the continuing bond that enables the relationship to maintain its power, legitimacy, and intimacy. Thus as the survivor's life continues, alongside it, memory preserves and resources an ongoing relationship with the deceased, 'none of which is canceled by death' (p. 47).

As it was a feature of Hamlet's case, memory assists individuals to connect with the reality of the deceased's life and nourishes a present awareness of the past, weaving a rich legacy of experience and knowledge into the fabric of the griever's present and future life narratives. Similarly, Laplanche reiterates the importance of memory in mourning and dismisses Freud's contention that 'the analysis of mourning' is unnecessary. Laplanche (1999, in Davey, 2000, pp.59-60) believes that the threads of lost relationships and experiences are cut in order to reconnect them in more useful ways to the self and that this is the function of mourning. The repetition of memory serves the individual in terms of being able to understand 'the messages left by the other' (pp. 59-60). For Derrida (1999, in Davey, 2000, p. 62), memory enables a dynamic reconstruction of the relationship. 'It is the continual remembering of the other that allows the possibility of change, of feeling something different, of the creation of a

relationship with something different' (p. 62). Attig (2000) confirms Grof's premise that through the difficulties of psychospiritual rebirth comes 'explosive liberation' that amounts to 'healing' and 'life-changing experience' (pp. 52-5) when he states that it is through the process of grieving that 'we struggle to transform ourselves, to establish something unprecedented' (1996, p. 145).

Attig (2001) is certain that it inevitably becomes necessary for an individual to return to aspects of life that are still viable whilst simultaneously undertaking a process of self-transformation that reshapes the individual's family and community life. The former he describes as a movement in a 'soulful' direction which draws nourishment from existing and viable resources, and the latter as a movement in a 'spiritual' direction which engenders new purpose and new connections with people in the family, community, and the wider world. 'We had no choice about what happened, but we can, and often do, grow positively through the experience' (p. 43). As Attig suggests, part of the challenge of grieving is reviving the motivation and trust that enable an individual to find soulful meanings that continue to remain available in the experience. As the deceased are loved in the soul, so they are held and given a place in the living individual's spirit. They inspire the full living of life as at the same time they help individuals to come to terms with the complete mystery of death. As Grof notes, in holotropic states the boundaries between worlds dissolve and existential fear is reframed as wonder, and for some this leads to a closer examination of a relationship with the divine.

Sometimes, all personal boundaries dissolve or are drastically obliterated and we completely merge with the divine source, becoming one with it and indistinguishable from it. Other times, we maintain the sense of separate identify, assuming the role of an astonished observer who is witnessing as if from the outside the mysterium tremendum of existence. (Grof, 1998, p. 26)

Significantly, according to Attig, as an individual interdependently relearns the world he or she begins to search for a 'spiritual place' within the greater scheme of things, a place where life is still 'meaningful and worthwhile' (2001, p. 45).

For some of us, this spiritual accommodation to a world transformed by loss requires that we adjust our beliefs about the nature of the world, the (possibly divine) forces that operate within it, and the places and meanings

of life, death, and suffering. Where the convictions or faiths include beliefs about the divine, it is plausible to suggest that as we relearn our spiritual place in the world, we also relearn our relationship with God.

(Attig, 1996, p. 121)

It is Attig's (2001) contention that an understanding and acknowledgement that lasting love can continue to exist in relationships with the deceased that enables an acceptance of the greater scheme of things. This suggests belief in the transpersonal dimension and an acceptance of a 'cosmic principle' (Grof & Grof, 1989) such as 'God' (Attig, 1996, 2000, 2001). In this part of his work Attig (1996) seems to be implying that the deceased becomes part of, or in effect, bridges the gap between the material and spiritual worlds, as 'we can be moved spiritually and take self-transforming inspiration from the stories of those who have died' (p.183); that a relationship with the 'divine' becomes accessible because the divine now contains the essence of the deceased. Consequently, existential fears are diminished because the relationship with the deceased continues and takes on aspects of a new relationship with the divine. Attig thus concludes that the change and impermanence in life becomes more acceptable, and imperfection can be forgiven as individuals sense their own imperfect love is forgiven. Indeed, the need to love is catalysed by uncertainty and not knowing into a stronger faith and hope in the face of an absence which is perceived, in its spiritual paradox, as a deeper and more meaningful presence.

Pivotal to Attig's approach to grief and loss is the understanding that individuals are forced to confront choiceless events in the biographical dimension that cause them to be repositioned in terms of their access to the transpersonal and perinatal dimensions. This altered state means that they must proactively begin again to relearn their selves and their relationships with the deceased, the world, and their God. Grof's work supports Attig's view that, like the death of a loved one, the death of self is both choiceless and transformative and requires an individual's active participation in the process of total relearning.

Summary and Conclusion: An Application to Adolescence

What both the postmodern grief and loss literature and Grof's holotropic theory suggest is that the experiences of grief and loss and of SE, whilst highly subjective and unique for each individual, should not be isolating but shared and affirmed. Both the grieving adolescent and the adolescent in SE actively participate in meaning making or meaning finding trans-dimensionally, often maintaining close connections to lost people, places, objects, and cultural identities that are accessed as transpersonal inner representational forms, and linked to deep COEX anchored over the perinatal matrices. In accounting for these factors, what constitutes 'normal' adolescent development and functioning under these circumstances must be non-prescriptive and mediated between the individual and his or her community.

It is generally recognised that the retention of bonds has an adaptive function for those who experience a dysfunction in existing relationships caused by loss or bereavement (Stroebe et al., 2001). However, questions arise as to the circumstances under which bonds continue to be retained rather than relinquished and the functions that these serve for bereaved individuals. In the course of normal development adolescents might either 'decathect' from lost objects, things, places, or people, or seek to maintain their bonds with what is lost. It could be argued that, viewed from the holotropic theoretical perspective, an adolescent's use of 'decathexis' represents regression to an earlier stage or a deliberate denial of a natural and potentially transformative process. Those things that have a significant inner representation, or become or have been part of self only to be prematurely lost, may present the adolescent with a deeper experience of trauma, characterised by SE, if they are actively disengaged from.

Klass identifies a positive aspect of the experience of bereavement and SE which he calls 'solace'. If the adolescent is able to engage proactively in the experience, 'solace', which soothes the pain of loss, helps to imbue the adolescent's losses with greater meaning as it connects to a reality that transcends the self. Klass' web is a trans-dimensional model that supports this contention as it connects with aspects of subjective existence beyond the

consensus reality of biographic narrative. Like Grof, Klass recognises the possibility of critical access points to the psyche's complex dimensionality. As Grof's COEX systems are the general organising principle of the psyche, so Klass' web allows for the dynamic interplay between the adolescent's external and internal worlds that help to organise the psyche, make sense of loss, and maintain relationships across dimensions.

Neimeyer proposes that death, much like SE as an event, can validate or invalidate beliefs that hold our assumptive world together and causes the individual to re-examine and reconstruct that world. Loss therefore not only presents a challenge to an individual's identity and narrative coherence, as Neimeyer affirms, but also to an individual's perceived existence. This experience of vulnerability resonates deeply with those described in *The Stormy Search for Self* (Grof & Grof, 1990).

Neimeyer also recognises that even as the relationship with the lost is transformed, the personality of the survivor accepts that the lost will still symbolically participate in his or her life. He suggests that, as grievers, adolescents can use the grieving process to name the loss, reconstruct identity as a survivor, and restore personal worlds of meaning. Their language and narrative can configure and order experience and beliefs into a meaningful life story that articulates the deepest understandings of self in relation to others. The focus for Neimeyer is therefore on an individual adolescent's personal narrative and that individual's natural desire to make sense of changes in his or her perception of reality, and through language to bear witness to the process.

Neimeyer's theory, like Grof's, constructs a positive and proactive view of human developmental psychology and not one exclusively focused on pathology. This approach strongly suggests that counsellors be committed to deep engagement with a client's experiential world. In addition, Neimeyer's work indicates that narrative in meaning making helps to organise experience, beliefs, language and ideas from both conscious experience and the experience of the collective unconscious. Neimeyer's constructivist position is not incompatible with the recognition of alternative and coexisting realities or dimensions of experience.

From a holotropic perspective Neimeyer's narrative constructs, like Klass' web, can be viewed as access points to the trans-dimensionality of the psyche. It could be argued that, as constructivist metatheory contends the meaning in language is implicit, Neimeyer's life narratives could be regarded as deriving their source from systems of absolutes deeply embedded in the unconscious. Narratives rather like COEX, then, may be self-conscious structures perceived by adolescents as organising principles of the psyche, or as the conscious and limited representations of COEX. Narratives, in common with COEX, serve to articulate and reframe memories or systems of condensed experiences, which are made available to the conscious mind triggered by loss and initiated by the psyche. Similarly, like COEX, guiding narratives seem to dominate a therapeutic encounter and are unique to each individual. Grof and Neimeyer therefore take up similarly positive positions by affirming relatively stable internal complexity in an individual's unique 'text of identity', which presents opportunities for meaning to be understood, explored, developed, and transformed into a narrative made richer by the use of language from conscious and unconscious trans-dimensional realms.

In general, Attig's work is of a more philosophical nature. His approach to grief and loss recognises the fact that grief in loss, much like SE, is a choiceless event and that relearning the world, the central task for each adolescent, is a multidimensional process that causes a repositioning in terms of access to other dimensions and relationships with others. Once more this becomes a proactive experience where the griever is encouraged to fully participate in this developing learning process. Loss is experienced as a loss of wholeness and meaning must be found, reconnected, and remade. Attig's work recognises the importance of meaningful continuity in life narratives and the characters embodied in them, which afford a deepening appreciation of a human being's place in the greater scheme of things.

The most difficult task of grieving for the adolescent is, as Attig explains, to come to terms with the devastation of 'being our pain'. Explained in holotropic terms, the experience of loss provides an overwhelming sensation of pain that is

coupled with physical discomfort as highly charged material from the perinatal and transpersonal dimensions emerge into biographical consciousness. The 'experiential logic' of the holotropic process is mirrored in Attig's description of *being* the pain to *having* the pain. This also seems to contain a natural resolution toward the finding and making of wholeness similar to that found in Grof's work. However, for Grof, grief is a symptom of inner transformation and not its cause.

In the concept of relearning the world, Attig has conceived of a dual process where the griever is resourced by the 'soulful' aspects of life that are still viable whilst, simultaneously, undertaking a 'spiritual' process that might be described as self-transformation that reshapes the individual's family and community life with new purpose and new relational connections. The challenge of grieving for adolescents is therefore for Attig in the reviving of motivation and trust that perceives soulful meanings in those experiences that continue to remain available.

Attig's work incorporates belief in the transpersonal dimension and an acceptance of a 'cosmic principle' such as 'God'. The deceased in effect mediates the biographical and transpersonal dimensions, and supports the relationship between the griever and his or her understanding of the 'divine'. Access to other dimensions helps to soothe existential fears or, in Klass' terms, provides solace through a relationship with the deceased which is able to continue and takes on aspects of a new relationship with the divine.

Thus grief in loss is a journey in which the heart makes room for the lost and in which the lost provide loving inspiration for the living. Grief opens an adolescent to additional critical life tasks at a time when he or she is least able to cope with new opportunities in the guise of problems. Yet it is at these times when the individual is least in control and would want to deny or run away from the challenge of change that transpersonal transformation is able to occur if it is allowed to. When the ego is diminished so the influence of the unconscious is stronger. Thus full grief is a process which, for the adolescent, may begin with the fear that attends psychic opening and end in the transcendence that accompanies transformation.

The application of Grof's holotropic theory to the field of postmodern grief and loss research is an original and useful way of extending, enhancing and clarifying the scope and content of both theoretical domains in relation to one another and to the associated fields of adolescent development, transformation and counselling. The next chapter, in drawing together these experiences, considers how SE might be viewed as an organising process that mediates grief and loss in normal adolescent development.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS IN ADOLESCENCE

An education which leaves untouched the entire region of transcendental thought is an education which has nothing important to say about the meaning of human life. (Maslow, 1970, p. 58)

Introduction

The marriage of SE with adolescent development is an attempt to make sense of the experience of loss that might significantly hinder an adolescent's development. The management of loss is an important part of the way in which an adolescent naturally adapts and develops. This thesis has sought to show that postmodern grief and loss theory can be reframed in terms of both normal adolescent development and spiritual or transpersonal development, and that the experience of SE provides a model or structure for these developmental processes. If there is a mutual understanding amongst counsellors and adolescents that these experiences can occur and that it is useful to understand them, then such ideas and interventions should be further explored within the caring community of the school, in our young people's families and in other dimensions of their lives.

Thus, this chapter examines and summarises the thesis' findings on SE and adolescent grief, loss and development, and critiques Grof's holotropic theory. It also discusses the implications that these ideas raise for counselling adolescents in the future, which will prepare the reader for a fuller discussion of the subject in Part Four.

Spiritual Emergency in Adolescent Development

The adolescent is very much a member of the consensus reality of his culture: his ordinary state of consciousness is well adapted to fit into, and he has a fair degree of control over his physical environment. For most 'ordinary' adolescents, there are far fewer possibilities for unusual functions of consciousness than there were in childhood. (Tart, 2002, p. 7)

Hamlet as a Case Study

Hamlet's case provides the counsellor and psychotherapist with a very valuable resource. The case provides an illustration of how one adolescent might deal with the trans-dimensional effects of trauma and loss without counselling support. It is an example of the way in which a number of events can come together for an adolescent client to create a potential crisis. It also presents the counsellor with a number of issues common to adolescence such as experiences of loss, alienation, misinterpretation and misunderstanding, powerlessness and vulnerability, disenfranchised grief, anger and confusion, and troubled relationships with peers and with parents. Hamlet becomes the very centre, hero, and narrator of his own tragic 'rite of passage'. Shakespeare's narrative provides a compelling and relevant description of an adolescent's journey of initiation from ignorance to understanding, from innocence to worldliness, and from disaffection to acceptance. Finally, confronted with the knowledge that he has obligations to himself and to the world in which he must live, Hamlet is forced to make a number of responsible choices. However, Hamlet's world offers him little in the way of options and without the benefit of counselling, he is limited to his own narrowing perception of the world and what seems to him a 'choiceless' conclusion.

The case raises a number of issues particularly for the client and the intending counsellor, and more broadly for counsellor training and research. Counsellors as professional people have certain expectations, augmented by their professional associations, about how to undertake their roles. It is important, for example, to review counsellor effectiveness frequently with clients like Hamlet who exhibit an encouraging capacity for self-reflection and a potential for change.

Indeed, if the counsellor is able to encourage and support the client sufficiently, he or she should be able to suggest to the counsellor what is most needed and negotiate an intervention plan for each session. With the adolescent client it is often the counsellor who allows the client to go to places that ensures best safety without creating an imbalance of power that mirrors the intentions of those the adolescent feels abused by. Certainly, Hamlet suffered from what he perceived was a significant loss of power as a result of bereavement and by unusual 'parental' control, having no recourse to non-judgemental support other than Horatio's. Clients are entitled to expect, and make a contribution as an equal partner, to services that correspond and respond to their particular needs. Incidents of SE in adolescence would indicate the need to create and provide a variety of suitable assessment and intervention tools in consultation with clients that prove to be the most effective for them.

Hamlet's story invites serious reflection on the proper relationship between the generations and the significance of inter-generational conflict. It also prompts us to consider how the young client is resourced during counselling when he or she believes that their parents have failed them and they cannot find self-assurance grounded in their own real sufficiency. Finally, its limitations should render fruitful avenues of future research. For example, as a European archetype, Hamlet must raise questions about coping with SE across cultures, traditions, beliefs and value systems. As primarily an adolescent male illustration of a response to coping with SE, it usefully suggests that adolescent female responses to SE need to be explored.

A Case of Spiritual Emergency

To argue that Grof's theory is a universal theory, applicable without reference to gender, age, ethnicity, culture or history, in the context of current research is at least honest if rather inconclusive. Certainly, the transpersonalist view that an individual's experience is uniquely coloured by the factors listed above is tacitly supported by the lack of their differentiation in the diagnostic category *Religious or Spiritual Problem* (DSM IV, 1994).

It is important to remember that, like other young people in counselling Hamlet, whilst he is attempting to deal with the multiple and experiential difficulties of SE, is also engaged in normal developmental tasks. Thus when the client is not engaged in counselling, he continues to work on himself and with others. Consequently, the counsellor needs to be aware that he or she is not the most significant person in the client's life.

It is essential in this kind of case that counsellors be mindful of their professional position, especially regarding the ethical issues of dealing with a client who might be at risk from self or others, and in their negotiations with other support agencies. Equally, the responsibilities become all the greater if it is accepted that there is something deeply spiritual going on during adolescence. Thus it is essential for counsellors to keep an open mind and seek collegial support and expert professional supervision. Similarly, the counsellor needs to be fully aware that a client like Hamlet, who may be selecting violence or revenge as an option, may not have considered that it is a fantasy about empowerment. Instead of freeing him, the client becomes not only tied into a cycle of violence but his recovery also becomes contingent on the fate and behaviour of, in this case, the assassin (Herman, 1992). Klass' (1999) suggestion that this is 'negative solace' in the face of transcendent reality makes it a spiritual issue. In Hamlet's case it was caused when the solace of the inner representation, the Ghost, combined with the drive for revenge and a spiritual feeling of 'peoplehood', sense of honour and royal obligations, initiated a cycle of violence which he believed to be divinely sanctioned.

In the course of his story Hamlet spends much of his time trying to help himself, relying upon his own native wit, observations and reflections to resolve his issues. This case validates the client's active involvement in his own experience and suggests the use of counselling as a viable option in supporting him through these crises. If Hamlet had been in a position to seek and use counselling, then the goal of accepting the experiential process of SE would be a key component of his treatment, alongside the normalisation of, and education about, the experience. Therapy implies a certain level of self-development, experience, and cognition in Hamlet. Undoubtedly, he has a clear communication style and a

high level of cognition, combined with a strong sense of identity that is an important requirement and a good prognostic indicator of suitable candidature for Grof's holotropic therapy. However, on a day to day basis it is perhaps the very lack of such skills and knowledge, coupled with the absence of trust, which may prevent an adolescent from recognising, understanding, and communicating his or her experiences of SE to others. As argued in previous chapters and detailed in Chapter 13, it is essential that counsellors and other key adults in a young person's life are widely accessible and approachable and that they use creative and alternative forms of communication in therapy to increase the possibility of good outcomes.

For example, a difficulty for the professional helper and for the client to overcome in the beginnings of therapy might be, as Grof recommends, that the adolescent understands that what he or she is experiencing is caused by a reorganisation of the psyche. Hamlet initially has no way to explain what he has seen in terms of inner process and like most adolescents, he does not have the educational reference points or the vocabulary to assist him.

Similarly, the problem of dissolving temporal and spatial boundaries commonly experienced in SE will also cause significant problems for both counsellor and client in discerning where the NOSC experience derives its origins. Hamlet's decision to suspend his judgement about the Ghost and to test its provenance as a messenger supports his willingness to explore the experience further with Horatio. This indicates the need and the readiness to trust a sympathetic helper and to honour the rules of treatment. As Grof (1989, 2000b) constantly stresses, 'an important prognostic indicator must be the individual's approach to the process of emergence and his and her experiential style' (p. 194, p. 13).

Using Grof's holotropic model has illuminated Hamlet's inner and outer experiences and the spiritual contents reveal a profoundly rich field for study. In interactions with young people counsellors need to be mindful of their clients', and for that matter their own, exposure to the spiritual and their individual connectedness to a spiritual centre. Hamlet's story in providing a vehicle to discuss what this means for young people may also provide a way of explaining

SE to them in ways that help them to clarify, understand, and negotiate meaning. In the case of SE it is meaning that they can employ in integrating and transcending this difficult but ultimately enriching experience in order to establish a more balanced and coherent self. 'In modernity, however, our shared reality is no longer a monolithic interpretation of experience. Rather in modernity, the shared reality is the human quest for meaning' (Klass, 1999, p. 164).

Spiritual Emergency, Grief and Loss, and Gender Coping Styles

Hamlet's case highlights that adolescent males may grieve differently and express feelings in differing ways.

The role of gender, of both the parent and the child, has been found to be significant in the reaction to parental death... Bereaved sons tend to emphasize themes of control, action, cognition, and privacy, which are quite different from the traditional feminine style of bereavement responses emphasizing relationship loss, the value in social support, and expression and sharing of emotions. (Moss, Moss & Hansson, 2001, pp. 252-3)

Hamlet, for example, as an 'intuitive griever' can be reflective rather than action-oriented, desirous of maintaining strong links with his parents and does not always follow a macho script. As an 'instrumental griever' he identifies with and measures himself against other males; seeking the confidence of other young men, he must mourn his losses privately. Measured against the general research and the myth of stereotype, Hamlet is quite normal in the way that he 'blends' both genders' grieving styles (Martin & Doka, 2000). In the same way, it is argued below, adolescent women may not necessarily respond to loss within the gender framework traditionally assigned to them.

By maintaining open expectations about the needs of and processes followed by young men and women and by accommodating Hamlet's uniqueness as a young male, the counsellor is better placed to assist them. Simply, although this case provides evidence that men in their adolescence should be perceived and defined differently by counsellors, an inflexible definition or categorisation can also limit an individual's assessment and subsequent intervention plan. Similarly,

in the use of the term SE as with any diagnostic label, counsellors need to be wary of over-use and the dangers of regarding the client in terms of the limited definition supplied by the label. Any label makes a judgement about the client and to some extent pre-determines or influences the therapeutic relationship.

Pollack and Levant (1998) suggest that male clients, in general, require support in the therapeutic relationship to recover emotions that they may have been forced to abandon in an earlier part of their lives. In their research they found that it is only therapists who believe that adolescent males are able to openly express feelings and share their emotional experiences who use this kind of therapeutic approach. Hamlet the adolescent already feels too disenfranchised and vulnerable to openly express his fears and needs in the context of his culture as doing so would place him in even greater jeopardy. In Gestalt terms the figure of Hamlet is regarded in relation to his landscape. Thus the counselling profession needs to creatively engage adolescent male clients in ways that safely and effectively enable the disclosure of these fears and needs, giving them permission and time to work through feelings and emotional experiences.

This then raises interesting questions about differences between adolescent male and female coping styles in the experience of SE. If coping with the SE experience could be equated with experiences of bereavement, then grief and loss literature offers important observations about possible differences in coping styles for men and women.

In *A Historical Overview of the Scientific Study of Bereavement* (2001), Parkes observes that some of the largest differences in coping styles exist within different cultures. For example, in some cultures although men may express their grief as much as women, there is still evidence to suggest that women show their grief more than men (pp. 35-6). This is mirrored in women's stronger post-traumatic growth (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001), although the data so far is highly selective and based upon culturally restricted samples. However, Calhoun and Tedeschi indicate that it is not clear whether gender differences in coping are sufficiently strong to account for the findings that reflect greater female growth. Surprisingly, Parkes (2001) notes that although psychoanalytic theory might

suggest that repression of emotion should lead to mental health issues for men, research indicates the opposite. However, men have a higher likelihood of dying of a heart condition within one year of their wives' deaths than women after their husbands' (p. 36). Men tend to benefit from counselling more than women, who generally have less difficulty in expressing grief and other emotions. Nevertheless, counselling may assist in helping women to restructure, rethink and import new meaning into their lives.

Loss not only causes grief but it is also a major cause of depression in men (Harvey & Miller, 2000). Pollack (1998) explains male depression as a traumatic disruption of their early holding environment, a premature psychic separation from both maternal and paternal caregivers and that, in order to protect themselves against further loss, men block all strongly overt feelings, except for anger and sexual feelings. Anger is valued as a false self-sufficiency through a process he calls 'defensive autonomy' (p. 147). Furthermore, Lynch and Kilmartin (1999) suggest that both masculine and feminine depression share similar origins in important experiences of psychological loss and emotional trauma, and similar dynamics in the unconscious or conscious experiences of helplessness, hopelessness and feelings of low self esteem.

Male depression can be disguised in physical illness or destructive behaviours (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999) and unreported depression can lead to completed suicide (Pollack & Levant, 1998). Currently statistics indicate that women are diagnosed with depression twice as often as men are (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999). This suggests that men typically resist ideas that they might be depressed as it is unacceptable to their self image (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999), and they are less likely to express overt affect or mood shifts (Krystal, 1988). Women are more able to express their feelings (Staudacher, 1991) because of a cultural gender role that emphasises a focus on internal judgements of their own inadequacies (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999). Clinicians too, unconsciously affected by societal gender stereotypes, are reluctant to ask men about depressive symptoms or inquire in any depth in the face of male resistance (Pollack & Levant, 1998).

Women tend to engage in more 'prosocial' and 'emotion-focused' expressions of coping than men do. Staudacher (1991) remarks that men in their grieving fear vulnerability, misunderstanding, hurting others, loss of respect and most importantly losing control. Thus men prefer 'problem-focused' strategies (Hobfall, 1994; Noel-Hoeksema & Larson, 1999, in Van Heck & De Ridder, 2001, p. 463). In the literature the strategies used by women are generally shown to be marginally more effective than those used by men (Stroebe & Schut, 2001). 'Confrontation of a loss is essential for a healthy recovery, and this comes easily to women' (p. 360) who according to Stroebe and Schut are more used to attending to their emotions and thus are more able to carry out the tasks defined in grief work. Men they suggest are more 'avoidant in their coping styles' and by immersion in work block their emotions.

Thus we would argue that the gender differences in bereavement outcome are a result of the fact that external constraints prevent men but not women from exclusively engaging in their preferred style of coping (M. Stoebe et al., in press). (Stroebe & Schut, 2001, p. 361)

However, it is important to note that in the research neither gender's assigned coping strategy in adjustment to grief has yet been conclusively proved superior to the other. Stroebe and Schut (2001) emphasise the most recent view that 'the limited evidence available on this issue supports the assumption that *both* coping styles are essential in coping with the loss of a loved one' (p. 360). Consequently, if both coping styles when blended appear to be relatively successful for both genders then it is possible that style is matched more to personality than gender. Similarly, therapeutic interventions may be matched to the coping style rather than that typical of the gender. Martin and Doka's (2000) integrated theory of coping styles, which contains both male and female strategies along a continuum, clearly illustrates this principle.

As most individuals do not fall neatly into stereotypical gender categories they have traits that Martin and Doka (2000) call 'blended' suggesting that 'while patterns of grieving are certainly influenced by gender, they are not determined by gender (pp. 99-100). They assert that different styles of grieving are based on many complex factors including personality, gender and culture and that the

interaction of these factors creates different outcomes for different people. Thus Martin and Doka's continuum of styles of grieving does not identify differences in coping specifically in terms of gender. Simply, at one end on a continuum is the 'intuitive griever', an individual who manages feelings by focusing on the emotional dimensions of the loss through social support. This is in keeping with the nature of traditional female coping styles. At the other end of the continuum is the 'instrumental griever' who, focusing more on the cognitive aspects of the loss, grieves through activity and problem solving. This style tends to be more solitary and private, concentrating on managing thoughts, a style more usually associated with men. 'What you have are people all along that continuum' as most individuals, Martin and Doka suggest, use a combination of both intuitive and instrumental ways of engaging with loss and grief rather than that most traditionally assigned as appropriate to gender (p. 92). For an example of how this works, Martin (2003) notes that instrumental females are one of the most disenfranchised groups in their grieving.

Women are expected to be nurturing, to be soft, to be compassionate, to want to talk about their feelings, to cry very easily. While men are not expected to be that same way, they are expected to be more the instrumental style, our society seems to have arrived at the point where that has become recognized as androgynous and males are approved of for being more sensitive, for showing their feelings. Women are certainly not, likewise, being approved of to not showing their feelings and not to show the kind of help seeking behaviors they have in the past.

(Martin, 2003, p. 1)

Martin (2003) continues that the extent to which an individual's culture and social response is a determining factor of style may influence the number of females who become instrumental grievers but 'we are not really sure just along where the developmental continuum that these patterns really begin to emerge' (p. 2). However, Martin stresses the importance of further research into the biology of temperaments, which is the inherit predisposition of an individual to be a certain way. He suggests that the assumption that every individual has the same capacity to experience feelings, for example, might be examined in terms of reactivity to grief rather than differences in grief response.

Superimposing Martin and Doka's model upon an individual's response to the experience of SE, and specifically to Hamlet's experience, produces useful results. Significantly, the role of gender ceases to be of primary importance in determining coping style with SE. Although it provides an initial predictor of that coping style, gender is only part of a complex interaction of developmental, cultural and biological components that will generally result in a blending of both stereotypical male and female personality responses (Martin & Doka, 2000). It is argued here that as individual responses to grief and loss may not be entirely reducible to gender differences, so may responses to SE be similarly regarded. To reduce the coping with SE to gender differences is to ignore the very unique and individual nature of the experience and the individual concerned. This is especially important to counselling.

Significantly, in conventional counselling practice the individual is not prejudged on the basis of gender or on a gender-assigned coping style. Therefore, irrespective of gender, a counsellor would not pursue a counselling model of intervention that facilitates the expression of feelings with an instrumental griever when it is clearly more useful to ask about actions, reactions and thoughts. Equally, a counselling engagement that does not discuss feelings or allow free expression and access to a wide support network with an intuitive griever, would also be missing the point. Similarly, although an individual's responses to SE may be contrary to those assigned by gender, or fit perfectly, the point is made that gender is not a definitive indicator of the most effective coping strategy or intervention in any one case. For example, in a review of the research relating to the efficacy of bereavement interventions, Schut et al. (2001) note that the gender-specific effects of intervention are inconclusive. Nevertheless, in their survey of adolescent coping in Australia, Frydenberg and Lewis (1999) conclude that

... schools have a role to play in encouraging students to reflect upon their coping behaviour... to avert some of their difficulties in dealing with life circumstances through an awareness and understanding of their coping, and through the teaching of coping skills.

(Frydenberg & Lewis, 1999, p. 93)

Furthermore, present grief and loss research is still 'insufficient' in terms of basic methodology (Stroebe et al., pp. 749-50) in providing conclusive data about gender differences. Also, in terms of age, further studies are needed that assess the role of expectedness of loss in mediating the impact of the ages of bereaved individuals on bereavement outcomes. Furthermore, Calhoun and Tedeschi (2001) suggest that research into the developmental aspect of post-traumatic growth to ascertain to what extent the 'struggle with loss leads to growth', and the minimum stage of psychological development this can occur is also essential (p. 164).

Hamlet's SE as an Organising Experience that Mediates Loss and Grief

In traditional grief and loss theory the bereaved is regarded as the passive receiver of an unwanted and objective external event from which he or she may distance himself. However, the postmodern grief and loss positions described earlier in this thesis reframe the external event to one that is subjective in much the same way as Grof describes the holotropic experience. An individual is aware that loss has an effect on how he or she experiences and perceives the world because it has reconfigured the meaningful web of connections that constitutes an understanding of life. Likewise, a SE reconfigures an individual's relationships, worldview, perceptions and understanding. Yet for both experiences the outcome might be that the external world, while it might represent new meaning, still appears to be relatively unaffected by a person's interior changes in response to either loss or SE, or both.

The works of Attig, Klass, and Neimeyer make little reference to the disenfranchising effect that the influence and control of others may have over a young person like Hamlet in situations of loss that feature so strongly in the work of Doka (1999, 2000). In the former the individual is encouraged to be proactive and not passive, not isolated but supported. He or she is an interdependent relearner (Attig, 2001) whose outcomes are positively charged (Attig, 1996) because they are connected to a community that heals (Klass, 1999), and which

encourages the development of a coherent identity and life narrative (Neimeyer, 2001). Grof too acknowledges the power of a positive and caring community when he urges others to become 'a reference point of support, someone based in everyday reality who can offer reassurance from his or her standpoint to someone', like Hamlet, perhaps, 'that everything is all right' (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 190). Klass, Neimeyer, and Grof and Grof (1989) concur with Attig (1996) that the perceived availability and quality of social support are crucial to the resolution of any traumatic event.

While such states of mind are often intrinsic, necessary, and pivotal parts of the healing process, they can become frightening and overpowering, particularly when human support is lacking. (Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 47)

As outlined in the next chapter, this theory of support is consistent with and central to the goals of many of the New Zealand Government's youth initiatives – even if at this point specific services for the support of those in SE are unavailable. It is argued that the most powerful element of support for youth is the development and involvement of a caring community made up of individuals who are reference points for the grieving or spiritually emerging young person. Unfortunately, in Hamlet's case, no such goals operated and no such community existed for him upon his return to a grieving Court. Hamlet's arrival at his home was initially greeted with fear and later with superficial cordiality. His community was itself too sick to support him and his reconnections were cynically manipulated to enable him to be more easily destroyed, which, ironically, finally and positively realised his life text.

In their review of the literature contained in the *Handbook of Bereavement Research* (2001) Stroebe et al. identify an interesting consensus amongst the represented researchers. They note that 'methods of counseling and therapy are only needed and effective for a minority of high-risk bereaved people' (p. 761). Current indications from research (Schut et al., 2001) suggest that within the 'high-risk' category, interventions that are most effective are notably only with bereaved children. They indicate that primary interventions with other groups are not only less effective but cannot even be called evidence-based because of the lack of methodically sound research to support them. However, Schut et al.

conclude that 'the more complicated the grief process appears to be or to become, the better the chances of interventions leading to positive results' (p. 731). In terms of a grief process complicated by SE there is at present no research to confirm one way or another whether interventions lead to positive or negative results or, indeed, even if grief is a complication for the process of SE.

However, there can be no doubt that a SE for most individuals is complicated and puts them at high risk. It is worth remembering that adolescent clients may discard and retain experiences on different dimensional levels and not necessarily at the same time. As we have observed, Hamlet's loss certainly impacted upon different dimensions of experience in a number of different ways.

The argument of this thesis naturally leads to the position that SE may be an organising experience that mediates adolescent loss and grief and normal developmental tasks and transitions, ensuring that they are integrated and become compatible with normal life-cycle projects. It is the simple claim of this work that caring helping professionals, in order to get closer to adolescents, need to understand that they may operate trans-dimensionally. Such knowledge must give the individual, family and friends, and the wider community of support, a deeper understanding of the ways in which these dimensions operate for the young person – the ways in which, theoretically at least, SE and/or grief and loss may be experienced.

Stroebe et al.'s conclusions are consistent with Parkes' (1998, in Stroebe et al., 2001, p. 761) findings that not all bereaved people benefit from counselling and that for some offers of counselling 'may cause family members and others to feel superfluous and to back off when they are most needed. (p. 18)'. Hall and Irwin (2001) suggest that understanding of an individual's coping mechanism is important. They indicate that research into the cognitive components of coping and dual processing would have implications for the provision of care and education for those in grief. They argue for the need for further research to focus on the most effective ways of teaching coping skills, preventing bereavement-related depression, stabilising sleep - wake routines, and extending social support networks. Similarly, the idea of education for SE might take into account

coping, a physical self-management regime, and the use of a close support network. The adolescent is often characterised in grief work as developing autonomously as a biological organism but is also viewed as interrelating with his or her community, making use of relational bonds as developmental catalysts. It might therefore be argued that an adolescent's ability to cope with loss is largely prescribed by the way in which he or she relates to the world and to others. If this is so, then research into loss must also continue to invest in work that explores that relational bond.

Schaeffer and Moos (2001) conclude that as bereavement is a universal crisis that transforms many individuals in positive ways, it would be useful if future research examines individuals' bereavement outcomes in the light of other ongoing changes in their life, family, and community. They suggest that the challenge facing researchers is to gain a better understanding of how, when, and why personal growth occurs in bereaved individuals, families, and communities. They suspect that the answer lies in developing and testing integrated models of personal growth that take into account the interrelationships between the nature and context of the bereavement, personal and social resources, and appraisal and coping processes. In the same way that this thesis attempts to draw strands from other disciplines together under the heading of SE, Schaeffer and Moos suggest that other events like SE require closer scrutiny in tandem with bereavement.

Research on bereavement and personal growth should be pursued in conjunction with research on other life crises. This approach will stimulate a cross-fertilization of ideas and enable us to obtain more generalizable information about how life crises may foreshadow growth.

(Schaeffer & Moos, 2001, p. 162)

In working with adolescent clients it is also important to consider that there is a relational bond with the deceased and the self that might also be lost and that requires very careful balancing and the development of new coping strategies. In the case study, loss triggered the perinatal COEX, which anchored themselves over Hamlet's new relationship with the deceased. Hamlet experienced a powerful SE in which both the physical manifestations of birth trauma alongside a restructuring of the psyche began to occur. It has been argued that this alone

could be problematic for the griever as it constrains Hamlet from fully integrating the inner representation of the deceased into his everyday world. What becomes interesting here is the interplay between the transpersonal and biographical dimensions. Not only does Hamlet need to continue his relationship bonds with an inner representation of his deceased father, but he may also be relating to the part of his idealised self that is lost in his change of circumstances. Like many adolescents, Hamlet grieves for his old self that has been lost in the changes associated with normal development and through what Viorst (1986) calls his 'necessary losses'. In Hamlet's case, he does seek solace from a continuing a bond that is blatantly self-destructive but in his destruction he transcends the loss.

In grief and loss work, Neimeyer (2002) usefully extends these ideas by focusing on the uniqueness of the experience for each client (p. 2). In the same way that Hall and Irwin (2000) stress individual coping skills, Neimeyer identifies the criteria for building a useful grief theory as one which reveals the unique meaning of the experience. He suggests that the theory will intimately describe and define each person's experience, by revealing the personal reality of loss for different individuals, focusing on the idiosyncratic responses to the 'same' loss, viewing people as actively responding to life's challenges, exploring the implications of varied responses, focusing on passionate meanings that shape actions, emphasising that the world is forever transformed by the loss and by placing grief in a social or family context. What Neimeyer describes might equally be applied to the loss of the individual's assumptive world that dominates the initially intense phase of the SE experience and could provide a theoretical base from which counsellors might work with SE in adolescents.

Klass (1999) also, in extending the notion of meaning in his research, implies strong philosophical connections with transpersonal theory and Grof's work on holotropic theory. Klass' work has led him to understand that finding meaning does not depend on content since, as he suggests, it is not what people believe which is important to them but rather the opportunity to be positively transformed. However, it is unlikely that content has no bearing on transcendence since he has observed that in the act of transcendence people share their losses, and

therefore the content, and the pain of grief. Similarly, in counselling adolescents with SE, it may be not so important to wrestle with the meanings of the unfolding unconscious material but in its sharing the individual will be assisted to transform. Klass argues that people can help each other because they are connected by their understanding of their continuing bond with the deceased and with each other. In the same way it might be argued that adolescents could support each other because they are connected by their understanding of their continuing bond to their lost or past selves and with each other.

In their conclusions, and according to their findings, Stroebe et al. (2001) question whether counselling and its interventions for those who have experienced loss might be based on an 'outdated myth that grief work must be done' (p. 763). If one can imagine that grief like SE is a process that needs to take its own natural course with the minimum of disruption then this useful perspective may similarly raise questions for SE work. More simply, interventions such as holotropic breathwork may only be required for extreme cases. Certainly, these assertions compliment Grof and Grof's observations that counselling and care-giving will only be effective for those with SE that are at high-risk because they are the ones who do not have the necessary coping skills in a process that is unusually disconcerting and disturbing.

The next Part considers the profession of counselling in New Zealand and specifically the role of counsellors in schools as a first point of contact for students who may be experiencing SE. It also critiques the holotropic contribution to counselling adolescents and discusses the implications for present practice and future research in counselling.

PART FOUR

COUNSELLING

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ADOLESCENTS AND COUNSELLING IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

This thesis proposes that as a protective factor school counsellors have an important if not central part to play in the identification of spiritual emergency in adolescents and in subsequently providing assistance to adolescents and their families as part of a collaborative strategy to manage SE for New Zealand's at risk youth. This chapter will discuss how effective school counsellors might be in responding to New Zealand young people with SE. It begins with a discussion about adolescent rights and defines what 'at risk' means in terms of education and health policies in New Zealand. It then relates these ideas particularly to the school counsellor's role and practice in schools, and concludes by exploring a strategic approach to SE in this specific context.

Arguing for Adolescent Rights

In her analysis of young people's rights, Tapp (1998) quotes Donna Awater-Huata's comment from the *New Zealand Herald* (June 19, 1997) that '... we've become so caught up in the pain of adults that we have put at risk the rights of New Zealand children'. Tapp discusses the bleak position of adolescents and children in New Zealand society specifically within the context of Articles 12 and 13 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The former entitles adolescents 'to express their views freely in any matter which affects them and that their views are to be given due weight taking into account their age and maturity' (Ludbrook, 2003, p. 202). The latter she notes entitles adolescents to be given the 'information and *context* they require to form and express their views on matters *affecting them*' (p. 10). Tapp is in no doubt as to the importance

and benefit of social policies that proactively facilitate the Convention's rights for the young person. She suggests that many New Zealand children are at risk from the negative outcomes of suicide, truancy, crime, substance abuse, perpetrating or surviving violence in the community or their family, unemployment, pregnancy, and poor general health. In the presence of adverse family circumstances too such as poverty, parental conflict, relationship breakdown, child abuse and neglect, parental illness and parental crime, adolescents are placed at risk. However, she notes that government must share the responsibility for placing young people and their families in this position by

The stress placed on families by current economic policies and the state sector restructuring, which has resulted in redefinition of functions and responsibilities, retrenchment, targeting of services and competition for funding. Families now have greater difficulty in accessing necessary services. (Tapp, 1998, p. 35)

Under such stressful circumstances Tapp suggests that parents, although they may find it difficult do need to recognise that their children can feel 'unimportant, invisible, angry, frustrated and depressed if their parents do not respond... positively and appropriately' (p. 36). Certainly, parents and society can use alienating ways of talking to adolescents that effectively speak about 'them' rather than with or to them. Bird and Drewery (2000) note that this terminology pervades 'discussions of youth, and help(s) to perpetuate a bad impression of young people that may have little basis in reality' (p. 146). Bird and Drewery also observe that on the one hand there is a tendency in New Zealand generally to marginalise or pathologise adolescents and their cultures yet on the other they have found that parents have enormous sympathy for the challenges that their adolescents are facing.

However, is it practical or realistic in New Zealand to expect that adolescents' rights to be well informed, to be listened to and to be taken seriously can be effectively maintained? For example, in the family group conference process (Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act, 1989) information is made available to the adolescent and he or she is listened to. However, the likely outcome is that the conference will give priority to the interests of the family over

the needs and the rights of the adolescent (*Report of the Ministerial Review Team to the Minister of Social Welfare* 1992, p. 12, in Tapp, 1998).

Similarly, the government reactively invests in education and programmes for adolescents but until relatively recently has done little to audit their needs, by surveying and consulting with them and by addressing these issues within families and communities. One outcome of listening to adolescents and their families is that programmes and curricula are likely to be modified to meet the changing needs of the present and the future society (Luke, 2000). McKain (2002), in his investigation of the New Zealand Health Education Curriculum, found that 'While lip-service is paid to the power of such programmes, the research results indicate that attitudes do not change readily, and that behaviour change cannot be assumed' (p. 4). In fact the research showed that rather than encourage the development of, in this case, negotiation and communication skills, it discouraged them.

Significantly, some schools in New Zealand have adopted programmes to meet the needs of Board policies rather than students perceived needs and have deliberately ignored some adolescent programmes because they have unfavourably drawn attention to the school. Consequently, rather than offering support for their students through anti-bullying or substance use programmes, for example, they have denied that it is a student issue. Equally, the liberal introduction of free programmes that are poorly developed and untested in New Zealand can often exacerbate the situation and also put students at risk (Bennett, Coggan, & Brewin, 2003). The same might be said about the referral of adolescents by counsellors to mental health agencies, outlined later below.

Briefly, in terms of SE, the reality is that although there is a very real possibility that SE is a verifiable experience it might be regularly misinterpreted because adolescents are not being heard. It is also true that if SE programmes were to be developed for the whole school population they may be neither necessary, acceptable or safe. This is not helped by a lack of skilled practitioners in the identification of holotropic phenomena in New Zealand, and the suspicion that SE

is either the product of fantasy or substance abuse, or that some other adolescent agenda lurks beneath these as a presenting issue.

Bird and Drewery (2000), citing Tait (1995), state that 'dangerousness' is a quality often attributed to the young. The description of the 'invisible', 'alienated' and 'dangerous' individual is the generic picture of the adolescent. Thus, to be an adolescent is to be dangerous but to be mentally ill, with all its nuances, makes an adolescent like Hamlet even more so. The present reality of the at risk adolescent in New Zealand today is problematic. Adolescents' rights are paid lip service to, they are expediently ignored by society and its agents in favour of the parents or other adults, and their anti-social responses often caused by frustration are to be prevented by untested programmes that may do more harm than good.

Bird and Drewery (2000) observe that in discourse about adolescence 'there are times when it appears that simply being adolescent is to be 'at risk', and they conclude that calling any group 'at risk' suggests that the group has a problem. However, recent research and government policy, rather than specifically pathologising adolescents is seeking to identify those protective factors that ultimately enhance educational opportunity, health and well being.

The discourse of risk which dominates in social work and health is now aimed at avoiding trouble by identifying persons who are associated with factors which have been shown to be associated with poor developmental outcomes. (Bird & Drewery, 2000, pp. 180-1)

Defining 'At Risk' in New Zealand

So what does it literally mean to be an 'at risk' adolescent in New Zealand? In 1999 the Ministry of Social Policy in the *Strengthening Families Strategy* define a young people as 'at risk' in the context of the family. The document suggests that adolescents, for example, are at risk

... in families where social and family circumstances might make the outcomes for children less than they would otherwise have been, such as

better health status, improved educational attainment, the ability to form positive relationships and prevention of persistent offending.

(Ministry of Social Policy, 1999)

Alongside this description it is important to note that a Ministry of Education Select Committee report (1995) describes at risk young people as 'students with normal intelligence'. The Social Policy (1999) strategy suggests that significant numbers of children in New Zealand live in situations where some of these risk factors are present and that an accumulation of risk factors will increase the likelihood of poor outcomes. The research indicates that across New Zealand, somewhere between 1 in 10 and 1 in 20 families are at high risk; somewhere between 4 in 10 and 5 in 10 families are at some risk.

Based on assumptions that what goes on in families has a profound impact on outcomes for young people it is suggested that a collaborative approach across sectors involving families and agencies together in support systems is more effective than unilateral, separate interventions. This is reflected in the Ministry's key goal to *Raise Achievement and Reduce Disparities* (2001-2) for Maori and Pasifika peoples to primarily reduce at risk factors by the development of 'an "at-risk" policy framework'.

Adolescent Education

Consequently, in 2003 the Ministry of Education's *Thinking Outside The Square* initiative proposed working with schools to create environments to raise the achievement of children and young people who are at risk of low achievement. This included encouraging schools to introduce new programmes and interventions to lift the performance of their at risk students. However, it cautiously noted that while innovative school-based interventions for at risk children can and do work, success is not automatic. It too defines 'at risk' in terms similar to the *Strengthening Families Strategy* but in an educational context. Adolescents are likely to have:

- poor educational outcomes, measured by indicators such as truancy and suspension statistics, low literacy and numeracy levels, alternative

education enrolments, low school leaver qualifications, and school drop-out rates

- adverse non-educational outcomes, including abuse in the home, youth suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and poor mental health
- a negative impact on other students as a result of behaviours such as bullying, violence, aggression, and assault.

(Ministry of Education, 2003)

This initiative, whilst emphasising factors that place a student at risk of educational failure, suggests that these are not restricted to children from abusive homes with offending behaviours, but could equally apply to students whose needs are not being met by their schools. Significantly, the difference between this definition and the former is the important distinction that the term 'at risk' refers not to the student, but to his or her home or school environment. Thus a contributing factor is a 'poor educational setting' that might be defined, for example, as one in which there is no counsellor and no attention to children's rights as outlined by Articles 12 and 13. Furthermore, it is suggested that at risk students without successful intervention will not make a successful transition beyond school.

This document also notes that some of the major sources of risk for students include 'social shock', 'such as children whose parents die' or 'students whose peers have experienced sudden trauma'. It is important to note here that these sources of risk to adolescents are also known triggers of SE for adults. Other risk factors include 'individual impairment where children are put at risk of underachievement because of psycho-social factors, physical/physiological factors and behavioural factors', which, it is suggested, may include internalised and externalised behaviours. Some forms of psychosocial stress or discrimination may act to precipitate extreme behaviours such as suicide. Significantly, suicidal behaviour is most frequently preceded by exposure to stressful or adverse life events amongst adolescents such as interpersonal losses or conflicts, usually relationship breakdowns (Beautrais, 2003).

Adolescent Health

In the same year as the *Strengthening Families Strategy* initiative, the Adolescent Health Research Group published their findings on the first national examination of health profiles of youth in New Zealand. It suggests that 'The health of our youth to a large part determines the health of our society'. *A Health Profile of New Zealand Youth Who Attend Secondary School* (2003) details the collection of information on health ratings, health-compromising and health-promoting behaviours, and social and environmental protective factors for 9,570 representative and ethnically diverse Year 9 to 13 students. The survey itself concluded that 'most school students are healthy, but there are areas of serious concern including driving behaviours and mental health'.

The survey also found that the 'high prevalence of positive connections with family and school... are known sources of resiliency in the lives of young people'. However, the findings suggest that mental health problems in New Zealand youth are up to twice those found in the young people of Australia. Beautrais (2003) notes that a consequence of some 'positive connections' may not be at all beneficial. For example, she has found that many young people making suicide attempts or dying by suicide 'have a history of contact with medical, welfare and related services for mental health problems' (p. 3). She explains that New Zealand research suggests that the majority (80%) of young people making serious suicide attempts have had contact, at some time in their lives, with such services for psychiatric problems, with 30% having a history of psychiatric hospital admission prior to making suicide attempts.

In his review of the health survey, McGee (2003) notes that although it was relatively optimistic in terms of the majority of young people, adolescent mental health is a cause for concern.

The bad news is that depressive symptoms were common (one in five girls, one in ten boys), as was violence (one in seven girls, one in four boys). Nearly one third of girls and one sixth of boys thought about killing themselves in the last year; one in ten girls and one in twenty boys tried to do so. Four in ten young New Zealanders binged on alcohol in the last month; over one quarter had been a passenger in a car with a drunk driver.

One quarter of boys and one third of girls who were sexually active did not use a condom at last intercourse. About three in ten boys and four in ten girls did not exercise regularly, yet many strived for reduced weight.

(McGee, 2003, p.1)

Evidence also suggests that parents are often unaware of these kinds of self-reported behaviours. The group has acknowledged that there are limitations to their survey. Some students, for example, who were not at school when the survey was conducted, are likely to have 'higher rates of health risk behaviours' which would therefore mean that the health and the wellbeing findings are probably overestimated.

Although the object of the survey was to elicit a response over a wide area of adolescent health issues there is still a paucity of information on the health and wellbeing of Maori and Pacific youth. In their *Qualitative Investigation into Samoan Perspective on Mental Health and Culturally Appropriate Services*, Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) suggest that understanding and addressing cultural perspectives for both Maori and Pacific Nations people should be crucial to understanding mental 'unwellness' amongst their young people. They note that as 'mental health indicators point to these communities becoming seriously at risk,' this must suggest that 'cultural factors may be critical in the provision of services' (p. 87). This also supports Grof's contention that the expertise of the extended family can be harnessed to support those in SE. Appropriate cross cultural mental health provisions for Maori use Maori health workers and Maori elders, adept in Maori health and spiritual issues, as a rich primary source of support in their work with individuals experiencing mental disorders (National Health Committee, 1996). Such an effective model may provide a respectful template for tackling SE in New Zealand in the future. The *fonofale* model, the Samoan meetinghouse, as a metaphor for health also provides a way into an alternative and legitimate cultural perspective and method of working with the young.

In their research Tamasese et al. (1997) found four dominant themes associated with unwellness identified by Samoans living in New Zealand. These are: weaker relational bonds due to the absence of interaction between extended families and

communities; their exclusion from the dominant culture because their value bases are different; an inability to adequately provide financially and materially for the family leading to a state of isolation, failure and fear; and finally, poor access to structures of traditional healing and support which can lead to mental unwellness if it is permitted to continue, inevitably affecting other members of the family.

The Samoan self without the collective connections which give meaning and purpose to their existence becomes a self in crisis.... Mental unwellness therefore, can be viewed to be the psychological disruption of the first paradigm of Samoan world view. (Tamasese et al., 1997, p. 60)

It is also useful to note that grief that has not been worked through in an appropriate context has been known to be a cause of mental unwellness amongst Samoans. Although these themes are clearly more associated with the adult population, it is not difficult to see what they might look like from an adolescent perspective. Not surprisingly, lack of friendship, social and cultural isolation and alienation, fear of failure and lack of culturally sensitive support might all be associated with the unsuccessful management of an individual adolescent's developmental tasks towards individuation and full adult maturation.

Unfortunately, the survey does little to address the problem of a comparative lack of representative population research into the protective and resiliency factors that in the lives of all adolescents in New Zealand promote health and wellbeing. However, the responses are generally useful as a snapshot, even if they fail to reveal the issues in greater depth. For example, the finding that spiritual beliefs were very important to about one third of the sample is determined by two questions in the survey that defines spirituality in terms of religious observance. Nevertheless, the implications for future surveys on the question of spirituality are obvious as one third of the adolescents who participated do derive meaning from conventional religion. The important question yet to be asked is what are the beliefs that provide meaning to the lives of the majority of adolescents in New Zealand? McGee, citing Eckersley (1993), states that behind youth depression and suicide, for example, lies a general failure of some societies to provide young people with a sense of individual value, meaning or coherence, and

relatedness and connectedness to the wider world. Adolescent spirituality has been suggested as being a protective factor against youth suicide and there is a real need to encourage it amongst adolescence and help them to understand and manage it effectively (Beautrais, 2003).

McGee (2003) concludes that the health-compromising behaviours outlined by the survey are so prevalent, not because they are caused by peer pressure, poor self-esteem, youthful risk taking or impulsiveness, but because of 'social class and disadvantage', which has been shown to affect adolescent health. He observes that adults must take some responsibility for creating an environment in which health-compromising behaviours can flourish because they 'control the media that project the images many young people yearn to copy' (p. 2). This is a key argument for acknowledging the powerful influences that both the media and government exert upon adolescent identity and behaviour.

The Role of Counsellors

Counselling in New Zealand schools, later than guidance and psychological services, began for children under the Education Act 1964. By 1974 all schools over a roll of 400 were required by the Department of Education to have a counsellor. Under the Education Act 1989 this scheme was extended to smaller secondary schools and the new integrated schools. Under article 77(a) of the Act, all schools needed to take reasonable steps to ensure that the students got 'good guidance and counselling' (Ludbrook, 2003, p.180). Subsequently, although the power to hire and fire counsellors has become the responsibility of Boards of Trustees, generally they have seen no reason not to support counselling in their schools.

Webb (1999) suggests that central to the role of a counsellor in a school is helping with emotional and social difficulties that 'can provide a child or young person with the resources and strategies to address other later difficulties with greater confidence and resilience' (p. 33). However, the type of intervention and the need to engage support beyond the counsellor is dependent upon the nature

of the adolescent's issue. As noted above, consistent with articles 12 and 13 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* adolescents have a right to be informed, heard, and have a positive part to play in their own helping. Article 29 of the Convention states that education's role in this is defined widely as 'the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential' (Webb, 1999). In addition under Article 29 the education system has a responsibility to address the needs of the whole child by developing respect for human rights, tolerance of others and by preparing the young person to live in a free society.

A school's provision of counselling contributes centrally to its commitment to remove barriers to learning, as defined in the National Education Goals, and assists in ensuring a safe healthy learning environment, as described in the National Administrative Guidelines. (Webb, 1999, p. 34)

One of the primary advantages of the role of counsellor for adolescents and their families is its accessibility and local knowledge. Availability for pupils, parents and staff during school time and its proximity to pupils' homes can make the service more readily usable and may be supplemented by statutory and charitable, twenty four-hour agency support. Counsellors are familiar figures positioned in the normal context of school life and their role should be well known to their pupils. Often counsellors alongside teachers are the first to identify difficulties with adolescents and the first to prevent an escalation of problems with prompt interventions. Webb suggests that with the growing concern in New Zealand about adolescent mental wellbeing alongside a 'serious reduction across the country in sources of help for young people' (p. 34), the role of counsellors in schools is becoming more significant.

The Work of the School Counsellor

As the school counsellor's role becomes more significant counsellors are even more likely to be the first point of contact for many adolescents, especially as private practice and agency counsellors would rarely be asked to deal with an issue that they felt unqualified to work with and rarely specialise in adolescent issues. Consequently, it is important to understand the sorts of pressures that

school counsellors are currently under and to discuss whether they are able to assist students in SE.

Firstly, it is useful to understand how counsellors view their work with adolescents in relation to other caring agencies. In his extensive and detailed survey of school counsellors in New Zealand, Manthei (1999) examined student problems and counsellors' use of outside agencies. His findings bear out earlier comments made by Webb about the inconsistency of sources of help for young people.

The most difficult or serious problems dealt with by the counsellors were depression, family problems, suicide attempts, sexual abuse, and drug abuse. Counsellors also rated outside service providers in terms of their usefulness and effectiveness. Most of the critical comments related to the statutory agency Specialist Education Service (now Group Special Education), suggesting that the agency was overworked, poorly resourced, failed to keep promises, too specialist in its focus, lacked training and expertise that led to poor outcomes, and that it was too exclusive in its contract responsibilities. Another statutory agency, Children and Young Persons Service (now Children Young Persons and Their Families Service) also generally received more negative than positive comments, indicating difficulties caused by access, case overload, lack of resources, and lack of commitment, narrow focus, diminished expertise and poor outcomes. Adolescent Mental Health Services were praised for a quick response to urgent cases but generally criticisms focused upon accessibility as a service and the fact that they seemed overworked. Medical practitioners were ranked as usually useful and accessible, but actual usage was limited as counsellors suggested that it might be more appropriate for parents to refer to doctors. Public health nurses were perceived as particularly useful because they are skilful and related well with the student. Counsellors used a number of other helping agencies on the basis of their ready accessibility, provision of specialist service, willingness to assist, and their overall effectiveness with students and their families. However, locally based support organisations, although useful, are limited because they are contracted to deal with specific adolescent issues such as anger

management or drug use and do not always have the training or the ethical guidelines which allow them to practice unsupervised.

The government, and the agencies involved, need to take heed of these criticisms since they point to fundamental problems in the provision of services the agencies were set up to deliver. In the meantime, counsellors, it seems, will continue to seek support, advice and resources from any providers that demonstrate skill, tact and effectiveness in their work with students. (Manthei, 1999, p. 45)

Some of the statutory agencies in this snapshot are described as the least sympathetic in their support of adolescents from the counsellors' perspective. However, in the experience of the researcher and professional colleagues, much of what they are asked to do is often difficult and requires long term interventions with individuals and their families. There is often no quick fix solution and many agencies are forced to be reactive in the short term rather than pro-active in their long term responses to adolescent needs. Anecdotal data confirms Tapp's (1998) concern that suggests that agencies will often attempt to reconcile individuals with their families even when the child may be at risk from them because their diminished resources leave them with no alternative.

Secondly, Manthei's research indicates that the job of the school counsellor has changed in recent years. His findings show that although counsellors continue to spend as much time counselling adolescents as before, they are spending an increasing amount of time doing non-guidance administration and crisis work.

As well as the support they have always provided for students and staff, the absence of other social services, particularly in rural areas, means they must also become involved in wider family issues... Ministry of Education programmes... stand-downs/suspension protocols, relationship and mental health issues... Other practitioners and agencies... may also refer clients to the school. (NZAC Newsletter, 2001 p. 33)

Counsellors in his survey observed that 'the need for counselling and guidance in schools had increased and that they were having to work longer hours merely to get everything done'. Manthei notes that the outcomes of these changes might result in counsellors with 'excessive stress' or 'burnout'. He emphasises the need for the profession to identify and eliminate potential and actual stressors by

'improving the conditions under which effective counselling and guidance services can be delivered in the schools' (p. 37). Until this situation is resolved, counsellors are potentially under the same strain and in the same crisis condition as the majority of support agencies referred to above. Clearly counsellors are best placed to assist adolescents in schools but are they able to support them to a level indicated by the Education Act 1989 and the Articles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*? If they are unable to do so it may make them less effective with all their adolescent students and therefore they may not be the best people to assist adolescent who have, for example, mental health issues related to SE. Unfortunately, at least from a school counsellor's perspective the same problem exists in the other agencies to a greater or lesser extent. Also the fact remains that whether counsellors are able to properly deal with student problems or not they are still in a position where they will meet them head on and will need to manage them somehow.

The Reality of Overload

The issue of an increasing demand for services by adolescents in New Zealand is not limited to schools and the agencies that work locally. Perhaps, as Walker (2004) observes, 'life has become increasingly complex for our young people. They face a life far different from that of even a generation ago' (2004, p. 13). The following briefly sketches the plight of two different agencies, both engaging adolescents:

Case 1: Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Webster and Shields (2000) note that there are significant numbers of young people in New Zealand with unrecognised mental health problems and 'hidden illnesses and disabilities'. They cite a Christchurch study of young people 'who had made medically serious suicide attempts, showing that 90% of them had a diagnosable psychiatric disorder, especially mood disorders' (p. 24). Since the Mason report on Mental Health Services there are now child and adolescent mental health teams within most of the major health services across New Zealand. Some services focus on specific groups such as early intervention for adolescents with psychotic

illnesses. However, they suggest that 'Despite the recent growth in services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services remain inadequate to meet the needs of New Zealand's children and young people'. For example, in 1998 the northern region had less than a fifth of staff necessary to provide an adequate service to the 0 – 19 population. This position has not radically improved. Difficulties in this major service have highlighted the lack of a trained workforce, recruitment and retention (Webster & Shields, 2000).

Case 2: Relationship Services' Youth Counselling Service. Adolescent clients seeking support in 2002-3 presented with depression, anxiety and poor self-esteem 'often being expressed through dangerous and risk-taking behaviours' overwhelmed Relationship Services' youth counselling service. The service 'identified high need categories of young people who require more counselling and social education support than is currently available'. Counsellors observed that 'we are being called on to help in what can only be described as crisis situations' and that,

We know that the Ministry of Social Development and Child Youth and Family are both working on the needs of young people at present. We strongly support a co-operative approach to create responsive services for young people throughout New Zealand.

(Relationship Services, 2003, p. 36)

A picture begins to emerge that there are not enough well staffed or resourced services to meet the basic presenting needs of adolescents in New Zealand at the present time. Consequently, this would make it so much harder to identify and manage an area of potential need such as SE that is at present unrecognised.

However, as the work of Manthei, Webb and others within the New Zealand Association of Counsellors shows, the counsellor's role and positioning in schools is both unique and flexible. Consequently, in spite of administrative workload, lack of appropriate outside service support and difficulties associated with working conditions and time, the adolescent remains at the heart of counsellors' work. It is the engagement of each adolescent's unique individuality that continues to keep counsellors practising in schools. It is the changing nature

of adolescents that teaches counsellors how to react to change in themselves and also constantly challenges them to expand their skills and vision in the ways that they deal with adolescents and the ways they perceive them.

A Spiritual Emergency Strategy in New Zealand

At present there is no formal structure or mandate to assist individuals who are experiencing SE in New Zealand. In her review of risk factors and prevention of suicide, Beautrais (2003) presents the outline of what has been effective in national prevention strategies used in New Zealand and typifies the multi-agency approach to managing adolescent issues. Her summary provides a comparative way of realistically exploring a national strategy for supporting adolescents with SE. Beautrais' interpretation of the research suggests that any suicide prevention strategy must involve approaches that aim to improve the detection, treatment, management and prevention of these disorders in young people. Similarly, the same might be said of SE in young people although in this case the goal is not prevention but to support effective management by the adolescent.

Youth Mental Health

Beautrais' analysis indicates a number of approaches by which the general objectives of information giving, intervention and ongoing support might be achieved. This version for SE, like Beautrais', targets adolescent mental health and early intervention. For the former, the most general way is through population-based approaches that encourage positive mental health, improve public understanding of spiritual emergence and SE, and provide means to identify, understand and manage holotropic phenomena in adolescents. Although population-based initiatives may reduce misunderstanding about spiritual emergence within the population, inevitably a fraction of the population will have SE. This requires the availability of adequately trained personnel to provide and co-ordinate services to support the psychospiritual health needs of young people experiencing SE by means of tertiary, secondary and primary care. In the case of

suicide prevention, those adolescents who have participated in a classroom programme designed to provide support and increase skills were found to have decreased levels of suicide-risk behaviours, depression, hopelessness, anger and stress, and increased levels of social support, self-esteem and personal control (Beautrais, 2003, p. 7). Similar programmes might be developed to encourage those skills required in the initial management of SE.

Early Intervention

A second theme that pervades research into youth suicidal behaviour, according to Beautrais analysis, is that a small but conspicuous group of young people vulnerable to suicidal behaviours is characterised by childhood histories of social disadvantage and family dysfunction. However, here the conventional intervention model for suicide parts company with that required for SE. Individuals experiencing SE may be susceptible to this form of inner transformation as a result of a number of factors outlined in earlier chapters, which have nothing to do with what makes a group vulnerable to suicide. Indeed the event of SE normally occurs for fully functioning individuals and its disruption leads towards growth rather than self-destruction. However, early intervention for families of adolescents experiencing SE, as with those who attempt suicide, would optimise adolescents' educational and life opportunities. In addition a further approach to SE may lie in developing targeted programmes to ensure young people in welfare care receive adequate, supportive care and protection, and appropriate mental health services.

In reality, using this suicide prevention model of thinking about the effective management and care of individuals and specifically for those experiencing SE would require a broad-based multi-sectoral approach that would integrate both individual-level and population-level programmes to maximise support. Indeed, in such a model there would be a need to develop a public/private partnership to address SE in adolescents and adults, with this partnership co-ordinated across government agencies and integrated across public and private sectors.

An Alternative Approach

Another existing New Zealand strategy which accommodates the collaborative elements of the above but does not emphasise a top down specialist approach is that advocated by the *Strengthening Families* initiative which could be combined with a school-based early intervention programme for adolescents that helps them to manage and process change, loss and transition called *TRAVELLERS* (Dickinson, Coggan, & Bennett, 2003). The former in its emphasis on family networks, and the latter's acknowledgement of an individual's perception of reality combined with creative interventions, are sympathetic to the Spiritual Emergency Network model initiated by the Grofs which emphasises creative interventions and twelve step model of support. Theoretically the key themes outlined in this approach that could form the basic model for a future intervention with SE in New Zealand are as follows:

- starting with the family and its networks rather than provider structures
- a focus on proactive approaches
- a partnership approach amongst government agencies, local government leaders, non government organisations and communities
- improving the quality of government services through collaboration, adaptation and innovation
- a focus on how policy is implemented encouraging local solutions to local problems.

(Strengthening Families, 1999)

In the former it is important to note the effectiveness of mental health promotion through community development in the New Zealand context. Raeburn and Sidaway (1995) report that community development 'is a highly effective way of bringing about positive changes for large numbers of people, in many spheres of their life, including mental, social and spiritual health and wellbeing' (p. 3).

The latter strategy engages adolescent school students in groups with parent, caregiver and whanau permission, and the content of the programme is appropriate to age, gender and cultural backgrounds. According to Bennett, Coggan, and Brewin (2003), the programme is congruent with the aims and broad principles of the NZYSPS and positioned in the third level of the WHO *whole-school approach to mental health promotion* (p. 48). This programme is

particularly congruent with the aims of an SE approach with young people in that it sets out to foster healthy development by offering opportunities to fully explore and navigate through experiences of change, loss and transitions in a supportive environment and thus improve their learning outcomes (Dickinson, et al., 2003). At the conclusion of TRAVELLERS pilot phase further evaluation determined that there were no difficulties or stigma attached to at risk students if they were part of this psycho-educational encounter group programme. This programme presently runs in at least 13 secondary schools in Auckland and targets early adolescents. Students are referred to groups by use of a base line diagnostic survey that measures levels of distress. Between 3 and 12% of students might require specialist one to one intervention beyond those used in the groups.

The relatively limited likely incidence of SE in adolescence may not justify such a nationally organised strategy but any structured approach will require adequate government and community backing and resources to ensure that appropriate levels of support are available and are maintained using empirically based and well-evaluated programmes. However, as there has been no empirical research into the incidence of adolescent SE anywhere in the world it may be too early to tell what model might be most effective. Nevertheless, there is a need to improve public knowledge about and attitudes towards SE in order to encourage and support help-seeking behaviours amongst those adolescents who might wish to get assistance with SE from counsellors and other primary care providers. For this group, there is a need to develop sources of family and community-based support.

The Future

Luke (2000) observes powerfully that the various psychologies that inform counselling and educational strategies with adolescents are 'fundamentally outmoded'. He argues that the presently influential models of development, behaviour and cognition were created to understand adolescents in another time and place, and that they are now largely obsolete in the face of 'globalised,

multi-lingual/multi-cultural, post-fordist, post-everything cultures' (p. 12). He suggests that in terms of counselling adolescents in New Zealand today,

... you're going to need new vocabularies. You're going to need new ways of working therapeutically and interactively with these kids, the most at-risk ones. Otherwise I think, the danger is you're going to wind up counselling kids that don't exist, or you're going to wind up creating categories of kids that aren't in the world anymore. (Luke, 2000, p. 26)

It is with Luke's perspective in mind that this thesis nevertheless suggests that counsellors, although they may not be fully equipped in terms of training and time, are in the best position not only to engage with adolescents but also to understand them in the terms that Luke outlines. Briefly, counsellors should be able to reframe the conventional psychological view to include a new discourse of adolescent spirituality. In other words, regarding adolescents holistically, counsellors will respect and work with their spiritual lives. Already many counsellors in schools help adolescents wrestle with notions of meaning in their lives associated with existence and personal development that include conversations about personal values, beliefs or religious faith. It is not impossible to see that counsellors might also support individuals who have spiritual needs and who are naturally experiencing an emergence of spiritual concerns. At times the emergence of spiritual concerns may precipitate a crisis which counsellors may be able to assess and then position the adolescent in a place of support.

Luke's argument that counselling methodology may be in danger of becoming as outmoded as the models of adolescence it projects onto young people is a challenge to the profession to fully see 'invisible' adolescents. However, his suggestion that if changes were made to the power dynamics of the therapeutic relationship so that it becomes more interactive and dialogical to reveal the reality of the adolescents lived experience is not necessarily correct. It is exactly because contemporary counselling methodology is interactive and the power dynamic does allow for this in client centred counselling, that the development of the spiritual awareness of counsellors, and their capability in facilitating processes, will begin to address these areas in depth with clients. Certainly, psychology in its relationship with counselling will become outmoded if it only emphasises the social and biological aspects of human development that inform

the two dimensional caricature of the typical at risk New Zealand adolescent and continues to exclude the spiritual and transpersonal dimension of adolescent development.

The next chapter critiques holotropic theory and discusses in what ways it contributes to a SE strategy and what the limitations of such a model are when applied to adolescents.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE HOLOTROPIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNSELLING ADOLESCENTS

The concept of 'spiritual emergency' is new and will undoubtedly be complemented and refined in the future. (Grof, 2000a, p. 177)

Introduction

The application of Grof's holotropic theory to *Hamlet* identifies Hamlet as an adolescent in a SE. The transpersonal and perinatal interpretation of the adolescent Hamlet's meeting with the Ghost recognises the importance of this disruptive NOSC experience to the individual, and the significant impact it has on everyday functioning.

The following both critiques and defends the contribution that Grof has made to the field of transpersonal theory, and the way in which his extended cartography of the psyche contributes to an understanding of counselling adolescents. First of all, relating to Grof's holotropic theory, there are a number of points that can be regarded as given. As argued in Chapter 12, there is an acceptance that SE is worth investigating both as a means of explaining the fictional Hamlet and subsequently what real adolescents might be able to experience. It is also argued that Grof's approach to the transpersonal is one of the most comprehensive of all the major theorists because it incorporates, and provides explicit accounts of, a remarkably wide range and diversity of transpersonal experiences supported by fifty years of collaborative and well researched empirically proven research. Grof's metaphysical position emphasises the fundamental realities of the psyche and of a universal consciousness, which overlaps, but is not identical, with the material world. This universal consciousness itself contains many levels or regions of experience. These

include not only the personal, archetypal and spiritual, but also other universes and other dimensions. Based on Grof's addition to the cartography of the psyche, it is assumed that Hamlet, as a typical late adolescent, is able to access material from domains represented by the transpersonal, pre- and perinatal. Grof's expanded model extends what was previously known in classical psychoanalysis and psychology about Hamlet in particular and adolescents in general.

Washburn (1995) maintains that Grof has expanded our understanding of the human unconscious and its transpersonal potentials in particular. He suggests that Grof has gone further than anyone in exploring the numinous and archetypal experiences that lie in store in the deeper strata of the unconscious. Daniels (2002) describes Grof's account of transpersonal experiences as 'remarkable for its originality and scope, and for the challenge that it offers to our traditional understanding of spiritual experience' (p.11). Daniels (1998) particularly remarks on Grof's daring and 'highly controversial' suggestion that spiritual experience reflects or is modified by intrauterine and childbirth events and his willingness to include paranormal experiences within the realm of the transpersonal.

Grof's work continues to be controversial and as he extends and clarifies his theory he does draw useful criticism from others in the field of transpersonal psychology, notably Wilber. Nevertheless, Grof continues to maintain a position of authority among many transpersonalists who regard him as one of their founding fathers. Indeed, Wilber (1985) has remarked that 'Dr. Grof is among the most brilliant of psychologists now living, and his work is always carefully researched, skilfully presented, and intelligently discussed' (p. 139).

Grof and Wilber

The following describes some of the observable points of difference between Grof and Wilber's two models of consciousness evolution. Washburn (1995) describes Grof's model as a 'spiral concept of ego transcendence' and Wilber's as a 'ladder concept of ego transcendence'. Grof claims his model to be based upon clinical and empirical evidence and views Wilber's as largely theoretical and

incomplete. Wilber asserts that Grof's model also lacks the fullness of an integral model and makes invalid assumptions about other experiential domains. Perhaps one of the greatest areas of disagreement is not whether Grof's expanded cartography is possible but whether it is a coherent explanation for the processes of the unconscious such as the psychospiritual reparative and renewal mechanisms of SE. Arguments such as these, while essential to healthy debate must place limitations on Grof's theory and consequently upon this thesis.

For almost four decades, my primary interest has been clinical work exploring the healing and heuristic potential of nonordinary states of consciousness (NOSC). Whatever theoretical writing I have done over the years has been based primarily on the reports of the people I have worked with. An additional important source of information and inspiration has been my own experiences of nonordinary states induced by psychedelics and various nondrug means. The choice of professional literature I have studied has been strongly determined by observations from my clinical work and the need to put them into a larger conceptual framework. (Grof, 2000b, p. 1)

In a critical commentary in *Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death, and Transcendence in Psychotherapy* (1985) Grof addressed what he saw as logical inconsistencies in Wilber's conceptual system, the omission of the pre- and the perinatal period in Wilber's work and what he considered to be a misrepresentation of the problem of death. Grof's contention was and still seems to be (2000b) that there is a lack of correspondence between Wilber's conjectures and the facts of clinical observation, concerning the dynamics of spiritual development, the nature of psychopathology, and the strategy of psychotherapy.

In *The Eye of Spirit* (1997) Wilber's critique of Grof pinpointed fallacies in his approach which he had himself in some instances committed at an earlier stage. Grof is shown to be using a dual definition of the word perinatal in which he equates existential death-rebirth phenomena with the birth experience, which Wilber claims confuses chronological regression with philosophical models of existence. Grof has responded to this question, in defence of his own expanded cartography, by asking why Wilber has omitted the pre- and perinatal domain in his spectrum psychology theory. Grof suggests (2000b) that Wilber has misunderstood the radically different aspects, physiologically and experientially, of the second and third matrices in the perinatal domain and that they cannot, as

Wilber suggests, both be subsumed into one sub-phase that Wilber has categorised as 'F-O'. Grof argues that 'their association with a serious threat to body integrity and to survival of the organism put them into a completely different category than the stages of postnatal development' (p. 6).

Grof suggests that Wilber's initial hesitation about including perinatal stages in his own spectrum theory was based on his uncertainty as to whether events from this time are consciously experienced by the foetus and/or recorded in the memory. Grof goes on to clarify what Wilber might be excused for thinking that the perinatal domain is not to be thought of as a linear or a stage model.

Perinatal matrices are not defined as stages of the psychobiological evolution of the fetus, but as experiential patterns that occur in self-exploration of adults involving NOSC. They are thus primarily related to psychospiritual evolution and only secondarily serve as indirect evidence for the importance of the early psychobiological events. In other words, they are much more than simple records of the original fetal experience. Besides containing distinct fetal elements, they also function as an important interface with the archetypal and historical domains of the collective unconscious and with species consciousness. For this reason, they cannot be simply reduced to a fetal fulcrum. (Grof, 2000b, p. 6)

Much of Grof's argument against Wilber's reductionism in this case depends upon an understanding of the psychological importance of biological death and its threat to an individual's integrity. In comparing their two models Grof contends that situations that threaten the survival of the organism such as near drowning, a serious operation, a car accident, a difficult birth, or an imminent miscarriage cannot be regarded in the same way as situations that occur in evolutionary processes on various developmental levels that Wilber describes as *Thanatos*. Grof suggests that 'life-threatening experiences are of a different logical type and are in a metaposition in relation to the mechanisms involved in evolutionary processes on various developmental levels' (p. 7). Grof contends that all perinatal experience, regardless of whether it endangers the individual, colours the existence of the individual organism as a separate biological entity without regard to the level of its development. Thus, he argues, a critical survival threat can occur during 'embryonal existence' at any stage of the birth process, or at any postnatal age, without regard to the level of consciousness evolution.

The inclusion of the perinatal level of the unconscious and of the phenomenon of biological death and acknowledgment of their relevance would give Ken's model more logical consistency and greater pragmatic power. However, since he lacks genuine understanding of the perinatal dynamics and does not appreciate the psychological significance of the experience of death, his model cannot account for important clinical data, and his description of the therapeutic implications of his model will remain the least useful and convincing part of his work for clinicians dealing with the practical problems associated with various emotional and psychosomatic disorders. (Grof, 2000b, p. 8)

It is, perhaps, in the area of emotional and psychosomatic disorders that Grof's expanded cartography differs from its roots in classical psychoanalysis. Grof claims that Wilber does not understand its evolutionary significance because, in common with Freud and Abraham (Fenichel, 1945), Kernberg, Mahler, and Kohut (Blanck & Blanck, 1974) he does not see biological birth as an event that has psychological relevance.

They thus accept the perspective of academic psychiatrists who do not consider birth to be a psychotraumatic experience and fail to see that it has any implications for psychopathology, unless it causes irreversible damage to the brain cells. As I have suggested earlier, there is a general belief in official academic circles that the newborn child lacks consciousness and that the neonatal cortex is incapable of registering the birth process and storing the information about it because it is not fully myelinated. (Grof, 2000b, p. 9)

Thus, although Wilber's has an extensive knowledge of transpersonal realms, Grof claims that even currently, Wilber understands little of true perinatal dynamics, their deep connection with the transpersonal realm, and their role in psychopathology, as well as spiritual development. Grof has clearly stated that the perinatal realm of the psyche is not just a repository of memories of biological birth, but also a natural experiential interface with the transpersonal domain. Grof suggests that Wilber and others choose to logically and inconsistently ignore the powerful psychological impact of birth, not because of their lack of first-hand clinical experience, but because of their psychological repression and denial of this extremely painful and frightening event, which they rationalise by the use of scientific language.

The justification of this position by references to incomplete myelination of the cerebral cortex of the neonate can hardly be taken seriously in view of

the fact that the capacity of memory exists in many lower organisms that do not have a cerebral cortex at all, including unicellular life forms that possess primitive 'protoplasmic memory'. The image of the newborn as an unconscious being who is incapable of registering and remembering the process of biological birth is also in sharp conflict with extensive research data showing extraordinary sensitivity of the fetus already during intrauterine life (Verny 1987). (Grof, 2000b, p. 11)

Wilber (2000a) accepts that, according to psychoanalysis and ego psychology, psychoses have their origin in early infancy while neurotic or psychosomatic disorders are anchored in later childhood. He, therefore, sees psychoses such as autistic psychoses, symbiotic infantile psychoses, most adult schizophrenia, and depressive psychoses, as results of regression to early developmental stages of postnatal development, and thus as fully pre-personal and pre-rational disturbances. This enables him to associate various psychoneuroses with later fulcrums of postnatal development without any need to accept Grof's pre- and perinatal domains. Grof's disagreement is justified in the content of the perinatal and transpersonal experiences that accompany regression in the BPM.

However, early childhood traumas cannot possibly create the often rich and intricate content of psychotic experiences, which is clearly transbiographical in nature. To account for it, we have to consider such concepts as the transpersonal domain of the psyche, the archetypal and historical realms of Jung's collective unconscious, the Universal Mind (anima mundi), or cosmic consciousness. (p. 15)

Nevertheless, in terms of psychoses, Wilber's (2000a) integral theory regards difficulties of spiritual development as transpersonal and postnatal disorders. Moving away from the single ladder models of development in which an individual failing a lower stage cannot advance to a higher, Wilber contends, can no longer explain 'uneven development'. Defining spirituality as an altered state, he suggests that uneven spiritual development can still occur in personalities that are dysfunctional or highly developed in some lines and poorly or pathologically in others. He suggests that this uneven mixture of spiritual and pathological is not easily explained by definition since 'developmental ranking' is what his definition claims to avoid. In this sense Wilber's integral psychology model draws closer to that of the holotropic. As noted earlier, Wilber also makes some concessions to perinatal dynamics by the creation of the new fulcrum (F-O) and briefly outlines

his ideas about the implications of this revision for psychopathology (Wilber 1995, in Grof, 2000b). Grof contends that reparative regression so active in SE does not stop in deep experiential work using NOSC because this regression proceeds to the perinatal level where the process often connects to the transpersonal domain. Therefore, Grof urges Wilber to accept the possibility that the process of reparative regression does not stop short of the split caused by the trauma of biological birth at his new fulcrum 0.

Similarly, Grof (1985, 2000b) clearly states that in experiential psychotherapies exploring NOSC, it has been observed that, typically, disorders such as depression, psychoneuroses, and psychosomatic disorders have a multilevel dynamic structure. They have, in addition to their connections with traumatic events in infancy and childhood, important roots in the perinatal domain and also beyond that in the transpersonal realm. However, it is not just the content but the fact that the perinatal and transpersonal realms clearly have agency that is most significant. Important for the understanding of the SE process and the provision of effective interventions, Grof's first-hand experience shows that therapeutic work on psychoneuroses and psychosomatic disorders, initially guided by the therapist, adopts spontaneous and non-linear healing trajectories and mechanisms of their own. Activated by NOSC, these self-healing processes will take the clients beyond the normally expected postnatal biography to the perinatal and transpersonal domains. Due to the free nature of client movement between the biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal levels within the same session, Grof insists that it is more realistic, rather than have specialist therapists to engage the client in different domains as Wilber has suggested, to use a therapist skilled in all of the dimensions of experience. 'With an open approach, the process that initially began as "therapy" will often automatically change into a spiritual and philosophical quest' (Grof, 2000b, p. 12). This clearly has serious implications for counsellor training and education, and counsellor support services.

There is a danger of applying Grof's theory too simplistically. The case study in this thesis argues and assumes Hamlet's development is chronological through the BPM. As noted earlier Grof has suggested that perinatal access to the

psyche may be quite randomly experienced. To predict the completion of the process of SE for each individual is not as simple as it at first appears. Cortright explains that,

Grof emphasizes that people do not necessarily work through their psychological and birth material in a linear way. Various aspects of each of these four matrices [BPM I-IV] may emerge at any time. But as they are worked through psychologically, they tend not to reappear. So the general trend over time is toward resolving the issues and moving toward the fourth matrix of birth. (Cortright, 1997, p. 99)

Wilber (1995, p. 587) contends that the memories of intrauterine life are just episodes of primitive failure to perceive differences. He does not deny that healing may occur as a result of accessing a given matrix but he argues that this in itself does not constitute nor lead to spiritual growth, i.e. simply having a heightened intrasubjective experience as a result of accessing repressed materials is no guarantee that this constitutes or will lead to an evolution in consciousness (Jackson, 1996, p. 36). As noted before, these experiences could be regarded as transient and not necessarily founded on a long-term stable pattern. This evokes the important question as to whether, as Daniels (2002) notes, SE experiences can be genuinely transpersonal or are, as Wilber believes merely pre-personal. In an interesting endnote, Daniels (2002) states that there is a danger in Wilber's formulation that the ordinary world of pre-personal and social experience may be considered relatively unimportant. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that in order to ground mystical experience, the transpersonal must be regarded as part of day to day life and not separate.

Spiritual Emergency in Adolescence: Transient or Fully Transformative Experience

Cortright (1997) suggests that the transpersonal view is often one in which full mental health is consistent with the psychological cohesion or integration of the surface self plus some degree of connection with the spiritual foundation of consciousness. In other words, there is an assumption that the greater the degree of connection with that spiritual foundation of consciousness, the greater the spiritual realisation. However, it is possible that the full connection to spirit

does not guarantee mental health, especially if an individual is locked into the process of SE. Thus adolescent SE may be either, as Wilber seems to be suggesting, a transient experience, a transformative experience or something else. Accordingly, a further question that Wilber's work raises is whether, when an individual accesses the BPM, any of the experiences are truly transpersonal or simply ego inflated pre-transpersonal states of consciousness. From Jackson's (1996) study the answer is that both may occur. When an experience is perceived by the individual and the therapist as directly connecting to a matrix, it has long term healing effects. Jackson argues with Wilber's dismissal of one-off 'back door' experience by noting that individuals who had truly transpersonal experiences in his study continued to make improvements beyond the environment of the Breathwork workshop. Clearly, transpersonal psychic, or non-ordinary, experiences may not occur in isolation and their effects are not limited over time but in synchronicity reveal the unfolding of inner spiritual development to outer events.

Grof's response is that contact with the BPM is associated with profound mystical insights that reveal fundamental unity behind the world of separation. However in its application to clinical work, Grof claims that the distinction between mystical states with an evolutionary potential and various psychotic states with mystical features cannot depend entirely on the nature and content of the experiences themselves and their association with radically different fulcrums of consciousness evolution.

It is important to take a balanced approach and to be able to differentiate spiritual emergencies from genuine psychoses. While traditional approaches tend to pathologize mystical states, there is the opposite danger of spiritualizing psychotic states and glorifying pathology or, even worse, overlooking an organic problem. Transpersonal counseling is not appropriate for conditions of a clearly psychotic nature.

(Grof & Grof, 1989, p. xiii)

However, unlike Wilber, who regards psychosis as 'purely transegoic progression', Grof (2000b) does not attempt to make a clear distinction between mystical and psychotic processes as he suggests that similar mechanisms operate in both. He argues that 'psychosis is primarily characterized by a regression to early infancy in the service of the ego'. He claims that this is a

'reparative regression and restructuring of personality' that typically include 'the motif of death and rebirth' (p. 11). His argument that the perinatal dimension is a natural experiential interface with the transpersonal domain accounts for this mixture of regressive phenomena and transpersonal elements in psychotic and mystical experiences. Thus genuine spiritual insights can sometimes be channelled through psychotic personalities and experiences, and mystics may reactivate regressive complexes on their way to mature unity states.

Grof also emphasises in his clinical work with SE that it is important to take into consideration the overall context, the person's experiential style, and his or her ability to integrate the experiences into everyday life. In addition, the belief system of the surrounding culture and of the professionals treating the individuals involved should not be underestimated as factors that play a paramount role in shaping the nature of this process and its outcome.

Grof's Cartography

Turning to methodology, Wilber (2000) claims that the general inadequacy of phenomenology for spotting intersubjective structure-stages seems to be the major reason why research into NOSC, such as in Grof's (1985, 1998) holotropic model, produces very partial and incomplete cartographies. He goes on to suggest that psychedelic research and holotropic breathwork are very good for spotting experiential, phenomenal, first-person states, but do less well in spotting intersubjective and interobjective patterns, hence the 'lopsidedness' of such cartographies and their inadequacy in dealing with many important aspects of consciousness in the world (Wilber 1995, 1997a).

Cortright (1997) also tends to support Wilber's view that as Grof's cartography is derived from his LSD work, it is arguable as to whether techniques that involve research into altered states of consciousness such as this, that actually bypass ego defences changing consciousness itself, can give a truly accurate map of that consciousness (p. 101). Equally, he continues that a theory derived from

such a technique may not be applied comprehensively as an accurate guide to the human psyche or as an explanation of aspects of adolescent development.

Wilber suggests that Grof, like many contemporary theorists, is hostile to structure-stage conceptions like his own, because their phenomenological methodology does not identify them, they assume they are imposed on consciousness for suspect reasons by categorising theorists. This is an interesting point of difference not just with Wilber and Grof's work but with transpersonal theory generally. There is little reference specifically to adolescent transformational growth in much of the theory of this new discipline, and Wilber's work is unusual in that it subscribes to a more overtly developmental model. In conventional psychology and spiritual systems, Cortright (1997) suggests, consciousness depends upon the condition and the development of structures of the self; the former studies consciousness at various stages and levels of self development, and in the latter, consciousness is viewed in the context of transcending or encompassing more than the self in unconditioned levels. Transpersonal theory, in expanding the context of human experience, studies the development of consciousness within an integrative framework and in all its forms. Thus, he notes that transpersonal psychology as a whole avoids the use of specific developmental stages like those used in some conventional psychological or spiritual systems.

In Grof's model he maintain that all have access to the perinatal and transpersonal spheres that literally assist and share in an individual's psychospiritual healing. The spiritual opening often follows a spiral trajectory during which consciousness enfolds into itself reaching back into the past and then again unfolds into the new present. It is the ability to, and the quality and character of, access that Grof seems particularly interested in, rather than a specific hierarchy of gateways to the unconscious. Grof, therefore, seems to be indicating that mastering both a materialistic existence and the trauma of birth is the individual organism's primary task towards achieving transcendence.

In his four quadrant phenomenological model Wilber seeks to rectify what he considers deficient in Grof's model.

There has been a great deal of research and models based primarily on altered and nonordinary states (Grof 1985; 1998; Tart 1972; Fisher, 1971; Wolman, 1986; White, 1972, etc.), and a great deal of research and models on various structures of consciousness (Graves, 1970; Loevinger, 1976; Piaget, 1977; Gilligan, 1982; 1990; Fowler, 1981; Selman, 1974; etc.), but virtually no proposals for an 'all-quadrants, all-structures, all-states' model that combines the best of both. (Wilber, 2000b, p. 7)

Wilber's integral expansion, however, still declines the use of Grof's full cartography of the psyche but does in its general scheme account for around 40 or so types of transpersonal peak experiences and non-ordinary states that he believes 'enriches and advances our understanding of these phenomena, the study of which seems to have stalled' (2000b, p. 7). Grof's response to Wilber's scheme is to agree that there is fundamentally little or no difference between their two models except that Wilber's theoretical approach re-affirms Grof's claims to have grounded his theory in clinical experience.

My classification of transpersonal experiences is strictly phenomenological and not hierarchical; it does not specify the levels of consciousness on which they occur. It is, therefore, interesting to compare this scheme with Ken Wilber's description of the levels of spiritual evolution that, according to him, follow the full integration of the body and mind (postcentauric levels of consciousness evolution in his terminology) (Wilber 1980). It is not difficult to show the parallels between his developmental scheme and my cartography of transpersonal experience... My work thus provides empirical evidence for the existence of most of the experience included in his scheme. It also shows that the descriptions in ancient spiritual sources are still to a great extent relevant for modern humanity. However, as we will see, the systems are not exactly identical and incorporating my material would require certain additions, modifications, and adjustments. (Grof, 2000a, p. 65)

Adolescent Access to the Transpersonal Domain

A key point of disagreement between Wilber and Grof focuses on the chronological order of the unconscious disclosures and depends on their differing perceptions of how an individual gains access to the transpersonal domain. Wilber indicates that in Grof's theoretical system the dividing line between the personal and transpersonal appears to be on the level of the perinatal matrices,

whereas in his map it is at the level of the centaur. This naturally constitutes a problem since, on Wilber's linear spectrum, these two domains are far apart. According to Wilber (1995), Grof's work with NOSC forces its way into the transpersonal domain through the 'back door,' at the level of the BPM. Conversely, Wilber claims that his model describes a spiritual evolution that leads there through the 'front door'. Here Wilber draws from many schools of meditation that stress the need for long and slow development. Thus the 'front door' leads to more conducive and stable developmental patterns, as it 'reflects the order in which these domains enter awareness as a stable adaptation and not as a temporary experience' (p. 587). Grof's (2000b) response, whilst agreeing that it is important to distinguish between transient experiences involving various levels of consciousness on the one hand, and reaching a certain evolutionary level as a stable personality structure on the other, maintains that experiential identification with the foetus appears to be a 'genuine mystical state of a very specific kind' (p. 16). Furthermore, Grof suggests that the accompanying rich archetypal imagery suggests an intimate and organic *a priori* association between the perinatal and transpersonal levels born out by the work of Bache (1995). Bache's (1996) analysis of NOSC accounts with perinatal features concludes that perinatal matrices reflect an operational mode of consciousness in which the personal and transpersonal blend, sharing organisational patterns and structures. This is not definitive evidence but it does suggest that Grof's 'back door' to the transpersonal is equally valid and a lot less temporary as an experience than Wilber would suggest.

Grof concludes that the perinatal NOSC experience draws into itself an amalgam of the three aspects of human life, birth, sex, and death, which are known to be potential gateways to transcendence. In answer to Wilber's 'back door' criticism, Grof agrees that it is certainly possible to have powerful mystical experiences that do not result in spiritual evolution but he questions how much or how far spiritual development can occur without individual exposure to the powerful experiences of NOSC. However, Grof (2000b) concedes that although he has considered the personality changes following spiritual experiences, and described and explained the circumstances that are conducive to permanent

beneficial changes as well as factors that facilitate good integration, he has not yet offered a theoretical framework for consciousness evolution.

I have not yet attempted to offer a comprehensive theoretical framework dealing with the problems of that would summarize my observations over the years. However, these observations leave no doubt in my mind that under good circumstances powerful 'regressive' experiences can be harnessed in such a way that they actually result in permanent changes of the developmental structure. (Grof, 2000b, p. 19)

Grof admits that at the core of their controversy is a disagreement concerning the nature of 'regressive' experiences and the role that they play in spiritual opening. Wilber criticises the position of the people that he calls 'peak theorists', such as Grof and Maslow, who believe that the entire spectrum of consciousness is always available, and fully formed but submerged. Daniels (2002), citing *Spiritual Emergency* (Grof & Grof, 1989), disregards the positive aspects of SE. He notes that Walsh and Vaughan (1993) make a similar point that transpersonal psychology is not so concerned with the highest or the 'spiritual' but seems more interested in the 'trough' rather than the 'peak' experience. Here it might be argued that experiences of SE could be included in a full spectrum of trough to peak experience indicated by Wilber's four-quadrant phenomenology.

Wilber contends that it is transpersonal awareness that is instrumental in the process of transpersonal experience and not the archaic structures in themselves. In his opinion no single pre-personal structure can in and of itself generate intrinsic transpersonal awareness but it can become the vehicle that is used rather than its source. Wilber's argument that in SE we re-enter these structures with transpersonal awareness is critically confounded by Grof's argument, consistent with Wilber's perennial philosophy that such structures are like all of creation finally guided by superior creative intelligence. 'There exist no scientific findings that can demonstrate the priority of matter over consciousness and the absence of creative intelligence in the universal scheme of things' (Grof, 1998, p. 268).

It is important to remember, as Daniels (2002) points out, that Grof is postulating the existence of a 'genuinely' transpersonal, universal, level of reality. The

fundamental difference, Daniel's suggests, between Grof's perinatal and the transpersonal domains are that the perinatal is essentially an aspect of personal psychology, a consequence of individual and collective human-personal experience, whereas the transpersonal represents a level of universal mind or consciousness.

To understand the transpersonal realm we must begin thinking of consciousness in an entirely new way ... as something that exists outside and independent of us, something that in its essence is not bound by matter ... Transpersonal consciousness is infinite, rather than finite, stretching beyond the limits of time and space. (Grof, 1993, p. 83)

In this way, Grof's understanding of the transpersonal domain differs from both the collective unconscious of Jung and the higher unconscious of Assagioli. Jung's collective unconscious thus partly overlaps with both perinatal and transpersonal, whereas Assagioli's 'higher unconscious' is essentially a subset of the transpersonal. Grof argues, therefore, that the archaic structures of the perinatal domain are no different from those of the spiritual realm and must represent more than just a replay of the actual experience of the foetus. Wilber's main objection to Grof's argument seems to be that regression to the pre- and perinatal state cannot convey any revelations about existence, because 'the fetus in the womb is not aware of the whole world of inter-subjective morals, art, logic, poetry, history, and economics' (Wilber, 1995, p. 755). Wilber's confusion with the subject and dynamics of the perinatal state is easily exposed when it is explained, for example, that the experiential form of the regressive experience of SE occurs not to the foetus but to an individual who is grown and who is experiencing NOSC.

If the nature of regressive experiences in NOSC is correctly understood, it does not seem surprising that they represent an important mechanism of spiritual opening and of spiritual evolution. Besides ample evidence from modern consciousness research, this notion can be supported by many examples from the spiritual history of humanity. The experience of psychospiritual death and rebirth, or 'second birth,' that is closely associated with the conscious reliving of biological birth, is an essential component in the ritual and spiritual life of many cultures. It plays an important role not only in shamanism, aboriginal rites of passage, and the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth, but also in Christianity (as indicated by the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about the importance of second birth, 'birth from water and spirit'), Hinduism (becoming a dvija or

twice-born), and other great religions. Some spiritual texts also indicate that - in spite of the obvious differences - there are certain significant similarities between the mystical state and the child's perception of the world ('you have to become like children to enter the kingdom of God').

(Grof, 2000b, p. 20)

As a concept SE is not presently compatible, understood or included in theories of adolescent development. The problem of entry into the spiritual realm through the 'back door' or the 'front door' is closely related to the question of whether children can have transpersonal experiences and whether true spirituality can exist in cultures that are at what Wilber refers to as the 'magical' or 'mythical' stages of development. If reaching the centauric level were a necessary prerequisite for entry into the spiritual realm on the individual and collective level, transpersonal experiences should not be possible in children or perhaps adolescents. However Grof (2000b, p. 22), citing Stevenson's (1966, 1984, 1987) extensive study of spontaneous past-life experiences in children involving more than three thousand cases, shows that transpersonal experiences, both spontaneous and evoked, are fairly common in children. Together, Grof and Stevenson have observed several clearly transpersonal experiences, including sequences of psychospiritual death and rebirth, in ten and twelve year olds who have participated in sessions of holotropic breathwork. Although Wilber admits the possibility of transpersonal experiences in children, he again considers them, like the transpersonal experiences of psychotics, as 'invasions' alien to the corresponding fulcrums of his developmental scheme rather than natural and regular occurrences. Fortunately the question for this thesis does not depend upon the SE's authenticity as a healing experience but upon the possibility of its occurrence.

Limitations and Conclusions

Additional points about Grof's holotropic theory have been raised by a number of writers. Rowan (1993), for example, has sought to make a distinction between Grof's (1988) 'transpersonal experiences of a paranormal kind', which Grof considers to be by content genuine transpersonal experiences, and those in

Grof's category which Rowan reclassifies by content as 'extrapersonal'. Initially, Rowan, it is alleged by Daniels (2002), in an attempt to distance transpersonal psychology from the lunatic fringe, re-categorised paranormal items according to whether they appeared to be non-spiritual rather than spiritual. Items that Rowan considered non-spiritual from Grof's table were assigned to this new extrapersonal category. However, more recently, Rowan (1998, in Daniels) has clarified his contentious position by arguing that extrapersonal events or experiences, due to their deep ambiguity and different origins, need to be examined on a case by case basis to evaluate them properly. Thus he overcomes criticism that he might be unnecessarily elitist in his definitive differentiation whilst retaining his distance and maintaining the integrity of what he considers to be the real concerns of transpersonal psychology and its true definition. In addition, Daniels himself takes issue with Grof's and Rowan's definition of transpersonal experiences by suggesting that the precise distinction between what is considered extrapersonal and what is transpersonal must also consider its form. In other words, definitions should depend more on transformational meaning or the effect these paranormal items have on the individual, rather than simply listing them on the basis of phenomenological context or content of the experience itself (p. 7). Thus, Hamlet's meeting with his father's Ghost is categorised as transpersonal only if the effect on Hamlet is shown to be transpersonal.

In terms of his theoretical roots, Cortright (1997, p. 101) has accused Grof of using a model based upon out-dated 'drive' theories of psychoanalysis popular in Eastern Europe in the 1940s and 50s. In this context 'drive', as a dynamic viewpoint of personality theory in psychoanalysis that pertains to the interaction of aggressive and libidinal impulses, is defined as 'a state of central excitation in response to stimuli' (p. 101).

This sense of central excitation impels the mind to activity, with the ultimate aim of bringing about the cessation of tension, a sense of gratification. Drives in humans are capable of a wide variety of complex transformations. (Arlow, in Corsini & Wedding, 1995, p. 24)

This theory is not, he suggests, consistent with new models of psychoanalysis and psychology. However, in a critique of Wilber's spectrum psychology, Grof (2000b) also criticises the modern revisions of classical psychoanalysis that he claims Wilber draws heavily from, as having refined the understanding of postnatal dynamics and object relationships, but that they also share, he insists, Freud's narrow biographical focus. Grof also acknowledges that the uses of verbal methods of psychotherapy, common to these models, are conceptually limited to biographical models of the psyche. Consequently, such models do not incorporate even an elementary understanding of the perinatal and transpersonal domains. Certainly, in the context of psychoanalysis, the average adolescent, and some adults, might find it difficult to articulate a SE experience if limited to a verbal response. This might also add to the difficulty of diagnosing and quantifying the experience. Differentiation between SE and psychoses would therefore be more difficult. However, Grof (2000a) seems to favour alternative but compatible methods of assessment and therapy in disclosure work such as sand-tray, music therapies, and holotropic breathwork (p. 205).

It could be argued that Grof's model is based upon classical psychoanalysis and psychology. In addition, although Grof's theory has been influenced by a large variety of non-european spiritual traditions, it might arguably be described as limited in its use with non-european cultures. It is not too difficult to identify cultural differences and limitations especially when comparing Grof's model with Wilber's. Washburn (1994, xiii-xiv) suggests that the spiral paradigm, shared by Jung and Grof, is closer to western experience of spiritual development, whereas the ladder paradigm is more consistent with eastern spirituality, especially of Buddhism and Vedanta. Subsequently, Washburn argues, transpersonal psychology has not yet reached a position where a truly cross-cultural transpersonal perspective has been achieved.

Typical of the work of transpersonalists in general, Grof's work does draw upon a number of spiritual traditions and philosophies from the east and the west but it is limited by a western interpretation. Bache (2000) regards this as a fundamental flaw in current transpersonal discourse and a major limitation of Grof's work. Bache particularly sees the notion of 'karma and the species-mind' as a source of

misunderstanding and consequently as a means of extending transpersonal endeavour. He suggests that this issue be made more transparent by the use of a new vocabulary that describes 'the dynamic of spiritual awakening from the perspective of the unified reality that is awakening, while not losing sight of the individual' (p. 5). Furthermore, and to extend Bache's point, it is important for counselling adolescents that the vocabulary used essentially to describe the dynamic of spiritual awakening may be more fully understood, accepted and realised in the description of the adolescent condition that guides that practice in the future.

However, Bache is overly critical of transpersonalists in general for the wholesale importation of this eastern view of karma that humanity is so engulfed in 'karmic illusion' that it is incapable of spiritual liberation *en masse* and which instead emphasises the notion of individual spiritual development. As he suggests in his feminist revision of the concept of karma 'it is central to the vision of reality held by the wisdom traditions of the east and is a fundamental concept for most transpersonal thinkers' (p. 2). Conventionally, transpersonalists describe karma as the principle energy of cause and effect that organizes the evolution of the individual toward the eventual realization of his or her inherent oneness with the whole of existence. However, as Bache notes, the spiritual development of the individual needs to be seen in the context of, and is deeply intertwined and simultaneously evolves with, the development of the species. He argues that although Grof describes the death-rebirth sequence as culminating in the discovery that one is much more than the individual self, his discussion of the impact of this discovery consistently focuses on the individual and does not address the larger systems that the individual is part of. He suggests that Grof might broaden the meta-narrative of spiritual awakening and extend his analysis beyond individuals, to begin to address the larger systems that individuals are part of by encompassing patterns that emerge in transpersonal experience itself.

Similarly, transpersonal development theory in general has been criticised for its partisan presentation of spirituality as a masculine domain and for its cavalier incorporation of assumptions borrowed from and belonging to established and dominant paradigms. Wright (1998), for example, criticises much of the theorising

in transpersonal psychology, especially that of Wilber, for being androcentric and patriarchal in its assumptions and therefore for ignoring or devaluing women's experience of spirituality. By way of an example, Grof's perinatal theory tends to ignore the explicit relationship between the mother and the unborn child and yet by implication the birthing experience is total for the child. Grof describes it as anywhere between secure and terrifying, which may or may not characterise the individual's later relationship with the power beyond the womb as at times either merely influential or totally engulfing. Grof (2000b) could be criticised for acknowledging that the representatives of all the schools of dynamic psychotherapy attribute a critical psychological role to the early mother-child relationship (p. 10), whilst he makes little in his theory of the role of the mother and of attachment theory. However, given these criticisms, Keil (2000) suggests that 'it is clear that the examination of these [perinatal] memories is of profound importance to understanding the mind. The mere fact that these memories exist is an important challenge to conventional psychology and an impetus for further research' (p. 2).

In order that Grof's general theory can be applied, its limitations need to be addressed by existing theory relating to gender, counselling and grief and loss. Fortunately there is a range of quality research into gender that will serve to supplement Grof's androgynous general theory. In counselling for grief and loss, for example, the research details and explains gender in traumatic growth responses (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001; Leedham & Meyerowitz, 2000) as an influence upon coping styles (Martin & Doka, 2000; Martin, 2003) and strategies (Stroebe & Schut, 2001), associated with differences in responses to grief and loss (Moss, Moss & Hansson, 2001; Staudacher, 1991), and with cultural differences (Parkes, 2001; Sue & Sue, 1990).

In spite of its limitations, Grof's general theory and particularly the perinatal influence are pivotal to his cartography of the psyche. According to Wilber's and Grof's theoretical models SE, or authentic temporary altered states of spiritual experience, could occur in adolescence, but with Wilber's caveat that they may not necessarily lead to sustained development. It is important to restate that the perinatal dimension may be, at least initially, the most difficult to identify in

adolescent behaviour because it is so easily confused with dissociated and imitative behaviours.

The need for potential care providers to understand what they may be dealing with when approached by a young person whose behaviour and perceptual experiences are unusual and difficult for them to manage cannot be over emphasised. The next chapter discusses how New Zealand counsellors might be trained to deal with incidents of SE in adolescents and considers the protective and risk factors around SE for New Zealand youth.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HELPING ADOLESCENTS: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Carl Jung once said that in psychoanalysis, the correct interpretation of a dream is one on which the patient and the analyst agree.

(Klass, 1999, pp. 215-6)

Several states of consciousness are quite familiar. For example, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Those are some of the 'normal' or 'ordinary' states. Some of the 'altered or 'nonordinary' states appear to include peak experiences, religious experiences, drug states, holotropic states, and meditative or contemplative states (Goleman, 1988; Grof, 1998; Tart 1972). Evidence strongly suggests that a person at virtually any *stage* or level of development can have an altered *state* or peak experience - including a spiritual experience (Wilber, 1983, 2000b). Thus, the idea that spiritual experiences are available only at the higher stages of development is incorrect.

(Wilber, 2000a, p. 4)

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief summary of some of the key arguments in this thesis and ends with a discussion of their implications for counselling practice and further research. Firstly, however, it is useful to briefly consider the particular view of grief and loss experience, counselling practice and research presented by this thesis.

In this research the process of adolescent grief associated with loss was outlined as beginning with a sudden absence of meaning, followed by fear of psychic opening, subsequent reframing and reintegration of what was lost, resolving itself in the transcendent psychic transformation that stimulates a deeper desire to understand, and the experience of functioning more fully in the world. The theories of Attig, Neimeyer and Klass were reframed in a holotropic context in order to achieve an understanding of holotropic theory's relationship and

contribution to this process and to discuss potential therapeutic approaches. From this rose the contention that a psycho-spiritual process perspective may be usefully considered as a parallel strategy to those used in conventional grief and loss, and discussed alongside theories of adolescent development. Together, it was suggested, this synthesis could provide insights into adolescents' inner experiences that could ultimately assist counsellors, other professionals and families to avoid putting adolescents at risk in circumstances of loss.

The application of holotropic theory and individual transformation raised two further issues for the practice of education: firstly, that adolescents have spiritual lives that could be subject to the kind of transformation defined by Grof; secondly, that by recognising this area of a young person's experience, educational institutions have a central role to encourage adolescents in this positive aspect of their lives, and to recognise when support through a difficult transformative experience is required.

Subsequently, it was proposed that the role of school counsellor should be pivotal in the determination and a primary co-ordinator of support for adolescents with SE, which was suggested because statutory and non-statutory support services are often too poorly resourced and under-staffed to manage their current roles as well as they might wish. Strategies for the delivery of services to adolescents experiencing SE in the context of existing services and infrastructure in New Zealand were discussed, and it was suggested that further research will be necessary to investigate and support SE in adolescence.

These realities for counselling practised in New Zealand schools need to be considered against the following implications for counselling adolescents experiencing SE. This chapter concerns itself with counsellor practice, professional development and future research and is followed by the concluding part of this thesis.

Recognising Adolescent Spiritual Emergency

If adolescents do experience SE then clearly they have gone unnoticed and perhaps unsupported up to this point. If this is so, it is necessary to ascertain how often clients disclose SE in secular or spiritual counselling settings, and how often those disclosures may be misunderstood because counsellors are unaware of SE as a process, particularly in adolescence. Hamlet's parents thought him mad and Freud regarded him as struggling with oedipal conflict. These responses, traditionally understood by counsellors and therapists, are conditional upon notions that the mind can somehow become sick, that it has substance and may break and require healing, or lose control of its self, or succumb to unmastered primitive drives that may only be controlled by drugs. An understanding of the trans-dimensional possibilities of the psyche removes the need to totally rely on one-dimensional responses to adolescent clients.

An adolescent's perception and testing of his or her own spirituality, and experiences of 'available states of consciousness' (James, 1901-2), must be regarded as a fundamental part of assessment and an integral part of adolescent functioning and therapeutic process. Hamlet's SE is a powerful example of the way in which an adolescent client holds the possibility of his or her own healing. Counsellors require training and support to recognise the breadth of experiential possibility within the spiritual domain of their clients and to provide effective guidance and resources with which to help them. An adolescent client may experience an event that could profoundly change his or her life. If the event is not disclosed or discussed, or there is no resourcing for that to happen, a potential opportunity for the client might result in a disaster.

Certain features of Hamlet's case, analysed in Part Two of this thesis, if considered by the counsellor in isolation, might suggest a diagnosis representing a regressive pathology whose features include auditory and visual hallucinations, disorientation, and delusions. When these features are considered more closely, however, acknowledging that they carry spiritual connotations and that Hamlet apparently maintains insight and a capacity for adaptive decision making, in their totality they indicate SE. It might also be supposed that as a result of his positive

disintegration and by riding the crisis, Hamlet has progressed to a point where reintegration at a broader, more inclusive level is beginning to occur. However, the assessment that this thesis theoretically supports and the nature of the case study itself illustrate the potential difficulties in arriving at an accurate determination and an effective client outcome. If Hamlet is psychotic and he is misdiagnosed as having SE then the counsellor will be supporting his symptoms and facilitating his psychological process in a way that might ultimately be disastrous for the welfare of this adolescent client and others. Conversely, if Hamlet's SE is assessed as psychosis, the counsellor will be seeking to control the symptoms that could abort this spontaneous healing process.

A clearer diagnosis of SE has implications for an expansion of criteria in the *DSM – IV* category of 'Religious or Spiritual Problem'. Similarly, Nelson (1996), like Lukoff, et al. in Part One, highlights the need for accurate diagnoses and suggests that if transpersonal psychology is to remain relevant to the real world it cannot abandon the professional diagnostic process. He argues that a holistic transpersonal view recognises the need for more diagnoses rather than fewer. He suggests expanding categories to include 'impediments to spiritual growth from the rudimentary consciousness of early childhood, through ego-based stages, to phases in which an individual struggles to free himself from personal and social obstacles to spiritual advance' will limit the potential for stigmatisation and labelling (p. 341). As argued in Part One, if sub-categories of 'Religious or Spiritual Problem' were created, and Grof has 12 in his typology, it would certainly make it clearer to diagnose and more fully define the rich range of potential human experience found in SE.

Even without the aid of counselling and therapy, Hamlet's position is clearly defined by the following diagnostic criteria: he can distinguish between inner and outer experiences and is aware of which inner experiences do not fit into the prevailing worldview of reality; he is able to function in the world, able to make discerning judgements; and he has appropriate control of his emotions, and is not, therefore, according to Grof and Grof (1989, 1990, 1996, 2000a) psychotic. Even though *Hamlet* describes a life lived during SE, and provides a theoretical illustration of an individual who does not have immediate access to support

except that offered in friendship or in loyalty, it is still able to raise a number of important questions that have implications for counselling work with adolescents.

Grof and Grof (1989, 1990), and Grof (1996b) have defined diagnostic differences between psychotic or pathological functioning and SE, and they have broadly outlined the observable identifying characteristics of SE. However, Grof and Grof's reluctance to equate SE with specific levels of psychosexual development may be due to a wide acceptance amongst transpersonalists of the possibility that SE-like experiences may generally occur at any stage of development. This, then, is a key point when considering adolescents in particular. Equally, there are others who believe that 'spiritual insights cannot manifest at a higher level than the highest level of psychosexual development.' (Boorstein, 1996a, p. 304), which indicates that research in this field still has a long way to go.

Counsellor Training in Spiritual Emergency

Lukoff's (2000) review of the literature indicates that the interest in spiritual experiences in America, for example, has been on the increase over the last two decades. Morris and Hill's (1999, in Clifton, 1999) research has estimated the 'spirituality industry' in New Zealand, excluding the mainstream churches, to be worth \$40 million and rising. Hill links the growing interest in spiritual experiences to the maturation of capitalism and globalisation. He suggests that 'a feature of today's spiritual questing is an acceptance of plurality. It emphasises an idealised human personality, but it is not at all dogmatic or prescriptive about how one arrives at it' (p. 16). Consequently, in practically addressing this trend, the relatively new category 'Religious or Spiritual Problem' in *DSM-IV* bears out the concerns of practitioners and the work of the Spiritual Emergence Network that mental health professionals particularly should become more competent in dealing with 'forms of distress associated with spiritual practices and experiences' (p. 2).

It is vitally important that counsellors, too, be well educated and open-minded to this area of work, as adolescents who want to share their wonderful and disturbing experiences of SE might be disclosing experiences that make the counsellor either personally or professionally uncomfortable. West (2001) suggests that, as many counsellors will not have received training in religious and spiritual issues, they will be relying instead on their own convictions to guide their work with their clients (p. 17). Consequently, counsellors need to be aware of their own counter-transference responses to spirituality and religion. Counter-transference is the counsellor's total emotional reaction to the client in the therapeutic situation. Progress in therapy can be impeded if, for example, the adolescent is made to feel through the counsellor's counter-transference that he does not understand, believe or approve of the adolescent's disclosed SE experiences.

Nevertheless, although school counsellors may not impose particular religious or denominational views on a student they are free within the Education Act 1989 'to discuss the student's religious belief' (Ludbrook, 2003). This is often a very important way to engage an adolescent who might wish to disclose SE, as West (2001) notes, even in the initial stages of a therapeutic encounter between client and counsellor,

Clients will avoid exploring topics that their therapists are 'deaf to', and will somehow pick this up without being told [counter-transference]. There is a case to be made for asking a client during the assessment stage whether they follow any spiritual disciplines, or whether they grew up in a religious household (Richards and Bergin, 1997). By so raising the question of spirituality and religion the client is more enabled to speak of it.

(West, 2001, p. 17)

Chapter 12 argues the significance of the school counsellor's position in the New Zealand context. School counsellors are very well placed to identify, initially resource, and support young people who are troubled by SE but they lack sufficient training in this and there are no specific services to confidently refer to. It also suggested that schools and local communities in which counsellors work lack information and education about SE but do hold a reservoir of contextual

and cultural experience and knowledge that already partners, assists and understands adolescents who are coming to terms with SE.

What can be done to create a sympathetic environment in which SE can be discussed and in which knowledge is increased? There are clearly technical books available for practitioners but more needs to be done in establishing simple protocols around the issue of adolescent spiritual experience. Resources centred within education and/or health authorities need to be established to provide literature, education and practical assistance for counsellors and others involved in caring for adolescents. The same centres might develop workshops to support those in therapeutic and clinical practices, their clients and their caregivers. Interest groups might also be established to share ideas, to critique practice arrangements and interventions, and to encourage and inform research. The transformational, developmental aspects of holotropic theory could become part of adolescent development courses or programmes that promote cultural understanding and address cultural and spiritual issues as part of the basic education of helping professionals at university level. Post-basic professional development seminars or independent courses on SE could be set-up to make professionals aware of SE and to keep them up to date with current research and best practice.

Health education programmes are widely encouraged in New Zealand schools (Ministry of Education, 1999) and counsellors, because they work closely with school nurses and health co-ordinators, can encourage adolescent SE to be identified in health assessment programmes, which will help to normalise it throughout the school population. Certainly, the presenting aspects of SE appear to be cross-gender and cross-cultural, in the sense that the contents of these experiences appear to encompass a number of traditions. Furthermore, an effect of the understanding of SE in counselling practice must be to offset the colonising influence of European culture and counselling on adolescent Maori and Pasifika clients by acknowledging the part that their traditional beliefs and values play in the process of healing and transformation.

Counsellor educators need to be fully alive, not only to the spiritual dimension of functioning and the relevance of the spirituality of clients and counsellors for the counselling process (Everts & Agee, 1994) but also to the possibility of SE experiences underlying the presentation of client issues in counselling. Training might include counsellors' management of and responses to SE in their clients and themselves, including the use of supervision, assessment and intervention techniques regarding these experiences, and training in specialised care.

In reality spiritual care is not a core subject in New Zealand's tertiary sector training for counsellors and at present programmes of the sort outlined above are not requirements for counsellors. Presently, at the tertiary level, training for counselling in New Zealand universities is quite poorly resourced. Most universities have departments of two or fewer full-time lecturers and counselling courses are broad based. Thus there are few formal counselling courses that combine spirituality and counselling except at the Institute of Psychosynthesis, whose courses tend to attract private practice and agency counsellors. The only university that offers a paper in Counselling and Spirituality is the University of Auckland (MPTHEO 701) and even here there are no core courses dedicated to counselling in schools for intending school counsellors. The Ministry of Education has in the past funded training at Masters level for practising school counsellors but this funding has not influenced the development of school counselling courses *per se* or encouraged the establishment of adolescent development papers, required for the M.Ed. in Health Education but not Counselling, as part of those courses. Economies of scale at tertiary level have created a situation where there are too few counsellor educators. Funding issues and pressure from other professions such as teaching that create demands on resources make counselling a less prestigious programme. Furthermore, the displacement of teacher education programmes into universities so that they are perceived as having more credible academic rigour is also putting pressure on existing courses. Under this kind of pressure it is not surprising that counselling courses are being pared down to make way for teacher education so that new papers in counselling cannot be considered.

Other factors that limit school counsellors' ongoing professional development and training include the fact that professional development courses are often expensive and take place in work time. Schools on the whole have very small professional development budgets and teaching colleagues rarely have the expertise to cover counsellors' absences. Critically, school counsellors are loath to attend courses knowing that a qualified counsellor cannot cover their absence from school and that caseloads will back up.

The Counsellor: Practice and Person

In terms of counselling practice, some modalities might seem to be more sympathetic for dealing with SE than others. For example, it might be expected that person-centred counselling exemplified by the work of Rogers (1961), because it is an approach that has as its core 'man's tendency to actualise, to become his potentialities' (p. 351), might suit cases of SE, at least in the disclosure stage. An integrative, eclectic approach, based on the values and skills associated with client centred counselling, would seem to offer the flexibility to incorporate a variety of strategies to suit the needs of each client (Corsini & Wedding, 1999, p. 142). Alternatively, narrative counselling as it comes from a social constructionist perspective may not be as directly applicable to the spiritual content of SE as it treats narrative as the organising context for human action in which people are both the authors of and actors in their own self-narratives (Lyddon, 1995). In Chapter 3 certain specialised therapies are nominated by Grof and Grof, which have been specifically used in support of clients with SE. However, research would need to be carried out to confirm whether any one modality might be effective with adolescents.

In terms of practice, irrespective of modality, Cortright (1997) contends that education is the best and most powerful intervention and suggests that a primary task of the counsellor is to provide a psycho-spiritual framework for the adolescent client about what is occurring. 'It is hard to emphasize the importance of education about spiritual emergency too strongly' (p. 173). Counsellors in schools must be enabled to assist adolescents to access information in order to

expand their understanding. The aim is to normalise without minimising the experience of SE, and reduce the individual's fears. Education, therefore, provides the adolescent with the knowledge to make sense of the experience and can make his or her relationship to it a positively engaging and healing experience. In this way the counsellor permits the adolescent to more effectively face the oncoming inner flow of experience, tolerate the initially painful feelings it introduces, and travel within it rather than to fight it, flee from it, or suppress it.

As indicated above, the secularisation of the education system in New Zealand makes the subject of SE in adolescence controversial. Similarly, as West (2001) notes, the practice of secularised therapy, by definition, imposes its own limitations on effective client outcomes and counsellor practice. He suggests that in some incidences secular counsellors may have 'given up their faith in the healing power of love' in exchange for minimal progress in the management of their client's problems (p. 50). Here especially the counter-transference issues of the counsellor become very significant to the client.

It is possible to argue that all of what happens in a therapeutic encounter, indeed in any human encounter, is spiritual. Indeed we can view the whole of human existence as spiritual. However, the word 'spiritual' is often reserved for peak experiences, for special moments of connectedness, for a special quality of human relating and relatedness... I wish to underline the fact that many people, both therapists and clients, have experiences in which the therapeutic encounter takes on for them a clearly spiritual quality.
(West, 2001, p. 52)

Sutich (1996), one of the founding fathers of transpersonal psychotherapy, has outlined his requirements for working as a transpersonal counsellor or therapist. Sutich suggestions mirror his personal concerns that effective counselling is heavily reliant on the counsellor's attitude, orientation, and perspective. The following is helpful as a base line for counsellors and therapists who might work with adolescents and SE. Sutich suggests that:

The counsellor or therapist:

- Is on his (her) own spiritual or transpersonal path.
- Accepts the rights of any person with whom he (she) is working to pursue his (her) own path and to change to another if that seems desirable.
- Has a commitment to the principle that all human beings have continuous impulses toward emotional growth and ultimate states, and accepts that the

chief responsibility of a transpersonal therapist is to function in the best way he (she) knows how, to help in the realization of emotional growth as well as ultimate states.

- Has reasonable knowledge, among other psychological principles, of the role of self-deceptive mechanisms throughout the life cycle, including their function in himself (herself).
- Accepts all individuals as having impulses toward states whether or not they are on a personal path. More specifically, this means working with individuals as much as possible through techniques and forms of relating that are directly relevant to their current state. (Sutich, 1996, p. 12)

In contrast, West (2001) has outlined a broad-based training programme for counsellors and therapists in training or in current practice who are dealing with spiritual issues. West's work, although it seems to expand Sutich's principles into a practical programme, in doing so loses some of the stress that Sutich places upon counsellor self-discovery. However, it does usefully provide an overview of the way in which an aspect of counsellor training could be directed, and West himself admits that it is only a sketch. In the following he suggests preparations for counsellors and therapists that might usefully be considered. Counsellors and therapists may:

1. Examine their own prejudices and biases around spirituality and religion, both positive and negative.
2. Familiarize themselves with some of the literature around spiritual experiences, pastoral therapy and spiritual direction
3. Explore a religion from a different culture than their own including attending a religious service.
4. Address the assessment issues involved, including when a spiritual experience might have psychotic elements to it, when a client needs a spiritual referral and to whom to refer the client, and the part played by spiritual emergence and spiritual emergency in some people's spiritual development.
5. Develop a sense of some of the main maps and theories of spiritual development.
6. Study implicit and explicit spiritual forms of counselling.
7. Clarify the differences and overlaps between spiritual direction, pastoral care and counselling or psychotherapy including non-Christian forms of spiritual care.
8. Be engaged in their own form of spiritual development.
9. Have appropriate supervision arrangements in place.

(West, 2001, pp. 17-8)

There are a number of points raised here by the work of Sutich and West that may benefit from closer comment. The Grofs (1990) suggest that what first

characterises an effective support person for SE is his or her open and trusting therapeutic relationships, which affirms Sutich's principles. However, in addition, Grof and Grof stress that the counsellor must have a professional, in-depth knowledge of NOSC, from both personal experience and, if possible, hands-on practice. This may cause a problem for counsellors who have had no first-hand experience or practice in cases involving NOSC or personal experience of NOSC, or who are unsympathetic to this phenomenon. This point serves to underline the importance that the Grofs' place on theory informed by practice, and the necessity to train specialists who can support the counsellor by being a viable referral source. This is confirmed by Grof and Grof's observations that individuals in SE, often in heightened states, are sensitised to the therapist, expecting the counsellor/helper to be truly responsive, to empathetically understand the transformative process, and to know the levels of intervention required. Interestingly, although the Grofs believe that an intimate knowledge of the experience and cartography of NOSC is essential for the counsellor in understanding holotropic theory, they stress that it is not so important to a client in the SE process.

Even if people [clients] in this stage are aware of the variety of theoretical maps and spiritual systems that describe similar states, they will find a difference between studying them and being in the middle of them.

(Grof & Grof, 1990, p. 53)

However in returning to Sutich's principles, Grof's (2000a) psychotherapeutic strategies for treating individuals undergoing SE are based upon the perception that these states are not manifestations of an unknown pathological process but results of a spontaneous movement of the psyche. Grof's perception is consistent with the recognition of Sutich's principle that human beings have continuous impulses toward emotional growth and ultimate states. It may be useful to note that Sutich refers to 'impulses' and Grof to 'spontaneous movements of the psyche'. The counsellor should also be aware that although the SE may be triggered, as in Hamlet's case, by loss, the client is not necessarily responsible for, or in control of, the process that he both witnesses and experiences in his or her self.

Similarly, Lukoff (1998) observes that under normal circumstances 'religious and spiritual experiences usually are not distressing to the individual and do not require treatment of any kind. However, some spiritual conflicts do lead persons to seek therapy' (p. 15). Unfortunately, lack of training in the assessment and treatment of religious and spiritual problems may lead to insensitivity and/or counter-transference issues that interfere with therapists and mental health professional in general to understand and explore their clients' issues (Meyer, 1988; Shafranske & Gorsuch, 1984; Strommen, 1984, in Lukoff, 1998, p. 3). Fortunately, in the past decade,

... the field of psychiatry has provided guidelines and added requirements in residency training to enhance clinicians' skills in addressing the patient's culture and values and for becoming more aware and sensitive to a patient's religious/spiritual world view. (Larson, Larson & Koenig, 2001, p. 4)

Thus by taking a spiritual assessment as part of the patient's history, clinicians have been able to discern the importance of religious and spiritual issues to the patient and 'how religious dynamics may be helpful or harmful' (Larson, et al., 2001, p. 30).

And given the potentially serious side effects of neuroleptic medications, enhanced diagnostic discrimination may prevent the unnecessary and potentially harmful treatment of many patients. (Kasprow & Scotton, 1999, p.17)

As noted earlier in Part I, the treatment for SE is usually markedly different from the conventional treatment of psychoses, even though the former 'continue to be treated as "diseases" with an etiology that has yet to be discovered' (Grof, 1985, p. 294). Psychosis is viewed as pathological and interventions are enacted to suppress or stop its process, whereas the unfolding of SE is regarded as natural and allowed to develop to its full conclusion.

The message of transpersonal psychiatry is that not all that looks like psychosis is illness. In some cases, these experiences represent developmental difficulties in individuals undergoing profound and important changes. In such cases, treatment should focus on safely supporting and

guiding this process, rather than suppressing it. The metaphor of midwifery is relevant: imagine the damage done if "treatment" prevented delivery (p.17)

Treatment of Adolescents who may be Experiencing Spiritual Emergency

It is important to note from the outset that, as Cortright (1997) suggests, by setting up support and encouraging the enfolding of this transformational process, a SE may be converted into the more benign and manageable process of spiritual emergence. As Grof has noted, treatment for SE will vary according to the intensity of the experience and the individual's ability to integrate it. Consequently, an active process might require regular sessions of experiential therapy to facilitate the emergence of blocked unconscious material and permit full expression of emotions and physical energies. Grof recommends that the strategy of the treatment follows that used in his holotropic breathwork sessions. If his recommendation is to be followed, counsellors in schools must either defer to breathwork specialists, trained workers or undertake training for themselves. At present the writer is aware of only a handful of Grof trained therapists in New Zealand. There are no facilities offering twenty-four hour supervision for individuals who might be experiencing SE, and the Spiritual Emergency Network does not as yet extend to New Zealand. If counsellors are to follow the Grofs' model of support, it should at least be acknowledged that the creation and staffing of such centres might become a necessary prerequisite for effective therapy of SE in the future. However, to be realistic, the setting up of such centres would require substantial financial backing, probably from wealthy private sponsorship, as it is unlikely that they would receive the recognition or funding they deserve from the New Zealand Government.

An alternative course of action that could overcome the present lack of central facilities would be to establish support teams in central locations. Keys, Bemak, Carpenter, and King-Sears (1998) suggest a collaborative consultant model for counsellors helping at risk adolescents. They recommend that in adopting this approach to their service, counsellors redefine their roles within the context of the broader community. This model effectively broadens the influence of the

counsellor and links potentially narrowly focused and isolated counsellors and their programmes with other community-based services and service providers. However, the full service model may achieve the same result as the collaborative consultant model and more successfully if the two systems became integrated. Keys et al. (1998) note that 'counselors who engage in collaborative consultation can more efficiently use their skills to empower others, while also enriching their repertoire through interdependent relationships with team members' (p. 132). Collaborative work in SE education is essential and might be best accomplished as part of a multidisciplinary project of the sort used by the 'positive youth development movement' (Catalano et al., 1999, in Vera & Reese, 2000, p. 424).

Grof (2000a) recalls that in some cases helpers have formed teams to assist individuals in their own homes for the duration of the SE episode. This kind of intensive work, however, associated with a lot of physical activity, deeply expressed emotion, insomnia, and loss of appetite for the client can also be extremely demanding on the workers as an episode can last from days to weeks. At the onset, and in its extremes, the process of SE can totally divert the individual's attention from bodily concerns to cause sleep deprivation, insufficient intake of food and drink, and poor elementary hygiene. These additional characteristics of an individual who is deep in the process of SE will require constant attention by the team. In the later stages of SE the intensity of the process subsides and the individual requires less supervision and is able to assume personal responsibility for basic self-care.

In the case study, both recorded encounters with the transpersonal realm reactivated Hamlet's sense of loss and feelings of loneliness. On both of these occasions the experience for Hamlet is exhausting and corresponds to the enormous physicality of spiritual emergence noted by Grof and Grof (1990). Hamlet is physically shattered by the process of transformation and he surfaces, bringing with him not just the baggage from his NOSC experience but an opened portal into an inner process that will consciously influence him for the rest of his life. Notably, however, in the second NOSC in his mother's chamber, Hamlet seems to experience not just an enormous influx of energy but a genuinely freeing catharsis. Later in the piece, his return to Denmark is marked by calmer,

more responsible, and accepting responses to his past behaviours and his present difficulties.

It is worth noting that Grof (2000a) added the experience of alcoholism and drug addiction to his SE typology, and its treatment is somewhat more complex. Grof regards addiction as 'a misguided search for transcendence' (p. 174) and before dealing with the psychological problems underlying addiction it is vitally important to break the use of the drug and its dependence. Grof (2000a), therefore, suggests that in addiction the source of the problem is often the unrequited need to contact the mystical dimension. However, it is clear from Grof's use of LSD in his clinical practice that not only does addiction occur as an attempt to meet the need for transcendence, but also as a means to access true transcendence rather than its replication. Equally, addiction may result from an individual's attempt at managing an ongoing SE and therefore it disrupts the normally natural process of spiritual emergence.

People in spiritual emergencies might find that regular use of alcohol and sedatives can make the experiences more manageable by slowing down the process and suppressing difficult physical and emotional symptoms. However, those with an unidentified problem of chemical dependency are subject to greater addiction. (Grof & Grof, 1989, p. 196)

Similarly, adolescents who use a number of drugs often refer anecdotally to the fact that regular use enables them to cope with what they perceive as consensus reality.

Grof suggests that holotropic states may only be introduced when the source of the addiction is identified. The task of holotropic states is to help the individual to obtain valuable insights into the psychological roots of their abuse, to confront traumatic memories, and process the difficult emotions associated with them. Most importantly, these experiences can mediate the process of psycho-spiritual rebirth typically associated with critical turning points for addicts and alcoholics, mediating experiential access to profound spiritual experiences that are the true objects of the addicts craving for which the drugs and alcohol were but poor substitutes.

The effects of the experiences of SE, as Grof and Grof and others describe them; exist along a continuum from spiritual emergence to emergency. They suggest that spiritual emergence is as natural as normal birth and that the process of spiritual transformation is experienced subtly and gradually. When natural emergence is experienced dramatically and rapidly it becomes emergency as individuals are exposed to sudden inner experiences that challenge their existing beliefs about and perceptions of the world.

Consequently, counsellors' assessments and interventions with adolescents in an educational setting must account for both potential long-term complications of SE for some individuals, such as prolonged absence and disorientation, as well as the appearance of relatively benign and unobtrusive experiences for others. As Grof indicates, even in the latter case there is still a need to provide counselling assistance to adolescent clients that recognises the importance of integrating this experience. At present, trained counsellors in schools make it possible for adolescents to talk to others about what they are going through. However, as individuals in SE feel that they are having an experience that is unique to them; in their special circumstances they require the provision of special therapy and support.

At present this support is not immediately available in or beyond school. However, existing psycho-educational programmes in New Zealand such as TRAVELLERS (Dickinson, Coggan, & Bennett, 2003) run by counsellors and teachers and outlined in Chapter 12, might be adapted for use in schools for students with SE. Community mental health services that are free to young people and families considered in need of assessment, treatment and therapy for mental health problems could also provide leadership and education in SE. For example, the four Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Auckland – The Kari Centre, Marinoto North, Marinoto West, and Campbell Lodge – might usefully provide expertise and support to young people, their families and to counsellors. Access and referral to these services is often facilitated through the work of school counsellors. There is no doubt that further training for counsellors and the provision or adaptation of appropriate existing offsite psycho-educational resources could, combined with successful role models and access to a good

spiritual mentors in the adolescent's immediate community, support adolescents in the SE process.

The nature and degree of therapeutic assistance that is necessary depends on the intensity of the psychospiritual process involved. In mild forms of spiritual emergency the person in crisis is usually able to cope with the holotropic experiences in the course of everyday life. All that he or she needs is an opportunity to discuss the process with a transpersonally oriented therapist, who provides constructive feedback and helps the client to integrate the experiences into everyday life. (Grof, 2000a, p. 173)

Counsellors need to be mindful that in a 'mild form' of SE the client may well cope better with the assistance of sympathetic, conventional counselling. However, it is also important to recognise and encourage the protective factors that may exist for an individual that prevent spiritual emergence turning into a SE, so that counselling itself does not become a factor in complicating the experience.

Shapiro (2001) suggests that social-systems developmental literature, which explores human development under conditions of adversity, is useful in building an interpersonal model of bereavement, as it helps to organise 'the complex, interdependent factors contributed by individual, dyadic, familial, and cultural domains to a continuum of adaptive or symptomatic outcomes' (p. 315). In the same way, research directed at SE might benefit from research models that measure the long-term effects of SE through the life cycle.

These models view human development as progressing through mutually adaptive transactions in interdependent 'nested structure' of family and extended family, peer, institutional, community, and cultural relationships and contexts. (Shapiro, 2001, p. 316)

The developmental outcomes of SE, for example, might therefore be determined by the adolescent's use of resources 'to manage the risks posed by potential stressors'. Those supportive resources and sources of stress are then identified across interdependent individual, family, community, school, and cultural domains, and observed to note changes in configuration and impact over the course of development. What Shapiro suggests is equally applicable to the investigation of SE in adolescents as it is examining similar characteristics.

This approach has recently been applied to the existing literature on adolescent bereavement (Clark et al., 1994). Suggesting that grief poses both immediate, direct disruption, and a cascade of secondary related disruptions combining to create configurations of risk and protective factors contributing to later outcomes. (Shapiro, 2001, p. 316)

Protective Factors for Spiritual Emergency

Bragdon (1988) has suggested that a spiritual emergence is less likely to turn into a SE if three protective factors exist for the client. These are also confirmed and elaborated upon by Grof and Grof's (1990) work with clients in SE. Simply reinterpreting this work in terms of the adolescent client, the following outline provides a useful guide for counsellors and therapists working with young people:

1. An adolescent has a conceptual framework to support, understand, and accept the experience.

Boorstein (1996a) makes the point that spiritual insights, like psychological insights, have the potential for promoting growth and health and that integration of these insights is dependent on healthy underlying ego structure. She suggests that in the face of a constantly changing life, 'clinging and attachment' can trap individuals into suffering more pain. She claims that acceptance of impermanence, and understanding informed by both spiritual and psychological insights, lead to healing. Certainly, impermanence and change mark adolescent development. However, for each individual if healing is to be achieved a choice must be made to explore these psychological insights fully and integrate the new understandings as they arise. 'Spiritual insights also require internal character integrity in order to be expressed in wholesome ways' (p. 304). This presupposes that the adolescent has the cognitive ability to understand the nature of the experience, as well as the willingness and courage to accept it. This might also, for example, require the adolescent to exercise enormous trust in the counsellor and the facilitation of interventions such as holotropic breathwork, which might be too new an experience and a potentially risk-filled undertaking for an already vulnerable and disturbed young person.

2. The adolescent has the physical or emotional flexibility and structure to integrate the experience: a healthy ego structure, tolerance for strong emotions and ambiguity, and flexibility, etc.

Adolescence creates its own unique challenges to the developing individual. Coupled with other complicating factors in the adolescent's life such as normal losses associated with the developmental process and those caused by cultural or social changes, the onslaught of a spiritual emergence on the fragile adolescent ego may initially be quite overwhelming and particularly confusing. Grof and Grof (1990) suggest that confronted with the fear of losing control, the mind and the ego become 'very ingenious in their efforts to hang on'. Adolescents may well feel a great reluctance to submit to change, especially to one that they feel is 'just illusory' (p. 51).

3. The adolescent's family, friends, and social network, including helping professionals, define the experience as natural, positive, potentially healing, healthy, or initiatory.

As noted above (Grof & Grof, 1990), a positive attitude and a helpful response from the family to SE is a very important factor. Grof and Grof confirm that in the ideal situation both the family and important friends should be included in the support network as equal partners in the specialist support group.

Risk Factors for Spiritual Emergency in New Zealand Youth

In a recent survey of New Zealand young people's health and wellbeing, conducted by the Adolescent Health Research Group (2003), and outlined in detail in Chapter 12, the majority of adolescents (90%) reported positive relationships with both their parents or their caregivers, and with adults at school who 'care about them'. This finding on its own indicates that according to young people there is a strong likelihood that there are a large number of adults with whom they have positive connections. The research found, nevertheless, that

young people (86%) were more likely to confide in a friend over a 'serious problem' than with the nominated caring adult (58%). However, the research does not indicate if the young people would regard the same adults as positive role models or mentors to whom they could disclose information of the type experienced in SE. Indeed, the same research indicates that 'more than a quarter of the students do not feel close to at least one of their parents and 40% want more time with at least one parent' (p. 46). The findings present a somewhat complex picture, in that even though most adolescents enjoy positive connections with parents or caregivers, this does not necessarily apply to both, nor do they necessarily disclose sensitive personal problems and seek help within these relationships.

For adolescents who might be experiencing a spiritual emergence or full-blown SE such as Hamlet, it is important to reduce the risk factors of the experience by noting and enhancing protective factors. There are clearly some factors that hinder support and do not serve the best interests of adolescents who are plunged into psycho-spiritual crises, particularly in terms of the most appropriate assessment, diagnosis and interventions.

Grof and Grof (1980, 1989) have identified a number of these risk factors that include, for example, that the individual does not belong to a recognisable group where SE is normalised or understood (1998, p.192). The Adolescent Health Research Group's survey (2003) is a case in point. Resnick, Harris and Blum's (1993) longitudinal survey of adolescents across the United States found that an adolescent's spirituality, defined as a belief system – not necessarily a religion – and a sense of personal identity or self-awareness, is one of six major protective factors in adolescent health. In contrast to this research from America and the international literature, New Zealand's Adolescent Health Research Group's results contradicted Resnick et al.'s findings about spirituality as an important protective factor. The New Zealand results indicated that only 33% of students had spiritual beliefs, which perhaps raises the question as to whether these findings indicate that the majority of adolescents in New Zealand are at risk, or have they been influenced by the researchers lack of attention to spiritual issues associated with youth health because they were not considered as important as

other more easily identifiable factors? The spiritual dimension of health, recognised in Samoan and Maori models of health, is still a relatively new and complex concept and notoriously difficult to define and validate (Eberst, 1984). The New Zealand survey limited itself to only two questions, one about the importance of spiritual beliefs and the other about attendance at places of worship, on which to assess the spiritual health of New Zealand youth.

Clearly, adolescent spirituality and adolescents who see their spirituality as important do not at present form part of the 'recognisable group' in New Zealand, which according to Grof puts them at risk. This is a significant reflection upon the way that research and policy in New Zealand currently values the subject of spirituality in adolescence. Furthermore, it could be argued that since examples of adults in SE are more commonly available in the literature, adolescents with SE are not therefore part of the recognisable group and until adolescent SE is recognised on the basis of empirical research, it puts all young people at risk.

Another risk factor for the adolescent is that the individual is unable or may not wish to articulate his or her needs (Grof & Grof, 1989, pp.193-4). Although adolescents are noted for their ability to clearly state their material needs many, particularly males, find it very hard to initiate deep discussion about feelings and even more so about spiritual experiences (Staudacher, 1991). Some will use friends to explore their needs while others may not even do this, and will lack the confidence to seek counselling. Indeed, research is currently unavailable about the extent to which adolescents would prefer to use their friends rather than counsellors to discuss their needs. However, those that do seek professional assistance require a safe, non-judgemental and empathic environment (Rogers, 1961) in which they can feel relaxed about disclosing SE in what ever ways are the most appropriate and comfortable to them. A further risk factor is that he, or she has no access to a SE support network or they are unavailable (Grof & Grof, 1989, p.193; Grof & Grof, 1990, p.199). At this point in New Zealand specific SE services do not exist but as discussed above, school counsellors and other helping professionals and communities are available. Influential organisations like the Mental Health Foundation New Zealand whose work includes mental

health promotion and research in schools, should also have the opportunity to place SE onto their agendas for consideration and research.

A final risk factor might be that the culture does not recognise SE as a problem, or the research does not indicate that there is a need for SE support. This describes and defines the current position in New Zealand and suggests an exciting way forward for research to explore this whole area of adolescent experience. All of these factors are pertinent to the work of this thesis, as adolescents at present do not appear to belong to a recognisable group where SE is understood or accepted as a common experience. As indicated above, more empirical data is required. A properly funded research project undertaken to assess the levels of SE particularly amongst adolescents and the kinds of support that they require would finally determine and address those risk factors for our young people as a 'recognised group' in New Zealand.

Conclusions

The minimal requirement for adolescents facing any level of spiritual disruption is a supportive social context for SE that must include access to counselling and education and a safe holding environment. In the latter, the aim is to protect the adolescent from the psychic stimulation of the everyday world that is often experienced as a painful interference in the process. Ideally the adolescent in SE should have access to a comfortable and safe place in which to experience the profound alterations in consciousness that can occur in SE. More importantly, the adolescent requires a place in which he or she can move freely, vocalise spontaneously, and express emotion without disturbing others. Clearly, it is not always possible to provide such a holding environment in a conventional student support area and it is questionable as to whether such a place, as currently positioned in many schools, is appropriate to meet these kinds of adolescent needs. However, the creative provision of facilities for young people that combines a professionally staffed and sympathetic full-service school approach, with a holding environment that is comfortable and fully accessible to home support and/or professional care is desirable and possible.

In terms of access to counselling, it is clear that some people are able to manage their SE with minimal support. However, the adolescent and the family do require access to trained professionals to guide them. This will place unusual demands on conventionally trained school counsellors that extend far beyond school time, and beyond their normal practice. The unusual and unconventional demands of a client in SE require the counsellor to be sympathetic, and thoroughly attuned to the adolescent client's raised level of consciousness. It is an ongoing therapeutic engagement that requires deep reserves of energy, confidence, calmness, and understanding of the adolescent's inner state. Alongside the client the counsellor must be a totally reliable resource providing a reassuring commentary on a potentially fearful terrain. Accompanying these personal qualities the counsellor will need to be experienced in dealing with psychoses and SE, which also makes an assessment easier, and have the necessary skills and knowledge with which to cover the territory and to know when and where to refer. A sound knowledge base is also important in providing wider educational support to the adolescent's family and extended support network. Reflective practice through good supervision and teamwork are all absolutely essential for the counsellor under such circumstances.

This thesis concludes with a final part which presents what has been learned and its implications for future research. It also outlines a possible process of adolescent transformation during the course of normal adolescent development and makes recommendations as to what might be done in schools, within the counselling profession and amongst those concerned with adolescent mental health.

**CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR
FUTURE RESEARCH**

TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENCE

Ko te Amoranga ki mua, kit e hapai o ki muri – Place the things of the Spirit to the fore, and all else shall follow behind.

(Traditional New Zealand East Coast Maori proverb)

It is important, I believe, to encourage people to face up to their paranormal experience, to find a way of integrating them meaningfully into their lives and, ultimately, to allow them to lead towards development beyond self. Indeed this is very much the approach taken by Grof & Grof (1991) in their discussion of how to work with spiritual emergencies. (Daniels, 2002, p. 11)

Introduction

The purpose of this final part of the thesis is to summarise and clarify what has been learned from this research and it also gives an opportunity to make some suggestions for future research. It begins by explaining how the thesis was conceived and leads on to a brief review of its original objectives and its findings. The research findings are then grounded in a co-constructed interdisciplinary position, which presents a summary of a process of adolescent spiritual emergence, emergency and transformation. Finally, the implications of this process and recommendations as to what might be done in schools, within the counselling profession, and amongst those concerned with adolescent mental health are presented as topics for further research and discussion

A Question of Spirituality

The original intention of this research was to suggest the value of Grof's theory in terms of providing support for young people in transformational crises. The thesis contends that theories of adolescent development in accommodating the existence of further realms of consciousness for adolescents acknowledges that the spiritual lives of young people play a significant part in the process of

transformation and education in that development. In supporting this claim the research has engaged in an ongoing debate about the nature of spirituality, its connection with experiences of loss and its place in young people's mental health. Furthermore, in attempting to describe SE as a positive experience for adolescents it has suggested a strength-based model rather than one that regards SE as a problem or a deficit for young people.

This thesis was conceived as a response to concerns raised by normally functioning adolescents who presented to counsellors with difficult experiences that had a predominantly spiritual content. The research, through an examination of existing theory in the field and a review of the literature, has established the robustness of Grof's holotropic theory over the last fifty years and suggests that it does provide an explanation for these kinds of experiences. This research also strongly indicates that SE in adolescence is possible.

Though Grof's typology of SE is quite explicit about the experience as it relates to positive transformation, the research has found that the use of the term 'spirituality' is particularly problematic. It is applied quite generally in a number of settings but it is most used to describe the outcome or experience of religion and therefore referred to and researched in the context of religious practice. In general usage, it is a rather imprecise umbrella term to describe 'health', 'development', 'wellness', 'well-being', or undefinable personal responses to 'something' beyond immediate conscious perception.

In New Zealand Ministry of Education publications, for example, the word 'spiritual' is used to identify a source of positive and creative support for an individual prescribed by 'the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of human experience' (Kerlake, 2000), or as an 'aspiration' of 'New Zealanders' (Ministry of Education, 2004a), or as a curriculum goal to 'nurture physical and spiritual endowment of learners' (2004b), where spirituality is linked to good physical health and good moral character (Crooks & Flockton, 2003). Consequently, in the New Zealand context, spirituality is acknowledged as being of benefit for young people inferring the infinite points of connection that the individual has with his or her inner and outer world but there is no one working definition of what it is.

However, the inclusion of the spiritual aspect of human development in a number of government policy documents suggests that the New Zealand Government considers it important to future strategies. If this is so, it may only be a matter of time before a clearer and more robust definition of spirituality emerges within policy documents. Furthermore, in the future, government servants, called upon to provide broader and more effective support to families and children, will increasingly be asked to consider the influence of people's, hitherto private, spiritual lives on their public functioning.

At present, adolescents may have difficulty in recognising manifestations of spirituality in their own lives because policy makers and advocates for young people are not encouraged to role model their own spirituality and may also have some difficulties in defining what it means personally. Thus, spirituality in the lives of young people is publicly preferred, tacitly understood, but somehow left to the individual to achieve and manage. However, its influence upon individual's lives is clearly marked by its outcomes but as a subject for human research it remains difficult to quantify.

A Review of this Thesis' Objectives

A number of objectives were outlined in the Introduction and their outcomes are summarised below:

Grof's holotropic theory, in contributing to the position that positive development can occur through transformational crises like SE, highlights the importance of spirituality in human development and specifically in the process of adolescent development. The value of Grof's work is that, placed alongside the theories and practices of counselling and education, for example, it offers concrete, theoretically sophisticated and well-grounded proposals and raises important unanswered questions for further development and research in this field.

In terms of theory it has been established that there are a number of similarities between the process and experience of adolescent grief and loss and Grof's SE.

Thus, grief and loss in adolescence appears to stimulate access not only to the biographical but also to transpersonal and perinatal dimensions of this experience. Significantly, the connections between adolescent functioning, theories of grief and loss and adolescent development strongly support the view that there is a firm link between loss and/or transformative crises and spiritual experience.

Counsellors' and educators' increasing acknowledgement and understanding of the experience of transdimensional consciousness and developmental crises in adolescence must serve to promote effective engagement with young people through responsible assessment and sympathetic and creative interventions in the future. Similarly, the literature indicates that interventions which support, understand and acknowledge individuals' spiritual lives are more effective than those that do not. Presently, further research is required that will contribute to models of practice for counsellors that can effectively respond to the spiritual needs of adolescent clients and that will help these practitioners to anticipate, identify and empower adolescents with losses and to guide them through these difficult transformations.

The application of Grof's holotropic theory to Hamlet provides an example of SE which identifies the dimensions of experience available to those young people in SE and also demonstrates the difficulties of self-management. As an illustration of a less-than-successful negotiation of the SE experience, it is particularly interesting in its trajectory and outcome. It suggests that, without understanding, the experience can put those involved in a higher risk situation. It points to counselling interventions and education as key protective factors for the effective engagement of SE in adolescence and more widely suggests that society as a whole might benefit from a greater understanding of the role of spirituality in human development.

An initial concern of this research was to discuss and raise further awareness about all types of loss experiences in adolescence but this would have involved a far reaching review of loss that was not within the scope of its final investigation. The research limited itself to loss through bereavement, which closely fitted with

the case illustration and also satisfied one of the contexts for psychospiritual transformation in Grof's work.

One of the challenges of this research was to establish connections between different disciplines that have as their common concern the understanding of adolescents and adolescence. The thesis draws together a number of disciplines, and emerging patterns of adolescent development and research that suggest that the influence of an adolescent's spiritual dimension on his or her loss experiences needs to be further investigated.

Finally, a significant finding is that, in order to maintain the tradition of high profile and well-researched support for young people in New Zealand, further research generally into the field of adolescent spirituality should be undertaken. This will contribute to the task of creating a model which will assist areas such as counselling and counsellor training, education and teacher practice to further incorporate notions of spirituality into existing theories of adolescent and human development. Furthermore, an intergenerational study into the incidence of SE alongside a study into the effects of loss on school performance, social, physical and emotional development and mental health in adolescence is also highly recommended.

Key Outcomes of this Research

A major characteristic of SE is that it is a developmental process that can result in fuller functioning for the adolescent. Similarly, bereavement, although it is often regarded as a risk factor in other areas of adolescent development, may also be seen as a necessary and therefore positive precursor to important personal development. It is clear that both SE and loss through bereavement do share spiritual elements that can provide solace, and support the inner resourcing necessary for an individual's further development. Research to explore the similarities of both processes would serve to illuminate and support ongoing discussion.

Although spirituality is often discussed as a dimension of health, there is little evidence of its integration into educational settings and health promotion programmes. The research suggests that the concept of spirituality is difficult to address because of its relationship with denominational religion and some dominant cultural emphasis on the material domain. This thesis associates spirituality with the development of human consciousness beyond the ego level and contends that the rigorous investigation of this kind of development beyond the ego may be possible using theories of knowledge grounded in experience. Furthermore it contends that an examination of the relationship between consciousness and spirituality is crucial for those that purport to address the health issues of the whole person.

According to Wilber (2000a), all humans access their own unconscious when they sleep. In the trauma of loss, however, the ego of the adolescent is weakened and diminished so that a gateway is opened that allows complete access to the repressed unconscious processes of the psyche normally only accessible in the dream state. In an adult the process that Grof calls SE may last for a number of weeks but how long it occurs for an adolescent is not specifically recorded.

There is a natural tendency for all human beings, including adolescents, to want to control their own lives. To ensure that they remain within their zones of comfort many individuals arrange that their existence be as safe and predictable as possible. The idea of submission to a spontaneous and choiceless personal experience can be a difficult notion for many individuals to accept or welcome. Like the spiritual experience, SE requires a level of submission to the process if it is to successfully run its course.

The concept of SE in adolescence is compatible with traditional psychological and transpersonal theories that full spiritual development, when it occurs, can only do so when the individual has reached higher levels of cognitive development or/or when current psychosexual development permits. The link between physical maturity and full and sustained spiritual experience is accepted but the research suggests that lack of maturity does not prohibit affective and

positive numinous experiences from occurring naturally in the course of adolescent development. Similarly, this thesis suggests that the reason why there is a paucity of research in the field of adolescent spirituality is because of the prevailing belief that it is not possible for adolescents to have extended spiritual experiences or at least experiences that might be fully transformational. Nevertheless, developmental theory does suggest that human development is not necessarily uniform in all areas. Consequently, it may be possible that some adolescents could have clearly defined spiritual experiences whilst others may have spiritual experiences that are not so immediately apparent or understood but that do impact later in life.

The claim by ego psychologists that adolescents are generally unable to access other forms of consciousness should be balanced against the view that adolescents do have spiritual experiences. Research with children indicates that pre-pubescent young people are able to access rich spiritual experiences but it does not suggest that adolescence destroys these gifts, only that it may prevent them from being fully enjoyed.

Although there is a lack of consistency between transpersonal theorists as to what the levels of spiritual development are, they all concur that there are breakthrough events when individuals for a short time have access to unconscious material at almost any stage of development irrespective of other developmental factors. For example, Grof does not discuss chronology or gender at all, he simply presents his cartography with relevant case examples. Similarly, he does not stress a logical transformational sequence (BPM I – IV) but observes that individuals can access different dimensions and stages when prompted by the psyche. Thus his model does not insist on a hierarchical developmental structure upwards or downwards like Wilber's ladder and Washburn's spiral model.

In the psychology of grief and loss there is a growing understanding that adolescents as a group may require special support in coping with loss that is undertaken in tandem with their normal developmental tasks. An awareness of the potential of spiritual and holotropic experiences and an understanding of SE

as a significant part of an adolescent's grief and loss process should enhance support factors. Grief and loss theorists might also benefit from considering the insights offered by this interpretation of Grof's holotropic theory. Similarly, transpersonal theorists by contributing to developmental theory could help to clarify those aspects of adolescent spiritual development that require fuller exploration in the context of adolescent research.

Counsellors can provide an important first point of contact for young people with SE but only for those who attend school. The adolescents who are not in attendance are those who are more likely to be at risk and who have less access to protective factors that ensure health and well-being (Watson, 2004). What is not known is whether SE becomes more of a risk factor for a young person, as in the case of depression, when physical illness, health inequalities and poor nutrition are occurring or are present. Certainly, Grof suggests that other risk factors like alcohol and drug misuse do complicate SE.

The notion of SE and spirituality in the context of adolescent development and mental health is likely to attract a degree of confusion and negativity until the discourse and its vocabulary become more familiar and secure within a rigorous research framework. One of the primary goals of this thesis has been to engage in and extend the existing discourse on SE and make a case to test empirically this hypothesis with an adolescent population.

Building a Co-constructed Theory of Adolescent Transformation in Spiritual Emergency

In terms of methodology and outcomes, the work of this thesis has been primarily to generate ideas about what is possible rather than to verify or test what is known or believed. It is not surprising, therefore, that, in drawing together the shared threads of understanding about SE and adolescence, to investigate a specific question, the findings reveal a number of further questions. These questions relate to the nature of adolescent spiritual experience, its identification

and assessment, its relationship to grief and loss, and its function in development and health.

The demonstration and analysis of spiritual emergence and SE, presented in this research, provides a shared understanding of adolescent loss, spiritual crisis and transformation and, by applying Grof's expanded cartography of the psyche to Hamlet, gives a coherent explanation of what inner development could be like for an adolescent. The case illustrates SE as a parallel process with that of grief and loss and, as a consequence, the research has been able to identify a number of particularly strong developmental connections between this research, the broad perceptions of spiritual experience and Grof's holotropic theory. What follows, therefore, is an outline of one possible process of adolescent SE and inner transformation, co-constructed by the literature of inter-connected disciplines discussed in this thesis:

Adolescent Development and the Psyche

Most transpersonal psychologists agree that in order for numinous experiences to occur, such as the transformation of SE, the ego must become unbalanced, which will allow unconscious material to unfold to consciousness. Any of the following can unbalance an adolescent's ego: the ego can be weakened in the process of normal development; the sex drive encourages the ego to become attracted to the numinous affects of the unconscious; the ego is diminished by the trauma of a loss event; the use of alcohol and drugs for self-medication can alter perception and ego control; and, unusually prolonged spiritual practices or physical activities can also unbalance the ego. Spiritual emergence, therefore, occurs as a result of organic changes in the body, through self-medicating or physical stimulation, or as a result of the psyche's spontaneous need to reorganise itself in response to conscious and unconscious stimuli.

Certainly, during normal adolescent development, the psyche gently reorganises itself in order to integrate the powerful effects of the development project. This integration suggests an unfolding of consciousness through processes similar to

regression in the service of development and second individuation. During these processes the adolescent may experience momentary peak experiences, or noetic consciousness events, that assist immediate transformation and the process of fuller transformation and transcendence later in development. Thus, spiritual emergence may be experienced as temporary both in duration and effect but its depth and influence is longer lasting.

Generally, the depth and duration of the experience for the adolescent will depend upon the ego's ability to manage it. However, if the adolescent's normal developmental tasks are complicated by trauma which, for example, might accompany personal loss, the adolescent needs to accommodate and integrate both events in order to facilitate transformation. SE might, therefore, occur in adolescence when normal psychic reorganisation alongside normal development becomes powerfully complicated by the parallel process of managing and integrating trauma. It is at just this time that the ego becomes overly exposed and vulnerable to the unconscious, because of its need to fully integrate both development and loss. Exposure to the unconscious allows powerful elements to flood into consciousness which creates an altered state of awareness for the adolescent. Consequently, during this process the adolescent may experience a heightened sense of awareness without the limiting factor of reduced cognition.

Characteristics of the SE Experience

As the adolescent experiences material not just from biographical but from transpersonal and perinatal dimensions of consciousness this sudden influx of unconscious material may be managed as spiritual emergence or as SE. Successful integration of this unconscious material is dependent upon its power to alter consciousness, the manner in which the adolescent engages with the process, and the quality of support he or she receives in order to successfully manage the experience to completion.

After a full assessment, SE is characterised by the absence of medical criteria that could easily be misinterpreted as the condition of psychosis. In addition, the

adolescent in SE may also convey an inner distress or confusion, be subject to new or unsettling emotions, mood swings or withdrawal, and uncontrollable spontaneous behaviours and physical difficulties, all of which may be interfering with day-to-day functioning causing absence from school or school refusal and psychosomatic illnesses. SE might also cause changes in moral and cognitive judgements, and audio and visual perceptions. Typically, the influx of new ideas originating in the unconscious, similar to that experienced in a vivid waking dream or caused by an over active imagination, is profoundly rich and authentic in content and can cause a combination of excitability and anxiety in the adolescent. After the initial shock the process becomes more benign and manageable for the young person as new understanding and reason become successfully integrated and positive transformation begins to occur.

The Effects of SE on Adolescents

Although effects must vary from each unique individual to another it is likely that adolescents will exhibit unusual behaviours over time that remove them from the pattern of their normal day to day functioning for either a period of a few days or for many weeks. This may have serious implications for managing educational tasks and relationships as well as normal developmental ones. In addition, while exhibiting mildly or extremely unusual and uncharacteristic behaviours the adolescent, in order to manage or control the spontaneous inner changes, may become involved in risk taking behaviours such as self-harming or self-medicating, which with support should steadily diminish as the process of SE is allowed to develop. However, attempts at depressing this crisis of development instead of easing it will lead to prolonged anxiety. Extreme experiences and responses might be features of SE dependent upon the level and nature of the psycho-spiritual crisis and the individual's ability, with support, to see it through to its conclusion. For example, a peak experience need not be prolonged and is more easily managed than a full SE.

As the adolescent is empowered to understand and manage the process, and the psyche is reorganised and integrates the experience, the outcome is that the

young person is able to function more fully than before. The adolescent is also able to draw upon the experience in the future and becomes more able to manage his or her fears of the unknown and integrate new experiences more easily. If, however, the adolescent is unable to manage the process he or she will certainly require the support of a counsellor, spiritual supervisor or guide and medical professional alongside the adolescent's immediate and extended family and community support network, assuming that such support is available. It is likely that adolescents may be facing SE alone or with minimal and uninformed support. It is also quite possible that, in some cases, adolescents could be misdiagnosed as having symptoms of psychosis. It is not known what the long term effects are of putting adolescents with SE on medication that specifically represses the symptoms and prohibits the necessary process of transformation to complete itself. However, it is likely to cause unnecessary distress which will need to be later resolved even if it allows the young person to function at a reasonable level.

Implications and Future Research

Education in New Zealand

Relatively little is known about the experience of SE in adolescence or its possible short term and long term effects. Further research must be undertaken with New Zealand adolescents in order to determine the extent, management and effect of SE on young people's lives. This will verify protective and risk factors concerning adolescent SE and enable policymakers, trainers and educators to draw upon research based resources so that they may begin to develop a long term strategy for SE and initiate training for support and education.

Generally, in acknowledging the spiritual dimensions of young people's lives, the implications might be considered for the development of educational policy in terms, for example, of how the curriculum could be reorganised to accommodate and include these dimensions for effective learning, how teachers are trained,

reviewing pastoral care provision for young people in and out of school, and how new partnerships with the wider community might be effectively maintained to support aspects of adolescent spirituality as part of a more holistic approach to learning and experience. This raises further questions about the perceived differences between secular education and formalised religions. For example, do the latter have a role to play in partnership with schools to provide educational and practical spiritual and emotional support? Clearly, as SE has a spiritual content, questions arise as to whether the support services provided to adolescents should be essentially secular or a partnership between traditional, religious and community organizations and the education system.

At present most adolescents and their families have little or no understanding or education about the possibility of SE occurring in their lives and are therefore unable to identify and communicate it as SE to those who might assist them. Indeed, SE might be judged across a spectrum of states from psychotic to mystical according to the beliefs of an individual's culture. Consequently it would be useful to initiate or tie into existing educational programmes that support and empower individuals in the management of their health, either as part of the curriculum in schools or offered as discreet psycho-educational programmes for groups or individuals at school and in the community. The aims of these types of programmes would be to provide support through education and information, to normalise the process of SE and to fully assist in its effective management. Establishing such programmes would also serve to clarify assessment and referral procedures and the availability of sympathetic interagency support. The literature suggests, in support of spiritual tradition and experience, that effective programmes are ones that are respectful of culture.

The Counselling Profession

Counsellors need to be fully aware of the possibility of SE and receive training to include assessment and intervention techniques which would enable them to differentiate between SE and psychosis and assist with the management and self care of SE in their clients, and safe self care and supervision for themselves and

their support networks. Currently, although spirituality is recognised within counsellor education, SE is not specifically dealt with as an educational component in New Zealand's tertiary sector training for counsellors. As a result counsellors need to attend to their professional and personal development as researchers and practitioners in areas of mental health, cultural awareness and human development.

Recommendations as to what might be done to support adolescents in SE depend initially upon the successful identification of young people with SE, which will be problematic without a good set of assessment tools. It also relies upon counsellors making assessment that they may not be properly trained to undertake alone and suggests a team approach. Counsellors working in isolation need the security of team support and will need to be proactive in forging positive and ongoing relationships with other colleagues and their local crisis services teams. For example, Grof's tool for differential diagnosis of SE and psychosis is relatively clear but requires an assessment for the presence or absence of clinical criteria to explain why psychological changes might be occurring. Initially, a general assessment might be undertaken by a mental health professional, or nurse in conjunction with a school counsellor or psychologist before referral is made to a specialist team. Similarly, although the perinatal aspect of Grof's cartography may be best assessed in a medical setting, the presenting physical symptoms can be identified relatively clearly within a sympathetic counselling relationship. In the face of SE it is easy to make assumptions about culture and options but it is important to develop models of support that originate from an understanding of strengths in adolescents rather than deficits. When working with families and SE a counsellor is required to be honest and creative, respect family confidentiality, maintain safety, acknowledge traditions and check the appropriateness of interventions against cultural norms.

Mental Health Care Providers

Traditional practices and beliefs legitimately offer authentic ways of viewing the human condition. Through the contribution of transpersonal psychology, the last

few years have seen a gradual change in perception by clinicians in all areas of adolescent support and a closer consideration of the relationship between spirit and reason. In mental health the application of medication in depression is becoming more controversial and there is growing preference for more effective behaviour modification interventions such as CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and interpersonal therapies. In the contemporary mental health work setting, counselling and complementary options, cultural healing as a full option, education and support plans and groups are preferred above medication (McNaughton, 2004). There is also a growing understanding that in traditional cultures, like Pasifika, the individual does not represent the self in isolation as is more common in European culture. The individual embodies the shared cultural heritage and aspirations of the immediate and extended family, and an individual's place of origin, such as his or her spiritual relationships with those who are living and dead, which are still maintained through continuing bonds.

It has long been recognised that spirituality is pivotal in health education and health promotion (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 2004), and that spiritual experience has a fundamental and profound influence on health and development - defined here 'as the unfolding of an individual's full potential within a given cultural context' (Chown, 2004). Consequently, the increasing application of this concept in mental health settings and health education and promotion should make it possible in the future to more easily integrate spirituality into educational settings and health programmes. However, the literature suggests that in adolescent mental health the medical paradigm is still predominant and that to use a spiritually sympathetic response is still unusual. There is, however, a growing recognition in New Zealand amongst health professionals that research should be done to support such an approach to enable agencies that deal with adolescents to become more aware of patients with SE and the need to provide appropriate facilities and staffing to understand the experience. Research might also be undertaken to discover if SE is a risk or protective factor in adolescent mental health, or whether there is a genetic susceptibility to SE in the same way as, for example, depression can be linked to heart disease.

A Global Perspective

If, as Chown (2004) suggests, 'acknowledging spiritual health is a human rights issue across the world' what then are the global implications of SE in mental health work? Globally mental health research has begun to accept the importance of examining the unique knowledges of traditional cultures in its assessment and treatment of religious and spiritual problems with nonpsychotic characteristics (Lukoff, Lu & Turner, 2004). This is of particular importance in cultures where spiritual models of wellness and illness are common. For example, Patel's (2004) random attendees' survey of primary health care clinics and traditional medical practitioners in Harare, Africa, clearly illustrates the presence of spiritual models of illness in indigenous peoples. It was found that half the patients had spiritual models of illness and that they were judged to have higher levels of mental disorder and thus more likely to have a mental illness. However, on closer examination, the symptoms of these patients resembled the construct of anxiety rather than psychosis. In this case spiritual models of illness represented an indigenous model to explain the distressing symptoms of nonpsychotic mental illness.

Does globalisation impact upon understandings of SE in positive or negative ways? Grof has expanded his work on SE in individuals to include groups and whole cultures. In his *Psychology of the Future* (2000), Grof suggests that the world is experiencing a form of SE and that consciousness evolution is critical to human survival. Consequently, a global model of SE may be applied whose experiences and contents are not necessarily contingent on any one group's traditions, cultures or spiritual beliefs but whose interpretation and management are context and culturally specific.

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Finally, this research has discussed the importance of enhancing protective factors for adolescents around issues of loss and SE and has emphasised that young people, who become more spiritually connected with self and others

through these processes, have an enhanced capacity to function more effectively and fully. Accepting that there are limitations in all models and theoretical constructs and that no one theory may be considered to be definitive, this research has sought to begin building a theory of adolescent SE as a positive transformative process, which should have clear implications for the education, counselling and mental health of young people.

As the concept of adolescent spirituality is central to this thesis, it is sincerely hoped that a major outcome of weaving together the theories and models of transformation, loss and grief, adolescent development and counselling is that 'the things of the Spirit' have been placed more 'to the fore', and as 'all else shall follow behind', so this research will prompt further discussion and debate about young people and their spiritual experiences.

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