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METAMORPHOSIS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS
OF THE EXPERIENCE OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION

by

Janet C. Elliott Waters

B.A. (Hons.), Simon Fraser University, 1981

M.A., Simon Fraser University, 1983

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department
of
Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Self-transformation signifies a profound change in the self as a whole, an effect on one's self, life or relationships that is so marked, one is not the same person as before. Though frequently described in case studies, these experiences have not been often investigated as they occur in one's life history. Narrative descriptions of the experiences of 40 respondents were collected in order to describe and understand the cause, nature and outcome of the experience through a phenomenological analysis of its theme and content.

Loss (actual or potential) was the most prevalent theme (65%) in this sample, particularly relationship loss (52%) because of death or relationship crisis. Other major themes included physical or sexual trauma (10%), challenge to one's self-concept because of success or failure (8%), life changes such as birth, or moving (10%), and internal change (insight or therapy) (20%). Major or minor life change was present for 93% of the respondents, and 88% described themes of insight which were often the crucial factors. No age-related crises were mentioned, and only 35% corresponded to developmental transitions across stages of self-growth. The cause of the transformation was often sudden and other-initiated, and/or a first experience, an intense one, or one which involved more than one traumatic event. A close

relationship was usually effected. Strong intense emotions (e.g. grief) were always present in the experience; these were usually negative (72%), and varied according to theme category, as did the contents of conscious experience. The role these factors may play in challenging the old self and forcing a change which cannot be resisted was extensively discussed.

Although the experience was usually negative (75%), the aftereffects were usually positive (65%), including significant positive aftereffects on the self, and on one's perceptions about life, values or goals. Aftereffects on relationships, cited by 70%, were not as uniformly positive.

A survey corroboration the study (n = 183) supported these findings, and indicated that transformation is a common experience in one's life history; 28% reported one and 60% more than one transformation. The older age groups in this sample were significantly more likely to have experienced self-transformations, particularly those caused by death, divorce, and therapy.

To Allan, Bernie, Clelie and Ann-Marie, who have each shared with me part of the trail on their journeys of self-transformation, and whose courage in turning a fall into flight I will always admire and treasure.

And it is time to go, to bid farewell
to one's own self, and find an exit
from the fallen self.

.....

Build then the ship of death, for you must take
the longest journey, to oblivion.

And die the death, the long and painful death
that lies between the old self and the new.

D. H. Lawrence

In a dark time, the eye begins to see,
I meet my shadow in the deepening shade

.....

A man goes far to find out what he is -
Death of the self in a long tearless night...

Theodore Roethke

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Behind every thesis is a network of help; no child comes from or grows with the efforts of one person alone. Thanks to many who were part of the process of writing this dissertation, from conversations about the results to editing help. Special thanks to Dr. James Marcia, for his support and help, and the freedom to create the vision.

Most especially, this study would not have been conducted without the participation of all the respondents who shared their experiences - in many ways, my co-researchers. This study asked them to make a review of their experience that some found was as personally and emotionally difficult as it was valuable. I am very grateful for their willingness to conduct this review, and to share their experiences with me for this study. It would not have been possible without them.

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FOREWORD

A powerful and popular metaphor of transformation is that of the "journey". This study of self-transformation has been a journey of its own; like any journey in which one must follow the footsteps of another, a map, a guidebook and a dictionary may be welcome - even necessary - beginnings.

When following a map of another's journey, it helps to understand the reasons why one road was chosen and not another. One road I could have taken would have simplified the study by addressing only a limited aspect of self-transformation, as other studies in the area of self-change have frequently done. The power and impact of transformation has been reduced to mere "personality change", in which a trait or two has been altered, a habit broken, such as, for example, a study of age-related changes in femininity/masculinity over time (Stevens & Truss, 1985). An advantage of this approach is that it reduces the topic to a specific and easily managed level. But this in effect reduces it to triviality. It is perhaps too easy, when considering an issue like self-transformation, to approach it on the level of cocktail party cliché. (Oh no, I spilled the wine - I'll never be the same again). Perhaps we do this because the largeness of the topic, and its potential for personal impact, makes us uneasy. But transformation is not simply a discrete change in a specific trait, but a profound change

in the self as a whole. A reduction of the topic to a more limited - and meaningless - level of specific self-change would have lost the depth of the change of the whole self implied by transformation, the sense of profound experiential alteration of the self.

Another road I could have chosen would have addressed self-transformation through an objectifying number-crunching approach. These attempts to objectify the topic, in order to reduce and distance it from the self, also lose its power and our understanding. It would be invalid (and therefore ultimately unscientific), and unethical to have addressed these lives, this pain, through a "separate" analytical epistemology (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), an objectifying approach. It would be as invalid as the belief of a gender, class and culture-centred 19th century anthropologist that he could objectively observe a culture of which he is not a member. Who has not complained about the painstaking methodology and subtle mathematics that, although unmistakably and admirably clever, have served only to prove some immensely trivial point about human psychology? One cannot hope to see the phenomenon as it really is, any phenomenon, except through engaged understanding. Yet the problems of the subjectivity bias of culture and theory protest against the sole use of a subjective knowing, with its limitations of individual subjectivity in seeing the phenomenon as it really is. If

it is impossible to understand a culture, an era, a self-concept towards which one stands as an alien outsider, it is equally as impossible to understand a culture, era and self with which one is personally identified. It risks our very selves to do so.

The road I chose has taken me on a study of experiences of self-transformation through both a process and an encounter. The experiences the respondents described for this study were profoundly important to their selves and their lives; their accounts of the experience, in their own voices, were therefore profoundly moving to read. A true understanding of the respondents' experiences demands a participant-observer attitude, a "connected" understanding (Belenky et al., 1986) not only from me, as researcher, but from you, as reader.

This approach, that of a participant-observer attitude, may be a truer objectivity than the deliberately blinkered eyes of the scientific paradigm. The engaged understanding, or involved commitment, used in this study is one which is not only more revealing of the phenomenon as it is, and thus is in a sense more truly empirical, but which is also more ethical. (It is another symptom of the patriarchal ascendancy of reason that the objects of scientific research are treated as objects, even the object of study in psychology, the human. The respondent, the "co-researcher", is treated as a dehumanized object, ironically termed

"subject").

So, as a sort of "person-centred ethnologist" (Attanuci, 1988), I found I must approach this topic of self-transformation through my connectedness as a "fellow" human and experiencer, not treating the respondents and their experiences as objects of theoretical analysis, nor my own experiences as irrelevant or distracting. To understand the topic fully, and avoid an impossible and distorting distance, I must be engaged with the respondents and their experiences, view them through our connectedness, using all ways of being-in-the-world, including those that are personal and emotional. To explicate, use and bracket my own theoretical and personal bias, I must be honest about my own understanding and experience of the topic (subjectivity is inescapable and must therefore be clearly explicated to avoid a self-interested bias). Gilligan (Gilligan, Ward, Taylor & Bardige, 1988) quotes Trilling that one must confront the need for "personal testimony"; if one does not, one is detached and dispassionate in the face of the passionate and personal. And that costs us our humanity and the meaning of the act.

This engagement was two-sided; I and the respondents both participated in the encounter. The protocols that comprised this study of transformation were engaged in a self-other connectedness, an I-Thou encounter as much as was possible within obvious limitations. The "other" portion of

the engagement, the protocols of the experience, were not distant safe stories in a book, but self-reports of experiences the respondents found profoundly transforming, the agonies of the self in the change of things closest to the self. I could not engage them without being myself profoundly moved by them, in a way impossible to convey.

And I, as the "self" portion of the engaged encounter, came to these protocols with my own past experiences with profoundly transforming life experiences. First, that I have had experiences I can describe as transforming, "without which I would not be the same" - both major and minor discontinuities. These include experiences of a loss of a significant person at a crucial age, of a "descent into the underworld" of self-change, of physical and emotional movement away from family and friends to myself in a journey transformation, of failure challenging a self-identification with achievement. The protocols were both informed by and informed my own experiences with transformation.

Using these tools and vehicles, I came to the end of the journey, an understanding of the experience of transformation as described by the respondents. What struck me most strongly, and what I want to convey, was the depth of the experience for the respondents, the extent of pain and joy they shared in their report. It would be easy to lose the power of these descriptions in the dry language of an academic examination. But a true examination of self-

transformation must keep the real flavour and power of the experience as crucial, perhaps the most crucial, characteristics of the experience.

In talking about transformation, we are talking about a passionate and personal experience, an experience which profoundly affects, even shatters, identity. It is difficult to convey the depth of this change through metaphor. If one has never had such an experience no description could convey anything but sentimentality. And our cultural discomfort with intense experience, our acceptance of the superiority of reason, and the current post-modernist zeitgeist in which self-change is expected in a weekend suggests an inability to deal with such change in its true intensity.

The disintegration and helplessness of this experience is like a caterpillar changing to a butterfly without the protection of a cocoon (Assagioli, 1965). We don't become a new person with a snap of the fingers. After the often sudden and unexpected destruction of the old self, we are forced to rebuild ourselves, brick by brick, or somehow encompass the damaged structure as ourselves. One's life may be torn into chaos by the impersonal tsunamis of change. In some of the experiences, the pain of the transformation reminded me of open heart surgery without anaesthetic. A classification of this as "negative" is a poor description, indeed.

As all pain is our pain, all joy our joy, life change at this profound level is a shared experience. Like a reporter in a war or catastrophe, not even the witnesses remain unscathed. Nor should they, if they are human. I did not.

Yet the protocols also conveyed the profound depth of change that resulted from these experiences: perception-altering transformations in values, beliefs and understanding that rewrote the whole life theme or story. Some, for example, came to an awareness of the inevitability of death, of loved ones and themselves; others of their participation in a social world of shared relationships. Again, it is easy to trivialize this perception if one does not understand the power of these changes, the awe of the respondents' own voice in describing an insight that altered their being-in-the-world forever.

As I did, every participant in this process engaged the experience of transformation described here. Far more important than the protocol, was the person who wrote it. Together, we have conducted this study of the experience of self-transformation.

INTRODUCTION

"Who am I?"

Theoretically and personally, this may arguably be the most important question in human experience. The sense of being, that "I am", is phenomenally central and indisputable. The question that arises immediately upon our conscious apprehension that we exist, when we have, as adolescents, achieved sufficient cognitive complexity to ask it, is the question of who we are, as a unique being both similar to and different from others.

The question that next arises is how I became who I am. This question is central in answering the first question as well; the process of developing as self, of becoming, is central to being. The significant transforming events, or "nuclear episodes" (McAdams, 1985), which have shaped us are crucial aspects of the life story that in McAdams' view is the self. These self-becoming experiences have a striking impact that can frame and structure us as a self. We are, in part, those experiences about which we can truly say that if they had not occurred in our lives, we would not be the person we are. In contrast are other important experiences of our life story that have added to and elaborated the basic structure of "who we are", but which have not changed us in this profound way.

The answer we make to the question of who we are,

theoretically and personally, reflects both our view of ourselves and philosophical struggles with the same question. Am I my body, my brain, my memory or experiences? Am I my possessions? My social role? Among all my changing experiences, what is essential to me, to my sense of being a unique continuous self? "Who am I, really?" In one's sense of being, there is a sense of coherence, a sense of a "real" self which endures beneath the changes of one's body, social role, and life position, as the ocean endures beneath the storms and shifting changes at its surface. A stable coherent sense of identity seems in experience to be discovered, not made, by a process of growth and development, of "progress toward actualizing (a) 'true' self" (Handel, 1987) that may continue throughout one's life.

Yet this sense of enduring identity also allows for change, even deep and profound change, in oneself. In fact, the process of growth and development requires it. How have I changed to become this person-who-I-am, and how can I change in the future? Paradoxically, one can feel that one has experienced profound change, to the point of feeling "estranged" from a past self, even while acknowledging a simultaneous experience that one is in essence the same self as that alien stranger one used to be (Handel, 1987).

This experience of profound self-change that is so crucial to one's becoming the person who-I-am is one which

is central to the self, and to its development and understanding of itself. This study will explore the experience of self-transformation which respondents have reported as being profoundly transforming to their self, their life or their relationships. The aim of this study is to describe and understand the experience of self-transformation through a phenomenological analysis of the content and themes of the narrative life-history descriptions of this experience by individuals who have experienced it.

A description of concepts and theories of the self, of self-development and self-change, is essential as a beginning to this investigation. As Colaizzi notes (Valle & King, 1979), it is essential at the initiation of an inquiry for the investigator to examine his or her own presuppositions about the proposed topic to be investigated. These assumptions and implicit theories must be explicated so that they can form a preliminary basis for research questions, and so that they can, if necessary, be bracketed, or used in the hermeneutical analysis as essential participant knowledge. What causes self-change is related to what constitutes the self; the self must therefore be reviewed, then concepts and research in the area of self-transformation will be addressed, before the findings of this study are reviewed.

Linguistic and Phenomenological Definitions

It is necessary to understand concepts and theories about the self before any contemplation of the experience of self-change can be undertaken. A discussion of this experience would be meaningless out of such context.

What is the self, in concept and in experience? It is essential to begin our investigation by going to phenomenal experience as our first and primary foundation, before we review various theories in psychology about the self. In the study of human experience, the validity of one's theory or research must be assessed by the correspondence of its match to subjective experience. Theory or explanation must arise from the description and understanding of what is given in direct experience:

To ignore the phenomena of conscious life *just as they are given in experience* is to abnegate the ultimate source of all knowledge in favour of physicalistic dogma. To Husserl, no matter how refined the measurement or how ingenious the experimental techniques ... all efforts are meaningless without a clear grasp of *what it is that is being measured and correlated* in the first place.

(McCall, 1983, p. 57)

The "ordinary language" concept of the self, reflected in its dictionary definition, includes many of the common psychological definitions of the self (Young-Eisendrath &

Hall, 1987). The self is defined as: "The person referred to with respect to complete individuality, the person's nature or character"; "personal interest", as in selfishness; "the ego: that which knows, remembers, desires, suffers"; and the "unifying principle, as a "soul", underlying all subjective experience". Congruent with linguistic philosophy (that this verbal expression describes an experience as it is experienced, or it would not be common usage), self may refer to each or all of these somewhat contradictory usages. The lack of coherence in the dictionary definition, which may follow from that in common experience, is also found in psychology; as Young-Eisendrath & Hall (1987) note, "we cannot stop talking about the self, but we cannot agree on our terms". We may be able to define what is meant by the self, and concepts associated with it, including the self-concept, self-esteem, the ego and the Self, through an understanding of the phenomenon as it is. Therefore, the corresponding phenomenon in experience will be discussed: that is, the sense of being, the "existenziell" (McCall, 1983). This will be done before addressing these concepts and psychological explanations of what is meant by the self, as theory must be second to description.

Experience of Existence

There are several conditions fundamental to the sense

of "being" central to all formulations of the self: that I as a unique self experience myself as existing, that I continue over time, as a coherent unity, that I have agency or self-determination (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987), that I as a self am shaped by and shape my experiences in my subjective world and that I have the possibility of growth.

First, and primary, is the essence of experience, that persistent and undeniable sense that "I am" (May, 1983), that one exists (am), as a distinct and unique individual (I, which implies a distinction between I and we or you). This sense is central and undeniable in experience (which implies its basis in experiential truth (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987)). As Heidegger noted, "Man's essence is his existence" (McCall, 1983). This "experience of being" both depends on and enables consciousness. *Dasein*, or "human presence" is not merely human awareness of its world; *Sein* is present to itself. Nor is it merely a characteristic or ability; it is being or existence.

Immediate to an awareness that one is, is the co-existent possibility of change or non-existence. Once we realize we are, we realize we will die; from then on, our existence is in relation to death, a *Sein-zum-Tode* (McCall, 1983). Although we shrink from it in terror and "dismayed apprehensiveness", according to Heidegger it is in fact death which gives meaning to life.

Another secondary effect of this awareness of being is

the ability it gives one to be aware of oneself as object, to have judgements, conceptions and evaluations about oneself (self-concept and self-esteem) which themselves can be objects of awareness. That is, once one is aware one exists as a separate individual, one has conceptions and evaluations about the qualities or traits that one believes characterize oneself, and can be aware of these conceptions and evaluations. The self-concept and the valence and level of self-esteem we thus associate with our existence are then themselves central to the personality or the self, essential aspects of who we think we are.

Experience of Continuity

Second, there is a sense that the "I" encompasses a condition of continuity; it existed previous to the present moment, and will continue to exist in the future (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987). (There are boundaries to this sense, of course, in birth and death; yet this experiential sense is sufficiently impressive to create religious beliefs in the immortality of the self. We find it hard to believe our sense of existence could begin or end). Reid (Perry, 1975) has noted that our phenomenal experience assumes without question an uninterrupted continuance of existence, across changing perceptions, ideas, feelings, and memories. This conviction is so marked, as Reid has noted, that no philosophical proof to the contrary could weaken it, without

a degree of unreality so strong as to be insane. Even sleep cannot challenge it; nothing less than unconsciousness can interrupt it.

This sense of continuity is paradoxical, since nothing about the self, objective or subjective, continues unchanged from birth. This is the problem of identity, the philosophical paradox of a continuous sense of self in an objective and subjective form that is constantly changing. An obvious source of an assumption of continued identity is bodily identity (Hanfling, 1972). Identity continues because the same living body continues. Yet the body changes completely over one's life span, while one's sense of continuity continues unaffected, as if the changes in one's body were only the superficial alterations of a costume. Even if the secondary attributes of self-concept and self-esteem change as the body ages, the sense of continuity does not. One may argue that continuity is enabled by the slow rate of change; change that is gradual may not disrupt this sense of continuity. However, radical change in one's body, e.g. the loss of an arm or leg, does not disrupt the sense of continuity either, although again, it may change one's self-concept and self-esteem. Thus, bodily identity is a part of the whole of who we think we are, but not itself the whole.

It is also clear from this example that it is not the entire body which is associated with a sense of continuous

identity; in fact, it is not the body, but the brain which seems crucial (Shoemaker and Swinburne, 1984). If one wished to effect an "identity transfer" from one body to another (a popular philosophical thought experiment), it is the brain which one would assume to be most essential for identity transplant. Yet surgery may remove substantial portions of the brain without necessarily challenging the experience of continuous identity. One may wonder if only a small portion of the brain is the self. An obvious candidate for the role would be memory.

According to Locke, personal memory alone constitutes personal identity (Shoemaker and Swinburne, 1984). Memory unites a lifelong succession of varying experiences into a meaningful whole. A similar view may be found in McAdams (1985) and Handel's (1987) life history metaphor of the self. One is one's life experiences. Yet it can not be the memory in toto which constitutes the self; memory includes much information unrelated to the self, as well as "factual" information about the self which is not identified with the self, which does not have that "peculiar warmth" James suggests accompanies information important to "me and mine". So not all of memory is necessary for the self. On the other hand, memories that have personal significance, that peculiar quality of being "mine", may include fantasy, belief, inaccurate information and expectations about the future; they may be false or imaginary, or not yet

experienced. Therefore, the sense of self can not be associated only with one's objective experiences which have been stored in memory. Also, one may lose personal memory in amnesia, and while one has then lost one's sense of the qualities about the self, a sense of continuous existence still remains (I am, though I don't know who I am). In fact, in normal experience, gaps in personal as well as impersonal memory occur which may cover large portions of one's life. Memory may be incorrect, even absent, and certainly is changing. Yet identity endures.

Both the body and the memory may be very much involved in the self-concept, yet alterations to either do not significantly affect the phenomenal sense of being, or even, necessarily, the self-concept. Swinburne concludes that both the brain and memory contribute to identity, but identity does not reside in either; it is something distinct from both.

Continuity of identity has also been associated with consciousness, in the human sense of personal awareness (Singer & Pope, 1978). Certainly one's sense of continuity of identity is disrupted by deep unconsciousness. However, that is the only change in consciousness which does challenge identity. Consciousness does not continue in an unbroken line even from day to day, as the state of consciousness changes from deep sleep to alert wakefulness. Yet we feel we are the same person across these changes in

consciousness, even in altered states of consciousness. And the alteration in this sense of continuity which occurs when one is under anaesthesia is not so much a discontinuity as a gap. One doesn't feel one has changed while unconscious, but that one has been somehow experientially "absent".

Another, more obvious source of the sense of continuance may be persistence in character, or personality, and/or one's social roles. One may feel a continuous identity from self-observation of similarity in behaviour over a life time, or from the "looking glass self" of internalized social interactions and reflected appraisals. An obvious objection to this is that there may be both extensive similarities in behaviour and roles between oneself and another, (both from similarity in personality trait and from situational constraints on behaviour), and extensive differences within oneself over time and across different situations. Change, even profound change, does occur within the individual, and changes in character and role profoundly affect the self-concept and self-esteem. Yet although one may know one has changed one's behaviour patterns and roles, even one's characteristic feelings, thoughts, and beliefs radically since childhood, and even though one can remember one's childhood experience and comprehend the magnitude of the difference, one persists in the sense that one is the same-yet-changed person. Somehow, the former being-in-the-world has been integrated with the

new. One is not so much a different as an expanded self. Character, like memory, is an attribute which contributes to the self-concept and which affects the self-esteem so that changes in it may profoundly change the self-concept. Yet, even so, the sense of continuous identity persists.

Thus, although experientially one feels one exists as a continuous identity, the problem of identity points out the paradox of this sense in a constantly changing body, memory, consciousness and character and role, even a changing self-concept. Either this phenomenal experience is a profound delusion, or the self cannot be identified with any of these.

As Charles Olsen wrote:

Into the same river no man steps twice
When fire dies air dies
No one remains, nor is, one

Around an appearance, one common model, we grow up many. Else how is it, if we remain the same, we take pleasure now in what we did not take pleasure before? love contrary objects? admire and/or find fault? use other words, feel other passions, have nor figure, appearance, disposition, tissue the same?

To be in different states without a change is not a possibility

(Geddes (Ed), 1973, p.270)

Experience of Unity

In this experience of being, there is a condition of coherence or unity, which may be of several different sorts. As with the sense of continuity across change, the nature of

the unity may change with development throughout life; however, the essential condition of unity does not. In Reid's view (Perry, 1975), one does not feel oneself to be a collection of parts or subsystems; one does not become a "part" of oneself, even after the loss of what one might think of as aspects of oneself. Phenomenal evidence does not support a view of the self as a cobbled together "modular" self. One may lose one's possessions, spouse, job, even a part of one's body or brain, without losing one's sense of self, which all the while is experienced as indivisible. This sense of identity or being therefore cannot be "in" or given by any of these partial and changeable aspects. It is not the work which is I, but the worker, not the thought, but the thinker, that which unites the work, the thought, and all.

Yet the possibility of growth inherent in being implies a progressive movement that has been frequently described as integration. Although one usually feels unified once identity has been achieved, (that is, one does not feel like a collection of different selves or aspects), there may be degrees of unification. Integration may be a more complex interpenetration of the various aspects of ourselves; or it may be a whole which is more than the sum of its parts. The experience of unity may a Gestalten; whatever the degree of differentiation of the content of the self, whether simple or elaborate, internally contradictory or integrated, the

self is always experienced as a whole. Like consciousness, the self emerges from the operation of the sub-systems or parts that contribute to it, but is much more than a sum of these parts.

Experience of Agency

There is a sense of agency, of "I do", which James has called "will", in the experience of being, that is, that our actions are directed by our selves. This is not simply mastery or autonomy, since interpersonal causation is also implied (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987). Nietzsche defined will as "the near-most essence of Being" (May, 1983). To May, will is the uniquely human quality of responsibility arising from self-consciousness.

Do we ever experience a lack of agency? A lack of agency would imply a sense that one is being controlled by a force external to our will; we do not experience a lack of agency in normal states, except in certain pathological states defined as such by this symptom. A limitation to agency may be felt in an experience of one's behaviour, thought or feeling as unlike oneself ("I don't know what made me do that, it's not at all like me") or as out of one's control (as in addiction). This may imply that unconscious aspects of the self, if such exist, limit our ability to act as we consciously choose; Freud's concept of the unconscious was a determinist one. However, it does not

refute the everyday experience of agency. As Boss noted (McCall, 1983), free choice "is a matter of everyday experience"; we experience choice, even if this is an illusion. Other limitations of agency which arise from the limitations of the world into which we are "thrown" are well within our conscious experience and do not detract from our sense of self as having agency, though the actual choice or behaviour may be limited by it.

Will is assumed to be a central characteristic of Being. Although he did not disagree that will was central to Being, Heidegger thought that care, or *Sorge* (involved commitment), is "the source of will" (May, 1969):

"When fully conceived, the care-structure includes the phenomenon of Selfhood", writes Heidegger. When we do not care, we lose our being; and care is the way back to being....Heidegger "thinks of care as the basic constitutive phenomenon of human existence"....Will and wish cannot be the basis for care, but rather... they are founded on care. We could not will or wish if we did not care...and if we do authentically care, we cannot help wishing or willing.

(May, 1969, p. 287)

The self is not simply one-who-wills, but also, and perhaps more importantly, one who cares, one who is personally, vitally and affectively involved. This insight does not so much replace will or agency as discover its source in the experience of what one feels about one's world.

Experience of Being is Being-in-the-World

An implication of *Dasein* which has not yet been discussed is its sense of situatedness, of "being-there" (McCall, 1983). This sense of "being", that "I am", cannot be removed from the phenomenal worlds which co-constitute the Being. Being is being-in-the-world (Valle & King, 1978) and this Being-in-the-world is co-constituted; emerging from the interrelation and interaction of the Being and the physical (*Umwelt*), social (familial and cultural *Mitwelt*), and self (*Eigenwelt*) phenomenal worlds in which it finds itself and which it chooses. Self implies world, "the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates" (May, 1983); neither are without the other. Thus, an understanding of the self and change in the self must involve an understanding of the individual subjective phenomenal worlds.

Existence is Growth

Although the experience of being has been described as continuous, Being is not static, as many have misunderstood (May, 1983). Its continuity is the continuity of an ever-changing river, not that of a stagnant pool. Existence is defined as "the condition in which an individual is able to actualize his essential capabilities or what he considers to be such" (Spiegelberg, 1972). Existence literally means "to

emerge"; existence or Being refers to coming into being, to Becoming (May, 1983). Human presence, Dasein, is not limited to current objective or subjective reality, but "embraces...as yet unfulfilled possibilities"; existence is "always able to be more" (McCall, 1983). In fact, Dasein is "always not yet the fulfilled possibilities to which it is by nature committed" (McCall, 1983).

These themes of existence, continuity, etc. can be discerned both in the definition and in the development of the self. For example, the linguistic definition of the self as a "soul", a unifying principle underlying all subjective experience, may reflect our phenomenal experience of the self as existing, continuous and unified. The self defined as the person with respect to individuality may reflect our sense of existing as unique separate individuals. And the ego which knows, desires, suffers may reflect the consciousness of the human self; Dasein, the human presence to itself and the world.

This review of linguistic definition and phenomenal experience structures the definition of the self as the term is used in this study. The self is defined as the sum total of the personality, all that we are, both conscious and unconscious (Redfearn, 1987). This structure is organized and unified, and includes (but is not limited to) a collection of related information about one's own person;

memories, experiences, feelings, goals, etc. which may be factual, imagined or projected. Some of this information may be similar across individuals; some of the experiences are rare or unique; it is the organized collection of concepts and information about the person which differentiates one "with respect to complete individuality" from another. However, this self may or may not be experienced in its totality; the experienced self (ego, or Kohut's "self") may be a sub-personality, an identification of the "I" with only part of the "I" or self (Redfearn, 1987). The self is Being-in-the-world, and must be understood as such, but also must be understood as Becoming, containing the possibility of authenticity, committed in the very Being of Dasein to the summons of full awareness of itself and its possibilities.

Concepts secondary in experience to these already reviewed were also mentioned as experienced in the phenomenal self - the concept one has of oneself, and the evaluation one makes of that concept. Self-concept and self-esteem, two concepts crucial in understanding our experience of the self, will now be reviewed.

Self-Concept

The self-concept may or may not be co-existent with the self. The self-concept is one's idea of oneself, the object of subjective self-awareness, that construct of "who I think

I am". The self-concept or self-representation may or may not be correct in the ideas it has about itself; it may exclude information about the self which is factual but for whatever reason unacceptable, or it may include information about the self which may be mistaken in part (e.g. an attractive person believes he is not). This implies the possibility of a "real self" (Masterson, 1988), on which the self-concept is generally based, but compared with which the self-concept may be in varying degrees contrasted or congruent.

The self-concept, like other concepts, is organized. There are contents which are thought to be central to the self, others which are on the "periphery". Some of the traditional philo-sophical and psychological theories about the self reflect a variety of central concepts with which the self is identified most strongly. The content of the self-concept includes constructed concepts of (among others) the individual's body and physical appearance, possessions (Umwelt), relationships and significant others (Mitwelt), achievements, abilities, traits, preferences, interests and activities, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings (Eigenwelt) (Greenwald and Pratkanis, 1984). A distinctiveness principle may be crucial in determining whether particular contents will be accepted into the self-concept; they may be included according to the degree to which the quality distinguishes one from other individuals (Greenwald &

Pratkanis, 1984).

The self-concept may arise from one's judgements about one's attributes, beliefs and feelings, from one's observation of one's own behaviour, from reflected appraisals from others, and from one's conscious reflections about morals and values; in other words, all of one's life experience contributes to the self-concept, including judgements given by both the "They" and by one's own self-appraisal.

Self-Esteem

Information about the self is never value-free. Self-esteem is an evaluative "feeling" that the self or a part of the self is felt to be good or bad. (Thus, self-esteem can be positive or negative in varying degrees, not "high" or "low" as it is often misnamed). This value judgment may be based on information about the self that may or may not be "correct", but in either case there is no necessary relation between an aspect of the self and the sense that comes to be attached to it that it is good or bad. The degree or strength of the evaluation in either direction may relate to the centrality of the particular aspect associated with the self that is being evaluated, one's own experience with that aspect, and one's familial and cultural evaluation of its relative worth.

Positive self-esteem is frequently associated with a healthy personality (Jourard, 1971; Seeman, 1983), with a

sense of self-efficacy and personal worth (Branden, 1969), and according to Rosenberg's research, with confidence, success in academic and social activities, creativity, autonomy and exploration (Singer, 1984). Negative self-esteem has been associated, according to Epstein, with interpersonal difficulties, unhappiness, cognitive disorganization and conflict, etc. (Pliner, Blankstein and Spigel, 1979).

Life experiences and the self-constructs created by them affect self-esteem, especially those aspects of experience directly related to efficacy and worth (the relationship is bi-directional, as self-esteem influences the meaning these life experiences have for us). Attributes and experiences which are evaluated in a particular way, positively or negatively, by the "They" and by the self in its goal to fulfil its possibilities may strongly influence the establishment of the valence of self-esteem. Because of the influence of both the "They" and the self, these evaluations may vary across culture, age, gender and individual. The evaluations would also vary according to how the attributes are perceived by the individual and evaluated against a standard.

Those attributes important for self-esteem may include body image (Bee, 1989; Belk, 1988), academic or task competence (Bachman & O'Malley, 1977; Hamachek, 1971), and social ability (popularity) (Seeman, 1983). Conformation to

role expectations related to gender, age, and interpersonal roles have also been found to be related to self-esteem. (However, Spence, Helmreich & Stapp (1975) found that androgynous members of both sexes, who have high scores in both masculinity and femininity, were highest in self-esteem, followed by subjects of both sexes who were high in masculinity. Women who were high in femininity, and therefore role appropriate, were not as high in self-esteem.)

Trauma and change in life experiences could also relate to self-esteem. Any or all of these may be crucial in influencing the self-esteem valence. Some of these may have particular impact because they are central to or identified with the self, if the self evolves through a developmental process of identification and dis-identification, as Kegan (1982) has claimed, or is constructed wholly or in part by reflected appraisals of others.

The Ego

The ego has often been described as if it were the experience of being, of personal identity, the feeling of "me" (Redfearn, 1987). Although the "ego" has traditionally been conceived as the centre of consciousness, thus differentiating it from the self as the sum total of the personality, this distinction has blurred in recent years as the ego psychologists seem to use "ego" and "self"

interchangeably (e.g. Loevinger and Kohut) to mean the experienced self. Self-concept would then be the idea ego/self has of itself, and self-esteem the evaluation of the self-concept. However, Fordham (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987) notes that the ego includes unconscious contents that can be made conscious. In his later formulations, Jung extended the concept of ego to not only that which is the centre of consciousness (which remembers, etc.) but which combines in itself both consciousness and the unconscious. This brings the concept of the ego close to that of the self, of which it was previously only a conscious manifestation.

The SELF

While the self, as the term is used here, is defined as the total personality, the Jungian archetype of the Self is both the potentiality of integration of the self, as long as the experienced self or ego does not encompass the whole of the self-structure, and the totality of the personality when it is experienced as an integrated whole. As a potential of itself, Self is a function of the unconscious, a symbol which must therefore "transcend conscious comprehension", and cannot be fully explicated, according to Fordham (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987). This potentiality has been described by Caspary as the core-self, by Arnold (1960) as the self-ideal, and by May (1983) as the authentic self.

Von Franz described the Self as the organizing centre, a sort of "nuclear atom in our psychic system", which appears first as an inborn potentiality, and functions as a hidden director of the process of growth or individuation. Thus the Self is the centre that directs the growth, and the Self is the product of the growth (Caspary, 1987). As such there is a sense that the Self is a "real" self, a core and touchstone which is there from the beginning of individual experience. This core-self is both given (being) and growing through interactions in the experienced world (becoming).

Caspary notes several of the characteristics we have already discussed and adds several more to this experience of being: self-regulation, the capacity for growth, for empathy, and emotions, particularly the foundations of love and work. Ethics have also been identified as resulting from and characteristic of the core-self (Caspary, 1987).

To integrate these various conceptions of the self, Redfearn (1987) notes that as a person matures as a self, the narcissistic self (Kohut), the ego as mediator (Freud), the ego as personal identity (Erikson), and the Jungian Self coincide.

Many of the current theories of the self may more properly be called metaphors or models of the self. These vary in the degree to which they step away from the phenomenal experience of being, and/or account for adult development or change in the self. Various models of the self will be briefly reviewed, with emphasis on growth or developmental models.

The Looking Glass Self: Social Interactionist Theories

In social interactionist theories of the self, i.e. Cooley's metaphor of the "looking glass self", the self emerges from and reflects the views of others about oneself (Schlenker, 1980). Mead also saw the self as "arising in the process of social experience" (Wagner, 1983); it is a socially formed self which arises from social communication in a social world. One assumes the attitudes of others towards oneself. The emphasis is on the self-other gestalt, the Mitwelt, rather than on a self-self or Eigenwelt dynamic; there is no internal self to include in the self, apart from internalized social interaction. One is wholly given by social interactions: the self is a Public or social self.

It is also apparent that in this view, a person can have as many selves as he or she has social roles (or

repeated structured interactions) or groups of others with whom he or she interacts. One could be a different person at work, at home, etc.; one has different selves in different situations and for different people.

Transformation of the looking glass self would be caused by changes in social roles. The new self would be formed when the individual replaces the lost social role, or finds new ones to fulfil.

The looking glass or social self metaphor does match our experience in some ways; Heidegger agreed with Sullivan and with Mead that our self-concept is basically composed of the reflected appraisals of significant others. He even argued that this fact is rooted in the inter-dependent nature of human existence, and called this self-given-by-others the *Man-selbst*, the self given by *das Mann*, the Other (McCall, 1983). However, the human can also transcend, at least potentially, the given world, including *das Mann*. In fact, *Dasein* is responsible to transcend the Other. A view of the self as reflected appraisal oversimplifies the self, and magnifies the *Mitwelt* at the expense of the *Eigenwelt*. It also conflicts with our sense of being a unified self, not a multiple collection of wholes, and of having a set of qualities that characterize us across different roles and situations. An alternate view that encompasses the social self but is not limited to it includes most of the growth theories of the self, including Kegan's, Loevinger's, and

Jung's. In these views, the social self is one stage in the progressive development of the self (Kegan's stage 3, Loevinger's conformist stage), one which will be transcended in later growth.

The Self as Computer Program: Self-Construct Theory

In self-construct theory, the self is a schema which, like other schemas, integrates information, knowledge and belief into a collection of related constructs. An appropriate metaphor might be the structure and process of a computer program, one which is as essential and primary as an operating program. Primary constructs about the self are those which are central, used often, and which would be well developed and contain important information and experiences. The self-construct may be an organized collection of constructs of role expectations and reflected appraisals from social experience, or it may be an organized unity of collected constructs, unified into a single complex construct that is relatively stable and constant across situations. The organization of this collection of constructs may occur in a variety of ways: as linked associations, as a hierarchy, as a matrix, or as a multidimensional structure (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984).

Transformation of the self-schema may result from life experiences which add to, elaborate, or challenge particular learned contents of the self-schema. Or it may be

developmental, as cognitive schemas are developmentally transformed in Piaget's model, assimilating life-experiences along a common universal structure of self-development.

Although elegant as a model, self-construct theory suffers the deficiencies of all computer models of human experience. Cognitive rather than organic, it can not describe the experience of being. A computer which has no consciousness could have an operating program similar to the self-schema; but no computer has a self.

The Iceberg Self: Psychodynamic and Ego Theories

Psychodynamic theories in general contribute the concept of the unconscious to our understanding of the self, the idea that there may be an aspect or component of the self that can direct behaviour and yet be largely inaccessible to conscious awareness. Its frequently used metaphor is that of the iceberg, whose bulk is mainly below the surface of the water. However, the iceberg metaphor fails to fully characterize the Freudian view of the unconscious in its constant state of internal war between the sub-structures of the personality, the ego, the id and the super-ego. This internal tension would imply a self that is not internally consistent and stable.

Because of this internal tension, transformation of the self is difficult in traditional Freudian views. In fact, development of the personality is thought to end with the

achievement at puberty of the genital stage. However, insight gained in psychoanalysis can lead to change; "where Id was, there ego should become".

The ego psychologists, such as Kohut and Erikson, while accepting the validity of the unconscious, focus more attention than did Freud on the self as ego - the conscious self-aware aspect of the personality. Kegan (1982) noted that a problem with a Freudian view of the ego's defensive nature is that it does not allow a concept of ego growth. Erikson does consider the change and growth of the ego in successive evolutions throughout adulthood, as well as childhood, and also considers not just the unconscious instincts, but also one's innate abilities and social experience with the world and with oneself. Identity (the concept and awareness the self has of itself) is identified with the ego, and arises out of the ego's experience with the world and itself. Transformation of the ego occurs as an interaction of life experience and the life task to be accomplished at each stage of psychosocial ego development. (Thus, transformations in the area of identity would be expected not just in late adolescence, but throughout the life cycle; at the very least, upon the resolution of each phase-specific crisis).

Although the psychodynamic approach is the only one usually thought of as including the unconscious, parallel concepts do occur in May's and in Rogers' theories. It is

not that the self-in-experience does not encompass aspects not in awareness, but that there is a greater emphasis on self-awareness, and the possibility of growth. According to May, Freud's concept of a weak and passive ego reflected the weakness of an objectifying culture. As Kierkegaard wrote, "the more consciousness, the more self" (May, 1983). (Freud would seem to agree with this comment).

A further implication of self-consciousness is self-transcendence (May, 1983). Awareness of oneself implies the capacity to "look at oneself and the situation and to assess and guide oneself..." (May, 1983). This contradicts an early psychodynamic view of the determinist rule of the unconscious. May notes that this capacity is at the very centre of human experience, given by the use of symbols (which in his view also enables "neurotic" forms by which phenomena are split into unconscious processes).

The Self as Autobiography: Life History Theory

In life history theories of the self, i.e. McAdams' "life story" approach (McAdams, 1985), the metaphor of the self is the autobiography. Identity is one's life story, written by both oneself and one's socio-historical world. The story "provides a coherent narrative framework within which the disparate events and the various roles of a person's life can be embedded and given meaning" (McAdams, 1985). Hankiss notes that:

Everyone builds his or her own theory about the history and course of his or her life by attempting to classify ...favourable and unfavourable elements...according to a coherent, explanatory principle and to incorporate them within a historical unit.

(McAdams, 1985, p. 18)

We thematize our life history within a "structured self-image", in Kohli's terms (McAdams, 1985).

Stability of identity results from consistency in the life story - lifelong themes or issues. Transformation is story revision, which may be the minor "editing" which constantly occurs as we rewrite our life story with the perspective of the present, or may be major revision of theme, character and plot. We interpret and integrate our life experiences as parts of the whole story that is our identity.

A view of the self as one's life history is an inspired metaphor. It allows for a great deal of individual differences in the self that are not explained by other, more universal, theories. Even individuals with similar backgrounds would have vastly different stories, depending on their interpretations of the event. It matches our experience in many ways; we do assume our autobiography is ourselves. But it is clearly a metaphor. One is not literally one's story, or amnesiacs would have no sense of self once the content of their story was lost. One's story is the content of the self, but not the sense of "being" basic to this content.

Also, a view of the self as life-history, while explaining individual differences better than other theories can, does not encompass the possibility that there are common developmental patterns of growth, unlike the growth theorists reviewed below.

Growth Theories

Although many theorists suggest the self continues growth throughout adulthood, not many have elaborated the possible stages of these transformations. In one approach typified by Jung's concept of individuation, and by the life-history approach, the journey of the self continues along a unique life path. Each individual develops in a unique way, meeting crises and integrating the self in accordance with personal life experiences. This idiosyncratic approach is impossible to study meaningfully in any way except through individual case histories. This may be contrasted to a stage model in which universal patterns are proposed. However, stage models may be limited by their lack of recognition that there are individual, cultural and gender differences in adult development. A third approach that one may propose is a combination of both. There are certainly dangers inherent in holding to a too-rigid stage model. But even in Jung's theory there are universal archetypes in this journey that, although individual, display universal patterns in the unfoldment or

integration of the self. There may be some common archetypes, "stages", or transition themes. The sequence, cause and nature of these transitions may, however, be individual, and partially dependent on exogenous situations and the individual's life experiences in their life path.

Thus, for this study, Kegan's (1982) and Loevinger's (Lee & Noam, 1983) stage models, and Jung's model of individuation (Battista, 1980), with Pearson's (1986) Jungian archetypes, and an existential-phenomenological perspective will be considered.

Kegan

Kegan's (1982) model of the evolving self considers both social and individual identifications in his self theory. The metaphor of the self in his view is a helix; the self progresses and evolves in a helix pattern, spiralling between integration and distinctiveness, in an increasing dis-identification with aspects of oneself and of the social environment. Modelled along the lines of the cognitive and moral development theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, Kegan's theory sees the embedded infant (who at first makes no self-other distinction) progressing through other-oriented then self-oriented stages.

In the first three stages, the infant must progressively disidentify with his or her own embedded reflexes, then perceptions, then with self-oriented desires.

In the beginning, at Stage 0 (Incorporation), there is a lack of self-other boundary (as in Kohut's selfobject). Infants are embedded in or identified with their reflexes. In the transition to Stage 1, the infant separates from "being" his or her reflexes to "having" them (Lee & Noam, 1983). In Stage 1 (Impulsive) the child is embedded in its perceptions and impulses during Piaget's pre-operational stage. In the transition stages of five to seven, the child disidentifies itself from its impulses; having rather than being them, the child now can be aware of and control them. In Stage 2 (Imperial), which parallels concrete operations, impulses can be controlled; needs, desires and wishes "are" the child, and impulses and perceptions can be denied if they are antagonistic to the child's needs and desires. This stage parallels Kohlberg's stage 2 of moral development (Kegan, 1983).

Then, in the middle stages congruent with Kohlberg's conventional level of moral development, the self identifies with other, then self again, through an interpersonal, social role identification to an individual stage. In Stage 3 (Interpersonal, at early formal operations), one "is" one's relationships. The self can objectify and control its needs, but is unable to objectify the shared reality of the Mitwelt (Kohlberg's Stage 3). A loss of significant relationships would feel like a loss of self.

Then, in Stage 4 (Institutional), the self

disidentifies with its relationships; it "has" relationships and social roles, rather than "is" them. Stage 4 is individualistic, and parallels Kohlberg's Stage 4, and Erikson's Identity stage. Kegan describes this stage as being one in which one identifies with the institution of the self; this may be seen in an identification with one's abilities, career, and accomplishments. A loss of one's job or one's abilities would feel like a loss of self.

The final "Intimacy" or Inter-Individual Stage 5 in Kegan's theory is one in which both individual and interpersonal needs are considered, similar to Kohlberg's Stage 5, Loevinger's "Autonomous" stage and Erikson's Intimacy stage. Evolving disidentification separates oneself from one's achievements and self-structure; one can both reflect on oneself as object and be close to another without either identifying with them or losing oneself.

Kegan provides an important insight into development as a progressive identification and dis-identification with others or with self that was useful in classifying the protocols of transformation in this study. The parallels of his theory and that of Piaget and Kohlberg also add support to his views. There are, however, some flaws with this theory. First, Kegan's model ends at this final "Intimacy" stage, while Loevinger introduces a further stage of "Integration", and Jungian theorists suggest even further stages in which the ego is dis-identified as the Self

completely. This may limit the usefulness of Kegan's theory.

Another major problem with this theory is the gender bias implicit in the progression through stage 3 to stage 4. As in Kohlberg's theory of moral development, on which this was based, there is an implication that the relational focus of women is a lower stage 3 identification with the social self (I am my roles), while the individualistic achievement orientation of men is a higher stage 4 (I am my job). This may indeed be the progression for men, who Chodorow (1974) and Gilligan (1981) suggest need to separate from the mother to individuate. However, if normal self development for women is organized around relational concerns (Gilligan et al., 1988), and women have a more relational self identity, Kegan's theory would imply that women would be less developed than men. These criticisms are the same ones Gilligan made of Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which was based on a male sample and accounted only for male ethics of fairness, on which women scored lower than men. Since Kegan's theory was based on Kohlberg's, it is not perhaps surprising that he has not sufficiently accounted for the more relational and attachment-centred identity of women. However, this actually could be accommodated in his theory, as discussed below, without challenging any major premise.

Gilligan's own three stage theory (Helson, Mitchell &

Hart, 1985; Skoe & Marcia, 1990) of the development of women may correct these weaknesses. In the first stage the focus is on one's survival; good is identified with what serves one's self-interest (Kegan's Stage 2). After one understands the need for a connection to others within an ethic of responsibility, the self develops to a second stage in which caring for others becomes good, in a conventional definition of female social role (Kegan's Stage 3). Then within this second stage a woman develops from a conforming stance to a more self-aware care for others. Finally, in the third stage, the woman adds self to the ethic of care; she now understands that she herself is as deserving of care from herself as others are. This enables responsibility for self without a separation from or neglect of the needs of others (Helson et al., 1985). This is similar to Kegan's Stage 4 in its self-care, but is actually more like Stage 5, which includes both self and others as deserving of care, implying that women go directly from Stage 3 to Stage 5.

Attanuci (Gilligan et al, 1988) studied women who were fulfilling a social role, mothering, which includes expectations of self-identifications similar to Kegan's Stage 3. She described four categories of self and other relatedness, the first two of which take role perspectives, and the second two of which define self in their own terms. Category 1, Reciprocal, sees both self and other in role terms; self is "for other", other is "for self" (both

members of a relationship are in Stage 3, in Kegan's terms). Category 2, Selfless, sees self as "for other", and other in other's own terms (self is in Stage 3, and the other is in Stage 2 or 4). Category 3, Selfish, sees self in self's terms, and other "for self" (self is in Stage 2 in Kegan's model, and other is in Stage 3), while category 4, Mutual, sees both self and other in their own terms (this may be Stage 4 and certainly would be Stage 5). Attanuci quotes Gilligan that the critical transition for adult women is from the role-defined conventional feminine self-sacrifice to a self which recognizes itself as equally deserving; in her model, it is a transition from the Selfless category to an acknowledgement of self in the Mutual category. The developmental task of women in the Selfish category is an acknowledgement of others in a transition to the Mutual category. It should be noted that Attanuci's (Gilligan et al., 1988) study, as well as other longitudinal studies, indicate that not all women progress in this relational identification. Hornstein (1986), for example, found differences between women according to whether they identified with a career throughout adulthood, worked at home, or initially worked at home, then started or resumed a career.

Although Kegan's insights about self-other identifications are valuable, one might suggest that the invariant cross-gender stage progression cannot be either

invariant or cross-gender. Either the stage identifications work in opposing directions for men and women, or women must be explained separately. It may be that both genders must go through and past a stage in which the social or public self is paramount; however, the description of this stage would be quite different for selves who develop "in relation" than for selves who develop "in separation".

A small modification of the description of Stages 3 and 4 would answer these problems without serious challenge to the premises of Kegan's theory. Kegan links career orientation to the individualistic Stage 4 and interpersonal orientation to Stage 3. But career orientation can be a result of identification with the social role of work (Stage 3) rather than an identification with one's abilities; this can be reflected in a concern for visible signs of success, for recognition from others, rather than for the work for its own sake regardless of its acceptance by others. Also, interpersonal concerns are not limited to Stage 3; many careers are interpersonal, including the traditional "career" for women, that of mothering.

Stage 3 can therefore be described as including both relationship and career social roles, if the self identifies with these as social roles. Stage 3 would then change from being an Interpersonal stage to being a Role-Identified stage, and Stage 4 would be more truly Institutional. For women, stage 4 would reflect their consideration of their

own needs as well as those of others, while retaining an interpersonal or relational focus. Like Stage 3, Stage 4 can include both career and relational concerns, if these are self-defined (one does not consider the opinions of others about one's actions in these areas). This re-working of Kegan's model could answer the gender bias without seriously questioning his theoretical premise.

Loevinger

In Loevinger's model of ego development (Blasi and Oresick, 1987), the ego is a unitary system of functions; the ego develops through a series of nine stages through which the subjective self emerges. The stages are not defined by stage-specific tasks or by identifications, but by the complexity and nature of the self in relationship with the world. Development is towards increasing disidentification; internal agency and responsibility; awareness of self, ideals, and goals; and authenticity.

In the earliest stages the self is undifferentiated, and lived in the body experience; one sees impulsivity and egocentrism as characteristics of the self. At the first level, level I-0, the Presocial stage, the child does not distinguish the self from the non-self (similar to Kohut's selfobject), and must come to differentiate the self from the environment. In Level I-1, the Symbiotic stage, the self-mother is differentiated from the rest of the world.

In level I-2, the Impulsive stage, there is awareness of the external world, and the child asserts its will (similar to Erikson's autonomy stage, and Kegan's Stage 1). Next is level "delta", the Self-protection level, which has a capacity for impulse control. It is similar to Kegan's stage 2 and Kohlberg's level 1-2 in moral development; the child is opportunistic, perceiving relationships as unnecessary (Lee & Noam, 1983).

In the middle stages one becomes identified with social roles. In level I-3, the Conformist stage, the self now understands itself as part of a group, and can see another's viewpoint, though often only that of family and friends (Lee & Noam, 1983), (paralleling Stage 3 in Kohlberg's and Kegan's theories), and tries to enhance its acceptance by the "in" group. This level accounts for a social interactionist view of the Public or social self as one stage in self development.

In the later stages of Loevinger's theory more autonomous and individualistic identifications emerge. Level I-4, the Conscientious stage, also parallels Kohlberg and Kegan. The self is oriented towards achievements and internal goals, and is seen as the origin of one's choices (Helson et al., 1985). The transition to the next level is another stage, the Individualistic stage, in which there is a respect for individuality and a concern for emotional independence (Lee & Noam, 1983). Next is level I-5, an

Autonomous stage similar to Kegan's Stage 5; the self reflects needs for both separateness and interdependence. There is an ability to acknowledge and deal with inner conflict in a mature and healthy way, one which contributes to self-fulfilment.

Finally, in Level 1-6, the Integrated stage, the self is concerned with authenticity and both individual and relational concerns. This stage goes beyond the final stage of Kegan's theory, and more closely matches the goal of authenticity and self-development in existential and other growth theories. Thus, Loevinger's is a growth model which considers and includes both the individual and social influences in self development, and accounts for the socially defined self as a stage in self development preceding a turn to internal individual stages. It includes in its conception a progression of growth toward greater integration and health, and a capacity for both autonomy and intimacy. Loevinger's theory also has more stages, a finer and more detailed description of the development of the self. The highest stage in her theory, the Integrated stage, corresponds to the healthy personality, the authentic self described by other growth theorists. However, similar questions of gender differences may be raised in evaluating Loevinger's theory as in Kegan's. The development of the self in a more relational frame for women, and possibly for both genders in a less individualistic culture, must be

explained in a way which does not assume relation as a lower mode of self-development (Josselson, 1988).

Jung

Jung's model of individuation is not an age-related stage model, as the previous theories. As Battista (Pope and Singer, 1980) notes, there are two movements in the process of individuation, one in which a conscious ego perspective is separated from the unified unconscious of infancy, and the second in which the individual ego is consciously reintegrated with this unified state (thus a progression from "primitive" unconscious, through conscious individual ego, to a "universal" integration of both). Initially there is undifferentiated unity. The infant is complete, yet unconscious of itself. In differentiating itself from the mother, the ego begins; thus the mother-child relationship gives form to the relationship of ego and self. Those aspects of the child which are not reflected or given conscious voice in the child's social experiences remain unconscious. For example, gender role adaptation leaves the contrasexual attributes unconscious (anima/animus), as well as other attributes thought unacceptable by society (shadow). Adolescence involves separation of the child from the family and the acceptance of some social role or "collective identity", the persona. This completes the first movement of transition from unconscious to conscious

identification.

In the second movement this process must be reversed. "Those aspects of the self which were sacrificed in establishing a social identity are to be confronted and integrated" (Battista, 1980), often in the second half of life. The first level is to confront the persona, one's conscious social adaptation (or social self). After one disidentifies with the persona, the shadow is generally confronted; this involves confronting unconscious rejected aspects of the self. Acceptance of the shadow and integration of those aspects it represents must take place. Then a third level, a confrontation of the contrasexual elements, the anima or animus, would take place. Battista views these complexes as more unconscious than the shadow because they have never been conscious. They may occur first in an outward form (e.g. in romantic love, during which one projects the anima/animus onto the other). As with the shadow, acceptance and union with the contrasexual aspect integrates these elements into the self.

Finally, the individual must confront the Self. "The ego must consciously realize the wholeness of the Self, yet in order to do so, it must give up its sense of importance and control" (Battista, 1980). Nothing less than the sublimation of the ego is demanded (Neumann, 1970). The hero/ego is frequently tested in successive trials, and fights to maintain its control, trying to possess the Self

instead. Eventually, the ego, with humility and service, must submit to the Self, be contained by it, and thus be transformed. It is this last step that is often omitted in self theories, most of which end at the heroic achievement of ego supremacy, and it is this last step which, though admittedly rare, must be explained by a complete theory of the self.

This journey of transformation has been outlined in archetypal or mythic language by several Jungians, including Neumann (1970), Jaffe (1971), Assagioli (1965), Pearson (1986), and Bolen (1985). Pearson's is perhaps closest to a model of successive steps. In her view, the hero's journey may be symbolized as a series of archetypal stories or myths that make meaning of various steps in the journey. The journey progresses as a spiral, beginning with the undifferentiated trust of the Innocent, to the "longing for safety of the Orphan", and the "self-sacrifice of the Martyr," (the social orientation), to the "exploring of the Wanderer," and the "competition and triumph of the Warrior", (both individualistic orientations). Finally the "authenticity and wholeness of the Magician" (Pearson, 1986) is achieved, an integrated stage similar in its concern for authenticity to both Kegan's and Loevinger's final stages. Pearson proposes a further stage of a return to Innocence that may correspond to the surrender of individual will and ego that occurs in self-realization.

Progression through these archetypes is not invariant in order; Pearson notes the above sequence may be that of the traditional female, while career-oriented men and women may experience the Warrior archetype after the Orphan, and the Martyr after the Wanderer, or the Martyr and Warrior simultaneously. While the typical transformation story of the young male adult is the hero's journey and quest, the transformation story for a young woman may be the love story (Helson et al., 1985). Pearson also notes that individual differences in personality type and life experience may encourage development in one direction before another.

Rogers

As a "Growth" theorist, Rogers emphasized the inherent tendency of the individual toward self-actualization; the individual perceives and acts in the phenomenal world in accord with the value of the experience toward or away from actualization. Through experiences in the Eigenwelt, Mitwelt and Umwelt, representations of being and functioning become elaborated into a concept of the self (Rogers, 1959). When some of our experiences are treated by significant others as less worthy of regard, this conditional positive regard becomes internalized as self-regard, even though this may actually conflict with the organism's own experience and internal motivation to actualize itself. Rejected experiences are not accurately symbolized or accepted into

an organized symbolic form, and incongruence may occur between the self and experience (Rogers, 1959).

Although the internalized conditional regard corresponds to the "reflected appraisals" of social interactionists, the self is not wholly given by these; the self's own nature and potentiality, and its concept and evaluation of itself are also crucial, as in Heidegger's view (McCall, 1983). Like the psychodynamic approaches, Rogers suggests a portion of our experiences remain unsymbolized; unlike Freud's conflict model, the denial of unacceptable experiences rigidly maintains structural organization. This denial is unhealthy, since it violates the inherent urge to actualize all the organism's potentials. It may support a self which, though stable and coherent, is rigid and incongruent with the real self.

The organism's self-concept, self-esteem, and self-ideal are crucial components of Rogers' theory. The self-concept must be accurate to the organism's experiences and potentials, and positively accepted by the organism (unconditional positive regard) for the individual to be integrated and fully functioning. Growth to self-actualization, or the "actualizing tendency" (Hergenhahn, 1990) would therefore reflect increasingly accurate self-appraisals, and positive self-esteem. As Rogers noted, "he will be, in more unified fashion, what he organismically is..." , will drop all masks and reflected appraisals, and

discover something "more truly himself" (Hergenhahn, 1990). The fully functioning person is more open to experiences, all of which are accurately symbolized and available to awareness. Their self-structure is congruent and flexible, they can face each experience with "honest spontaneity", and treat others with the positive regard they have for themselves. Much of this parallels Heidegger's view of authenticity.

Existential Approaches

As has already been noted, the model or concept of "being" in existential views such as May's is *Dasein*; one studies the person as a being-in-the-world. The person and the world are co-constituted. This is not another social interactionist view, however, although it includes this *Mitwelt* co-constituted self, as well as influences on the self of the *Umwelt* of the physical body, (the person's nature), since the *Eigenwelt*, the person's own consciousness, is also an aspect of the world (Hergenhahn, 1990). The fact that *Dasein* is present to itself, that it has consciousness or awareness (McCall, 1983), is crucial to existentialist views, since it allows one the potential for freedom, *Sorge*, and becoming-to-authenticity. In fact, awareness of being forces us to be responsible for the potentiality present in being. We are condemned to choice. Growth, therefore, is given by awareness. Being is not a

static description signifying mere "isness"; it is a verb, describing someone in the "process of being something" (May, 1983). Being is becoming; being is the potentiality of the authentic self. As Kierkegaard noted (May, 1983), "A self, every instant it exists...is in process of becoming for the self...is only that which it is to become". What Heidegger terms the

"call of conscience"...is the explicitly conscious self-disclosure...of the commitment to self-realization which is contained in *Sorge*....since *Sorge* is the very Being of *Dasein*, the summons...is of *Dasein* to itself....The human being tends...to fall victim to the attitudes and beliefs of the "They" or the generalized Other....But the recognition of the commitment to self-fulfilment can call it back to itself...

(McCall, 1983, p 87)

Once the human responds to this call of conscience, a more powerful mode of "self-disclosedness" occurs, which includes not only self-revelation but also an "anticipatory self-affirmation" which:

enables *Dasein* to achieve authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*), i.e., the state of being fully aware of itself, its life situation, and its possibilities; and of moving realistically toward their realization, including especially that unique possibility of death which gives finality and meaning to life as a whole.

(McCall, 1983, p.87)

May describes this experience as the experience of "I am", a primary "ur" experience of existence. He differentiates this from ego identity, as the sense of being is not rooted in conscious awareness of the outside world, but is aware of one's whole experience, unconscious as well as

conscious, one's whole being-in-the-world, *Eigenwelt* as well as *Mitwelt*.

But one can choose not to experience this potential, to remain the *Man-selbst*, the other-directed human (McCall, 1983). As May notes, becoming does not unfold as automatically as the often used metaphor of an oak tree growing from an acorn would suggest. The self-consciousness that enables becoming also allows *Dasein* "in his own choices [to] slough off and forfeit his being". Being is a choice made every instant. Awareness of non-being, of the possibility of non-existence, of one's mortality, leads to anxiety. How one reacts to this anxiety is crucial; one can deny the possibility of non-being, and therefore of being, or one can chose conformism, and allow oneself to submerge into *das Mann*, choking (linguistically and metaphorically) one's birth or life as *Dasein*.

Thus, existential approaches describe the possibility of growth of the self, although as an individualistic approach, they do not propose an invariant series of stages through which the self progress. There are experiences crucial to the unfoldment to authenticity, however, including awareness of the constraints of the given world, the *das Mann*, of the possibility of non-being, and of the responsibility of the choice to be. Issues of self as separate from *Mitwelt*, and of confrontation with one's mortality, would therefore be ontological themes in

transformation. A progression through transformation toward greater authenticity and acceptance of the whole of one's experience, concepts present in Jung's and in Roger's theories, could also be discernible. However, as in Jung's theory, the final state of authenticity is not one of ego supremacy, but of "I am".

Thus, in these theories, self vs. other identifications are a theme throughout, and a progression occurs through both a social self identification and an individual orientation towards an integrated self which is both individual and interdependent. In the view of Jung, Rogers and May, the highest stages of self-realization are a state of integration and wholeness which is not, however, a stage of ego supremacy; a stage beyond may occur, in which the ego must release control to a whole, authentic or transpersonal Self.

Issues in the Development of the Self

How does the self become what it is; how does the self change? Profound change within a psychic structure as central and essential as the self would not occur easily; yet change must occur, to explain the development of the self, and to allow for changing situations. Either the self is "there", fully mature, at birth, or it develops with time and life experience. An understanding of its development not only aids an understanding of the nature of the self, but is crucial to our topic of self-transformation.

In both experiences and theories about the development of the self, several themes emerge as pairs of helices around which development occurs. Issues in the development of the self that will be reviewed in this section include the tension/creation of the twin dichotomous themes of differentiation and integration, and of the self-other, and self-Self co-constituting forces. The development of the self, when recognized at all, has usually been assumed to progress in a direct positive direction. It has also been suggested that individual life experiences play an important role, and that gender, age and culture may also be related.

The Differentiation-Integration Double Helix

The self has been defined as both integrated and differentiated; integrated as an organized collection of experiences into a psychic structure central to the personality that is experienced as unique to oneself, and differentiated in terms of the pattern of the whole structure from the self-structure of others. These same themes of integration and differentiation are reflected in the development of the self. These themes can be discerned in all three realms of interpersonal, internal and intrapersonal integration and differentiation.

First, in the Mitwelt realm of the co-constituted social or public self, the individual becomes increasingly differentiated from others as the self develops, from the immersed selfobject identification of infants through increasing disidentification of the self from its social roles. In infancy, there is a high degree of connectedness to the family; individuation progresses toward adolescence with increasing psychological separation from one's parents. This individuation enables an adult to be emancipated from his or her parents' standards, and "weans" them from the need to lean on significant others for support (Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985). However, one cannot ignore the Being itself; in Caspary's view the core-self is already there in infancy. The core-self does not gain differentiation, but is itself already separate and integrated.

In terms of the internal self-structure, as differentiation from others occurs, integration is also occurring, interdependent with differentiation from others. As the information about the self, the self-concept, is being differentiated as unique to oneself, and as differentiation of aspects within the self is occurring, these differentiated aspects are being integrated into a whole and coherent pattern, a "sense of self" which is experienced as a continuous, coherent whole. At the same time, integration and re-integration in terms of social relationships must be occurring; as the self is disidentified with roles and is integrating itself, changes must necessarily occur in the Mitwelt.

It should be noted that the development of the self through self-identifications and dis-identifications is occurring within the context of a life path, with its life themes (Adler, 1930; McAdams, 1985), tasks and patterns (Erikson, 1959), both personal and shared. These identifications can be expected to change as the themes and tasks change in various stages of the life path, reflecting the co-constituted being-in-the-world.

A parallel theme is identification and loss, existence and non-existence. As one defines who one is, in the context of one's lived world, and the central content of that definition, the threat of the loss of that central identification is the shadow of its existence. The

development of the self, as it implies gain in coherence and stability, must also reflect the theme of loss and/or the awareness of the possibility of the loss of the self.

The Self-Other and Self-SELF Double Helix

The second dichotomous helix of the developing self is the co-creating tension in the Being-in-the-World between the self-creating influences of the social world (the Mitwelt, the social self) and of the individual self. The social self, the self-as-other pole of this co-constituting tension, sees the self as developing in-relation-to-others, as social construction. The self is the social or "public" self; one's social roles are who one is (Greenwald and Pratkanis, 1984). The self places its social roles centre stage in a persona-like identification; there is emphasis on the "welt" aspect of the being-in-the-world, particularly the Mitwelt.

In contrast to this is the "private self", the real, core or "fact" of oneself against which the social self must compare itself (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987). The particular idea of the nature of this self-Self varies; it may be a reflection of the influences of one's nature, of the "private" self, one's interpretations or understanding of the world, or of a transpersonal Self. It may agree or disagree with the impulses and choices of the social self.

While the dichotomy described above implies that the

self is either a social/public self or a real/private self, in other approaches the public or social self is thought to co-exist with a private self. Individuals are thought to differ in the degree to which they monitor and direct their behaviour to correspond with either the public or private self (Schlenker, 1980).

A third possibility is that development is a progression to a social self, then away from it towards a "real self" (Handel, 1987). Kegan's and Loevinger's theories both incorporate the social self as a discrete stage in self development that is later transcended by more individual stages,

This is illustrated in Nietzsche's story of the three transformations of the spirit (Campbell, 1988). The child is the experience of the camel, of obedience, instruction and information. Once the camel is well-loaded, he runs into the desert, there to become a lion; the heavier the load, the stronger the lion. The lion must kill the dragon of "Thou shalt", the left-over inhibitions so necessary in childhood that prevent self-determination in the adult. Once the dragon is dead, the lion is transformed into a child who moves from his own self. This parable reflects the sense of change throughout life of many transformation stories, and the necessity to free oneself from domination by Das Mann, social consciousness, to transform from the social or public self to the private self. Von Franz (Jung,

1964) notes that the individual must often "separate from his group - from his family, his partner, or other personal connections - in order to find himself."

A problem with this view of the tension between self-other and self-Self is the gender and cultural bias already noted. The social self as a stage in development (Kegan's Stage 3 and Loevinger's Conformist Stage) is implicitly descriptive of women's development of self-in-relation. Feminine identification with social interpersonal roles and their concern for the particular in relationships (e.g. family) is thought to be an indication of the social self, and male so-called individualistic self-in-separation is thought to be a higher stage. (This has been discussed previously).

This view reflects an unconscious differentiation bias, and the higher status given power and achievement motives over affiliation. As already discussed, these motives are actually reflective of the social self in the arena of work. The prime concern of the social self, "what will others think", applies to both men and women in their various traditional roles. Power, status and achievement concerns are always relative to others; a concern for gaining recognition from others, for status and the right car, clothes and toys, is a social self concern. Thus, an identification of self with one's career is not necessarily less social or more individual than an identification with

the other social role arena, the interpersonal. Both may be Mitwelt determined, and other-centred and identified.

Perhaps true development away from a social self is not so much in a development away from familial interpersonal identifications to achievement identifications, but from a "foreclosed" (Marcia, 1966; 1976), other-directed role in either love or work to a true identity achievement. The test of whether an interpersonal or achievement focus is one of the social or of the private self would be in part whether that commitment had been chosen solely because of its conformation to social standards of family or The Other, or to individual standards of the person themselves (which may, of course, consider the needs of others, but is not ruled by them).

Development does not end with the achievement of an individual self, however. As the social and individual selves compete for the self, so do the individual and the "integrated" selves. As has been noted in the Introduction, it has frequently been suggested that there is an authentic (May, 1983), "core" (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987), or "possible" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) self which, however imaginary, plays a crucial role in directing the growth of the self. This may be in the nature of an ideal self-image, or of the "Self" archetype. Growth of the self consists of greater and greater correspondence to this authentic or real self, as the social self is progressively disidentified, and

conscious and unconscious aspects of the self are integrated. This greater correspondence to the authentic self enables the individual to have self-determination and agency.

This is often assumed to be the individual self, an ultimate stage of differentiation and individualism that removes one from affiliation or social concerns. (As Barron (Chiang & Maslow, 1969) pointed out, descriptions of the ideal "healthy personality" given by male middle-aged professors may typify only just such a middle-aged man, and perhaps only such a man in Berkeley, California, in late summer, the context of the description). However, individualism may be merely another stage in the developing self - a stage in which the newly self-governed self, so concerned with consolidating the self-structure and "becoming one's own man", to use Levinson's term, must learn to relate to and care for others as well as self. Eventually, a delicate balance must be achieved between both needs.

Not only is it possible to be authentic to oneself and yet to be oriented to care for others, it is necessary. Care for others, or social interest, is as essential as autonomy in developing to authenticity. Though earlier theorists concerned with the development of the self to a healthy personality do not seem to have recognized this, current self theorists do; both Kegan and Loevinger, among

others, have stages in which a concern for both self and others is higher than a purely individualistic stage. Cultural and era associated influences are obvious here, as they are in the suggestion that the social self must be transcended.

Finally, as has already been discussed, Jung suggests that the highest stages of self-realization transcend the individual ego, which is not, after all, the authentic self. The highest stages of the authentic self are similar to the final task of life in Erikson's theory, that of achieving ego integrity. Thus, after its childhood struggles to differentiate a social self, and then its adult struggles to disidentify with the persona or social self, the ego would come to struggle with the Self archetype. The ego-identity, at first a necessary integration, becomes a demanding tyrant which seeks to prevent the suprapersonal transcendence of Self (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987). Rumi wrote of this struggle, showing the trans-personal aspect in his references to Allah, the Divine as symbol of the Self:

...my ego passed away for the sake of His Ego.

.....
The individual self became dust:
the only trace of it is the
print of His feet upon its dust.

(Nicholson, 1974, p. 178)

Although the self-realized person is a healthy personality, not all healthy personalities are self-realized. A transpersonal level occurs in self-realization

that is not necessarily present in the "healthy personality" (Chiang & Maslow, 1969). Self-realization is more than being a healthy or mature personality. Maslow terms these "transcenders": those who have experience with frequent peak or transcendent experiences of unity with humankind, a surrender to the transpersonal (Chiang and Maslow, 1969).

So as the theme of differentiation and integration of self-vs.-others, and of the self-structure, is evident in the development of the self, so is the parallel, co-existent and interdependent theme of self-vs.-Self in the process of individuation, or complete integration.

Direction of Growth

Thus, in most concepts of the self, there is an assumption of a progression beyond one's learned social roles, in a positive direction toward a "real" self, through intrapersonal Eigenwelt integration and differentiation. It should be noted that there is almost invariably an assumption that the direction is a positive one to health and maturity, that the self is somehow more effective and stable, with greater flexibility and less defensiveness. There is thought to be greater integration and differentiation; the self is maximally organized into a cohesive and internally consistent whole in which all aspects of the personality are potentially accessible. The "healthy personality" has a capacity for autonomy and self-

determination, for intimacy and social feeling, for ethics and values, and for spontaneity, creativity and humour. Although these characteristics are generally adaptive, the self's greater autonomy, social interest, and post-conventional ethics may bring one into conflict with one's society (one is not, therefore, "adjusted") (Seeman, 1983).

This growth may be seen as a refinement that is at the same time a deepening and enrichment; an increasing integration of the Self. However, as noted above, this growth is not just individuation, but also an eventual growth away from self-centeredness.

A parallel assumption to the positive direction of growth is that it is continuous, that development continues throughout adulthood. In contrast to this is the assumption that although the self may undergo changes in childhood, and particularly in adolescence, the structure of the self is largely complete and stable by early adulthood. The transformational model of the self (Jung, 1956; Assagioli, 1965) allows for the possibility of profound change within the self, change that is not simply an elaboration of a stable structure. This model would still apply whether the self is defined as an archetype to be achieved through a process of individuation (Jung, 1964), or as the ego-identity, the personality, or the sum total of the being, including both conscious and unconscious aspects.

If the self or personality may indeed undergo profound

and deep transformations in adulthood, it should be noted that this may not always occur. Adolescent identity achievement, a commonly accepted transition to a stable self-structure, is itself not invariable; foreclosure or diffusion are possible alternate outcomes (Marcia, 1966). It is possible that identity achievement is susceptible to cultural conditions which may discourage or encourage crisis at transition. One may speculate that foreclosure or diffusion is not the end of the growth of the self, but that these outcomes delay this particular self-transformation to a later date (Marcia, 1976).

Transformations in adulthood of comparable or greater depth and completeness as the identity crisis may be similarly susceptible to cultural influences and situational constraints, and to an individual's choice not to grow, and be found to be even less universal than the identity achievement. These transformations may differ from adolescent identity crises in that they are not as clearly associated with any particular universal or common life change or stage. In Erikson's model of psychosocial development, in which ego identity is achieved in late adolescence, and elaborated in later adult stages, each life stage may have an unfavourable outcome, with, at the last, despair occurring rather than ego integrity. It may be argued that if circumstances allow, these later transformations are possible in every individual, but may or may

not occur or have a favourable outcome depending on both exogenous and endogenous influences. The "higher" stages of integration and self-realization are rarely achieved.

Individual Life Experiences

This process of development, with its twin themes of differentiation/integration and self-other/self-Self, and assumption of continuing growth, would progress differently from individual to individual according to differences in life experiences (the unique individual nature of the world of the Being-in-the-world). The unique nature of the individual is co-constituted by a unique set of social relationships (e.g. family roles), the differing natures of individuals (i.e. temperament, abilities, talents, etc.), and the interaction between these.

According to Sabatelli & Mazor (1985), the nature of the family system can affect the individuation process. Although many approaches assume that all family systems are a constant in this process, which will occur in a similar way whatever the nature of the parent-child system, others have found that the parent-child relationship is an important factor (i.e. the parents of the "identity diffused" adolescent were overly controlling or permissive; those of developmentally "offtime" adolescents were likely to be in a high degree of conflict; those of "identity achieved" adolescents encouraged autonomy and independence).

Sabatelli & Mazor believe that the most important factor in the family system influencing individuation is the system's level of "differentiation": the pattern of family cohesion and adaptability. Functional systems (flexible and adaptable) are able to maintain a balance between the necessary separation and connection, allowing increased distance without much stress. Less differentiated systems, which are highly reactive and fused, block the necessary psychological separation and may lead to an enmeshed individual (in a "needy dependence"), or one who cuts themselves off physically from the family (but is still psychologically dependent). Either of these may delay the individuation process, keeping the individual from developing from a social self to an individual one, although this delay may eventually be overcome.

Other dysfunctional family patterns would also affect the developing self. Dysfunctional family roles would become "internalized", incorporated into, even central to, the structure of the self and the self-concept, as a "false self" that would be incongruent to the core-self (Casparly, 1987). Negative attitudes towards aspects of oneself learned from a dysfunctional family background would lead to a negative self-concept, negative self-esteem, and dysfunctional styles of interacting in all three phenomenal worlds. Kohut (White & Weiner, 1986) identifies empathic mirroring as the element which allows the healthy growth of

the developing self; without empathy from healthy mature parents, the self stays an undeveloped narcissistic self in Kohut's view, while in Caspary's view the core-self remains an unrealized potential. Thus, since the Self retains the potential to become the "true self", this internalized dysfunctional social self becomes a "false self", leading to feelings of dis-connection, alienation and inconsistency.

Traumatic experiences of abuse, neglect, sexual trauma and incest would also strongly affect the self. For example, Courtois (1988) notes that incest and its negative aftereffects becomes integrated into the personality, frequently leading to a negative self-concept and self-esteem, personality disorders (i.e. borderline, dependent, etc.), and possible ego disorganization.

Gender, Age and Culture Differences

In addition to individual differences, gender, age and cultural differences should also be noted. Emphasis on the relative place of differentiation and integration, the individual self and the social self, may vary between the sexes and across cultures. As has already been discussed, the development of the self for women may differ from that of men, as women struggle to become a self within relationships. This struggle is complicated by a cultural devaluation of relational concerns, which, if internalized, would lead again to a false self and inconsistency with the

"true self". For men in this Western, individualistic culture, the self may struggle to achieve differentiation from mother (and without a loving father to replace the empathy), the self must then struggle with relations within a framework of separation (Gardner, 1987; Bolen, 1987).

Much has been made of chronological stages in the development of the self. Levinson (1978) has discussed the stages of a man's life; similar work has been done in identifying the issues and transitions in a woman's life (Reinke, Holmes, & Harris, 1985). However, it has been suggested (Schlossberg, 1987) that these apparent age-related changes in the self are actually related to life transitions that frequently occur at certain ages (marriage, divorce or retirement) which are transformational in themselves, at whatever age they occur. Both these influences on self-change will be discussed in the next section.

Self development may also differ according to socio-historical cultural differences. Young-Eisendrath and Hall (1987) note that the self develops within a framework of a sociocultural context; this contributes the shape of the gained aspect of the self, if not the given. An obvious example already noted is our Western culture's individualistic emphasis on autonomy; other cultures may reflect a more relational or social concern. Another example might be the affect on the self of membership in a

marginalized or minority culture, as suggested by Highlen et al. (1988), who developed a separate model of self development for "oppressed people" of any ethnicity.

Common Patterns of Development

There is no one developmental path, since individual, gender-specific and cultural experiences shape the given world into which the Being is thrown. The Being then struggles to differentiate and integrate itself as Being-in-the-world, in terms of its physical nature, its personal and cultural social world, and its Eigenwelt. However, if the progression is always potentially toward realization of the real self, there may be common patterns of stages through which individuals may progress on their journey from the unaware undifferentiated or core-self of infancy to the congruence with the "real self" of later adulthood, if it is attained. These may not be the same across genders, cultures, or dysfunctional childhood backgrounds, but may show some common themes or patterns.

First, one common theme may be a progression from an undifferentiated self through a sequence of self-other-self identifications in which self-other themes are central to the changing self-concept. A second theme may be an increasing awareness of differentiating aspects of oneself, a theme which focuses on the "emergence" of archetypes, including the Self, rather than on the internalization of

others as a model of growth. As these archetypes or aspects of ourselves emerge, previously unknown parts of the self-structure, or sub-personalities, become "seen" by the self, understood, and then accepted and re-integrated. Perhaps all the contents and identifications of the self-concept, conscious and unconscious, in all three phenomenal worlds, must be integrated (Battista, 1980).

Third, it should be emphasized that each individual has his or her life themes, purposes and meanings (McAdams, 1985), meanings which are deeply crucial to the individual's existence. These life meanings or themes may account for strong individual differences in the pattern and development of the self and provide the organizing central theme that underlies all the individual experiences (e.g. freedom, or "righteousness").

Finally, within the very concept of "development", there is an implication of progressive positive growth to greater maturity, health and self-actualization.

Metaphors of Transformation

Transformation of the self is one of the essential themes in literature and myth as they fulfil their function to reflect and reveal human nature, and guide our growth and development. Image motifs of transformation that are familiar to all include the powerful image of the journey (Cooper, 1978): the slow forward change through light and dark landscapes that leaves the old self behind forever, and eventually reaches the goal of the new self. This image portrays the sense of time and effort needed to change, the feeling of movement yet suspension while one is in the process of change, and the encounter with unknown tests and dangers. A second familiar image is the caterpillar transforming to a butterfly (Assagioli, 1965); a less familiar one is the archetypal alchemical transmutation of lead into gold. The power of this motif is the complete and awesome extent of the transformation that is achieved, and the perfection and beauty of the butterfly and of the gold, compared to the humble caterpillar. Because we rarely have the safety of a cocoon to contain the disintegration and helplessness of the self-change, Assagioli has used the image of a complete renovation of a building within which one must continue to live while the renovation is going on.

Third, birth, growth, death and rebirth are direct

symbols of self-change; the loss of the old self is experienced as a little death, the new self as a birth. Many images reflect this sense of natural transformation throughout life: for example, the blooming of the rose or lotus, representing the unfoldment of the Self (Assagioli, 1965). Other images depict the cyclical nature of transformation: the radical changes in form (though not in essence) the tree demonstrates through the seasons, the seasons themselves, the moon, and water or the sea transforming to ice, and to nourishing rain.

Even fairy tales, childhood stories and popular movies tell archetypal transformation stories. These stories of transformation reflect and shape the process of self-change, as they reflect and shape our view of our life experiences. The universality of these stories testifies to the universality of the causes and nature of the transformation experience. However, the stories do not necessarily predict the individual experience; life-task, life experiences and the individual path will vary widely, in, for example, the typical ages at which certain transformations are depicted in myth and story, and archetypal gender differences.

There are few stories of individual transformation in childhood; themes of archetypal childhood stories reflect issues one would expect to arise in the other-directed life of a child, during which socialization is the theme and

goal. For example, stories of early childhood, like Peter Rabbit, The Goose Girl, Red Riding Hood, and the Little Princess reflect the rule of the world by adults who may be wise or strong or dangerous or monstrous and who are always more powerful than the child. Generally, both danger and salvation come from sources outside the child. The only task and lesson for the child is obedience to avoid catastrophe, and endurance if one occurs. Rarely is there anything the child can do about step-mothers or witches or wolves. The moral is to be a good child no matter what happens.

An interesting exception to this is a story like Hansel and Gretel (Lang, 1949). Although their position as victims of actions by powerful adults is typical, both children broke the pattern of obedience and endurance until saved by another; they acted cleverly to save themselves. When abandoned by their father and stepmother, Hansel dropped pebbles to mark their path. When imprisoned by the witch (the devouring mother) to fatten him for her supper, he gave her a bone to feel instead of his finger. Gretel tricked the witch into the oven, then shut the door, killing her. With the treasure they found in the witch's cottage they were then able to help their father. The stepmother had died (showing her connection to the witch). With the witch's treasure, the family's life was transformed. Since the child's self is a family-defined self, transformation

for the child would be shown by a change in the family's circumstances.

Most of these childhood stories and fairy tales are not really stories of personal transformation. These begin in earnest with the first transformations of young adulthood (where many self theories end). The transformation stories of early adulthood reflect the need to break free from the family and achieve one's own self-determination. As Jung notes:

As long as the child is in that state of unconscious identity with the mother, he is still one with the animal psyche and is just as unconscious as it. The development of consciousness inevitably leads not only to separation from the mother, but to separation from the parents and the whole family circle and thus to a relative degree of detachment from the world of the unconscious and the world of instinct.

(Jung, 1956, p. 235)

The transformation stories of young adulthood are distinct in archetypal theme for men and women. This may not simply reflect traditional gender roles, since these gender differences in themes exist in contemporary literature as well. It may reflect the fact that gender differences do in fact exist most strongly in young adulthood (Helson & Moane, 1987; Stevens & Truss, 1985) when marriages occur and children are born. (These gender differences would gradually reduce until mid-life, during which a cross-over effect has been noticed by several, including Neugarten, Sheehy, and Jung). Young men and young women may need different stories to reflect and illuminate

their separate transformation stories, as Gilligan has pointed out.

However, not all individuals conform to these male or female "ways of knowing". The self development of a woman who has chosen a "yang" or active path in what used to be thought of as a male way of being would experience transformations of a more "yang" nature. The transformation stories of young adulthood reflect archetypes in which the individual participates in a much more individual form, with much less clear separation of roles. Individual experiences of transformation would have elements of both male and female stories. For this reason, and to avoid sexist stereotyping, the terms "yin" and "yang" will be used to reflect a relational connected principle and an outward mastery orientation respectively, rather than female and male.

The archetypal transformation story for young men, or the yang aspect of both men and women, is the Hero's Quest or Journey. (An obvious contemporary film version is the Star Wars Trilogy). The young prince (Lang, 1951) must embark on a perilous journey away from home and security, dare great risks, pass tasks or tests (e.g. killing dragons or other evil forces), in order to free the kingdom from the enchantment of childhood unconscious innocence and claim his throne and the hand of the princess (commit to his work and a relationship). Self figures aid the hero (as magical

animals, or the wise elder or child) but are not central to this quest. There are many versions of this story, which reflect the various positions and experience of the oldest heir, the youngest prince of many brothers, or the orphan who does not know his true birthright. This quest may be chosen, accidental, or commanded, and the quest or journey has numerous forms. Common to all is the need to leave behind home, parents, and conformity, to risk one's life with courage and trust and thereby redeem the whole kingdom (who reflect both other aspects of the self, and other people with whom one is in a relationship), and achieve the throne of mastery over one's self and one's life (autonomy and self-determination), and a marriage to an equal.

The transformation story of the young woman, or the yin aspect of the woman or man, finds full achievement of the self, self-determination, power and position, and intimacy in a relationship with an equal, in an archetypal story of a relational self: the love story, the Romance. Examples include Cinderella, the Beauty and the Beast (Lang, 1949), Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, The Princess Bride, etc. This may be precipitated by the actions of the "wicked stepmother" or witch (the rejecting, jealous or devouring mother), or even the well-meaning father, from whom the girl must separate. Like the Quest story, the Romance does not have Self as a central figure, although again there may be help from Self in the form of magical animals or fairies,

the good mother, etc.

This form of transformation has been derided as inferior to the courageous adventure of the Quest because our patriarchal preference for active yang ways of being ignores relational development of the self as immature and childish (see page 35) (Gilligan et al., 1988; Belenky et al., 1986). But the Romance is not a story of a woman trading one master, her father, for another, her husband, as it may appear. It is actually a tale of the woman freeing herself from social consciousness and the bonds of her family of origin to become powerful (Queen) in her own realm (a theme of mastery and self-determination) through the relational mode of bonding with her equal male side. As Gilligan has suggested, the relational mode of self-development is often the path for women.

Both of these stories, moreover, contain the other. Only the focus is reversed. Both end in the Sacred Marriage which accepts and joins with the anima or animus within, and enables each to achieve their power in the world. In the Quest story, the Prince slays the Dragon and redeems or bonds with the Princess in a fulfilled Romance story. Intimacy in an equal relationship is enabled by the freedom from the social self, which is identified with his parents. In the Romance story, the Princess finds her active yang side, and in bonding in relationship with the Prince, now achieves her active power. In many of these stories, she

gains her rightful position, which has been taken from her by circumstance or a "wicked stepmother" (the bad mother), and thus has power in her world for the first time. This gives her self-determination and freedom from her family and the bad mother, the face of social consciousness demanding conformity.

After the self has been established in the Quest or Romance transformations, further transformation stories of relation and mastery occur relating to the continuing tasks of young adulthood. For women, there is the "heroic task" of giving birth (Campbell, 1988), and the struggle to be a good mother, able to protect one's children without devouring and destroying them, and able to mother them without either "banishing" them, or losing oneself (Carlson, 1898). In the true Sleeping Beauty tale (Lang, 1949) (not the sanitized Disney version), the story continues after the traditional end at marriage. The Princess, now Queen, had two children, and she and her children are repeatedly threatened by the Prince's mother, an ogre, who wishes to eat them all (an obvious devouring mother image). The Prince, now King, and a servant try to trick her and hide them from her; eventually the old Queen is killed as she is about to kill the young Queen and her children. As the Princess was woken from unconscious childhood by the courageous striving of the yang, the animus Prince, in the Romance portion of the story, she and her children are also

saved from the devouring mother by the actions of the animus. Relational modes of being must integrate the power or mastery orientation, in order to withstand the dangers inherent in relation, especially the loss of the self in identification with the other. (In this story, the young King does not kill his mother; he arrives at the impending execution of his wife and children and asks what is going on. His question brings consciousness, which destroys the power of the devouring mother. In her rage she throws herself into the death she had planned for the young queen.)

Although only women have the heroic task of giving birth, both men and women experience the transformation into parenting, and the associated relational issues of self-as-parent.

In terms of yang concerns of active work in the world, the transformational struggle of the mastery orientation, that corresponds to the relational task of giving birth, may be the struggle to have and use power in service, neither to be afraid of it, nor to misuse it. The now self-confident Hero must learn to balance mastery with "care". In the Arthurian cycle, King Arthur encounters Lancelot, who cannot be overthrown because his strength comes directly from the land itself. Arthur must win Lancelot's service by besting him in a fight. Initially, however, he loses, and becomes unbalanced by his arrogance and rage. Lancelot's virtue comes from the "land", symbolic of his dedication to the

Goddess, his constant orientation to strive for others, not for himself. The Hero must not lose the anima-given relation as he acts; the Hero must never be acting for himself, but for others. Mastery must always be in service of care. In myth or story this would be for the people of his realm, or for the "land" (as in the Arthurian myth). This represents those who personally depend on the Hero's right action (family, dependents, etc.); humanity in general; and the spiritual or transpersonal realm. Again, both men and women may experience these issues.

Although there are no archetypal stories reflecting the next era of life, the midlife, the cross-over effect of gender differences in one's middle years might suggest some themes. It may be, as Jung suggests, that whatever orientation dominated one's self and one's life in the first twenty years of adulthood now recedes, and the opposite orientation comes in the fore. Perhaps one "foreclosed" on one's identity search, did not undertake a Quest or Romance in early adulthood, but remained a camel, accepting a social role and self given by one's parents. Midlife may give a second opportunity for the transformational story. Or perhaps one actively committed to a relationship but not to a career, or a career and not to a relationship. The part of one's life that had not been actively chosen would have remained diffused (drifting from job to job, or relationship to relationship), or foreclosed (staying with a job or

relationship chosen because one's parents wanted it), or in moratorium (actively exploring possibilities). The radical switches in direction reported by Sheehy (1976), Gould (1978), and Levinson (1978) may reflect these transformations, which would be unremarkable in a young adult, as the adult now seeks to achieve identity in this neglected area.

Another cause for mid-life changes would be compensation or exploration of an unrealized aspect of the personality (e.g. an introvert becomes more extroverted). One example would be the story of Tolkien's Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, who, in the middle of a comfortable mid-life, suddenly set off on a dangerous and dubious adventure that was eventually responsible for saving Middle Earth.

Another type of story presages the turn towards the spiritual or the Self that may occur in older adulthood. (Again, these are metaphors, not literal age limitations; transformations symbolically associated with later life can happen in younger years). The Arthurian myth may be a good example of transformations of both men and women in midlife. (As an archetypal myth that tells the story of an entire life, this myth is a rich source. It is also valuable as a story with which most members of our culture are familiar; this may indicate it reflects current archetypal issues that have kept the legend present in consciousness). In midlife, both Arthur, the Hero now King,

and Guenevere, the Queen, experience transformations which change them, their lives, and their realm forever.

Guenevere's relationship with Lancelot is fulfilled in a Forbidden Romance motif. One could see this as a betrayal of duty, a tragedy of the weak individual's inability to fulfil obligations, thus destroying the realm (one's life). But the story is actually that of the Romantic Love of the medieval troubadours (Berman, 1989), a powerful individuation theme in which one eschews social duty and obligation to others to undertake the dangerous road of listening instead to oneself, even if that takes one into opposition to social duty (Campbell, 1988). Campbell notes this as analogous to the love of God, in fact as a love, a unitive eros, which is a closer approximation to divine love than is married love, which is "epithalamian", or agape (Berman, 1989), joined with but forever separate from God. Berman quotes De Rougemont that "falling in love is literally the one ecstatic or mystical experience left open, and it serves as a haven for the culture of repression and control..." (Berman, 1989, p 205). It is a discovery of "interiority", the internal self, of the Goddess/anima, of love as a mystical experience of the divine, of love as freedom, and of love as dangerous rebellion from the norm. As Kegan noted about transitions to his Stage 4 self, individuals now see that they have to live with themselves, even if it hurts others, an essential step to integration.

As is typical for women, Guenevere discovers this in relation, not in mastery.

In fact, in the myth, Guenevere subsequently put aside worldly power and "went to a nunnery". This was not the failure, shame and exile our secular power-oriented contemporary world-view would assume. In fact, secular power was made possible for women through religious orders. But in Guenevere's case, in the company of the feminine and freed from the social self by her dangerous love, now open to the equally dangerous and rebellious love of God, the Queen turned to a spiritual life, as Jung suggests is the task of later stages of the self.

Arthur's midlife story is the myth of the sick King (Jung, 1964). Von Franz (Jung, 1964) describes this as the initial stage in the process of individuation, and images of the sick, barren or old King are common mythic themes. Individuation may begin with "a wounding of the personality and the suffering that accompanies it", a crisis or loss in relationship or career that strikes at the central identifications of the self. In some cases, no event has happened, but the individual falls into mid-life anomie, and feels empty and bored. Arthur falls ill, and this casts a shadow over the whole land which destroys its vitality; the "initial encounter with the Self casts a dark shadow" (Jung, 1964). A magic talisman or artifact, the Grail, must be found which will save the king and country; this must be

something unique, hard to find, or about which nothing is known, as is the Self. The usual methods of dealing with crisis do not work with this one. One can not go to war, or use any conscious or active striving. It is only when one surrenders to the guidance of the Self through the unconscious can the Grail be found and the King saved. This surrender to inner guidance parallels the surrender to love experienced in the Forbidden Romance. The attitude of surrender and acceptance is needed to receive the salvation of the Grail. The striving to win through battle, by the sword, has neglected the anima side, and the Grail, symbolic of the Goddess, "the land", the anima, now must be incorporated. Once the insight that the "King and the land are one" is understood and accepted, the Grail gives the spiritual gifts of enlightenment, grace, and immortal life.

Finally, we come to metaphorical self-transformation to a wise Elder Self. As Jung notes, this is a spiritual journey, a religious quest (Storr, 1983). Images of the Self are also images of God, and this is not chance; "the soul-spark, the innermost divine essence of man, is characterized by symbols" which express this God image. Thus, archetypal metaphors of this final transformation can no longer be stories with human protagonists, but must be divine myths.

Myths describing male transformation to the Self are common, and all have similar themes of sacrifice. Christ,

Buddha, Osiris and other sun gods world-wide enact myths of sacrifice, death and rebirth (Jung, 1958).

Christ exemplifies the archetype of the Self. He represents a totality of a divine or heavenly kind, a glorified man, a son of God...unspotted by sin.
(Jung, 1958, p. 36)

The Mass celebrates in ritual this transformation myth. However, in the Christian myth of the Self, this archetype of the Self is not complete. It lacks wholeness in its rejection of the shadow, and in its implication that the human can never really become God. The Self, and self-realization, can never be personally achieved as it will always be the attribute only of Christ.

For women, Perera (1981) has described the myth of the descent to the goddess, Inanna's (and Persephone's, or Psyche's) descent to the Underworld. Inanna, the goddess of love, passes through seven gates and must sacrifice the emblems of her godhood at each step. In the Underworld, the dark worlds of the shadow and the unconscious, she is killed by Ereshkigal, the goddess of the Underworld, and kept for three days. Finally she is rescued by messengers from Enki, the god of waters, who save her by empathizing with Ereshkigal's labour pain. As a reward, Ereshkigal releases Inanna's body, and she is reborn.

In both these metaphors, surrender, sacrifice and death are necessary steps for both men and women. As Inanna is required to do at the seven gates to the Underworld, one

must lose and let go of all that one loves and with which one is identified: possessions and treasures, power, position, status, relationships, and achievements. In the Christian myth of Christ's crucifixion, Christ was stripped of honour and dignity, and executed in the manner in which thieves were killed. The theme for both these mythic figures is humiliation; one is utterly without recognition or place in society (perhaps a modern metaphor would be a homeless person). The task of this transformation is to challenge and destroy ego identification, to change from a dominance of ego or will to one in which the Self is fully integrated. It is not enough to descend to the underworld, or even to risk death. Both Christ and Inanna are divine figures who are paradoxically actually killed, and held for three days, before resurrection. As already noted, the ego does not give up easily. The person must die as their former self in order to be reborn as Self. To the person experiencing this transformation, the despair and darkness of this feels like death; in fact, physical death may feel preferable.

This final stage of transformation is one which is rarely achieved and described, and is in fact an experience which many theorists do not recognize as possible or desirable.

To summarize the themes evident from these metaphors of transformation, one can see themes of freedom from social identifications of self that enable the self to achieve both autonomy and intimacy, and the accomplishments of the tasks of early and mid adulthood (and much of adult life) in both the Quest and Romance stories. These issues continue in midlife, and a reversal of story theme may occur then. Then the themes of the Forbidden Romance and the Sick King show a turn to individuation, a turn away from the world to the guidance of the unconscious. Finally, themes of the sacrifice, death and rebirth of Self archetypes in myth illuminate the difficulty of self transformation, the necessity to disidentify with all that is central to self-concept and self-esteem, and to die in one's former self in order to be reborn as Self.

Causes of Transformation

In talking about "transformation", we are not talking about a "partial revision" of some aspect of our self, but an essential change of the whole (Phillips, 1981). The external circumstances may or may not change; but the transformed person experiences these circumstances in a whole new way. What can cause such profound transformation of self? Is it exogenous change in one's world, relationships, or life? Or is it endogenous, often gradual, growth, that may be related to one's age?

In both stage theories and in theories in which development occurs as a continuous gradual change, there may be transition points in an individual's experience during which marked self-change occurs. This would be similar to a Piagetian disequilibrium; the self, continually striving for consistency (to which the experienced sense of continuity and unity of the self would attest) assimilates information about itself from its life experiences and/or internal growth which stretches the self until finally a structural re-organization must take place. The "old self" - the former organization, identification, or central concept - must disintegrate and a "new self" emerge from the reorganization or disidentification. The endogenous and exogenous influences interact.

Maturational Causes of Transformation

The cause that may come to mind first is a maturational one, one which ties the transformation of self to chronological age. Erikson (1959) and Levinson (1978) have vividly described the various crises of self in adolescence and in mid-life respectively. These concepts have become everyday parlance, perhaps because they articulate and validate experiences common in this culture. As Longfellow wrote:

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip by me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth....

....halfway up the hill, I see the Past

.....

And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

(Allison et al., 1975, p. 324)

As adolescence and mid-life crises imply, these changes are thought to be related to one's chronological age. Patterns have been discerned in transformation crises associated with specific ages; these may be because of maturational and physiological factors (e.g. the ability to have children) or social role expectations that are tied to age - most likely there is an interaction between both of these influences. Many of the changes described in these theories reflect the developmental issues of separation from parents and social self to a more individualistic orientation.

Representative of this view, Levinson (1978) believes

that "the life structure evolves through a relatively orderly sequence during the adult years." Adulthood alternates stable structure-building periods of about 6 to 7 years with transition or structure-changing periods of about 4 to 5 years in length. Each of these periods is thought to be different from the others in some crucial ways, and each of these periods is thought to be characteristically associated with a particular age range (plus or minus two years).

Transition periods may be a smooth reform, or a revolution, a time of crisis and inner conflict, or of suspension. (This characterization is similar to the identity crisis Erikson describes in adolescence.) At the end of the transition, one makes choices and gives meaning and commitment to these choices (as occurs in the resolution to the identity crisis). During the stable period following these transition periods, a new or re-newed life structure is built around these choices, which may have been well or poorly made.

The periods are defined by developmental tasks, as in Erikson's theory, and not by events such as marriage or retirement, although these "marker events" do interact with the developmental task of the period.

Levinson's model was constructed from research with middle-class American men. Within this population, he identified certain transitions he thought were common. The

first stage is the Early Adult Transition, which begins at 17 and ends at 22. The first task of this stage is to move out of the adolescent world, to review and modify one's roles, relationships and self within that world in a separation transformation. Next, one must explore the possibilities of the adult world, construct an initial adult identity, and make some choices. This corresponds to the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage in Erikson's theory. At this point the first male adult structure, Entering the Adult World, begins and lasts until 28. This corresponds to Erikson's Intimacy vs. Isolation stage. The task of this stage is to construct a workable adult life structure in terms of moving out of the home, work, love and friendships, and values and lifestyle. One needs to be both open and exploring, yet be responsible, a difficult dichotomy.

The Age Thirty Transition - from 28 to 33 - marks a life that is becoming more serious, and a time during which the flaws and limitations of the life structure of the 20's can be changed. After this transition, the second life structure - Settling Down - lasts until about 40. The tasks of this stage are to "establish a niche" and to "make it" on the ladder of achievement. By 36, Levinson suggests a sub-phase of Becoming One's Own Man occurs.

At 40 to 45, the Mid-life Transition brings the life structure again into question; one may review and question every aspect of one's life. This may parallel Erikson's

stage of Generativity vs. Stagnation. As Jung suggested happens in mid-life, neglected aspects of the self now seek expression and integration. After this transition, middle adulthood commences, with a new life structure at 45 to 50. Another transition, the Age 50 Transition occurs, and then a stable period completes middle adulthood from 55 to 60. Finally, from 60 to 65, the Late Adult Transition occurs as another major turning point; one's tasks are to finish the efforts of middle adulthood and prepare for older life structures, paralleling Erikson's stage of Ego Integrity vs. Despair.

Gould (1978) also identified stages similar in character to Levinson's, which he thought occurred for both men and women. In Gould's view, transformation in adulthood is a change in consciousness, in one's interpretation of life events; this change to an adult consciousness is dependent on the resolution of one's challenge of certain false childhood assumptions. If we do not challenge these assumptions, we remain defined by others, particularly our parents.

At ages 16 to 22, the task is to "leave our parent's world"; our false assumptions centre around the virtues of defining oneself as belonging to one's parents and the risks of losing that security. We begin to move away from our parent's views. At age 22 to 28, we must establish our own views, construct our life dream, "do things my way", and

accept responsibility for our decisions and actions. At 28 to 34, Gould suggests we must "open up to what's inside"; we must turn our now independent and adult consciousness to self-examination. At 35 to 45, the "midlife decade", the feeling of timelessness of the early thirties is replaced by a feeling that "whatever we must do must be done now". Risks of separation from one's loved ones by death or life change must be faced. He also notes a need to confront sides of oneself that may not be comfortable or pleasant; one's own responsibility in relationships must be accepted.

Up to this point we have been dismantling childhood assumptions. Beyond mid-life, about 50, we must confront our assumption that there is no evil in the world, and realize that there is no magic that can help us control the world. At this realization, the adult now owns himself. We have a sense that we are who we are going to be. Thus, Gould sees the adult consciousness as achieved here, while Levinson believes several transitions are still to come.

Levinson studied a rather small population of accomplished men in developing his theory; it has been suggested that his stages do not apply to the lives of women. Reinke, Holmes and Harris (1985) found that across four cohorts of women (five years apart in age) studied through retrospective interview, the 27 to 30 transition period was most common. This was identified by 78% of the women in their sample and was most likely to occur among

women who had been working outside the home. Other age-related transitions were limited to individual cohorts; however, their upper age group was 45, so there may not have been enough data about later age transitions. It was suggested that the 27 to 30 transition stage may be a crucial one for women because of one's expectation that certain intimacy and occupational tasks should be complete by a certain age (e.g. having a child), or because of life events, or changes in the family life cycle associated with this age. The strong indication of a 27 to 30 transition may indicate gender differences; this may correspond to the mid-life crisis Levinson suggests occurs at 40 for men which was not found in this group of women.

Helson & Moane (1987) also found 27 to be a "watershed" for women, in their longitudinal study of personality changes over age. They describe the ages of 21 to 27 as a period characterized by increased self-control and decreased socialization, and increased psychological mindedness, tolerance, social maturity and femininity. This would support the view that early adulthood for women is a time in which separation from the family of origin and the social self occurs, a time for taking control of oneself. It would also suggest that gender role orientation increases between 21 and 27 as women are developing a relational self, in preparation for parenting.

At age 43, when the women were tested again, there was

found to be some overall patterns of personality change. Consistent with Jung, the women showed a decrease in femininity, suggesting that as the responsibilities of parenting decline the personality changes (so women become more masculine and men more feminine). There were also increases in nurturance, an increase in confidence, independence, organization and commitment, and a more favourable self-concept. They coped more effectively, and showed more interpersonal and intrapersonal cognitive complexity. Since the subjects assessed their early thirties as much less positive, Helson and Moane compare this period to the early forties to Levinson's model, as an equivalent time of becoming their own persons. For women, most of this work seems to be complete by the age of 43.

Hornstein (1986) also found that midlife changes do occur for women, but interact with the arena of role identification (occupational or family). In a longitudinal study of mid-life women, she found both similarities and differences between women who had always worked at home, those who had always had a career, and those who had initially worked at home, then started or resumed a career. All three groups showed stability in their social role as wife, and all three became more involved in "self-expression" by age 42. But the first two groups felt their last major change had been in their mid 20's, while the third group, not surprisingly, had undergone considerable

restructuring of their sense of themselves in their 30's and 40's, at the time of their role switch to a career.

Thus, the arguments for the view that there are transformations related to chronological age include patterns discernible in crises and transitions at certain ages. The arguments against the view of maturational transformations suggest that these apparent patterns may be the effect of expectations of social role and task accomplishment at certain ages (that would differ across cultures and may depend on life expectancy ages), or the effect of greater freedom of choice of occupation and social role in this culture. It has also been suggested (Stevens & Truss, 1985) that these patterns may be a cohort effect, and not an age-related one. Schlossberg (1987) thinks the important factors in transformation are life events or transitions that may happen to be associated with age, but are not in themselves age-related.

Life Events

Thus, Schlossberg (1987) believes that the age at which a transformation occurred is less important than whether the experience was a "transition", an event or non-event that "alter(s) our roles, relationships, routines and assumptions". These include anticipated transitions (expected "transitions" in life such as marriage, divorce, retirement etc., at whatever age these occur); unanticipated

transitions (unexpected events such as a serious accident or sudden job loss); and non-event transitions (the failure of expected transitions such as marriage to occur).

What is important is not the transition itself, but how much it alters our social and private self, and how able one is to cope with these changes. The degree of crisis is predictable according to several factors, including: how the person appraises the situation (i.e. as positive or negative, expected or unexpected); factors in the self like optimism and a strong sense of self; supports, including emotional support from friends; and the number and kind of strategies the individual has to manage stress and change the situation.

Both chronological and life event views of transformation recognize that the age and the event interact; differences are a matter of emphasis. Schlossberg believes that the transition is the important factor in and of itself, and her emphasis is on the individual's resources to cope with the transition. If one had ample social and cognitive coping resources, it is possible one could sail through a transition relatively unchanged.

The transition that leads to self-transformation may involve endogenous factors which interact with the event. The self can no longer "stretch" to assimilate the new information, and must change markedly. At another time, the same event would not lead to this change in self-structure,

as (to use an analogy of cognitive development) information which conflicts with one's cognitive stage is ignored until sufficient cognitive development has occurred. In this model, endogenous factors such as one's stage of self-development, age-related or otherwise, interact with exogenous factors such as life events to precipitate transformational change. So, for example, an unexpected event such as the loss of one's job would not always precipitate a crisis and a transformation. For an individual whose life stage, theme, or self-identification is centred around his or her career and accomplishments, a job-loss may precipitate a crisis not only of career goals and life plan, but of self-esteem and self-concept. At a younger or older age, in which such self-identification may not yet have stabilized, or may have passed, this loss may be stressful, but not as threatening to the self. Transitions are self-transforming to the degree to which they threaten one's identification with some subpersonality, role or life theme. These, of course, relate to one's age and the task of the life stage (i.e. academic success when in school, family roles when family is the central task, career roles when one's work is central), and will vary with individual and situational change.

Other Causes of Transformation

Other causes of self-transformation may also reflect challenges to the nature of the self, that would arise from themes thought to be characteristic of either or both the self or the Self. Caspary (1987) as well as others (Arnold, 1960) have proposed that ethical dilemmas can precipitate self-transformation. The connection between the core or "real" self and individual post-conventional ethics is thought to be profound, and any confrontation of ethical conflict may be resolved only by recourse to one's self. In fact, Kegan's (1982) model of self development was based in part on Kohlberg's model of moral development.

Also, May (1983) and other existentialists propose that the experience of one's mortality, of the possibility of one's non-existence is essential as an impetus to self-transformation. This experience may be equivalent to the strong effects of a life crisis in precipitating transformation. This may, in fact, theoretically be extended to the mortality or loss of others with whom one is identified, so that it is not just one's own mortality, but that of family and friends.

Another experience that has often been suggested as self-transforming is a peak or mystic experience. This state of consciousness, which Assagioli (1965) associates with the state of being integrated or self-realized, is described as a state of:

joy, serenity, inner security, a sense of calm power, clear understanding, and radiant love. In its highest aspects it is the realization of essential Being, of communion and identification with the Universal Life.
(Assagioli, 1965, pg.53)

This experience of Being has often been associated with self-transformation and growth (Maslow, 1964).

Blasi & Oresick (1987) have proposed that the experience of self-inconsistency may characterize the growth of the self in Loevinger's theory, through conformist and then onto later more individuated stages. This would reflect the comparison of the social self either to its social models or milieu, and/or to its emerging core or "true" self, to use Caspary's terms. When compared to either of these standards, the social self may feel inconsistent, leading to a search for "who one really is".

Finally, it is possible that a gradual endogenous "inner growth" may eventually result in an experience of a loss of the meaning one once had in one's life, self, and experience. That is, while experiencing no major life change, threat or reason for such questions, one begins to question the meaning in one's life, leading to an "anomie", a sense of emptiness and alienation.

The Nature of the Transformation

The nature of the transition would, on the one hand, be specific to the particular stage of the individual self before the transition (social or self), and/or reflect the nature of the cause of the change. On the other hand, there may be common patterns in many self-transitions. Both universal themes and stage specific patterns should be identified.

Universal patterns may emerge in themes of dis-identification, loss and self-examination, in the presence of certain strong emotions, in changes in the self-concept and self-image, and in the direction, intensity and valence of the experience. Specific themes may reflect the particular nature of the stage or cause of the transformation reviewed above.

For example, the self or ego must dis-identify with one aspect, archetype or role that is central to the structure at its entering stage, and then re-identify with another. The particular nature of this aspect would depend on the context of the world and the self. Whatever is thought to be central to the integrity of the self-structure, the loss of that identification, role, etc. is a constant edge to its existence, and themes of loss of these central identifications may be common, indeed characteristic, of transitions and transformations. This loss may be experienced in

feelings of emptiness, loss of pleasure, and fear evoked by the lack of a centre. There may also be themes of a search for a new self, "who am I if not this?", which would lead to self-discovery through increasing awareness of and attempts to introspect about oneself and one's life.

For example, in their study of life changes in women, Reinke, Holmes and Harris (1985) found that transition experiences last for 2.7 years on average, beginning with an experience of "personal disruption" as individuals reassess their lives and seek personality and life changes. Counselling may begin here. A middle phase then occurs during which there is a focus on the self and self-development, (with less orientation towards others), and on setting or resetting personal, occupational and educational goals. Childrearing satisfaction may decrease, and separations or divorces may occur. In the final phase, closure of the transition occurs, and the periods of seeking and introspection have ended, replaced by feelings of well-being, self-confidence, competence and lack of self-doubt. There may be remarriage or a return to school as a result. Thus, there are feelings of a need for change and much self-examination during this time.

One would expect that such radical challenges to a construct as central as the self (arguably there is no psychic structure as important) would be accompanied with and characterized by strong "deep" emotion, which is not,

however, necessarily intense in a superficial way. Depression has been described as the inevitable result of this challenge to Being, the loss of the self. Loevinger (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987) has noted the terror of peering "over the abyss into nonself"; fear of the transition, of the anticipated and real loss of the self, and the courage that may eventually take one through to the new self stage may also be characteristic of self-transformation. However, emotions in transformation may not necessarily be negative; peak experiences of joy are also described as characteristic of self-transformations (Maslow, 1964).

The self-concept and self-image would also undergo profound change in transition experiences in general. Although one may see changes in behaviour during and after self-transformation, the nature of the change is more likely to be found in changes in the self-concept and self-esteem. Respondents may, to a certain extent, be clearly aware of the changes within themselves. Since the nature of one's own self may be termed, without exaggeration, of strong salience and central concern to an individual, such changes may be thought to entail much reflection and awareness. One's personal life-history or life-narrative may structure, reflect and maintain a sense of self, with transition changes as dramatic events within these narratives (McAdams, 1985; Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987; Bruner, 1986).

In terms of the direction of the transformation, there would be an increasing refinement of identifications towards congruence with the core-self, and an increasing autonomy from and intimacy with others. In terms of the duration and intensity of the experience, the change may be either a time of internal and/or external crisis, or it may be a gradual development (Assagioli, 1965). In terms of the valence of the transformation, the nature of the change may be related in valence to the cause of the change, or it may not be.

The valence of the impetus of the changes may be either positive or negative. Maslow (White, 1972) and others have discussed the involvement of "peak" or transcendent experiences in self-change; this would be a strong emotion of a markedly positive nature that is often associated with such joyful experiences as nature, childbirth, etc. (Goleman & Davidson, 1979). Assagioli (1965) and others have noted, on the other hand, that transformation may also be associated with self-threatening crisis situations and with strong negative emotions. Thus, the valence of the cause and the nature of the experience may match each other or conflict. There are five possibilities. First, the cause may be negative, and the emotion of the experience negative. Or, both the cause and experience may be positive. Third, although it is unlikely that the cause would be perceived as negative by the individual, and yet evoke an immediate response that was largely positive, this may be

theoretically possible. Fourth, the cause of the experience may be clearly positive, yet the emotion and experience largely negative. Positive life-changes such as childbirth, or major successes or achievements can be strongly stressful. Finally, and most likely, these experiences may evoke a mixture of emotions, both positive and negative. (For example, a separation that one has chosen may lead to both positive feelings of hope, anticipation and relief, among others, as well as negative feelings of depression and mourning, anger, and fear).

More specific themes may reflect the particular theme of the stage at which the transition is occurring, and/or characterize the nature of the cause of the transformation. If the cause was a loss of meaning, questions of meaning would characterize the experience. If an ethical dilemma or an experience of perceived self-inconsistency (between the public and private self, or between what one believes and one does, or between expectations and reality) led to the transformation, the experience would be a similar one of self-examination; one would be "thrown" to confront the core-being, the private or "real" self, in order to discover who one "really" is, and to evaluate the dynamic between oneself and one's interrelations with others. If the cause is a threat to the life of the experiencer or a loved one, the nature of the transformation may be one of an evaluation of one's life up to that moment, a judgment of one's life

and its worth. Finally, if the cause is an experience of contact with the Self, a momentary wholeness of being, the nature of the transformation may reflect a more archetypal theme described by Jungians.

The Outcome of the Transformation

The aftereffects of a transforming experience must include, by definition, profound change in the self structure. This may, in fact, be evident in changes in the self-concept, although not necessarily in behaviour. Behaviour is directed by the self and is thus an effect, at a secondary level. One's behaviour may not always reflect the depth of the change in the personality, since the change may show up only over the long term, across a wide variety of situations, or because the transformation may affect such subtle yet crucial aspects as long-term goals, not necessarily visible in immediate behaviour. Also, situational and interpersonal constraints may often temporarily limit or direct the behaviour in opposition to self-concept or to one's real goals.

However, the self-concept may not be a complete or undistorted picture of the self as sum total of the personality. Fitts (Seeman, 1983) found that even the healthiest personality may have some positive self-deception and some level of ego defences. But it is probable that the self-concept or self-image is a window to the accepted parts of the self-structure, and thus should reflect the change in the structure. In fact, the individual's impression of profound change in the self-concept may itself be a crucial aspect of that structure.

In terms of the valence of the outcome of these transition experiences, this, like the cause and the experience itself, may be positive or negative. Pliner, Blankstein & Spigel (1979) found that positive outcomes were reported even after crisis situations of a strongly negative character. This may be, in part, a factor of time. In the short term immediately following this kind of self-threatening crisis, there may be a predominantly negative mood. Integration of the new self and self-identifications must take place, and it would make sense for this integration to be slow. The image of death and rebirth is often used to represent this (Jung, 1956); the old self must be let go, and mourned, and the "new" self, an integration of the new self-concept with the old, must be achieved over time. A change to such an important psychological structure as the self, of the major extent that is being suggested, would not be occasioned or experienced easily or quickly. It would make sense to assume the process of this change to be a long-term one, with the time correlated with the depth and nature of the change.

Thus, the tone of the reported aftereffects may be, in part, dependent on how close in time the report is made to the experience; it may be negative in the short term, and neutral or positive in the long term. Or the tone may reflect how well an individual has integrated the transition experience. For many reasons, including the poor resolution

of past crises, left over childhood conflicts, and current situational and social factors, one may never achieve integration of the old and "new" self-concept into a renewed positive self-concept.

As well as the valence of the outcome, the changes in the self thought to have resulted from the transformation may be evaluated by the self as either or both positive or negative (affecting self-esteem). However, if sufficient time has passed for the self-structure to have regained stability and a degree of integration, the individual may be expected to experience a feeling of stability and certainty of ego identity, a new answer to the questions raised by the cause of the transformation, possibly even a feeling of wholeness and authenticity, if the transformation was a transition to a later stage of self-development. Thus, whether the change seems to have been for the better or worse to an observer, the individual may experience it as positive.

Numerous possible characteristics of self-transformation experiences have been reviewed in previous sections. These included themes of self-other dis-identification, loss, self-examination, strong emotions both negative and positive, and specific themes of stage and/or crisis transition such as self-inconsistency, an ethical dilemma, a peak experience or a loss of meaning. A pilot study found several of these proposed themes. Themes of

changes in self-other identification of various kinds, loss, a change of understanding, or a crisis of meaning were found to characterize the protocols of the pilot study sample. The valence of the cause and of the experience of the transformation was for the most part negative, while the after-effects were mainly positive. There were differences within the self-other identification category which may support stage theories of transformation, but more than half of the themes typified an existential theory of self and self-change, rather than a developmental one. The pilot study supported some of the themes and valences thought characteristic of transforming experiences, and sketched a framework for more detailed analysis of the protocols that were collected in the research.

Purpose

Transformations of the self would be experienced as deep and profound, affecting the self as seen through the self-image or concept in such a way as to be personally recognizable as a great change or profound alteration in self-image or viewpoint. The cause of the experience may be endogenous or exogenous, or an interaction of both, and could be either positive or negative. The emotions in the transition experience may be similarly either positive or negative, as well as the aftereffects. The nature of the transformation may include changes in identification (or "archetype") from Social-Interpersonal or Conformist to Individual or Conscientious, Individual to Interpersonal, or to an Intimacy or Autonomy stage, or beyond to Integration.

These significant experiences of transitions or self-transformations, though frequently described in anecdotal or case studies (Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976), have not often been investigated in adulthood, apart from the significant transition from childhood to adulthood of the identity crisis. The purpose of this study was to collect narrative descriptions of these transformational experiences in general, without specifying theoretical cause, using the narrative method of phenomenological

description, and to describe the cause and nature of experiences of self-transformation by an identification of their characteristic themes or patterns of meaning, through a phenomenological analysis of the themes and content of the protocols. Respondents who had had such a transformational experience were asked to describe this experience, an experience which significantly transformed their self, personality, life or relationships, without which they would not be the same. The phenomenological method was chosen to analyze these narrative descriptions, since it is particularly able to discern patterns of theme and content in such narrative data.

In the phenomenological analysis, indications of the cause and nature of the transformation, the emotions and thoughts experienced during it, and the aftereffects of the experience were noted. Since individual divergence in self-stages may be marked (as Kohlberg found in moral development), the protocols were examined to identify any common thread or theme of transformation in general. What leads some to allow or enter into self-change, while the terror of the nonself stops this change for others?

These themes were then addressed through the lenses of theory (including Loevinger, Kegan, Jung, and an Existential Phenomenological view of the self), and a classification of theoretical congruence was made. Although theoretical perspectives must be clearly explicated, both to bracket

them, if necessary, and to enable phenomenological analysis, it is essential to ensure that theoretical foundations do not become a bias that limits the scope of the findings. Thus, the phenomenological analysis portion of the study was conducted before the protocols were re-addressed through the lenses of conformity with any of these theories.

In addition, individual differences were noted. Though the meaning of a particular transformation may not be common, and may reflect an individual's unique life themes and purposes, to the individual involved the particular theme is crucial.

Method

Phenomenological Description and Analysis

A topic such as self-transformation is obviously not one which easily lends itself to positivist methods of laboratory experimentation. Nor would traditional methods of study be appropriate in describing as subjective and personal an experience as this, even if they could be used. As a subject of psychological inquiry, self-transformation presents problems for a more traditional approach. First, it has rarely been studied from the perspective of the lived experience, outside the frame of a particular theory. This theory-based study has been premature, since before theory there must be description of a phenomenon. When

investigating any phenomenon that is in the descriptive phase, the phenomenological methods of data collection and analysis are essential. As Colaizzi (Valle & King, 1979) noted, a truly objective investigation of human experience demands a method, the phenomenological description, which remains with the human experience as it is experienced. An objective investigation would refuse to "tell the phenomenon what it is"; rather, it must have an attitude of "respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself", remaining faithful to the phenomenon as it is. "To deny my experience, then, is to not be objective" (Valle & King, 1979). Thus, when first describing a lived experience, the respondents' own reports of their experience through their narrative descriptions of it, and the rigorously data-centred method of phenomenological analysis, are essential, even if other methods are used to further examine a phenomenon after the description of the phenomenon has been made.

It is particularly because the experience of self-transformation is in a descriptive phase that it is essential not to bias the scope of the results in data collection by theoretical preconceptions. Since this may be an unintentional side-effect of specific questions, this is one important reason for the choice of an open-ended narrative method. Although there are theoretical models that have been discussed and explicated in the Introduction,

these cannot influence the questions asked in either the data collection or analysis; phenomenological methods of data collection are particularly useful in this regard.

Second, as a subject of inquiry, self-transformation, like other phenomena of lived experience such as subjective feelings, dreams, or the contents of conscious experience, would be difficult to study with methods which rely on observable behaviour measured by experimentation. Self-transformation would be difficult to induce for an experimental method of research. Even therapeutic methods of inducing self-change are uncertain. And the subtle changes in the self that result after such transformation may not be readily observable to an outside experimenter, even though they may be very salient to the respondent.

While difficult to study with traditional methods, such a topic is readily and easily studied with phenomenological methods. Narrative methods of description are not merely second-best methods; narrative descriptions are uniquely able to get at one's lived experience, as one has framed and understood it. In the topic of self-transformation, it is how one understands the experience that is important. Such an experience may seem minor to another person; but there is no such thing as an objective value or measure of impact to the self. If the experiencer understands an experience as one of profound meaning to who one is, to one's very being, it is of such profound meaning.

This method or approach has been used in different forms to study human experience, and has gained popularity in recent years with increasing discontent with the old "exogenic" empiricist paradigm (Gergen, 1985, 1987), and with the use of the positivist methods of natural science to study subjective human experience (Westcott, 1988). Kvale (1977) also has criticized the positivist's application of natural science methods to humans, which he sees as a methodologically legitimized manipulation and objectification of the human. Gergen (1985) has noted a turn to the hermeneutic interpretive disciplines, which render accounts of "human meaning systems", as an alternative to the use of models from the natural sciences. Handel (1987) used autobiographies to study the sense of continuity and change of self, and the course of development of the self. McAdams (1985) noted the importance of a "personological" inquiry, one which studies the whole person through a biographical method, since in his view the "life stories" we tell ourselves are equivalent to identity. Honey (1987) discussed the importance of hermeneutic inquiry, and noted that hermeneutics is gaining popularity as an alternative methodology to more positivist conceptions. Westcott (1988) criticized the systematic distortion and trivialization of phenomena studied by traditional methods, quoting Koch, and Reason & Rowan, and notes the methods of systematic autobiographical phenomenology have the advantages of yielding

systematic, humanly meaningful, and experience-based understanding. He used this method in his study of the experience of freedom.

Finally, Belenky et al. (1986) propose a constructivist way of knowing (which they identify as characteristic of many women) as an alternative to an analytical separation-based knowing. Far from suggesting a detached objectivity, Belenky et al. see a connected way of knowing as one which engages the researcher as well as the respondent. As Polanyi (Belenky et al., 1986) suggested, the "passionate knower" participates in the act of knowing. Du Bois (Belenky et al., 1986) viewed passionate scholarship as being "science-making, [which is] rooted in, animated by and expressive of our values".

The next question which arises is that of the analysis of these narrative descriptions of self-transformation. The phenomenological method of analysis was chosen as the method of analyzing the narrative data. Philosophically and pragmatically, phenomenology has advantages as a method of analysis that particularly suits topics of human lived experience, studied through narrative description. Perrott (1977), in researching themes of laboratory research through phenomenological analysis, found an inability to account for human lived experience and context in natural science models of research. He concluded that the natural science paradigm is inappropriate for the scientific study of human

phenomena; it is weakest in areas where the human is most distinguished from the natural world, as would be true of self-transformation. The existential-phenomenological approach can tap and "rigorously explore important human dimensions"; its focus lies primarily and explicitly in human science.

Philosophically, as Green (1988) has noted, a variety of phenomenological views are united by their focus on a descriptive approach to the lived human experience. This has united phenomenology from Brentano's attempt at a new psychology, one which started from a "description of the data unfettered by positivistic blinkers" to Stumpf's "experimental" phenomenology, in which subjective phenomena are systematically explored, and intersubjectivity becomes possible (Spiegelberg, 1972), to Husserl's focus on transcendental phenomenology with its aim to establish knowledge of essences, to structuralist, and then to post-structuralist hermeneutical phenomenology, with its emphasis on interpretations of the meanings of texts (Green, 1988).

Lauer (1958) describes the philosophical stance of phenomenology as a scientific psychology:

...Husserl defines phenomenology as an "a priori psychological discipline," which provides the only secure basis for a scientific psychology...psychology can be scientific only if all the concepts it employs have been investigated according to the phenomenological method, wherein the very essences which these concepts represent are revealed to the investigator.

(Lauer, 1958, p. 34)

Pragmatically, "phenomenological psychology welcomes the study of the individual from either a naturalistic or transcendent perspective,...and is thereby more comprehensive than positivist psychology." (Green, 1988). Consciousness and acts of consciousness are treated with a unique perspective, as real entities. Phenomenological analysis, in its variant forms, gives methods by which one can understand the product of Being reflecting on its experience of profound transformation of the self. These methods have their own methodological rigour, which may be different from, but is not inferior to traditional experimental methods (although they have often been assumed to be, simply because they are phenomenological).

Green (1988) noted that as with any method, "there are a number of different permutations to phenomenological research". However, Wertz (1983) has noted that although different phenomenological investigators have developed different styles of analysis, Giorgi's procedures are present in some way in all phenomenologically oriented research. Recurrent meanings or motifs are thematized; the researcher looks for "the unity and consistency of diverse experiences" (Wertz, 1983), a search for Husserlian essences. The Duquesne model, as described by Colaizzi, includes phenomenological explication, individual phenomenological reflection, etc. For example, Van Kaam's method of phenomenological study categorizes the response

protocols by first using explicit expression, then by "common relevant moments of experience" (Green, 1988). That is, if the underlying theme of several descriptions of an experience is similar, they are classed together. In phenomenological explication, essential or invariant features of the experience, its themes, are extracted; the researcher repeatedly refers back "to the things themselves", the protocols, for understanding. This is the method chosen for this study.

The final step in a phenomenological analysis is the understanding of the meaning of the themes and content of the narrative text. Phenomenological methods of data analysis are strongly data-centred. The very method used in analysis arises from the data. Although there are specific phenomenological methods of description and analysis, Colaizzi notes that each psychological phenomenon evokes its own particular descriptive method. It is essential to Colaizzi's phenomenologically objective approach that the method not dictate the analysis; the analysis must in part arise from the data, the description of the phenomenon, itself (Valle & King, 1978). Wertz (1983) also notes that appropriate methods are developed according to the unique phenomenon under study.

It follows from this that the phenomenological method does not accept that hypotheses about experience can be generated without reference to that experience, nor that the

chosen method and analysis can proceed free of any need to consider context and assumption. A belief that it can be free of assumption will lead to the blind imposition of experimental bias onto the results. Instead, it recognizes that since all experience is contextualized in the individual's lived world, so, too, is the researcher's (Gergen, 1987), and his or her assumptions and implicit theories about the phenomenon must be explicated, recognized, and bracketed as much as possible. However, it should also be recognized that the researcher has essential insight into the phenomenon that cannot and should not be denied. The "agent of phenomenological understanding" is not a disengaged alien, but a participating, engaged, and involved fellow experiencer. Colaizzi has noted that just as the classic phenomenological reflection implicitly resorts to empirical data, phenomenological explication of empirical data is meaningless without reflection (Green, 1988).

Thus, on the one hand, phenomenological methods of analysis attempt to describe, free of interpretation and theory, true to Husserl's purely descriptive "formal science" approach. The phenomenological analysis must proceed in as purely a descriptive form as possible, before theory or interpretation enters the process.

However, although many phenomenologists would rigorously refuse to interpret the themes and content which have been extracted from the data, Wertz (1983) specifically

includes a secondary procedure in which one uses existential phenomenological concepts to "guide reflection", a process in which the researcher's presence is engaged, as the horizons of the description are "co-given", and he or she is empathically immersed in the description. A hermeneutical or existential approach would address the meanings of the experience to the being-in-the-world. It is, in fact, more true to human lived experience that we do not merely describe the experience, out of context or meaning, but attempt to understand the meaning of the experience. The world is not merely lived, but understood in the frames and context of its meaning to us. Therefore, after the phenomenological analysis which yields a description of the experience, an understanding of its meaning must be part of the process. In some ways, this may be more of a post-structuralist approach (Green, 1988). However, there is a limit to this reflective understanding. To continue the reflective process of understanding to the point of constructing a theory about the cause or nature of self-transformation would imply a belief that self-transformation could and does have a universal predictable cause. The individuality of Dasein would contradict that possibility.

To accomplish these purposes, the following procedure was used for the first part of the study, the phenomenological narrative, and then the phenomenological analysis of these protocols.

Respondents

The respondents in this study had some training or experience in phenomenological methods of data collecting. In addition, the respondent sample was limited to those who have had the transformational experience described. The sample for the phenomenological portion of the study consisted of 40 respondents (7 males, 33 females). Thirty-seven of these were among 66 students in a Psychology of Emotions class who had completed an assignment in which they described a self-transforming experience (as one of four possible choices) in a phenomenological protocol. The respondents ranged in age from 19 to 45 years old ($X = 21$). In general, students in this Psychology of Emotions class came from a variety of backgrounds, majoring in Psychology, Education, etc., and a majority are female. These respondents were contacted for permission to use their protocol in this study, and agreed. (One other contactee declined; three protocols were discarded from the original sample since, according to their own protocol, they themselves did not consider their experience particularly transforming; and the remaining 25 students could not be reached). The other respondents were not students, but had heard about this study and contacted the researcher to volunteer to participate.

Procedure

The respondents were asked to describe their experience (with as many details as possible), in a narrative phenomenological report which was open-ended in length and narrative in style (see Appendix A for instructions). They were asked to describe an experience which had significantly transformed their self, their personality, life or relationships, an experience without which they would not be the same person they are today, and to provide background detail and a description of the effects of the experience. The question was deliberately open-ended in order to allow a full and complete report of every detail of the experience.

Although interviewers have certain advantages in data collection since interaction may elicit further responses, and one can probe further if necessary, a self-submitted phenomenological report has the advantage of time and leisure for the respondent to fully recall the details of the experience. In addition, in the case of a question of this nature, which may elicit reports of very personal and possibly painful events and feelings, the phenomenological report accentuates the anonymity of the respondent, as well as allowing time for reflection that may make a full answer more likely. To encourage this, the respondents were allowed several weeks to consider and describe their transforming experience in their own words, and were asked to contact the researcher if there were any questions about

the format during this time. However, to include those respondents who preferred an oral style of narration, and who found written reports difficult, the participants were allowed to use either method in the protocol report. They could give an oral description alone on tape, or be interviewed. One respondent chose to be interviewed, and one submitted a tape. The rest submitted a written report.

After the narrative descriptions were collected, and the results analyzed in a phenomenological theme analysis, a survey was constructed from these findings, and distributed to corroborate the original findings. The survey part of the study will be reviewed and discussed in the Results section.

Phenomenological Analysis

The protocols were analyzed in five major steps, in the following manner:

A) The first step was an overall hermeneutic synthesis of themes and meaning. These overall themes were extracted according to standardized theme analysis (Lyman and Sims, 1988; Colaizzi, 1973; Hannush, 1985; Valle & King, 1979; Wertz, 1983) of the protocols and background questions (see Appendix C). This step-by-step procedure of theme extraction is frequently practiced in phenomenological analysis; Colaizzi (Valle & King, 1979), Hannush (1985) and Wertz (1983), among others, include their detailed

explication of the theme analysis in their studies.

In their study of the themes of twenty-two emotions, Lyman and Sims (1988) noted that there was a high inter-rater reliability in theme abstraction in independent checks; a few themes which were questioned were resolved with reference to the data. This reliability extended to an independent group of 64 respondents who were also able to identify the general emotion described by the theme in every case. The average percentage agreement among respondents, over the 22 themes, was 86%; agreement percentages ranged from 71% to 98%.

In the theme analysis of self-transformation, each protocol was read carefully, a short summary was made of each individual protocol as a whole, and categories and recurring themes were noted. Note was also made of the cause of the transformation, significant factors in the experience, and the aftereffect. These were then used in the second stage to categorize and analyze the individual protocols.

B) The protocols were then categorized according to their major theme, and sorted into groups of similar thematic descriptions. These sorted protocols were then re-read and re-summarized within each broad category in greater detail, covering:

i) A general description of the individual theme of

the experience, including all the elements essential to the experience (those which could not be taken out and have the experience retain its meaning. See Appendix C for the procedure for systematic theme analysis). This description was coded for valence.

ii) A summary of the contents of the conscious experience given in the report, what the individual was aware of experiencing.

iii) The emotions noted in the protocols were listed in the order in which they were experienced.

iv) Background details provided by the respondent were summarized.

v) Aftereffects discussed by the respondent, both short and long term, were summarized, and coded for valence.

vi) Finally, note was made of specific changes or effects noted by the respondent to do with either themselves or their relationships, if these occurred.

The themes of the categories were then abstracted from both these summaries and the protocols themselves, including: i) patterns that reoccurred across all protocols in every category; ii) patterns that occurred across the protocols within a category (e.g. loss), and which differed from other categories; iii) patterns that occurred across protocols within specific categories only (e.g. sexual trauma); iv) differences between protocols within

categories.

C) In the fourth step, the original protocols were then re-read and re-coded for: a) the presence of minor categories or themes. The protocols and the summaries were subsequently re-read to note: b) the emotions cited by the respondents; c) factors which seemed significant (and usually were specifically noted by the respondent as such) in making the experience transforming (e.g. one's first experience with death); and d) the valence and kind of aftereffect. These factors and kinds of aftereffects had already been outlined in the first step, although further reading and classification usually added several less frequently occurring ones.

D) Content Analysis: At this point a content analysis was conducted, using procedures developed by Lyman, Waters, et al. based in part on Hall and Van de Castle's content analysis of dreams (1966) (see Appendix D for the Content Analysis manual). In previous studies of this sort, Lyman and Waters (1989), Lyman, Waters, Sims and others, and Saukarookoff and Waters have cross-checked their coding of the content of narrative data, and generally found a high reliability (of about 85% to 90%).

A general content analysis was performed on six protocols selected at random to ascertain which categories,

qualities and referents would be useful in this study. An abbreviated version was abstracted; specific activities, events, places, time and objects were omitted. Many of the quality characteristics were also omitted; for example, the number of images, thoughts and sensations was not counted, since the length of the protocols varied, and differences in the relative amount of these contents is more indicative of length and of individual differences in general.

The following content analyses were performed:

1) Contents of Conscious Awareness: Aspects of the respondents experience were noted in the summary and further analyzed for specific contents in the external and internal environment.

2) Emotions: The emotions experienced were listed and summarized over the whole group, then general categories of emotions were compared across the theme categories.

3) Significant Factors: Once these factors that were noted by the respondents as significant factors were abstracted in the fourth step, content analysis of the protocols was performed.

4) Valence of the Cause and Aftereffect: The positive or negative valence of both the cause and aftereffect of the experience was noted.

5) Characters: Content analysis was performed to determine whether the main object of focus of the experience was the self, family, friend, or stranger, or the

environment. Then the protocols were coded to determine whether the respondents were alone or with others during the experience.

6) Place: The specific place in which the experience occurred was coded (at home, in a public place, or outdoors).

E) At this point a theoretical analysis was conducted, using the theoretical causes of self-transformation outlined in a previous section. Exogenous and endogenous theories were included; the latter category included such developmental self theories as Loevinger and Kegan. Self-actualization theories, including Jung and an Existentialist perspective, were also used as coding categories. The protocols were re-classified according to their congruence with these theories, and further categories were added as needed to account for the themes noted in reading and coding the protocols (this included relationship identification, for example, and a category for an experience which seemed to reverse self-growth). The protocols were coded in a category if the issue or cause was specifically stated or clearly implied as associated with the transformation. Care was taken not to interpret beyond the information known by the respondent and reported by him or her (according to Colazzi's (Valle & King, 1979) injunction against interpretation dictated by theory in phenomenological

analysis). The entire protocol was used in this section of the analysis, including the respondent's discussion of the background and aftereffects of the experience.

The following categories resulted and were used to code the protocols:

1) Exogenous/Situational: If the protocol noted the presence of external changes associated in whole or in part with the experience of transformation, this category was coded as:

a) Life Changes or Events: Schlossberg (1987) noted that the presence of critical life events is more predictive than the "mid-life crisis" would be. As an informal guide to the presence of life changes, the Holmes-Rahe scale of life change (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) was used; major changes were the sort that Holmes and Rahe scored as above a LCU of 26, and minor were scored below 26.

b) Trauma - Critical Life Events: These critical life events (not, incidently, included in the Holmes-Rahe scale) were deemed to be sudden, traumatic and extreme events that have a critical effect on the respondent. In general, these would include physical and sexual trauma, and other major events like war, kidnapping, torture, etc. (Although these latter are unlikely to be included in a sample from this culture, they would theoretically be important).

2) Developmental: Internal endogenous changes, related to:

a) Age-Related Crisis and change: As noted in a

previous section, many theorists, influenced by Erikson, (i.e. Gould, Levinson) see transformation as associated with age related development. Various transition stages associated with these theories were looked for: identity crisis, intimacy issues, mid-life crisis, generativity, etc.

b) Self - Growth theories: Kegan outlined stages of self-other identification; Loevinger outlined similar stages of self growth, with finer differentiation. These were used to classify the protocols, if any self identification or stage related issue appeared at all.

c) Relationship Identification: Others as objects of identification were coded if issues of identification, or changes toward or away from a particular type of relationship identification were noted: family, intimate (spouse, partner, or boy or girlfriend), child or other (friends or the larger social community).

d) Reversal of Positive Direction of Growth: Most growth theories assume an invariant positive direction of growth. It was noted that several protocols seemed to indicate change in a negative direction, so this was also coded.

3) Internal Change: Catharsis or insight gain. Many of the experiences conformed to the internal causes outlined in the previous section. These themes are incidentally all characteristics of the healthy and/or authentic self-

actualized person. These included:

a) Catharsis of Repressed Emotions: An experience of release of emotions from or about a past situation.

b) Insight regarding: Mortality, Ethics, Realistic Assessment of the world and others, Consistency/ Inconsistency of Self or Others, Spiritual or Peak Experiences, Value of Others and Relationships, and, finally, insights about the Self (greater self-awareness, or more withdrawn introspection, or an internal locus of control). Many of these also characterize various stages in Loevinger's and Kegan's theories.

In general, any of the protocols may have been coded as corresponding to more than one of these theories, since they are by no means mutually exclusive, particularly the insight components.

F) Because the range of respondents did not include sufficient numbers of males, or of mature adults, statistical comparisons between the age groups were not possible. In addition, the numbers of respondents within the categories discovered in the phenomenological analysis (which could not be predicted in advance) were uneven and often small, ranging from 3 in the self-concept category to 21 in the loss category. Again, this made comparison of the categories difficult. Because of this, a brief survey was constructed (see Appendix B) from the information abstracted

from the protocols, to corroborate the findings in the narrative descriptions, and to enable comparison between the categories and ages (since the phenomenological reports did not allow for these comparisons). The survey was then totalled and analyzed according to the categories already identified in the phenomenological analysis. The survey method and procedure is discussed in the Results section (Section F).

Results

A. Phenomenological Theme Analysis

The first analysis of the major theme of the phenomenological protocols yielded overall commonalities and several different distinct categories of themes, within which could be discerned distinct subcategories and thematic characteristics.

Theme of Self-Transformation

Overall, there were universal commonalities in terms of cause, valence and outcome of the experience of self-transformation. It was evident that for all of the respondents the experience was a profound one, one which they frequently described as significant in shaping who they are, their relationships and life path. It is difficult to convey the emotional impact obvious from the protocols in simple theme labels like "loss", or "relationship crisis". One might expect a depth of impact since the respondents were asked to describe an experience which profoundly changed their selves and/or their lives. Examples of some of the respondents' comments about the extent of the transformation include profound positive or negative effects:

"I feel like a new person, as if I have been reborn anew."

"..a real transforming and growing experience for

me. Sometimes I wonder what course my life would have taken, had this not happened. I probably would not be at school now, since it was the experiences of the past ten years that got me here..."

"This experience has changed my whole perspective of the world..."

"this experience...changed my life negatively at the time (both mentally and physically), and has had lasting effects on my personality, self, and relationships. I still don't feel like my old self...This whole experience has turned my life upside down."

"This has definitely been a transforming experience for me. I have grown and developed along side my children.

I have learned so much about how life unfolds and what's important and what's not....This experience ...will continue to influence me for the rest of my life."

"I feel that I will never be the same person again..."

"The illness of which this experience was a portent (or maybe a cause) has recurred in the years following this event and has seriously disrupted my life."

"That major experience of joy marked a turning point in my life and serves as a reminder that I can and do have control of my life. I believe that without having had that experience I would not be where I am today."

It was interesting that the causes of these profound changes were not necessarily profound in themselves (although they usually were); for example, one respondent reported an incident in which her sister left home to work in Europe. Although not, perhaps, obviously significant to an outside observer, it was evident from her protocol that this incident has affected her life and actions from that time.

"...her unexpected leaving punched a hole in my life..."

my world was turned upside down....I have been forced to make new friendships...I am now more confident. The depression...has made me a psychologically stronger individual and a happier one..."

It is not that all protocols would be assumed to reflect this profound change, simply by their presence in the sample; three protocols, discarded from the original sample, did report trivial incidents which had trivial after-effects, according to the respondents themselves.

The profound nature of this transformation was also reflected in the themes of the experience. These themes indicated that the cause of the experience was strong, profound, or very personally meaningful. At the heart of all these experiences was someone the respondent cared about very much, or a perception or insight about something crucial to self or life, or a radical change in their lives and future, or something very positive or negative about an aspect of the self central to self-esteem. In sum, these transforming experiences were very much so, in the respondent's self-perception, a "significant event" in their life history (McAdams, 1985).

Nor was the change limited to one area, even the area central to the main theme of the transformation. A relationship crisis, for example, did not simply affect the relationship, but also the respondent's self-esteem, work ability and achievement, and social relationships with others. The students among the respondents frequently mentioned that the transforming experience dramatically

effected their schoolwork. And almost every one of the protocols was concerned about relationships, in terms of cause or aftereffect. Even a personal failure was of concern because of its impact on others. (This may reflect the relational orientation of the predominantly female sample, or the psychosocial stage of young adulthood). Also, an insight or perception change often occurred as a central theme or aftereffect. The respondents frequently reported that the most significant change was that they could no longer see the world in the same way. A general characteristic of transforming experiences may be their generalized effect on many areas of being-in-the-world, on work, relationships, and perceptions.

This generalized effect was not diffused in its strength and extent by its spread throughout the self. Most of the protocols were vividly detailed with "flashbulb memory" clarity. The respondents described small details of events, even exact words and images that they remembered occurring at the time. These may or may not have been descriptive of the actual event; in the life history memory that is the self, the past is as it is remembered. This vivid detail, and the strength of the impact in so many areas of the being, testify to the power of the transformations the respondents described. It was impossible to encounter these protocols without being moved by this profound impact.

Another characteristic of all of these protocols was the presence of very strong and deep emotions, usually of a negative nature. These included grief, loss and depression, terror, anger, and shame. The rare positive emotions included joy and love. This negative character persisted not only in emotion but in general theme. A full 85% of the protocols could be termed largely or solely negative in theme, although the aftereffects were usually positive (65% noted immediate or eventual positive changes).

Finally, the events associated with self-transformation were often sudden, and were rarely caused by the respondents. Actions or decisions for which the respondent was mainly responsible happened in only 7 (18%) of the reports. The descriptions of the actual experience of transformation often began when the respondent first heard about the crucial event, or encountered the other person central to the experience (if there was one). The protocols often described the moment in the overall transformation of the strongest experience of emotion, which was frequently when the cause was first discovered, and continued with a description of the transforming effects over months.

Other elements of the descriptions varied. The experience was sometimes short (occasionally moments or hours) and sometimes long-term (months). The nature of the strong emotion associated with the experience differed according to a characteristic theme of the cause of the

experience, and can be differentiated within the valence categories. These will be addressed in the theme descriptions that follow.

Central Themes of Self-Transformation

Once the overall theme of transformation had been abstracted, the central themes of the causes and experience of transformation were identified. The protocols were then classified according to their major theme. The causes of the self-transforming experiences are presented in Table 1. Each experience may have had elements of several causes or themes, but in this preliminary categorization only the primary theme was identified. The valence was classified as the overall valence of the experience, regardless of outcome, which in a few cases conflicted with the valence of the experience (e.g. therapy, in one case a painful and "negative" process, led to a completely positive outcome).

Table 1

n=40

Themes of Self-Transformation

| Themes: | Valence: | <u>Negative</u> | <u>Positive</u> | <u>Both</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <u>Loss:</u> | n | | | |
| Mortality: Actual: | 9 | 22.5% | | |
| " Threatened: | 2 | 5.0% | | :27.5% |
| Relationship Crisis: | 10 | 20.0% | | 5.0% :25.0% |
| <u>Trauma:</u> | | | | |
| Physical or Sexual Abuse: | 4 | 10.0% | | :10.0% |
| <u>Self-Concept/Ability</u> Loss: | 1 | 2.5% | | |
| Failure: | 1 | 2.5% | | |
| Success: | 1 | | 2.5% | : 7.5% |
| <u>Life Change:</u> Moving/Travel: | 2 | 2.5% | 2.5% | |
| Childbirth: | 2 | | 2.5% | 2.5% :10.0% |
| <u>Internal Change:</u> | | | | |
| Peak Experience | 2 | | 5.0% | |
| Formal (therapy): | 2 | 2.5% | | 2.5% |
| Insight: re Addiction | 2 | 5.0% | | |
| Empathic | 2 | 2.5% | 2.5% | :20.0% |
| | 40 | 75.0% | 15.0% | 10.0% |

B. Analysis of the Theme of Each Category

The protocols were then re-read and re-summarized within each theme category, according to the second step of the procedure outlined previously. The following theme descriptions were abstracted from patterns observed within these protocols and summaries (according to step three).

I. Loss: 52.5%

The theme of loss of a person one cared about was the most prevalent theme; in general it was characterized by depression and mourning, and may have been accompanied by

the other emotions associated with loss: shock and disbelief, anger, fear and distress, grief, and an empty numb feeling. The loss may have been actual or threatened, and was because of death for 27.5% of the respondents and because of a relationship crisis for 25%. In every case the loss was of a significant affectional relationship, either a family member, a significant other, lover or close friend. The protocol often began when the respondent received the news of the loss - of the death or of the breakup.

The nature of the loss constitutes a sub-theme in itself; as might be expected, it made a difference whether the feeling of loss was caused by the death of the significant person, or by a "breakup" in the relationship, and whether the loss was actual or only threatened with an eventual positive outcome. These sub-themes were associated with the degree of change and aftereffects.

a. Actual or Threatened Mortality: 27.5%

Overall Description:

In every one of these protocols, the actual or threatened death was sudden, and completely unexpected, (in many cases the person was young, and healthy, and therefore the death was a shock) and this may be a crucial factor in causing the profound effect it did. In one case, the threat was to the respondent himself; in every other case, the person whose life was threatened or lost was important to

the respondent; a family member (4 resp.) or close friend (5). Frequently the respondents noted that this was their first experience with the death of someone close to them; this may also be a crucial factor. The nature of the death also may be an important factor; since it was invariably sudden, it was frequently not a natural death - an accident (5 resp.), or suicide (2 resp.). All 11 respondents heard the news of the death second-hand - in several cases quite brutally.

The first response was often shock, a numb disbelief. There were often references to the physical surroundings. One respondent paid irrational attention to the restrictions of daily life (I can't talk to you now, I have to go to work). The respondents were mainly aware of their feelings, which were very intense, even overwhelming, and the physical sensations associated with these feelings. There were questions about what happened, accompanied by extrapolated images of the event, memories of their past together, and thoughts of the loss of their future. "Why?" was frequently asked, particularly in the two cases of suicide. Both of these respondents noted the lack of any warning signs. There was also anger directed at the one thought to be responsible for the death; those who had died in the case of suicide, and a drunk driver in a car accident. As one would expect, the most prevalent emotion was grief, accompanied by many physical sensations of fear, and an "empty, numb"

feeling. Several regretted not saying goodbye. In several protocols, there was also concern for others who would also be grieving.

There was a definite theme of the aftereffects of this loss. First, most still missed the lost person very much, even after many years. This was particularly true in three cases in which the loss had been of someone very close (a grandmother, a fiance, and an infant). "To this day, I still miss my Grannie at times". "I still grieve for _____ ...I still have dreams about [him]."

Second, there was frequent mention of a change in attitude to seeing life and relationships as finite and precious. The respondents were now aware of the possibility of death, and the need to make the most of their goals and life. "I must do something positive with my life that is constructive and helpful to other people." This was particularly true of those five respondents who had lost friends rather than family. One of these respondents wrote:

...it has made me more sensitive to other people's feelings and made me realize that we often take life for granted. We often don't realize how precious life is...we need to get as much as possible out of life because there may be no tomorrow.

The respondents also mentioned the growth they had experienced as a person, which they attributed to the experience of the pain of the loss, and the impact it had on their being. "I questioned life and death...I felt I had grown up very quickly". Many mentioned their greater

empathy and caring for the pain of others ("I can empathize with the depth of [their] pain"), and greater self-awareness, openness and honesty.

Finally, this theme was the only one in which effects on religious beliefs were noted. The loss seemed to initiate questions about death and life and about God. ("[his] death made me question God and religion, and this is something I haven't quite sorted out yet.") In one case this was in a direction away from the religion of her parents: ("Where is there evidence of the kingdom of God? It's not there. It's empty...I am now an agnostic."). For other respondents it was definitely towards a new or renewed search for spiritual understanding. ("I quickly acquired spiritual beliefs...for me, meaning is in people, relationships, spiritual values, emotional expression and empathy.")

Description of Sub-themes:

1) Actual Mortality of Significant Others: (22.5%)

These descriptions were invariably of the sudden unexpected death of people important to the respondents: family (4), or friends (5). The protocols were detailed and clear; minor details of the surroundings and events were noted. In none of these protocols was the respondent present at the death; each heard the news sometime later, although one respondent had a short period of anticipation

before the news was confirmed. After the first shock, and the reaction of disbelief, the respondents describe a devastating grief, thoughts and images of the person who has died, associated behaviour (sobbing, etc.) and awareness of the loss of the person from one's life forever. One respondent, who lost her living-together fiance in an accident, wrote:

Pain, loneliness and sadness overwhelm me...I cry, I bargain with God...Images of _____ and I together...he can't die. I've never felt anything like this...I want to die....We love each other so much...How can this be, he's gone?...I begin to realize...[our being together] will never happen again. The shock has turned into a big hole of sadness and emptiness...that will not go away....I am furious and raging at God....Why did you have to take him, why wasn't it me?.... Screaming, rocking, pleading, crying, raging, grieving...

Depending on the individual situation, there were accompanying feelings of anger towards the individual or situation thought to be responsible (i.e. in alcohol or drug related accidents, at the impaired driver, whether the person lost or another, and in the case of suicide, at the person lost), and guilt about chances missed. In several cases, there were feelings of guilt that the respondent did not prevent the event, even though they knew they could not have.

After-effects include a new awareness of one's own mortality, and an appreciation for life. This may relate to an accompanying increase in responsibility and commitment (since there is an awareness that there may be no time to

accomplish one's life tasks in the future). There may also be an increased "other" orientation, a caring for significant others in one's life. In at least two cases (e.g. that of the fiance described above), the loss led to a search for meaning and spiritual understanding the respondents report as crucial in their lives. Most of the respondents still miss the person who has died, although in some cases the event was years ago (in the above case, 10 years ago), and are still grieving the loss. The extent of this depends upon the closeness of the relationship (the loss of one's child would have a different effect than the loss of a friend). However, most (7 of the 9) report that the self change which has resulted from the loss has been surprisingly "positive" in many ways - maturity, strength, and an appreciation of life and others. Not surprisingly, the most recent losses were least positive in outcome, as the respondents were still grieving.

2) Threatened Mortality of Self or Other: (5%)

The theme of this situation is different from those detailed above in that the loss was anticipated, but did not actually occur. One protocol, in which the threat was to the respondent himself, described the experience of receiving a diagnosis of cancer. The theme differs from those of the mortality of others in that the object of focus is the self; the shock and fear is for oneself. The

respondent focused mostly on his physical symptoms, and described in great detail the sequence of events in the hospital the day of his diagnosis, the physical surroundings, and the importance of the presence of members of his family and his girlfriend; it was when he was with his family that his feelings were strongest. ("When I saw my parents, brother...and _____ [live-in girlfriend] I felt a deep sense of love for them...as if they were all I had, all that mattered to me.")

This particular protocol, which may not be typical of this experience in general, includes a peak experience of insight crucial to the self-transformation. This insight, on the evening of his diagnosis, related cancer to repressed emotions. This feeling of connection and "truth" led to deep self-reflection and analysis, and eventually to therapy, which the respondent credits with saving his life. In addition, he relates the significant changes in himself and in all his relationships to the cancer and the subsequent therapy. "Something clicked when I related emotions to cancer, and I knew that I had to acknowledge these emotions or die....it is that moment when I understood what the cancer was and what it had given to me that was the profound transformational experience."

In the other protocol in this category, the life-threatening illness was experienced by the respondent's mother. The respondent witnessed the sudden illness, and

awaited the outcome, which was eventually positive. Anticipation of the potential loss was the dominant theme of the experience, and thoughts and reflections about the ramifications of that loss. Rather than shock followed by grief, in this case the sudden illness evoked shock followed by fear, worry about what could happen, and the accompanying symptoms of fear rather than grief (i.e. restless, hyperalert, etc). Thoughts centred on the person whose life was threatened. The respondent described a new awareness of how important her mother is in her life ("I have become so dependent on her that I could not even imagine a day without her. She is...the central figure in my life."), and an after-effect of an increased appreciation of her and of other significant persons, a new other-orientation. ("I learned that we must never take people for granted...I have become more helpful to [her] and I spend more time talking and relating to her than I had ever before." "I learned to treasure...the ones we love..")

b. Crisis in Relationship: (25%)

Overall, in all of these protocols, the respondents report the experience of a crisis which threatened a significant relationship with which the person is identified, although in 3 of the 10 cases the loss was temporary and the crisis led to a renewed relationship. The loss of a relationship of importance to the respondent for

reasons other than mortality seemed to vary in effect depending on the nature of the relationship, the reasons for the loss, and whether or not the respondents initiated the separation. The estrangement was most often with a romantic relationship (7 respondents); consistent with the age and life task of this sample, the breakup was more likely to be with a boyfriend/girlfriend than a spouse (1 resp.). A younger sample may show the same theme with the family of origin as object, while an older one may reflect the loss of spouse or child. A separation or threat to relationships in the family of origin were reported by two respondents: a mother and a sister.

The cause of the loss or breakup appears to be a significant factor. In one case, the respondent's parents contributed indirectly to the breakup (she feared they would disapprove because the boyfriend was from another culture), and the loss was complicated by a confusion of loyalties, and feelings of regret and anger. In another case, the breakup followed an affair by the other party, and was complicated by feelings of anger and betrayal. However, in one case it was the respondent herself who had the affair, and felt it was invaluable in detaching from her husband, who was fostering her feelings of low self-worth.

Another significant factor may be that the relationship crisis was frequently initiated by the other party. For 8 of the 10 cases, the transformation resulted from the

other's actions, whether deliberate or not. In only three cases was the loss of the relationship initiated by the respondent, and in one of these, the respondent was reacting to actions by the significant other. In both of the other cases the breakup seems to be more an effect of the transforming experience than a cause of it.

In most cases the descriptions of this experience of loss were similar to the experience of loss because of death. The emotions of the other-initiated crises were characterized by grief ("I sat up against the wall and cried, and cried and cried."). The feelings of grief and sadness may be preceded by shock and disbelief, when the crisis was unexpected, and accompanied by anger, betrayal, loneliness, helplessness and low self-worth. ("I felt a rush of a number of emotions all at once. The most intense I had ever experienced. I felt loneliness, sorrow, rage, confusion, disbelief, pain. I began to weep uncontrollably.")

As in the descriptions of loss because of death, there were detailed descriptions of the event, and physical sensations associated with distress. This was marked in the protocol of one respondent whose mother was unexpectedly sent by her father to a hospital in Europe because of mental illness; her protocol included extrapolated images of her mother as her breakdown was described, their past together, and the loss of their future, typical also of the protocols

about loss because of death. "My heart sank...I imagined my mom laying on the green and white carpet...I could not talk because I was crying so hard."

Differences occurred in the nature of the crisis. In the case of the romantic relationships which ended in estrangement or breakup, the causes varied. For the three respondents who initiated the crisis, these included a realization by two that the relationship was poor and threatened their self-esteem, and in the third case, fear of parental disapproval. Another respondent was "let down" by a substance-abusing boyfriend; her protocol focused on the injustice and the lack of reciprocity in a relationship where she was expected to do all the giving. Two others can be described as involving trust issues. In both of these the relationship was serious, with marriage planned in the future. In one of these cases, a sudden unexplained breakup initiated by the other party caused feelings of abandonment, and the loss of not only her relationship with the significant other, but also the loss of her fiance's family, their friends and church, and their marriage plans for the future. In the second, an affair by the other party lead to feelings of betrayal and anger:

What do I do now? Should we stay together? Do I still love her?...My mind began to flood with memories of past experiences....self-esteem seemed at an all time low....How could she have done this to me? I trusted her. I hate her....images of a wedding...images of the two of them together...

The two respondents whose crisis eventually ended in reconciliation described a deteriorating relationship, and awareness of the need for change in either or both parties. The experience ended when the person agreed change was needed and was willing to make changes; this final stage was characterized by determination and hope.

After-effects included those associated with loss in general; for example, the crisis had a negative effect on the respondents' schoolwork. In the case of trust issues, the crisis led to negative aftereffects, including a continuing and current inability to trust the opposite sex and a lack of confidence in oneself. The respondent whose girlfriend had an affair wrote:

I feel as though I will never be able to trust anyone as completely as I have in the past...I will never again let anyone get as close to me...this experience will effect all future relationships between myself and another woman....My self-esteem and sense of identity...seemed to reach...rock bottom.

Similar to themes found in trauma, 6 of the 10, including the two "family" crises, and those that resulted in reconcilia-tion, described improved confidence and better relationships with others. ("I value my mom more...I found myself, evaluated my life and what I wanted to do with it, and it brought my mom and I that much closer.") ("...the time we were separated was essential to our own personal, individual growth...when we reconciled we...were more prepared to try to meet each other's needs.") This may be

because the loss was eventually resolved, or was seen as valuable and appropriate.

The other two respondents whose aftereffects have been negative include, surprisingly, the two who initiated the estrangement in their romantic relationship.

II. Trauma: (10%)

While the loss themes are characterized by grief, both types of transformation associated with trauma (physical or sexual abuse) evoked feelings of extreme fear or terror, the physical sensations associated with terror, and feelings of helplessness and needing safety. Invariably the abuse was a sudden traumatic event. All of these experiences were reported by women, and 2 of these occurred while the respondent was a young child (the only theme that did). Every detail of the event was described with vivid clarity. Every one of the four sought safety - tried to escape, or go to a safe place or person. (One was successful, two others found safety eventually. The fourth, who was violently attacked by her mother, went to her father who refused to help her. This was also the only one for whom the trauma was not an isolated case, although this event was the worst abuse she suffered). Aftereffects include feelings of shame; all four felt fear and helplessness, and a long term loss of safety or feelings of security, and of trust. ("I have never been that scared in my life, and I believe that

these memories and feelings of that night...will be with me for the rest of my life.")

a. Sexual Trauma: (5%)

The experience described was very frightening. The nature of the relationship with the assailant may be important; for these two respondents, the assailant was a stranger, and the incident occurred outside, in their own neighbourhood (one was a child, the other a young adult). The young adult, although frightened, managed to escape unharmed. The after-effect of this experience were negative in the short term, while in the long term she described gaining strength and determination from this experience (possibly because she escaped through her own efforts). In the second case, the respondent reported fewer short term effects, but many negative long-term effects on sexual relationships in adulthood. She wrote:

...this definitely contributed to an aftereffect in the relationship to my body and to sexuality...as soon as it [relationships with men] had to do with the body, I felt threatened, I felt like running away....I'm still having a hard time with it.

b. Physical Trauma: (5%)

In both of these cases, the abuse was extreme, physical, and life-threatening, and committed by a significant person (mother and boyfriend) from whom the respondents expected love. The predominant emotion of the

experience was terror, and in both cases fear remained as a long-term after-effect. One respondent who, as a child, was beaten and burned by her mother reported disillusionment and fear, as well as compassion for others.

I don't want any children. I'm more pessimistic about long-term relationships...I don't think of dad as the all-protecting superman I once thought he was. I feel a sense of loss...I gave up my dreams for a perfect ideal family...I became more sensitive to children from dysfunctional homes.

The other respondent was beaten, terrorized over several hours, and her life threatened by her boyfriend. She reported being still frightened, particularly of men in her life.

I now realize that I am powerless against men. That if they wanted to do something to me, they could and that as women I can not do much about it. It scares me to think that I have no control when it comes to men...I can not handle a man raising his voice...if a man hurts me even by mistake, it brings back all those feelings of terror and helplessness...

These experiences of terror seem to have left long-term fear which the respondents still re-experience in similar situations, even after years.

III. Challenge to Self - Abilities: (7.5%)

Three respondents described experiences in which a threat or challenge to a self-identified ability occurred. In one, an athlete suffered a bad injury which threatened his athletic abilities; in another, the respondent faced a featured musical role in a concert and was eventually

successful; in the third, the respondent anticipated, then experienced, a devastating failure in his scholastic achievements at university. All three began their protocols at the point when this threat to their self-esteem became salient, but the outcome was not yet known, and ended when the outcome was confirmed, positively or negatively.

Common strong feelings of worry, fear or dread characterized the anticipation stage in these three protocols, along with the physical sensations of nervousness and fear. There was also a strong and common sense of self-doubt. Although these feelings were self-referential, all three respondents were also aware of the judgement of others; the athlete worried about letting his teammates down, the musician about what her family and friends in the audience would think, and the student about his family's disappointment about his failing marks. Both of the negative experiences included worries about the future, and anger as well as fear.

During the experience, the different nature of the challenge influenced the focus of attention. The athlete focused on physical sensations, particularly the pain of the injury (as might be expected), as well as repeated references to the physical limitations this caused. During the time he waited before the extent of the injury was confirmed, he dealt with his worries by minimizing and denying them (e.g. thoughts of the reasons why a trip to

Emergency was not necessary - "it's Friday night, they're going to be real busy"). When he heard that his injury was bad, he felt panic and worry about the future ("out for 6 - 12 months - anger, fear, will I walk again? play ball again? anxiety about surgery, panic, what about finals? depression, resentment, pain, great pain, sadness.")

The student experienced not only strong worries about the future, and imagined humiliation, but also guilt, regret, and self-blame about his past actions that had led to his failure:

What am I going to do? How will I tell my parents? I felt really scared...like a total failure...What will all my friends say?...the humiliation my parents would feel...How could I have been so stupid. My future is over.

While waiting to receive his marks, he dealt with his fear by praying he would have passed.

The musician, who was successful, was aware of a desire to do well as she waited her turn to play, and some sadness that this was the last concert that she would play in front of her family and high school friends. As she waited, she dealt with her nervousness by becoming absorbed in listening to the music, and reminded herself she was ready and able. During her concert, she was aware only of the music and of a sense that she was doing well; afterwards she felt pride and feelings of accomplishment.

The aftereffects of the two who experienced negative outcomes were negative in the short term, and more positive

in the long term. The physical activities of the athlete were restricted while he was recovering, and he felt helpless and useless. The injury happened recently and the respondent reported that he is still recovering, but appreciates his increased caution and awareness that he is not invincible, and appreciation of his life, and family (a reaction noted above in situations of loss). The student had a very difficult period during which his failure had a "very great effect" on him; he was no longer social or outgoing. In the long-term, he became studious and very committed to his schoolwork, much more conscientious and responsible, and no longer socialized; this has led to his doing well in school, which has increased his self-esteem and given him confidence. He wrote:

I have come to realize just how important university is, and I am highly self-motivated...I stick up for myself a lot more....because my parents are so proud of how well I am doing in school...has influenced my self-esteem. I actually have a career in focus....The thoughts of what I went through have never left me... this is one of the main reasons why I study so hard.

In many ways, this experience was an identity crisis, which has resulted in a commitment to work.

The success the musician experienced led to pride in the short term, and an increased confidence and self-esteem in the long term. Her experience that she could be the centre of attention and survive without panic gave her confidence in herself and her abilities and had enabled her to speak out more in front of others. It is ironic,

perhaps, that both failure and success could result in such similar aftereffects of confidence and self-esteem.

IV. Life-Change: (10%)

a. Moving/Travel: (5%)

Moving was a self-transforming experience for two respondents, both of whom were female. One was in her middle teens at the time, and her parents initiated a life change of moving residence from a small town into the city. The other moved to Canada from Britain in her middle twenties, leaving behind her family, friends, job and culture. As Levy-Warren (Bloom-Fesbach, 1987) notes in discussing cultural re-location, the factor of choice may be a crucial issue here, as well as the age at which this occurred, the associated loss of friendships and other relationships and the degree of change. The respondent who was moved by her parents experienced a reluctance and sadness at the thought of leaving, anger towards her parents, depression about losing close, lifelong friends, school and stability, and feelings of helplessness to resist the change. She was aware of all the experiences she expected to have with her friends that she would miss, and although she was also excited about the novelty of the new city, found it hard to adjust to new friends and school.

In contrast, the experience of the respondent who chose to move to Canada was positive, characterized by feeling

ready to go, excited and interested, and experiences of feelings of peace, calmness and timelessness on the journey to Canada. The journey seems to have been an important part of the process; the respondent described it as "a contained space between two totally separate portions of life...I absolutely needed but didn't know why"; as being "prepared in silence and solitude" for her new life alone in a new country. The circumstances (sailing on a cargo ship with a crew who did not speak English) enforced an isolation and inactivity which gave her time to let go of the past and get ready for the future. She was aware mostly of the sights, smells and activities of shipboard life, and of her feelings of timelessness and peace. "[What was] important was...the time I spent on my own doing nothing above the ocean...being carried along...while I had nothing to do but get ready for being almost totally on my own."

Yet the moving resulted in positive after-effects for both respondents. The first respondent eventually realized it was up to her to change her attitude about the move; she let go of her old life, and accepted and began to enjoy her new life and friends. She credited it for making her more outgoing and accepting of change:

I realized that I was the only one who could change the way I felt about the move...the next move [was] much easier since my attitude had changed. The experience had made me more outgoing in social situations and more accepting of change.

The second felt that the journey and move helped her

begin her life on her own, to detach herself from the social roles her family position had dictated.

There seemed to be nothing left in England...our circle of friends had broken up. I was ready to go. I felt guilty at leaving my parents...for wanting to go away, for being so excited. My aunt...was glad I was going... because this way I wouldn't sink into the youngest daughter role of looking after parents at my own expense, which is what happened to her.

b. Birth of Child: (5%)

The theme of these two protocols was the experience of going through childbirth. There was a great deal of pain and fear, but for both the birth was a "special" one, for different reasons. In one case the birth was her first, in the second, it was a difficult and painful Caesarean section, and her last. For both of these protocols the birth itself was a "peak" experience of joy difficult to adequately describe. The characteristic feelings of this experience included awe and elation, joy and love. ("A beautiful face...angelic. Glowing and surrounded by pure light." "The birth was wonderful and wondrous. It was by far the most exhilarating experience that I've ever had...A miraculous accomplishment.")

The descriptions were extremely vivid, as if every sensation and experience was remembered with clear detail. As one might expect, awareness of their physical sensations was uppermost, particularly and not surprisingly, the pain. As one respondent described it: "I am only pain, all over,

everywhere. Must have died. Must be hell." However, for the other respondent the labour was fairly quick, and her general feelings of euphoria seemed to help balance the pain. As well as pain, there were details of all the physical sensations of labour and birth, and all of the feelings.

Both noted as aftereffects strong feelings of happiness about being a parent, and strong bonds with the child, with whom they were very close emotionally. ("Nothing more meaningful in this world than having a child...this child fulfils some of my greatest needs. When we are together we like to be quiet...we are at peace with each other.") One respondent called her experience of giving birth to her son a "miraculous accomplishment"; there was a sense of personal growth from this experience, the awareness of responsibility, a new maturity and patience.

V. Internal Change: Insight/Therapy: (20%)

Eight respondents described experiences in which the change was internal, involving a change in understanding or perception of themselves and others in the world. Two of these occurred in a "peak" or anomalous experience of unity with the world, beauty, and joy, and two others in situations of formal therapy. Four respondents experienced "spontaneous" insights or realizations which changed how they saw themselves or others; two of these concern

alcoholism, and two can be characterized as an empathic understanding of another's experience.

a. Peak/Anomalous Experiences: (5%)

Two respondents experienced a peak or anomalous experience; one was at least partially drug-induced, and the other was spontaneous. Although the cause and situation of these experiences was quite different, many of the emotions were similar: both experienced joy and euphoria, contentment, an aesthetic emotion of a sense of beauty, and a feeling of belongingness and unity. Both were aware of their physical surroundings, which seemed very beautiful in every detail, and a sense of familiarity or belonging. The respondent who experienced a spontaneous peak experience wrote:

...a streak of joy down to the solar plexus, face-splitting smile...Ecstasy!...We did it!... the view, the mountains, the valley, the farms and cows, the glorious sunshine - God, this is beautiful! Everything looked very familiar, comforting yet exciting...

Commonalities include the fact that both had experienced a recent and radical life change characterized by openness to new experiences in which they left behind one life and moved to another city. The physical situation was outdoors for both. But the situation and precipitating cause was quite different, and this may be related to the marked difference in aftereffect. One respondent was outdoors at a music festival; although surrounded by others,

he was essentially alone throughout. He attributed his peak experience to the drug he was smoking and the music, as well as his openness to and curiosity about anomalous experiences. His experience included not only an awareness of beauty, unity and joy, but also feelings of reference; eventually, by the end of the experience, he was sure the musicians and the people around him were directing attention and messages to him. "...they want to befriend me...smiling at me and seem to recognize something about me...I believe they have certain plans involving me...even the musicians on stage are aware of me and are directing their songs at me." According to the respondent, although this experience resulted in the short term in a sense of meaning and beauty in life, it was also the cause of an eventual psychosis, with long term negative effects on every aspect of his life. This was the only case in which a positive experience lead to a negative aftereffect.

The spontaneous experience of the other respondent occurred after many changes in her life had unfolded remarkably easily, at the beginning of her new, self-directed life (symbolized for her when she returned across the Canadian border into a beautiful sunny day in the country, leaving behind an American marriage, job and life). As well as feelings of joy and beauty, this respondent experienced feelings of achievement, a sense of freedom and relief, and feelings of warmth and love. This may be

attributed to differences in their ages, in the cause of the peak experience, and in the situation, which she shared with her daughter. She described the entire experience, from the beginning of the changes she made in her life to their culmination in her peak experience, as a "turning point" in her life. There was a sense of a positive feeling of surrender to a positive fate. Eventually she realized that she had to make active changes as well, and now has a new self-direction in her life; "Life has more direction, more genuineness, more serenity and peace, more happiness."

b. Insight: (10%)

Insight-induced transformations included two kinds: one which involved a realization of alcoholism, and one which involved an empathic understanding of another.

1) Insight about addiction: (5%)

This insight into the fact of addiction to alcohol had strong impact on both of the respondents, profoundly changing their lives. In both cases the insight occurred after promises to stop drinking had been dramatically broken. However, the fact that in one case the addiction was the respondent's own alcoholism, while in the other it was the respondent's father who was an alcoholic, makes the situations and experiences quite different.

According to the alcoholic respondent, the experience of the realization of his own alcoholism was a situation of

"hitting bottom". After he had promised not to drink over Christmas, he awoke on January 2 with no memory of the previous week. The experience was characterized by strong awareness of the physical symptoms of a very bad hangover, and of his inability to remember what day it was, which led to thoughts and attempts to figure this out. ("...I feel terrible, shaky...what the hell happened to the last few days."). There were also thoughts and fears that he had damaged his brain and ruined his current relationship. He felt despair ("I'm really screwed up - terror, frustration, bewilderment and despair is all I feel"), and struggled between thoughts of A.A. and feelings of shame at being thought an alcoholic. ("What if someone sees me going in there.") He dealt with this conflict by thinking of numerous reasons to go, persuading himself through repeated reminders that he didn't "want to keep feeling this way". This struggle was finally resolved when he encountered a friend at A.A., and felt relief and hope. "A sense of relief floods over me. I feel safe; if _____ can stay sober so can I."

Aftereffects for this respondent include a difficult period of dealing with his alcoholism resulting in sobriety that has continued for eight years, a return to university, and other wide-spread changes in his life. Dealing with his alcoholism forced him to deal with the reasons for it. He wrote: "My alcoholism was exactly what I needed to make me

get mentally well. My past experiences because of alcohol are my greatest assets."

The other respondent realized her father was an alcoholic after a week at a Christian summer camp. While she waited for her family to pick her up, she was looking forward to seeing her family, wanting to share her good times, her elation about her new friends and religious experiences and "feeling like a whole new person". When her family arrived, "suddenly...everything fizzled, all my inspiration, everything..." She became aware of various non-verbal clues that her father was drinking, and felt intense disappointment, even hatred, depression and sadness. "I knew my dad had been drinking. And obviously a lot, too...I looked at him, he seemed so ugly to me. I hated him". She then realized he would always be the same. "I wanted a dad; I didn't love the one I had. My heart ached. I wanted to love him. I hoped he would change. I realized he was never going to change, I could never love him again."

This understanding released the respondent from self-blame for her father's addiction. She noted the experience had positive aftereffects of detaching her from her father and her attempts to save him, giving her a determination not to become an alcoholic herself, introducing her to religion and God, and increasing her self-confidence.

...it was not my fault my dad was so addicted to alcohol...I could not feel guilty for my dad's actions anymore. Now, I had learned to love myself and let him go...Just because he was my father, it didn't

mean I would turn out like him. I felt I had broken free.

The week away from her family, the good times she had experienced there, and the contrast to her feelings when she saw her father had been drinking again, broke her former way of being.

2) Empathic Understanding: (5%)

Both of these cases were experiences in which the respondent (young and fairly sheltered) came to understand the life experience of a very different person in a very different life situation. In one, which reminds one of Buddha's awakening, the respondent encountered homeless women and children for the first time during a trip to Los Angeles; awareness of the contrast between Beverly Hills and the alleys of the homeless evoked guilt, remorse, upset feelings and anger, and a desire to help. According to the respondent, this experience has led to a change in values. "I think if I had not had this experience I would have still been a snotty girl who wanted everything." "I am more charitable and hardworking."

The other respondent reported an experience with an elderly resident of the home in which she volunteered, which touched her deeply and changed her perspective in life. She realized her good fortune and came to appreciate the choices in her life, expanded her "restricted vision".

Both respondents reported an increased understanding of others in general, and an appreciation of their own lives, of things they had always taken for granted.

c. Therapy: (5%)

Commonalities of the therapy-induced transformations included the fact that both respondents were participating in (different) intensive group therapy (programs which immerse the participant for several weeks) which involved intense emotional work. Both noted the help of the emotional support of others in the group. ("I was very affected by watching other men go through similar experiences." "My friend comes to me and holds me...she rocks me back and forth. Slowly my panic and fear subside...") Feelings during the experiences included fear, even terror, anxiety and neediness, wanting to be reassured and nurtured. ("The six weeks were very sledgehammer...so difficult. Feeling very afraid, terror...Rage work - would feel out of control...felt I was going into a black hole....Neediness, anger, wanting time and attention.") Both came to realize life-long patterns of emotions and behaviour; insights gained in the therapy led to increased self-awareness and understanding and profound positive change in the self.

C. Age and Cause of Transformation

The age at which the transformation experience occurred was most frequently university age, the early 20's (the age of most of the respondents: see Table 2). In part, this was because most of the respondents reported experiences which had happened fairly recently (65% within 3 years).

Table 2

n=40 Age of Respondents and Number of Years
Since Experience

| Age | Gender | | # of Years since Transformation | | |
|---------|--------|---|---------------------------------|------|-------|
| | F | M | Years | Resp | % |
| a)18-23 | 21 | 4 | 0 - 3 | 26 | 65.0% |
| b)24-27 | 2 | 1 | 4 - 8 | 7 | 17.5% |
| c)28-35 | 5 | 1 | 9 - 12 | 2 | 5.0% |
| d)36-45 | 5 | 1 | 13 - 18 | 3 | 7.5% |
| | | | 19 - 25 | - | - |
| | 33 | 7 | 26 - 32 | 1 | 2.5% |
| | | | unknown | 1 | 2.5% |

Table 3

n = 40 Frequency Distribution
Age of Transforming Experience

| Age: | Child | Middle | H.School | Early 20's | Late 20/30 |
|--------------|-------|--------|----------|------------|------------|
| Loss: | | | | | |
| Mortality | | 1 | 3 | 7 | |
| Relationship | | | | 9 | 1 |
| Trauma: | | | | | |
| Physical | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Sexual | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Self: | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Life Chng: | | | | | |
| Birth | | | | | 2 |
| Moving | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Int Chng: | | | | | |
| Peak | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Insight | | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Therapy | | | | | 2 |
| | 2 | 2 | 6 | 24 | 6 |

The low numbers of respondents within the separate categories did not allow statistical age comparison of the sub-categories within the theme categories; this was therefore done with the survey data (section F) where possible.

Cause of Self-Transformation

The causes of the self-transforming experiences, both major and minor, are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6. The protocols were re-examined for the presence of minor themes. Many protocols described experiences which crossed several categories; these were included in all applicable categories in this re-classification (mean number of categories: 2.08). These were coded only if mentioned as an aspect of the experience or its immediate background, and not if mentioned only as a background theme or aftereffect that was only remotely associated with the experience.

Table 4

Cause and Valence of Transformation:
n = 83 (categ) Major and Minor Categories

| Cause: Valence | Category | | | | | Total |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | <u>Loss</u> | <u>Trauma</u> | <u>Self-Conpt</u> | <u>Life-Chng</u> | <u>Internal</u> | |
| Neg/mix | 36.1% | 9.6% | 4.8% | 2.4% | 12.1% | 65.0% |
| Positive | 7.2% | - | 1.2% | 12.1% | 14.5% | 35.0% |
| Total | 43.3% | 9.6% | 6.0% | 14.5% | 26.6% | |

An interesting anomaly in Table 5 is the difference in

frequency between the major and minor themes in the categories of mortality and insight. It would appear that if a death is involved in the experience, it is usually a major theme. Only once did the experience of a very recent death contribute to the crisis but not cause it. Every other time this theme was cited, it was the major theme in the protocol.

Table 5

| n = 40 (resp) | Cause of Transformation: Percentage of Categories | | | n (categ) = 83 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Themes | Major 40 | Minor 43 | % Major & Minor 83 | |
| <u>Loss:</u> Mortality - Actual: | 22.5% | 2.3% | 12.1% | |
| - Threatened: | 5.0% | - | 2.4% | = 14.5% |
| Relationship Crisis - | | | | |
| Romantic: Breakup: | 12.5% | 4.7% | 8.4% | |
| Divorce: | 2.5% | 2.3% | 2.4% | |
| Reconciliation: | 5.0% | 2.3% | 3.6% | |
| Closer to Other: | - | 14.0% | 7.2% | |
| In Family of Origin: | 5.0% | 9.3% | 7.2% | = 28.8% |
| <u>Trauma:</u> Physical Trauma: | 5.0% | 9.3% | 7.2% | |
| Sexual Trauma: | 5.0% | - | 2.4% | = 9.6% |
| <u>Self-Concept:</u> | | | | |
| Ability Loss: | 2.5% | - | 1.2% | |
| Failure: | 2.5% | 4.7% | 3.6% | |
| Success: | 2.5% | - | 1.2% | = 6.0% |
| <u>Life Change:</u> Birth: | 5.0% | - | 2.4% | |
| Travel: | 2.5% | 14.0% | 8.4% | |
| Moving: | 2.5% | 4.7% | 3.6% | = 14.4% |
| <u>Insight:</u> Peak/Anomalous: | 5.0% | 4.7% | 4.8% | |
| Therapy: | 5.0% | - | 2.4% | |
| Re Addiction: | 5.0% | 2.3% | 3.6% | |
| Empathic: | 5.0% | - | 2.4% | |
| Re Self(emotions,past): | - | 20.9% | 10.8% | |
| Spiritual/Relig: | - | 4.7% | 2.4% | = 26.4% |

The presence of "insight" as a major or minor theme shows a reverse pattern to that of mortality. In four protocols it was a major theme, while 12 respondents noted that insight gained in the experience was an important part of it (this was not scored if the insight was mentioned as an aftereffect of the experience). In these cases, however, it was clearly a minor theme, although a crucial one. For example, the respondent who faced a diagnosis of cancer noted that the insight he gained about himself was crucial, to the point of being responsible for healing; however, his protocol was included in the "loss - threatened mortality" category, since that was the major theme of the experience and its cause. As 40% of the respondents included an experience of insight about others, themselves, or religion as a primary or secondary theme, insight may be a crucial secondary factor in a transforming experience.

In Table 6, the percentages of respondents within each major and minor category are presented. The percentages do not add up to 100%, since each respondent may have been included in one or more minor categories, in addition to the single major category.

Table 6

Cause of Transformation
 n=40 Percentages of Respondents within Each Category

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| | | <u>Loss</u> | |
| Mortality: Actual : | 25.0% | Relationship Crisis: | |
| Threatened-Self: | 2.5% | Romantic: Breakup: | 17.5% |
| -Other: | 2.5% | Divorce: | 5.0% |
| | | Reconciliation: | 7.5% |
| | | Closer to Another: | 15.0% |
| | | Family of Origin: | 15.0% |
| | | | |
| | | <u>Self-Concept</u> | |
| | | Ability Loss: | 2.5% |
| | | Failure: | 7.5% |
| | | Success: | 2.5% |
| | | | |
| | | <u>Life Change</u> | |
| | | Childbirth: | 5.0% |
| | | Travel: | 17.5% |
| | | Moving: | 7.5% |
| | | | |
| | | <u>Internal Change</u> | |
| | | Peak Exp: | 10.0% |
| | | Therapy: | 5.0% |
| | | Insight:Addiction: | 7.5% |
| | | Empathic: | 5.0% |
| | | Re Self: | 22.5% |
| | | Spiritual/Relig: | 2.5% |

D.

Content Analysis

As outlined in the content analysis procedures (see page 111) the following factors were used to analyze the content of the protocols: 1) contents of conscious awareness, 2) emotions experienced, 3) significance factors, 4) valence and kind of aftereffects, 5) character referents, 6) physical and social environment.

1) Contents of Conscious Awareness:

Contents of conscious awareness were analyzed for the presence of specific conscious contents such as sensations and emotions, and general and specific referents (Table 7) (see the Content Analysis Manual, Appendix D). Some specific referents were added during analysis when they were found to occur in several protocols.

Table 7
Frequency Distribution
Contents of Consciousness

| | Mortality | RelCrS | Trauma | Self | LifChg | IntChg | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|--------|--------|------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| External | n=11 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 40 | |
| Environmt: | 7 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 24 | 60% |
| Others: | 7 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 28 | 70% |
| Time: | 5 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 12 | 30% |
| Event/Act: | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 28% |
| Internal | | | | | | | | |
| Sensation: | 9 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 31 | 78% |
| Emotions: | 11 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 40 | 100% |
| OwnBehav: | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 19 | 48% |
| Past: | 7 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 21 | 53% |
| Future: | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 40% |
| Why?: | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 12 | 30% |
| "Should"s: | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 10 | 25% |
| Currnt Issue: | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | 5 | 13% |
| Crucial Evnt: | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 12 | 30% |
| Crucial Pers: | 10 | 10 | 4 | - | 3 | 2 | 29 | 73% |
| God/Relig: | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 6 | 15% |

2) Emotions Experienced During Transforming Experience:

The emotions experienced by the respondents during the transforming experience were listed, and are summarized in Table 8. A further breakdown of the emotions experienced within the theme category is presented in Table 9.

The emotions experienced during the self-transforming event or change were usually intense and negative. For example, 72% of the emotions cited by respondents were negative (28% positive). Fully 48% of the respondents were "sad/depressed", 43% were frustrated/angry, and 30% were feeling "terror/panic". Each respondent could and did identify more than one emotion: the mean number of different emotions cited by the respondents was 5.9 (if an emotion was mentioned several times by the same respondent, it was coded only once).

There were differences between the theme categories in emotion patterns (Table 9). Grief and denial/shock was most likely experienced in the loss category (81% of the respondents in the loss category felt grief, 57% felt shock), particularly the category of loss because of death (grief was present in 91% of the respondents in this category, and shock/denial in 82%). The sole exception to this was the respondent who had cancer. Respondents in the loss category were also more likely to feel angry (52% over both categories). All 7 respondents in the trauma and self categories felt fear, which was also present in the loss

category (43% of both subcategories).

Table 8

Emotions Experienced in Self-Transformation
 n = 40 Percentage of Respondents 236 emotions

| Positive Emotions | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Happy</u> | <u>Peace</u> | <u>About Others</u> | <u>About Self</u> |
| Joy: 7.5% | Peace: 5.0% | Love: 15.0% | Confidence: 5% |
| Excited: 15.0% | Relief: 12.5% | Concern: 12.5% | Achiev/Proud: 5% |
| Happy: 10.0% | Relax: 2.5% | Close: 7.5% | Determined: 2.5% |
| Free: 2.5% | Safe: 7.5% | Belong: 10.0% | Ready: 2.5% |
| Elated: 10.0% | Content: 5.0% | Friendly: 2.5% | |
| Interst: 12.5% | | | <u>Awe</u> |
| | | | Awe: 2.5% |
| | | | Timeless: 2.5% |
| | | | Beauty: 2.5% |
| Negative Emotions | | | |
| <u>Sad</u> | | <u>Fear</u> | |
| Sad/Grief/Depressed: 47.5% | | Anxious/Worried: 22.5% | |
| Helpless: 20.0% | | Fear/Nervous: 25.0% | |
| Hopeless/Empty: 10.0% | | Terror/Panic: 30.0% | |
| Numb: 15.0% | | Dread: 5.0% | |
| <u>Surprise</u> | <u>Upset</u> | <u>Other</u> | |
| Disbelief: 12.5% | Upset: 15.0% | Reluctant: 7.5% | |
| Confused: 17.5% | Desire to control emotion: 7.5% | Pleading: 10.0% | |
| Shock: 27.5% | | | |
| | <u>About Others</u> | | |
| Frustr/Anger: 42.5% | Hurt: 5.0% | Lonely: 10.0% | |
| Hate/Resent: 5.0% | Betrayed: 2.5% | Isolated: 2.5% | |
| Bitter: 2.5% | Rejected: 2.5% | Missing Other: 10.0% | |
| Defensive: 2.5% | Trapped: 7.5% | | |
| Disappointed: 2.5% | Needy: 2.5% | | |
| | <u>About Self</u> | | |
| Self-Blame: 2.5% | Worthless/Low Esteem: 5.0% | | |
| Guilt: 15.0% | Self-Pity: 2.5% | | |
| Regret: 10.0% | Embarrassed/Shame: 12.5% | | |

Table 9

n = 40
 Frequency Distribution
 Emotions within Categories

| Emotions | n = | Mortality | Rel.Crs | Trauma | Self | LifeChg | Int | Chg |
|------------------|-----|-----------|---------|--------|------|---------|-----|-----|
| | | 11 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 8 | |
| Sad/grief: | | 10 | 7 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | |
| Anger: | | 6 | 5 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | |
| Fear: | | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | - | 3 | |
| Worthless/guilt: | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | |
| Shock/Denial: | | 9 | 3 | - | 2 | - | 1 | |
| Lonely/Needy: | | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | |
| Upset: | | - | 3 | - | - | - | 3 | |
| Joy: | | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | |
| Love/close: | | 2 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | |
| Happy: | | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | |
| Peace/relief: | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | |
| Concern-other: | | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | |
| Excited/elated: | | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 5 | |
| Confidt/Achieve: | | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

3) Factors Which Made the Experience Significant:

The factors which made the experience significant are presented in Table 10, in order of frequency.

a) The closeness of the relationship, if one was involved, was a strong factor; a close relationship was involved in 65% of the experiences (the loss of a parent, or a long term relationship), including family (28%) or romantic or other friendships (38%).

Table 10

n = 40 Significance of the Experience
Percentage of Respondents

| Significance | Valence | | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| | Negative | Positive | |
| a) Close:Family | | | |
| Spouse | 2.5% | | |
| Child | 2.5% | 5.0% | |
| Parent | 10.0% | | |
| Sibling | 2.5% | | |
| Grandpt | 2.5% | | |
| Other Rel | 2.5% | | = 27.5% |
| Friend: Boy/girlf | 20.0% | 2.5% | |
| Friend | 15.0% | | = 37.5% |
| | | | = 65.0% |
| b) First Experience | 47.5% | 15.0% | = 62.5% |
| c) Intensity of Event/ Change | 40.0% | 10.0% | = 50.0% |
| d) Unexpected Event | 47.5% | | = 47.5% |
| e) Several Events | 30.0% | 12.5% | = 42.5% |
| f) Insight Crucial | 27.5% | 10.0% | = 37.5% |
| g) Felt Responsible | 17.5% | 7.5% | = 25.0% |
| h) Future Lost | 17.5% | 5.0% | = 22.5% |

b) For 63% of the respondents, the event or change had never been experienced before; it was the first death, or the first love. As Dylan Thomas wrote, "after the first death, there is no other".

c) The degree of the change or event was often extreme (for 50% of the respondents): i.e. death or near loss of a loved one, or moving to a very different culture.

d) The event or change often came as a shock; for 48% of the respondents, it was completely unexpected. For 23% of the respondents, it was so radically different from or even against expectations, there were many thoughts of the future together that was lost.

e) There were frequently two or more traumatic events at the same time (for 43% of the respondents).

f) It was noted (by 38% of the respondents) that realizations about oneself or one's life that were triggered by the event or change were the significant factors (and perhaps not simply the event alone). A feeling that one was responsible for the event, positive or negative, may have been a significant factor, for 25%.

In many cases more than one category contributed to making the experience a significant one. In fact, there was a mean number of 3.53 factors notable across the 40 protocols.

4) Aftereffects of Self-Transformation:

The Aftereffects were analyzed for kind and valence (Table 11).

Table 11

n=40 Valence of Cause and Outcome of Transformation
Percentage of Respondents

| Aftereffect | Cause | | | Totals |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-----------|
| | Negative | Mixed | Positive | |
| Negative | 15.0% | - | 2.5% | 17.5% |
| Mixed (largely neg) | 17.5% | - | - | 17.5%:35% |
| L-T Positive (short-t neg) | 30.0% | - | - | 30.0% |
| Positive | 12.5% | 10.0% | 12.5% | 35.0%:65% |
| Cause Total: | 75.0% | 10.0% | 15.0% | |

Although the cause of the transformation was largely negative (85% of the protocols were largely negative (75%) or mixed(10%)), the aftereffects were largely positive (65%). Although, of course, the respondents were not happy that the event had occurred, the self-transformation caused by the negative event was largely a positive one. (For example, the respondents who lost a loved one still missed them, even after many years; but they also noted positive effects to the self, their relationships, and their perceptions of the world).

The aftereffects differed according to the kind of effect that was noted (Table 12); if the effect was on the respondent's future relationships or ability to relate, rather than on the self directly or on perceptions about life, the after-effect was more negative - a reverse tendency to the overall positive valence of aftereffect.

Table 12

| n= 40 | Kind of Positive and Negative Effects Percentage of Respondents | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| | Negative/Mixed | Positive | Total |
| Effects on Self: | 12.5% | 50% | 62.5% |
| Effects on Relationships: | 30.0% | 40% | 70.0% |
| Effects on Perceptions: | 12.5% | 45% | 57.5% |

The after-effects clustered in three main categories. The first, effects on the self (about 33% of the responses, cited by 63% of the respondents) included comments such as

more understanding of oneself, increased self-awareness, "I'm a better person", increased independence and maturity, and increased or decreased confidence and self-esteem. The second, effects on relationships (about 37% of the responses, cited by 70% of the respondents), concerned the respondent's ability to be warm and close to others, to trust or mistrust loved ones. The third, effects on the respondent's perception of life, values, or goals (about 30% of the responses, cited by 58% of the respondents), were cited when a loss (for example) led to a new and different appreciation of life and one's future. Respondents usually cited more than one of these effects (mean of 1.9).

5) Character Referents: Main Object of Focus

The main objects of focus were analyzed (Table 13). This did not code whom the experience was about, as this has already been done, but did code objects of awareness which seemed to be important in the experience. Each respondent may have several objects of focus. When a "minor character" was mentioned, an object would not be scored if little or no attention was given to him or her. (It could be assumed that the experience would have been the same without their presence, real or imagined). The self as an object of focus includes not only the self as self-concept, but also one's feelings, etc., if specifically mentioned as an object of the experience.

The self was more likely to be one of the objects of focus in the themes of trauma, self-concept, life change and internal change; all or almost all of the respondents in these categories (84%) focused on themselves, while fewer of the loss category did (33%), the mortality category especially (only 18%).

The "crucial" object of focus was likely to be friend or family in the loss category. Strangers were the crucial focus only in the trauma category (both the cases of sexual trauma were caused by strangers). The environment seemed important for the life change and internal change categories (58% combined), more so than for the other categories.

Table 13
Frequency Distribution
Object of Focus of Experience

| Object: | Category | | | | | | Total | % |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| | Mortality n = 11 | RelCrs 10 | Trauma 4 | SelfCpt 3 | LifChg 4 | IntChg 8 | | |
| <u>Self:</u> | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 23 | 58% |
| <u>Family:</u> | | | | | | | | |
| crucial | 4 | 3 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 11 | 28% |
| other | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 28% |
| <u>Friend:</u> | | | | | | | | |
| crucial | 6 | 7 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 16 | 40% |
| other | 1 | 4 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 10 | 25% |
| <u>Stranger:</u> | | | | | | | | |
| crucial | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 8% |
| other | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | 5 | 13% |
| <u>Envirnmnt:</u> | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 38% |

6) Physical and Social Environment:

The physical and social environments were coded, and

are presented in Table 14. The specific location of the experience was analyzed across theme categories to determine whether it occurred at home (or at the home of a friend), in a public place, (an institution such as a hospital or school, etc.), or outdoors. The social environment was also analyzed for presence or absence of others. If the respondent was in several of these physical and social environments, each was coded.

Table 14
Frequency Distribution
Physical and Social Environment

| | Category | | | | | | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------|--------|------|---------|--------|-------|-----|
| | Mortlty | RelCrS | Trauma | Self | LifeChg | IntChg | | |
| Physical Environment | | | | | | | | |
| Home: | 7 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 22 | 55% |
| Public: | 3 | 3 | - | 2 | 4 | 3 | 15 | 38% |
| Outdoors: | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | 6 | 12 | 30% |
| Social Environment | | | | | | | | |
| Alone: | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 19 | 48% |
| W.Family: | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 13 | 33% |
| Friend: | 1 | 5 | - | 2 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 33% |
| Strangr: | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 33% |

It is interesting that these experiences often took place while the respondent was alone (48%) and at home (usually their own) (55%), during all or part of the time. This was most obvious in the loss categories (62% of the respondents in these combined categories were alone, and 71% at home), while the trauma and internal change categories were higher in occurrence in the outdoor environment. All

four respondents in the life change category were with strangers, in public places/ institutions; this resulted from the dual themes of birth (in a hospital) and travel/moving to a new place.

E.

Theoretical Comparisons

As a final step, the protocols were re-addressed in a theoretical comparison, to see if the experiences described could be categorized theoretically (Table 15). The theory categories used were described in the Method section.

The protocols were not easily classifiable. And no protocol was completely explained by only one theory. All corresponded to several theories (mean number of theories = 3.5; therefore the totals in Table 15 are larger than 40.) This may imply either that some of the theoretical categories are similar in many ways to others, or that an interaction between endogenous and exogenous causes of transformation is most likely, or that both of these are true. Classification was made more difficult by the need to use only information given in the protocol. For example, there may have been age-related transformations among the respondents, but this could not be assumed if issues and concerns associated with age were not mentioned.

Almost all of the protocols mentioned an exogenous cause or involvement in their experience of transformation: 92.5% noted a major or minor life change or event was involved, in whole or in part. (For 3 respondents there was no major or minor exogenous cause that could be determined at all, and for one, the exogenous cause was only a very minor aspect). However, this does not imply that Schlossberg is completely right, and life change is the most

important influence; every protocol also corresponded to developmental and/or internal theories that may interact with the life change.

Table 15

Frequency Distribution
Theoretical Classification

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Exogenous | | | |
| Life Changes: | Major: | 24 | |
| | Minor: | 11 | |
| Trauma: | | 4 | = 39 |
| | | | |
| Developmental | | | |
| Age Related: | Identity: | 1 | |
| | Intimacy: | 1 | = 2 |
| | | | |
| Self Theories: Kegan | | | Loevinger |
| Stage 1 to 2: | 0 | | Impulsive: 0 |
| Stage 2 to 3: | 1 | | Conformist: 3 |
| Stage 3 to 4: | 3 | | Conscientious/Conformist: 5 |
| to 4 or 5: | 2 | | Conscientious: 3 |
| Stage 5: | = 6 | | Autonomous: 3 |
| = 14 | | | |
| | | | |
| Relationship Identification: | Toward | Away | |
| | Family: | 3 | 8 |
| | Intimate: | 1 | 6 |
| | Child: | 2 | - |
| | Other: | 4 | 1 = 25 |
| | | | |
| Reverse Direction of Self-Growth: | | 6 | |
| | | | |
| Internal | | | |
| Emotion Catharsis: | 5 | Consistency/Incons: Self: | 6 |
| Insight: Mortality: | 6 | | Other: 7 |
| Ethics: | 1 | Self became: | Stronger: 6 |
| Realism re World/ | | | More withdrawn: 6 |
| Others: | 7 | | Self-aware: 3 |
| Value of Others: | 12 | | Internal LOC: 4 |

Few protocols mentioned age-related issues (only 2 even remotely suggested this); no mid-life crises were scored.

Some of the experiences may have actually been a "mid-life crisis", but since no age-related issues were mentioned in the protocol, this could not be assumed outside the information given. And only 35% could be classified as descriptive of issues present in transitions across developmental stages of self-growth. All 14 respondents were classified by Loevinger's theory; six of these also could be matched to Kegan's theory. In fact, 15% actually indicated an experience of a negative direction of growth, in which the self seemed to reverse earlier advances, now showing greater mistrust, for example (at least at the time this protocol was written). This occurred in the cases of trauma, of betrayal by a loved one in a relationship crisis, and in the peak experience which led to psychosis.

Changes in relationship identification matched 55% of the protocols, in which the respondent described a change to or away from a particular self-identification with a relationship, family, intimate (spouse, boy/girlfriend, etc.), child, or other. "Relationship identification" indicates a level of involvement that is more than a relationship issue, or a relationship change. There must be a clear indication that the self was identified with the relationship. For example, a friend who died suddenly was a loss, and a relationship change, but was not an issue of relationship identification. These latter included losses of a fiance, mother, and sister.

As were the rates of exogenous life change, insight or growth associated themes were very prevalent: 87.5% of the protocols could be classified in one or more of these themes (which had been suggested as characteristics of a healthy or self-actualized person).

F.

Survey

Method

With the general circumstances and themes of the experiences of self-transformation identified by the theme analysis, and combined into categories of causes, a survey was constructed using these categories to corroborate the theme analysis, and to discover if there were any age differences. Because of the suggestion effects of a survey, and the brevity of the responses when compared to the details given by the phenomenological reports, the results were expected to be less detailed, but were thought to be useful in corroborating the categories abstracted by the theme analysis.

Respondents

The respondents in the survey sample group were 183 volunteers from introductory psychology classes at both university and college, from personal development courses in community education, and from personal contacts. The age and gender distributions of the sample respondents are given in Table 17.

Materials

The respondents filled out a survey (Appendix B), which was constructed from the information identified by theme analysis of the protocols of the original group.

Results

Of the 183 respondents, 11.5% had never had a transforming experience (Table 16), 27.9% had had one, and 60.1% reported more than one (one subject did not respond). The 21 respondents who had never had a transforming experience were omitted from the rest of the analysis.

There was a significant age difference in this finding (see Table 16). To analyze age differences, the respondents were grouped in ages chosen to approximate self or identity stages (e.g. 18 to 22 years old was thought to include the completion of the identity and other tasks of early adulthood). Because of the difference in the numbers of respondents in the youngest age group and each of the other age groups, the age groups above 22 years old were combined (the "18 to 22" age group included 124 respondents, all others totalled 59). Although this may obscure differences between these older age groups, the numbers within these groups were too small for meaningful comparison.

Fifteen percent (15%) of the youngest age group (18-22 years) had never had a transforming experience, while 52% had had more than one. Only 5% of the older age groups combined had never had a transforming experience, and 76% had had more than one. It appears that the older groups would be significantly more likely both to have experienced a self-transforming experience, and to have had more than one.

Table 16

n = 183

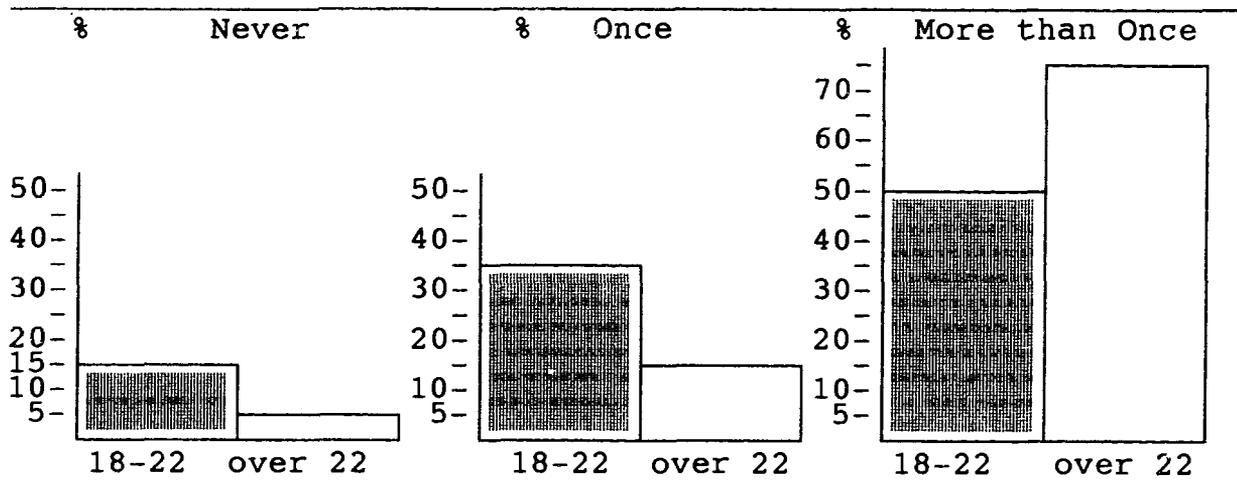
Age Differences in Occurrence Rates

| Age: | 18 - 22 | | Over 22: Combined | | Total | |
|---------|---------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|
| Never | 18 | 14.5% | 3 | 5.1% | 21 | 11.5% |
| Once | 41 | 33.1% | 10 | 17.0% | 51 | 27.9% |
| More | 65 | 52.4% | 45 | 76.3% | 110 | 60.1% |
| No resp | | | 1 | 1.7% | 1 | .5% |
| | 124 | | 59 | | 183 | Chi ² =14.1* |

* p < .02

Table 17

Histogram of Age Differences in Occurrence Rates



It was surprising to find that overall, 60% of the respondents reported having had more than one transforming experience. Because of the suggestion effects inherent in surveys, it is impossible to tell if the high percentage of respondents indicating more than one transforming experience, and the low percentage of respondents indicating they had never had one, was a result of misunderstanding the description of self-transformation. However, one can say that these percentages reflect the respondents' belief that

they had experienced self-transformation, as defined in the survey description ("...an experience of self-change which has profoundly and significantly affected your self, your life and your relationships. You could say that if you had not had this experience, you would not be the same person.").

The respondents who had experienced one or more transforming experiences (n=162) were analyzed by age group (Table 18).

Table 18

n = 162

Analysis by Age Group

| Group Age | n | \bar{X} Age | Gender F M ? | \bar{X} # of years ago | \bar{X} Intensity |
|--------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| a) 18-22 | 106 | 18.6 | 61 41 4 | 3.1 years | 3.9 |
| b) 23-27 | 11 | 24.8 | 6 2 3 | 5.5 | 4.0 |
| c) 28-35 | 19 | 31.2 | 10 6 3 | 7.0 | 4.2 |
| d) 36-45 | 15 | 40. | 9 5 1 | 13.6 | 4.2 |
| e) 46-54 | 9 | 47.8 | 5 2 2 | 15.7 | 4.3 |
| f) 55-65 | 1 | 62 | 1 0 0 | 37 | 5.0 |
| g) 65- | 1 | 69 | 1 0 0 | 15 | 4.0 |
| | 162 | \bar{X} :24.7 | 93 56 13 | \bar{X} : 5.7 | \bar{X} : 4.0 |

Because of the low numbers within each of the groups older than 22, Groups b to g were combined, and compared as a whole with the youngest Group a (18 - 22 years). Overall, 56% of the respondents had had a transforming experience within the last 3 years (Table 19), however, there was an upward tendency according to age. The older age groups were more likely to have experienced transformation many years ago (see Table 19) and there was a higher intensity

reported. However, this does not necessarily indicate that the older groups have more experiences with age, since 47% of the older group indicated their experiences happened between 17 and 27 (a time of identity crises and intimacy tasks). It may also be that transformations currently in progress, or experienced very recently, by the younger group may not be recognized as such, or that the intense transformations later thought memorable will happen within a few years. It may also be that experiences may seem more intense and more transforming in retrospect that they did at the time.

Table 19

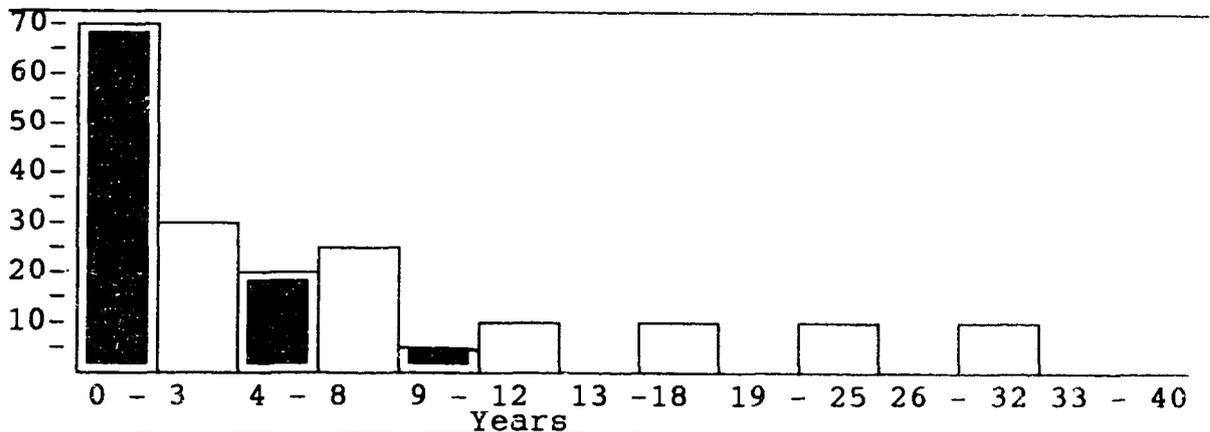
n = 159

Age Differences in Time of Transformation
of Years Ago

| Age Groups: | Group a (18-22) | Group b-g (22 up) | Overall |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 0 - 3 | 70.8% | 28.6% | 56.0% |
| 4 - 8 | 22.3% | 26.8% | 23.9% |
| 9 - 12 | 5.8% | 10.7% | 7.5% |
| 13 - 18 | 1.0% | 12.5% | 5.0% |
| 19 - 25 | - | 8.9% | 3.1% |
| 26 - 32 | - | 10.7% | 3.8% |
| 33 - 40 | - | 1.8% | .6% |

Table 20

Histogram of Age Differences in Time of Transformation



Seventy-one percent of Group a (18 - 22 year olds) indicated their experience of self-transformation occurred within the last three years (70% between 15 and 19). Only 29% of Group b - g combined (22 up) experienced self-transformation within the last three years. Both Tables 19 and 21 show that the age of transformation was more variable for this group.

Table 21

n = 159 Age Differences in Occurrence of Transformation
Age Transformation Occurred

| Age Groups: | Group a (18-22) | Group b-g (22 up) | Overall |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Age of Exper. | | | |
| Childhood | 6.8% | 5.4% | 6.3% |
| 12 - 14 | 19.4% | 5.4% | 14.5% |
| 15 - 16 | 31.1% | 3.6% | 21.4% |
| 17 - 19 | 39.8% | 12.5% | 30.1% |
| 20 - 23 | 2.9% | 25.0% | 10.7% |
| 24 - 27 | - | 10.7% | 3.8% |
| 28 - 32 | - | 14.3% | 5.0% |
| 33 - 38 | - | 12.5% | 4.4% |
| 39 - 45 | - | 7.1% | 2.5% |
| 46 - 52 | - | 1.8% | .6% |
| 53 - | - | 1.8% | .6% |

Cause of Self-Transformation

The causes of the self-transforming experiences are presented in Tables 22 and 23. Each respondent may have checked more than one of the categories which represent the causes; on average, 2.6 categories were checked per respondent. There was an age difference here, as well; however, it was not large. The youngest group (18 - 22) checked 2.42 categories on average, and the other age groups combined checked 2.84 categories on average. Not only were the older groups more likely to have had a transforming experience, and more likely to have had more than one, but their experiences were more complex and elaborate, crossing several categories of change.

It should be noted that these results (Table 23) are equivalent to those presented in Table 5, in which the major and minor categories of the phenomenological data were combined. Since more than one category was checked, it was not possible to determine which was the major theme.

All categories checked by the respondents were included in the unadjusted tally, except in the few cases in which information given in the explanation clearly contradicted the meaning of the category. These were omitted.

Table 22

Cause of Transformation: % of Categories

| n=419 | | Category | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|------------|-----------|----------|-------|--|
| Cause: | Loss | Trauma | Self-Conpt | Life-Chng | Internal | | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| Valence | | | | | | | |
| Neg/mix | 30.8% | 9.3% | 10.0% | 5.3% | 1.2% | 56.6% | |
| Positive | - | - | 11.2% | 6.7% | 25.3% | 43.2% | |
| Unknown | | | .2% | | | .2% | |
| Total | 30.8% | 9.3% | 21.4% | 12.0% | 26.5% | | |

Except for the self-concept category, these results (Table 22 and 23) are almost identical to the phenomenological results (see Table 5).

Table 23

Cause of Transformation:
 Percentage of Categories and of Respondents
 n = 419 (cat) n = 162 (resp)

| <u>Loss</u> | <u>% Category</u> | <u>% Respondents</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Death: Unexpected: | 6.7% | 17.3% |
| | Expected: 2.6% : | 9.3% |
| Illness/Accident: Self: | 2.4% | 6.2% |
| | Other: 1.4% : | 3.7% |
| Breakup/Divorce: Parents: | 1.7% | 4.3% |
| | Divorce Self: 1.7% | 4.3% |
| | Breakup Self: 11.2% | 29.0% |
| Abandonment/Fam.Confl: | 3.1% : | <u>17.7%</u> |
| | | 30.8% - |
| <u>Trauma</u> | | |
| Physical Abuse: | 3.3% | 8.7% |
| Sexual Abuse: | 2.9% | 7.4% |
| Other: | 3.1% : | 9.3% - |
| <u>Self-Concept</u> | | |
| Failure: | 7.2% - | 18.5% |
| Success: | 5.7% + | 14.8% |
| Change Attitude: | 1.0% +/- | 2.5% |
| Change Job/Role: | 1.7% - | 4.3% |
| Change looks: | 3.6% +/- | 9.3% |
| Change Ability: | 2.4% +/-: 21.6% | 6.2% |
| <u>Life Change</u> | | |
| Relationship Comm: | 5.7% + | 14.8% |
| Childbirth: | .2% + | .6% |
| Moving: | 3.6% - | 9.3% |
| Getting Older: | 1.4% - | 3.7% |
| Travel: | .7% +/- | 1.9% |
| Other: | .2% + : 11.9% | .6% |
| <u>Internal Change</u> | | |
| Education: | 2.2% + | 5.6% |
| Therapy: | 2.9% + | 7.4% |
| Growth: | 7.4% + | 19.1% |
| Insight: | 10.5% + | 27.2% |
| Conversion: | 1.4% + | 3.7% |
| Addiction: | 1.2% - | 3.1% |
| Peak Exp: | .2% + | .6% |
| Other: | .7% + : 26.5% | 1.8% |

Age differences in the causes of self-transformation were observed for the following categories (Table 24): (only

the obvious differences have been included).

Table 24

n = 162 Age Differences Between Sub-Categories

| Category | Age: | Group a (18 - 22) | Group b - g (22 up) |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Loss | Unexpected Death: | 10.4% | 30.4% |
| | Divorce: Parents: | 6.6% | - |
| | Divorce: Self: | - | 12.5% |
| Trauma | Physical Trauma | 11.3% | 3.6% |
| Internal Change | Therapy | 3.8% | 14.3% |
| | Conversion | 5.7% | - |

When the percentages of the respondents within each major category were compared (that is, the percentage of the total number of respondents who included one or more of the sub-categories as present as a cause of their experience), few age differences were found. Loss was the largest category; 66% (overall) experienced a loss (as a major or minor category).

Table 25

| Category | Percentage of Respondents Within Category | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| | n= 106 | n= 56 | n=162 |
| | Group a (18-22) | Group b-g (22 up) | Overall |
| Loss | 61.3% | 75.0% | 66.0% |
| Trauma | 22.6% | 16.1% | 20.4% |
| Self-Concept | 40.6% | 42.9% | 41.4% |
| Life Change | 27.4% | 30.4% | 28.4% |
| Internal Change | 37.7% | 50.0% | 42.0% |

These overall results do not add up to 100%, since more

than one theme was checked, frequently across categories.

From the descriptive explanations, it was clear that the high numbers of respondents checking internal change (19%) and insight (27%) as a cause of transformation were actually describing a minor theme in the experience. That is, the cause of the transformation frequently led to internal growth and/or insight, which itself made up a large component of the experience. It was a crucial aspect in making the experience a transforming one, an important contributing factor, but it was not itself the sole cause of the experience. This factor was therefore taken out of the original calculations, unless it was clearly a theme of the cause or of the experience (i.e as it was in empathic insight, or in therapy, in the phenomenological data). The totals and valences were re-calculated, to attempt to discover the proportions of factors which were more properly the cause of the transformation, and not a description of an important aspect of the experience (Table 26).

Table 26

Cause of Transformation: Adjusted % of Categories

| n=332 | Loss | Trauma | Self-Conct | Life Chg | Int Chg | |
|---------------|-------|--------|------------|----------|---------|-------|
| Valence Total | | | | | | |
| Negat/mix | 38.9% | 11.7% | 12.7% | 6.6% | 1.5% | 71.4% |
| Positive | - | - | 14.2% | 8.4% | 5.7% | 28.3% |
| Unknown | | | .3% | | | .3% |
| | 38.9% | 11.7% | 27.2% | 15.0% | 7.2% | |

Emotions Experienced during Self-Transformation

As found in the phenomenological analysis, the emotions experienced during the self-transforming event or change (Table 27) were likely to be negative and intense. For example, 82% of the (357) emotions cited by respondents were negative (18% positive).

Table 27

| Emotions Experienced | | Percentage of Total <u>Respondents</u> Checked | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Positive Emotions | | | |
| <u>Happy</u> | <u>Peace</u> | <u>To Others</u> | <u>To Self</u> |
| Joy: 4.3% | Peace: 2.5% | Love: 6.8% | Confidence: 3.7% |
| Happy: 9.9% | Relief: 3.7% | | Strong/Courage: 1.9% |
| Excited: 4.9% | Hope: .6% | | |
| Other: 1.2% | No Regret: .6% | | |
| Negative Emotions | | | |
| <u>Sad</u> | | <u>Fear</u> | |
| Sad/Grief/Depressed: 42.0% | | Fear/Nervous/Anxious: 25.3% | |
| Helpless: 3.7% | | | |
| Empty: 1.9% | | | |
| <u>Surprise</u> | <u>Upset</u> | <u>Other</u> | |
| Disbelief: 3.1% | Upset: 1.2% | Tough: .6% | |
| Confused: 10.5% | Mixed/All: 1.9% | Neutral: 1.2% | |
| Shock: 3.7% | Futile: .6% | Strange: .6% | |
| | <u>About Others</u> | | |
| Anger: 32.1% | Hurt: 4.9% | Lonely: 9.92% | |
| Hate/Resent: 6.8% | Betrayed: 2.5% | Seek Approval: .6% | |
| Disgust: 1.2% | Rejected: 4.9% | | |
| Mistrusting: .6% | | | |
| Bitter: .6% | | | |
| Jealous: 1.9% | | | |
| | <u>About Self</u> | | |
| Self-Blame: 4.9% | Worthless/low S-E: 4.3% | | |
| Guilt: 4.9% | Self-Pity: 1.9% | | |
| Regret: .6% | | | |
| Shame: 1.2% | | | |

Fully 42% of the respondents were "sad/depressed", 32% were angry, and 25% were "afraid/ anxious". Each respondent could and did identify more than one emotion: the mean number of emotions cited by the respondents was 2.2.

Factors Which Made Experience Significant

The survey asked an open-ended question about the factors which made the experience significant. The percentages of respondents within each significant category are presented in the following table (Table 28).

Table 28

| n=160(resp) 352 checks | | Significance of the Experience Percentage of Respondents | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Valence: | | Negative | Positive | Total |
| Significance | | | | |
| a) Close: Family | | | | |
| | Spouse | 5.6% | | |
| | Child | .6% | .6% | |
| | Parent | 20.6% | | |
| | Sibling | 1.9% | | |
| | Grandprt | 5.0% | | |
| | Friends | | | |
| | Boy/girlf | 23.1% | 5.0% | |
| | Friend | 13.1% | | |
| | | | | = 34.3% |
| | | | | = 41.2% |
| | | | | 75.5% |
| b) Intensity of Event/ Change | | | | |
| | | 34.4% | 1.3% | 35.7% |
| c) Several Events | | | | |
| | | 26.3% | 3.1% | 29.4% |
| d) Unexpected Event | | | | |
| | | 23.8% | | 23.8% |
| e) Insight Given by Event/Change | | | | |
| | | 20.6% | 6.9% | 27.5% |
| f) First Experience of Event/Change | | | | |
| | | 6.3% | 1.9% | 8.2% |
| g) Felt Responsible | | | | |
| | Time of Life | 1.9% | | 1.9% |
| | None of the Above | 1.3% | 5.0% | 6.3% |

The factors reported by the respondents were on the whole similar to the phenomenological results. Since each experience may have been significant for more than one reason, respondents frequently were included in several categories, and the percentages do not total to 100%. A total of 352 categories were noted, for a mean of 2.2 per respondent.

After-effects of Self-Transformation

The after-effects were analyzed for kind and valence (see Table 29). Although the cause of the transformation was significantly negative (71%) (see Table 26), the after-effects were significantly more positive (64%) or mixed (16%, for a total of 80%).

Table 29

n=153 Valence of Cause by Outcome of Transformation
Percentage of Respondents with Cause and Outcome

| Effect | Cause | | | Total |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| | Negative | Mixed | Positive | |
| After-effect | | | | |
| Negative | 20.3% | - | - | 20.3% - |
| Mixed | 13.7% | 2.0% | - | 15.7% -/+ |
| Positive | 37.9% | 7.8% | 18.3% | 64.0% + |
| Total Cause: | 71.9% - | 9.8% -/+ | 18.3% + | Chi ² = 16.96* |

* p < .05

Analysis of the matrix of "cause" by "after-effect" revealed that even when the cause of the transformation had

a negative valence, the after-effect was completely negative for only 20% of the respondents, and both positive and negative, or solely positive, for 52%. (Another way of showing this is to look at each category separately. Of the 110 respondents whose self-transformation resulted from a negative cause, 28% experienced a negative outcome, while 72% had a partially or completely positive outcome).

When the cause of the transformation was mixed, and had both positive and negative elements, this never lead to a solely negative aftereffect, but to a mixed or solely positive outcome for all (100%) of the 15 respondents in this category (10%). Finally, positive causes of transformation never led to solely or even partially negative outcomes; when the cause was solely positive, the outcome was always (100%) completely positive as well (18%) for all of the 28 respondents in this category.

The valence did differ according to the kind of effect that was noted; if the effect was on the respondent's future relationships or ability to relate, rather than on the self directly or on perceptions about life, the after-effect was more negative (Table 30).

As with the phenomenological findings, the after-effects clustered in three main categories: effects on one's self, on one's relationships, and on one's perceptions (Table 30).

Table 30

| n=162 | Kind of Positive and Negative Effects Percentage of Respondents | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|
| | Negative | Positive | Total |
| Effects on Self: | 5.6% | 44.4% | 50.0% |
| Effects on Relationships: | 20.4% | 19.1% | 39.5% |
| Effects on Perceptions: | 1.9% | 30.2% | 32.1% |

Half of the respondents cited effects on the self (41% of the total number of responses). As in the phenomenological data, these included comments indicating more self-understanding and awareness, independence and maturity, and increased or decreased confidence and self-esteem. Effects on relationships were cited by 39.5% of the respondents (33% of the responses), and concerned the respondent's ability to trust or to relate. Effects on the respondent's perception of life, values, or goals were cited by 32.1% of the respondents (26% of the responses). These were often cited after religious conversion or a brush with mortality gave a new and different appreciation of life, or the respondent reported new goals and values. Respondents occasionally cited more than one of these effects (mean number of effects cited was 1.2), so the percentages do not total 100%.

It should be noted that as in the phenomenological findings, the effects on relationships reversed the otherwise largely positive valence of the outcome for the other two categories. After-effects of self-transformation

on relationships were as likely to be negative as they were to be positive, while after-effects on the self or on perceptions were likely to be positive.

Integration of Phenomenological and Survey Results

By and large, the survey has corroborated the phenomenological data on which it was based. The percentages of causes are almost identical. In the original data, the valence of the cause and of the experience of transformation was usually negative (75%) or partly negative (10%) and 53% of the protocols identified the cause as relationship loss (28% death or accident and 25% divorce or breakup).

In general, the phenomenological study can be read as the more reliable, since the far greater amount of detail, including details about the contents of consciousness actually present during the experience, provided much more information than the brief survey. As a phenomenological study, it was also far less likely to be susceptible to methodological problems common with surveys - suggestion effects, forced choice alternatives, and limited time and space to elaborate on even the open-ended questions. However, the advantages of the survey method allowed some questions that could not be determined with the phenomenological method, which because of the great amount of detail had to limit the number of respondents. The survey was able to discover rates of occurrence of transformation, from

"never" to "more than one", and the larger numbers of respondents enabled age group comparisons to be made that were not possible with the small numbers of phenomenological reports in each theme category.

The much greater amount of material provided in the phenomenological protocols may be responsible for some of the differences that may be noted in the results. In general, the tendencies are the same, though the numbers tend to be smaller for the survey results. The percentages of respondents indicating certain categories of "significant factors in the experience", "emotions in the experience" and "kind of aftereffect" were greater in the phenomenological study than in the survey, though similar in pattern. The much greater amount of information given in the phenomenological report allowed an opportunity for reflection and a full development of all possible aspects of the experience to be explored. Less obvious emotions, aftereffects, and significant factors would therefore emerge. For example, in the survey, the respondents did little more than label their emotions. The greater information given by the respondents in the phenomenological group allowed a description of the complexity of the emotional reaction, including minor emotions that also contributed (as Izard (1977) suggests always occurs in complex emotions).

One difference that cannot be so easily explained is between Table 4 and Table 22. When the major and minor

themes are combined, the survey group had more respondents in the self-concept category: 21% vs. 6%. There was more reference to failure and to success, as well as to changes in looks (e.g. losing weight). It may be that the higher numbers of respondents in the survey group resulted in this difference. Or it may be that having been presented with the category, the respondents remembered that, for example, failure in school also occurred along with other events such as loss (this was also mentioned in some of the phenomenological reports as a minor theme, and may have occurred more often than was mentioned).

One final point - the kind and valence of the after-effects of transformation is very similar. The same three themes could be discerned - effects on self, relationships and on perceptions. The largely positive valence of the self and perception categories was the same in both groups, as well as the fact that the relationship aftereffects were more equally divided between negative and positive.

DISCUSSION

What characterizes a transforming experience?

As we have seen, all of the phenomenological reports described strong, indeed very strong, emotions. Major or minor life change was present for 93% of the respondents, and may have been an important aspect of transformation, in whole or in part. Although life events or change were prevalent, internal change or insight was also common as a significant factor in the experience, or as an aftereffect, for 88% of the respondents, indicating that an interaction of both may be involved. A finding that may be rather surprising was that the events that were associated with self-transformation were often sudden and unexpected (48%), and were rarely caused by the respondent (83% were initiated by another). A close relationship was often involved (65%).

Another notable finding was that the experience of self-transformation seems to be most frequently a negative experience (85% mixed or solely negative). However, the after-effects were usually positive, at least in the long term (65% were immediately or eventually positive). These positive effects were most notable in the effects on the self (63%: positive for 50%, negative for 13%) and/or one's perceptions of value or point of view (58%: positive for 45%, negative for 13%). After-effects which were not always as positive were also noted in the area of relationships

(70%); these were negative for 30% of the respondents, and positive for 40%.

How prevalent is self-transformation?

It may also be surprising how prevalent transforming experiences seem to be, given the occurrence rates noted in the survey (88%: 28% reported one experience, and 60% more than one). One might expect experiences of self-transformation to be rare, involving major events and unusual occurrences such as war, torture or imprisonment, or rape, or life events that occur out of expected time in the life-span such as the unexpected loss of a spouse or child. But the most extreme and uncommon examples of life events were not present in these samples, as they would not be present or common in one's life, at least in this culture. Although these kinds of life events are vivid, and likely to have great affect on the self, they are also rare, and may not account for self-transformation in the average person. The life changes cited by the respondents in these studies were not unusual dramatic events, the stuff of TV movies, but the soul searing tragedies of everyday life. In fact, although life change was prevalent, for 28% of the phenomenological respondents the life change was a minor event, even a very minor and common event (graduation from high school, a vacation), and may have been only a minor factor in precipitating transformation.

Perhaps, for the average person, self-transformation is influenced by many smaller transformations that occur throughout the course of one's life. A significant person met at a certain time, a decision, an affair - any of these may be remembered as turning points in a person's life, perhaps because internal changes made one ready to change. As Alden Nowlan wrote, describing a seemingly insignificant event which became a crucial turning point in his life:

Because I went to the store for bread
one afternoon when I was eighteen
and arrived there just in time to meet
and be introduced to a man who had stopped
for a bottle of Coca-Cola (I've forgotten his name),
and because this man invited me to visit
a place where I met another man
which took me away from the place where I was born
I am who I am instead of being somebody else.
(Nowlan, 1985, p. 284)

Looking back, one can see turning points in events that may have seemed minor at the time. This is supported by, and may partially explain, the age difference in occurrence rates noted in the survey results: while 15% of the 18 to 22 year olds had never experienced a self-transforming experience, and 33% had had only one, only 5% of the over 22 year olds checked "never", and 17% checked "once". Fully 76% reported more than one. However, this was not necessarily because the older respondents had more transforming experiences later; for 52%, these experiences occurred before they were 24.

It should also be noted that, on the other hand, some

of these events may not be remembered as transforming after several years have passed. Some of these transformations, particularly the recent ones experienced by young respondents, while profound in the respondent's current life and self, may not be ones the respondents will report later in life as transforming. I do not doubt the subjective impact of these events; the respondents believed these experiences "profoundly and significantly affected" them in such a way that they would not today be the same person had it not occurred, and the protocols gave no reason to doubt that their experience was transforming. But it may be that in the future some of these events may be overshadowed by other, stronger events. A recency effect may be operating here; 65% described an experience that occurred within the last three years. The most recent event is the strongest, the most impressive in memory, and may still be being processed. The trauma of a fire in one's home would affect one as memorable and significant, particularly if it is recent, but as time passes and other life events occur, it may recede in memory, or become fully processed and integrated. Or it may become overshadowed by more recent or more devastating events. It would not remain as significant, for example, as a fire in which one lost all one's treasures or work, or in which a loved one died. In the survey, the mean of the ratings of intensity increased with age, as well. This may indicate the transforming

experiences are stronger, or the respondents more willing to admit them, or that the crucial ones, remembered from the past, were those very strong and intense ones, while the milder changes were dropped as comparatively less transforming.

Yet all these events, small and large, can affect us profoundly. Perhaps self-change, as understood by the person themselves, is more possible and more frequent than we think, and not always the major event we expect. A journey is made up of many small steps, although we usually notice only the major advances. In Weenolsen's (1988) life-history study of loss, numerous events and recurring themes were cited by her respondents as meaningful in their lives.

Other transformations, i.e. the death of someone in a close relationship, or therapy, may always be significant. The survey analysis found significant differences in the rates of these themes across the two age groups (in the over 22 age group, 30% and 14% (respectively) described bereavement and therapy, as opposed to 10% and 4% in the 18 - 22 age group), matching the greater likelihood of the over 22 year old group to have experienced many transformations of a higher mean intensity.

It should also be noted as a possibility that recent transformations that are very painful may be less likely to appear in phenomenological reports, as they are perhaps too current to bear the pain of reporting them. This does not

necessarily contradict the recency effect, since those who experience these very intense and painful transformations may need some time to pass, some processing to occur, before being able to report them to someone else (without being overwhelmed).

As well as the frequency of transformation in general, the categories or themes of experiences found to be transforming may also be surprising, if one was expecting confirmation of theoretical sources of change. We must consider the unexpectedly high rates of themes of loss and insight, and the unexpectedly low rates of trauma and self-concept identification. According to various theories noted in previous sections, we might expect to see maturation themes in age-related crises, ethical or consistency dilemmas, positive events like peak experiences, and therapy, or, for negative effects, trauma, especially sexual trauma. Yet the findings were quite different. A colleague who is a college instructor noted, when she read these results, that we hope and expect that influences like education and therapy will lead to positive self-change. Yet it seems from these data that it is more important for growth that young people endure tragedy and unexpected loss in their life experience than positive influences like education.

However, it is possible that experiences like education have a role, perhaps an important one, in facilitating an

internal preparedness for change by strengthening and deepening the self, by increasing one's understanding and insight. Although not noted as transforming in themselves, these experiences may help transmute the loss from tragedy to transformation.

The fact that the threatened or actual experience of loss (through death or relationship crisis) was a major theme, and not direct threats to the self-concept or self-identification, indicates that relationships are deeply involved with the self. The prevalence of these themes of loss, and of themes of insight, will be discussed. Many of these lost relationships, particularly ones lost through relationship crisis, were romantic ones. This is congruent with the age group of many of the respondents, and reflects the Romance transformation. It is interesting, however, that this was usually the tragic or lost Romance, not the Romance fulfilled, which did not appear at all in the phenomenological sample, and was a theme for 15% of the survey sample.

It is also interesting that other categories were lower than one might expect: there were no mid-life (or other age-related) crises in the phenomenological group, and only 4% of the survey sample indicated a theme of getting older was a factor in their self-transformation. In part, this may be because the age group of the respondents did not include enough who were at an age of adult crisis. And, as already

noted, this does not mean that these age-related crises were not present, only that they were not considered such by the respondent.

As mentioned above, archetypal metaphors of transformation were also not common; few of the protocols could be matched to metaphors such as the Journey, the Romance, or the Hero's Quest. Again, it may be a factor of age, or because the respondent did not see and relate their narrative in these terms. Some, however, did fit a romantic tragedy. For example, the respondent who lost her fiance wrote that "I tend to compare all my relationships with men to the one with _____. None match up....I may never again experience being that loved, or loving that much". It may be that some of these metaphors do fit the experiences described. Although this sort of theoretical interpretation can not be arbitrarily made in phenomenological research, if the metaphor were described, the respondent might (consciously or unconsciously) see parallels.

Traumatic events and dysfunctional backgrounds were also rarely mentioned as self-transforming (although it is interesting that insight about these backgrounds, which subsequently led to self-change, was self-transforming). These low rates must also be explained. Other categories which were rare might be expected to be so, e.g. peak experiences and therapy. It is interesting to note that these are the kinds of experiences stereotypically thought

to relate to self-transformation. This may explain our surprise that self-transformation is so common, since these experiences are rare. In fact, it is loss, a common, indeed universal, experience, which was most frequently involved.

Why were there so few reports of childhood physical, sexual or emotional trauma?

The small numbers of respondents within this category was surprising. Only 4 (10%) of the respondents in the phenomenological sample and 6% of the survey reported a self-transforming experience in childhood. Two respondents described sexual trauma as their transforming experience; only one of these happened in childhood. Even the survey responses, which had greater anonymity, included few (7.4%) who identified sexual trauma as profoundly affecting the self (a higher percentage cited seemingly less dramatic influences as moving, or losing weight). This seems low, given the rates of these experiences in general. Courtois (1988) notes a conservative estimate of prevalence rates of childhood sexual abuse is 10% - 30% of all girls and 2% - 9% of all boys. This may imply that such trauma is not always transforming.

Also, the experiences described in the protocols were ones of traumatic isolated instances, committed by strangers, which may not be the typical sexual trauma. According to Courtois, the most reliable current statistics

indicate that 20% of all women have experienced at least one incestuous experience by the age of 18. According to the typology devised by Russell et al., 64% of the cases of incest in their sample rated as "severe" to "very severe". Both of the cases described in the phenomenological reports were in the category of "least severe". (This rating is of the abuse, not the aftereffect, which is commonly negative and long-term, as it is in both the cases described in this study).

In terms of dysfunctional family backgrounds, particularly those related to alcoholism, Weenolsen (1988) found that 44% of her study reported alcoholism affected their lives, and 42% reported physical abuse or violence (including sexual abuse) (she notes that both of these percentages match observed prevalence). Of the phenomenological respondents, only two reported experiencing physical abuse, only one of these in childhood, and one respondent reported a self-transforming experience in childhood centred around the alcoholism in a parent. As was true of the adults, this was an experience of insight into her father's addiction, not a specific review of the effects of the alcoholism on her identity.

Why did these traumatic experiences of physical abuse, sexual trauma, or alcoholism in a parent appear so rarely in this study as causes of transformation, if they are so common? It may be intuitively obvious why positive

transforming aftereffects may be rare or absent, but one might expect negative aftereffects. It may be that trauma does result in aftereffects, but that these aftereffects are not identified as transforming.

In the case of sexual abuse, Courtois (1988) reported recent research that younger age incest is often repressed. It may be that this abuse, indeed, all traumatic childhood experiences that involve one's family, may be repressed, and in this youthful sample, have not yet been remembered.

It may also be that these childhood experiences are not what a respondent associates with an experience of self-transformation. Childhood experiences, particularly experiences of life situations which last over a long term, may be more of a self-formation than a self-transformation. This would be supported by the rarity of childhood experiences in general in both the phenomenological and survey results - only 10% and 6% respectively. One is not clearly aware of how these experiences shaped us, since there was no previous different identity with which to compare one's changed self. A sudden unexpected trauma such as those cited in the study would be different from ongoing physical or sexual abuse, or the ever-present emotional instability of a dysfunctional family. When the dysfunction is constant, the self, like the family, comes to be organized around it. It may accommodate the abuse as a fact of existence that is rarely openly noted yet which

directs much of life's daily activities. A sudden trauma is shocking, but there is a formed stable self who does not have an identity as a loved one's sexual object, or as a member of an alcoholic family. One can compare one's new feelings to the previous self, and recognize the difference. If one is never safe, a lack of safety would not be noticed or remarked on as self-transforming, although it may be very important in forming the self.

It is also possible that this particular class of experiences leaves an after-effect of shame, a common reaction to abuse (Courtois, 1988). The one respondent whose experience of childhood physical trauma occurred in the context of ongoing child abuse had told no one, not even her doctors or teachers, who had injured her so badly, while the others who experienced sudden trauma all reported it. Respondents may simply be unwilling to discuss it, even in an anonymous survey, because of these feelings of shame.

What is the role of sudden, unexpected, other-initiated life change in transformation?

Sudden, unexpected and major life events or change, into which one falls like Alice into the rabbit hole, seem to be a common pattern. In some of the cases in the phenomenological group, the life change or event found in the protocol actually occurred at the end of the transformation, as a result of increasing dissatisfaction with

the life situation as it was. Eventually, the dissatisfaction tipped to rejection, and the choice was made to change the situation (in the cases of an affair, a choice to move to North America, and several cases in which a romantic breakup was initiated by the respondents). However, this was rarely the case; far more frequent was the event that was thrust on the respondent without choice.

These sudden, forced changes may be so transforming because they force one to a choice of move and grow or break. While we may resist the internal tidal forces of change, because of fear or reason which resists the unknown, a forced change overwhelms the resistance with necessity. If not forced to by harsh life experience, how often would we choose the waterfall over the safe slow river? Who, in their right mind, would voluntarily go through hell, no matter what emotional maturity was to be gained at the other end?

It has been suggested that the self, as the central and most crucial cognitive structure, resists change. It is the tense dynamic of the self that it must be flexible enough to grow and change as situations and life changes, yet be stable and strong enough to endure as a solid foundation on which to build one's life. A self which changed with every situation would be more changeable than a chameleon, who at least retains its structure while it alters its camouflage. One normally thinks of the self as more resistant than that

to change. As a stable continuing structure, the self strives for cognitive consonance; dissonance causes tension and anxiety. While change is possible, indeed inevitable, with life experience, too frequent and easy change would not allow a stable self. The self therefore has an inherent tendency to defend against allowing change in one's life to change the self as well.

Such defense mechanisms would be unhealthy when one selectively perceives, distorts and denies experiences; as May (1983) notes, "the neurotic pattern is characterized by repression and blocking off of consciousness" when we leave unrepresented experiences that may threaten our being, our self. If the healthy personality is aware of and accepts all of its experience, unaccepted aspects occur in cases of "incongruence" (Rogers, 1973). But healthy defence mechanisms may also occur. Fitts (Seeman, 1983) found that high personality-integration subjects did not show a lack of defense mechanisms (rather a lack of extreme scores on these, neither high nor low). Vaillant (Lee & Noam, 1983) proposed that there are healthy, or mature defense mechanisms (i.e. altruism and humour, although one might question a designation of these experiences as defensive, even in a healthy way), as well as unhealthy (psychotic, neurotic and immature). He suggested that even neurotic and immature defenses are found in normal adaptation to crises over a life span.

These defense mechanisms would normally guard the self against rapid self-change. A life event would be coped with, or resisted, or even distorted; one will do almost anything rather than change the self. But sudden, unexpected and unchosen life change, which for 43% of the respondents occurred at the same time as other events, may overwhelm these defenses, breaking them down. There is no time to resist. One can not, for example, pretend one's loved one has not died (except, perhaps, in dreams). One can not go on the same, untouched by the experience. When one can not, at the last, fight off the change, deny it, or resist it, one must accept it, and be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the alchemical fires that transform the self to gold.

The sudden unexpected crisis or tragedy overwhelms our defences and changes our selves because the mere fact that it has occurred violates our basic optimistic Western world-view that we have control and power as individuals, that nothing bad will ever happen if only we are good, that the world is predictable and stable. Our meanings and world-view are basic to our being. Now we must deal not only with the change itself and the strong emotions it evokes, but also our own real helplessness to affect any changes in the situation. We now have a new understanding that the world is not a predictable and controllable place. Many of the respondents (30%) asked "why", searching to find the cause

of the event, so the world would again seem understandable, not random and uncontrollable.

This affects our basic world-view, our whole philosophy of life, and therefore ourselves. We can not encompass it without a fundamental change to our perceptions about the world and its meaning for us, an after-effect which 58% noted.

Sudden change would not necessarily always lead to transformation (nor does transformation only result from sudden change). As long as the life circumstances interact with some internal readiness to change, this "sink or swim" growth may occur. Otherwise, it might be as ineffective in forcing change as information about Santa Claus is to a Pre-operational child. It may create denial, or rationalization, but not change. On the other hand, once the cognitive structures are ready to transform, because of psychosocial development from, or with, the many small influences of life experience (education, etc.), the smallest push will lead to it. What would have been tragedy or trauma would then become transformation.

The life change that was most frequent in both groups was that of relationship loss (53% of the phenomenological respondents), particularly loss, potential or actual, because of death (28%), but also loss, potential or actual, because of a relationship crisis (25%). Mortality was rarely a minor theme; perhaps when loss because of death is

present in a person's life, it is sufficiently significant and strong to always be a major theme. It may also be the sort of theme that, if it leads to transformation, will always be experienced as a major transformation, even later in life after many different sorts of life experiences.

To relationship loss we may add cases in other categories which also suffered a loss. Weenolsen (1988) defined loss as "anything that destroys some aspect of an individual's life and/or self". Bloom (Bloom-Feshbach et al., 1987) noted that loss due to bereavement is similar to divorce/separation loss, moving, major injury, and job loss. Several respondents in the other categories suffered losses of this sort, and noted emotions of sadness and grief in their experience (a forced move, a crippling injury suffered by an athlete, a failure leading to expulsion from university, and disillusionment with self or other due to alcoholism). Loss and grief themes therefore occurred in 65% of the phenomenological protocols, and must be discussed as a crucial theme.

Why is loss so prevalent as a theme?

Perhaps loss is a prevalent category because of the emotions it evokes; grief and sadness are intense and deep emotions which can last for years, even a life-time. In contrast, the physiological intensity of fear caused by trauma cannot continue as physiological arousal for a great

length of time (although it can re-occur). These intense emotions of grief can persist, and may vitally affect the self (see the discussion that follows on the role of strong emotions). In Roethke's words,

In a dark time, the eye begins to see,
I meet my shadow in the deepening shade;....

A man goes far to find out what he is -
Death of the self in a long, tearless night....
(Geddes, 1973, p. 182)

Perhaps loss is prevalent because the effect of the loss on one's life is profound; a loss of someone in one's family, someone close, may be felt throughout one's daily life, even for the rest of one's life. The sheer impact of the areas of one's life which have changed ensure the self must adjust to many changes and differences. As one's life is transformed in this adjustment, one feels one is a new self.

For example, divorce not only removes the loved other; one has also lost one's role as spouse, with all the daily habits and activities attendant to that role. Familiar places and people are affected; one may lose or change one's relationships with friends, children and in-laws. One may have to move, and change one's possessions, or one's occupation (as when a work-at-home mother must find a paying job). If one finds oneself in a year's time in a new status and role as a single person, in a new residence, with new possessions, new friends and new life, it would be

surprising if one didn't find that transforming. And all of this reflects only the life changes that occur in divorce, and does not consider the psychological losses of the attachment, and of one's dreams, one's future.

Loss of any kind affects one's relationships. Loss of a crucial relationship changes our Mitwelt being, our self-in-relation, forever. More than a simple change of mood or role, it is a loss of a vital meaning in our lives. And as we are partially co-constituted by our relationships, loss of these relationships must therefore change the self.

Participating in a relationship is continually experiencing the value of the other, the continuing presence of the other as a relationship in one's life, the love with the other, and what that fulfils within us. In the romantic relationship, this is the Romance, the self-transformation of love, completion, acceptance and stability. In any relationship, *"the essence of relationship is that in the encounter both persons are changed"* (May, 1983). The essence of loss is that the relationship must be remade. As one experiences the irretrievable loss of that person/relationship. one must change the relationship to a new particular kind of relationship, a kind of relationship that one can have with a person who is lost.

One does not detach, or disidentify, as many authors suggest. The effect of loss is not so much a "letting go" or "transcendence" (Weenolsen, 1988) as a change of the

attachment to an attachment which can continue with a person who is not there, who, in the case of death, will never be there again. Describing her struggle to establish a way of being with her father after his death, Clelie Rich wrote: Somewhere....my father,/ newly dead/...We have both made promises./ He, to forget his death/ and I, not to dream his birth.

Even when the relationship is casual, the transformation of relationship is an integration, not a detachment. Even a minor loss must be somehow arranged in its place within the self. In the case of a casual relationship, this may be relatively easy.

When the attachment is unhealthy, the loss involves integrating or learning to live with the tension that one's hopes for future changes can now never be met, and one's needs will never be fulfilled, and is complicated by emotions like relief, or blame.

In an important relationship, both healthy and unhealthy, loss may force us to integrate both the good and bad aspects of the person and the relationship, as we introject the lost person. If the person is important, this integration may keep getting worked over in a continuous process throughout life as we re-figure and re-figure who the person was to us, in relationship, impact and meaning. The respondent who lost her fiance ten years ago noted: "I still have dreams about _____....I awake from these

dreams feeling as if I had a real-life visit with him. I always feel closer to him...."

When we accept the loss in accepting the introjected lost person, these introjects themselves must be related to. The internalized other enables us to incorporate that aspect of the self the other held for us. After the person has died, these introjects do not necessarily "freeze" the other as they were when they were alive (Marcia, personal communication); they may become richer now that the other is gone. With the other no longer there to limit the introject's development (as when one's elderly parent has become more rigid and self-oriented with age), this aspect of oneself may now develop in deeper, richer directions.

However the introjects change and develop, as they change they transform the self, and as the self is changed, one's relationship with one's introjects changes, which changes the self again, and so on.

Loss, like sudden life change (of which it is one form), makes us question our world-view, our meanings. Loss forces us to ask the questions we may never ask in everyday life, in which we survive largely successfully, and in which we may have plentiful self-protective positive cognitive biases. We ask "why"? Why did this event occur? Why anything? We suddenly come to understand that the world around us, others, and ourselves are transitory, that "all relationships end in separation" (Lagrand, 1988). This is

particularly true when the loss is one of death. What Weenolsen calls the "fundamental illusion" is our belief that no death, metaphorical or actual, will ever occur. In our culture, we don't assume that death will happen as a matter of course, nor do we accept it; as Victorians rejected sex as a part of life, we repress an awareness that death and loss is inevitable (May, 1969). We befriend, love, marry, and have children without ever thinking that loss will inevitably result at some time. Loss therefore not only loses us the person or thing lost, but also our illusions about the immortality of those we care about, and of our relationship with them.

And, of course, we lose our illusions about our own immortality. After a loss, we must realize as we may never have before that all our efforts and creations, our very selves, will end. This may seem to make our efforts and our lives completely meaningless and pointless. If at the end our best will lie broken beside us in the crypt, why live at all?

In Heidegger's view (McCall, 1983):

...the appreciation of the reality and certainty of our own death is an essential aspect of human self-transparent openness. In truth, you do not begin to live in human fashion until you are aware of the fact that in a certain sense you are dying... inevitably and very personally.

(McCall, 1983, p. 85)

We do not, of course, go "gentle into that good night". We rage, and quake, and turn our faces from "the dying of

the light" (Dylan Thomas). The very concept of non-existence

is a terrifying one before which man shrinks and against which he, following the Other (*das Man*), defends himself by denial, diversion,....This defensiveness, however, serves to mask the all-important truth that it is death that gives meaning to life. As Boss notes, man's actions are meaningful because each moment of life occurs only once....
(McCall, 1983, p. 85)

Recognizing death, and accepting and integrating that inevitability, is a recognition of one as a "Sein-zum-Tode", an Being-unto-death. One is thrown into one's existence as a Being who will die.

Related to this, loss makes spiritual questions inescapable, sometimes for the first time. Half of the respondents whose transformation was triggered by a loss because of death noted seriously questioning God, searching for answers to the meaning of a life that always ends in death. The old pat answers of *das Mann*, and of one's childhood religion, fail to satisfactorily answer these questions.

The respondents who had suffered a loss asked these questions. Yet, in their aftereffects, they noted they had paradoxically learned the value of their lives and their relationships, had come to treasure every day. Thrown by loss into a confrontation with the meaning of their lives, what was important became unmistakable, as if white against the dark. In everyday life one is often numb, one doesn't

notice the habitual events of day to day. In understanding loss, one comes to treasure both what is lost and what remains. One respondent, who had lost a friend in a car accident, wrote:

...it has made me more sensitive to other people's feelings and made me realize that we often take life for granted. We often don't realize how precious life is as we get wrapped up in finals and papers and exams - in the face of death all that seems so meaningless...we are so defenceless when it comes to death. All the life plans we make...may not even come true...we need to get as much as possible out of life because there may be no tomorrow.

Each moment is experienced in the here and now, noticed more intensely. Many of the respondents (30%) noticed that they treasured their relationships since the loss, no longer took for granted what they valued, what gave meaning to life. On the other hand, priorities may be re-ordered, as confrontation with loss teaches one what is truly important. As one respondent noted:

I have far less attachment to material things; for me, meaning is in people, relationships, spiritual values, emotional expression and empathy...I have a real need for meaning in my life...life is too short and fragile to waste on things, people or experiences that have no personal value for me.

Maslow (May, 1969), recovering from a heart attack, wrote:

The confrontation with death...makes everything look so precious, so sacred, so beautiful....Death, and its ever present possibility makes love, passionate love, more possible. I wonder if we could love passionately, if ecstasy would be possible at all, if we knew we'd never die.

(May, 1969, p. 98)

Frankl asked how, considering the transitory nature of human existence, one could ever find meaning in one's life.

we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation as its helpless victim, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then counts and matters is to...transform a tragedy into a personal triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. *When we are no longer able to change a situation...we are challenged to change ourselves.* (italics added)

(Frankl, 1978, pg 39)

Extremity can trigger one's search for meaning. In Frankl's view, there is a meaning in suffering, as there is in one's causes, one's loves, one's work and one's beliefs. The meaning of suffering occurs if it changes oneself; and to Frankl, changing oneself means "rising above oneself, growing beyond oneself" (Frankl, 1978).

As Bloom-Feshbach et al. (1987) note, loss facilitates growth because it forces us to lose the familiar, the ones we care about, and the support they give us. Dealing with the loss involves the aloneness of letting go of one's ideals, one's hopes and self-images. As they note, "coping with loss is inextricably tied to creative transformation". Shuchter (1986), referring to spousal bereavement as the most disruptive, threatening and challenging experience one will have, suggests it is not surprising that the potential for dramatic changes therefore exists, as one is forced to think, feel and behave in a completely new way. One may lose one's world-view, one's direction and meaning, all sense of the future, even one's belief in one's control over

one's destiny, in a just God.

The old meanings must be replaced with modified or new ones which reflect the fragility of life. Shuchter notes the bereaved may become more appreciative of life, more patient, accepting, giving and growing. (It is also possible, of course, that one will not be able to meet the challenge and grow). He suggests that "By the end of two years of bereavement, the majority... regard their grief as a growth-promoting experience, and their self-images as primarily positive". Few do not experience some sense of growth after coping with and surviving grief.

This is because loss is a little death of the self (Weenolson, 1988). It is not just the relationship we have lost, but a vital piece of ourselves. Loss makes us look at ourselves, build a self and a life without the one we have lost. We are challenged to become more than we were. We cannot remain the same. As Frankl notes, one becomes aware of the potential, the freedom, indeed the responsibility, to change oneself for the better, if the world cannot be changed, and the loss regained. There is the possibility to "rise above (one's) predicament, to grow beyond it, and eventually to mould ... negative experience into something positive, constructive, creative" (Frankl, 1978).

Weenolsen (1988) also proposes that losses must be "transcended"; "it is the transcendence of loss that makes life meaningful, because the life and self are re-created,

reborn, resurrected." (p. 3). In her view, the loss must be overcome, let go; the hole created by the lost person or thing must be filled (positively or negatively).

Perhaps some losses can be transcended. But in the landscape of the self, in our realm, our garden, the loss of a significant other makes a vacuum, into which the air rushes like a tornado. Nothing can ever fill that gap. It doesn't heal. One doesn't "get over", or "deal with" life change and loss like that. Emily Dickinson reminded us that "To fill a Gap/ Insert the Thing that caused it -/ Block it up/ With Other - and 'twill yawn the more -/ You cannot solder an Abyss/ With Air." (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1987).

The self does not transcend loss so much as integrate it. The new self that has been thrown into existence in that moment of loss can contain the hole, like a Japanese garden that uses the spaces, the absences of what is not there, as much as the presence of what is there, to create beauty.

It is clear how loss affects one's relational self, but we must also ask how it affects oneself at such a basic level. One explanation is that the self is one's roles and relationships, the social self; if this was true, a loss of a relationship, or of anything identified as oneself (one's possessions, one's status, etc.) would dramatically alter the self. If one is one's roles, as in Kegan's Stage 3 of self-development, a loss of one's roles is truly a loss of

self. The degree to which the self is identified with the relationship, and the degree to which the roles change, would determine the extent of the threat to the self (thus, loss of one's parent in childhood, and one's spouse as an adult, would be most threatening). In social self theories, this can only be healed when new roles and relationships replace the old ones.

However, an alternate explanation may be found in Kegan's and in Loevinger's views, in which it is just this kind of deep challenge to the social self identification that results in growth to a further stage, an individual or "institutional" stage in which the individual is more self-defined, a private self. When one is torn from one's roles, one can create a self that is not role-defined, that cannot be lost when the role is lost.

In object relations theories, the process is one of internalization. Bloom (1987) describes Parkes' five stage process of dealing with grief due to bereavement (and notes this is similar to adolescent separation from the family, and to stages described by Weiss in separation/divorce, by Marris in major moves, by Parkes with limb loss, and others with job loss). First, there is "Alarm" and disbelief. Second, there is "Searching", in which there is outward acceptance, but inner disbelief, severe pangs, a wanting to find the lost one. One's purpose is to try to gain control over this desire to search. In the third stage, there is

"Mitigation", in which one feels the loved one nearby; and "pining" with preoccupations with one's memories of the person, painful recollection of the loss, and attempts to give the loss meaning, working to accept and understand it (e.g. religious). This stage ends with a true acceptance, which is both conscious and unconscious. Next, and perhaps it is surprising that it is such a late stage, the process reaches an affective level, and the fourth stage is one of "Anger and guilt", in which these emotions, and depressive withdrawal, sadness and despair occur. Finally, in the fifth stage, the griever integrates a new identity as separate from the lost object. The feelings of emptiness and loss, a desire to find oneself, are concluded by a new identity. All of these feelings and stages were typical of the respondents in this study who suffered a loss.

According to Bloom, these stages, common to loss of all kinds, indicate that in the first stage of alarm, there are intense emotions and attempts to reattach, panic and fear - an identity diffusion stage. As one might expect would occur after a loss of a selfobject, there is resistance to the loss. After disbelief and searching expresses attempts to re-attach, and one has grappled with the reality of the loss, there is cognitive, then affective acceptance. Finally, after the loss of the external object has at last been accepted, one gives up the attachment through a process of identification and internalization. This allows true

separation, and a new identity ensues, that has internalized the former object of attachment and is now open to new relationships.

Gellen (Bloom-Feshbach et al., 1987) takes a different approach, emphasizing a differentiated and separated self-concept. As Weenolsen notes, loss involves issues of differentiation and separation vs. intimacy. Gellen notes that to the extent to which one has failed to acquire these "realistic and cohesive representations of themselves as separate and different from others", one will be vulnerable to "severe and prolonged reactions to the stress of separations".

These approaches emphasize the integration of the introject, the incorporation of the selfobject into oneself. But it should also be noted that our relationships do not only include the effect the other has on us. We are our relationships, yes, but we create them as much as they create us. Our relationships are co-constituted, we participate with our being.

Our capacity to love (and it is a caring relationship that is important here) allows a loving relationship, which in turn enhances our capacity to love, as it develops our emotional maturity. This begins with our first attachments and loving relationships, those with our parents and family. Our experiences with them, our feelings about them, their treatment of us, etc. develops our mature ability to love.

A new level of emotional maturity is gained when we must confront the loss of a relationship with someone we care about. As noted above, we now understand that we will lose our loved one. We must now integrate a loving self who is able to love in other current and future relationships even though we now know that loss is inevitable, and the person will ultimately be torn from us. The cliché, that it is better to have loved and lost, is now understood as true. In fact one of the respondents quoted this phrase in her protocol. As this new, more mature self, we can love, and accept the loss that edges that commitment.

Perhaps loss makes us change as a self because it is the most painful experience, as caring is the most joyful. The loss includes not just loss of relationships but of anything we care about. To have "lost" a thing or person we must have cared about it, it is part of us, our emotions, our selves. Aeschylus knew that wisdom and growth come through suffering, and loss makes us suffer. ("Zeus, who leads mortals to understanding, who has established as a fixed ordinance that wisdom comes by suffering..." Aeschylus, Agamemnon). This wisdom is that gained by the "death" of the old self, from the pain which tempers us.

Wisdom and growth from loss is a deepening, not a differentiation. The wisdom we gain from loss enriches and adds to the self, makes the self more complex and integrated. The pain of loss causes tears which nourish the

growth, as if the self were a tree whose roots were holding deeper in the earth, its branches higher and its trunk broader. The tree is strengthened, and now able to bear fruit.

Why is insight so prevalent as a theme of transformation?

The themes of insight and internal change together constituted the second largest theme in the theoretical analysis of the phenomenological group (88%). In fact, insight was the major theme of the experience for 20% of the respondents, and a minor theme for an additional 25%.

What is insight? Insight is sight-inward, an experience of illumination. Common metaphors are of the light illuminating the dark, of being able to see what could not be seen before. An implication of this metaphor is that one sees what is really there; insight illuminates what is true. Insight also implies a growth in its enrichment of us. Like education, which also increases understanding, we are inevitably a different, wiser person.

Insight is not simply knowledge, but knowing, not data or information, but understanding (an essay exam rather than multiple choice). The understanding must be immediately and personally experienced. It "grasps" one, one can not "learn" insight through the explanations of others (May, 1983). The illumination of insight comes like creative illumination; it is found, not made, in a wholistic

synthesis. It can not be figured out through logic, but arrives full blown after incubation, like the illumination phase of creativity. And like creative illumination, insight does not simply light a corner of a dark room that one may have seen before, but synthesizes a new sight of the room, a new way of viewing it altogether. Now that the insight has lit it, the room is configured.

Insight may be about any facet of the being-in-the-world, oneself, or others, or the world. After insight, our being-in-the-world must be re-ordered, the new sight integrated.

Why does insight change the self? Fried (1980) thinks that "Insights are the prime movers towards building a sound and complete ego and a genuine self". According to Wheelis (1973), "The place of insight is to illumine: to ascertain where one is, how one got there, how now to proceed, and to what end". All of these tasks, so essential to self-change, are accomplished through insight.

Insight makes historical connections between past and present, what Fried (1980) termed "impact insights" about wounds from the past that are still unhealed and active. When we understand the experiences in our personal history which have shaped our current being-in-the-world, we better understand our own present experience, and this understanding leads to choice, and the freedom to change (May, 1983). Both the respondents who experienced self-

transformation through therapy cited insights of just this kind as responsible for their transformation. One respondent explored, in therapy, his lifelong pattern of dishonesty and inability to reveal his feelings, which he could see connected to his parents, whom he called "chronic liars". Exploring these patterns allowed him to move forward to further therapy and dramatic self-change. The other respondent recounted an experience of diving into, then leaving, a small womb-shaped underwater cave, a sort of re-birthing, which caused feelings of constriction and terror, and eventually escape and freedom. This experience gave her insights into her present life ("I saw that I lived a lot in a state of panic") that were connected in therapy with interpersonal patterns, including distrust of others. She noted that because of this crucial insight experience, "over the long term...I began to have more choice of how I live my life".

Insight illuminates current problems of which we may not have been aware, and often, simply by our sight of it, also illuminates the solution. Possibilities are the intrinsic nature of insight. Insight (Wheelis, 1973) helps us understand a bewildering experience, make new connections, integrate it into our being-in-the-world.

In many of the insights achieved in these experiences of self-transformation, a new understanding of oneself, others or the world was achieved. Two respondents whose

main theme was one of an "empathic" insight, came to see others and the world in a completely transformed way that led to changes in themselves. Instead of the world as framed by their individual experience, both understood through their insight that another's experience could be different from theirs, that another could be in pain in ways they had never imagined (in one case, homeless in L.A., and in the other, an elderly woman in a nursing home). In the peak experiences cited by two other respondents, the sense of participation in a transpersonal whole reframed the world completely, leading to a sense of belonging, of trust. However, one of these led to negative consequences of psychosis. Perhaps, as Wheelis suggests, insight is not enough to effect change without an acceptance or a readiness to change.

As already noted, insight is sight-in to oneself. Insight is greater self-awareness. In Heidegger's view (McCall, 1983), we can transcend the Other and the world in our human ability to understand our "situatedness", the "self-disclosing attitude" which refers to the "actual situation in which one finds oneself, (Befindlichkeit), and in one's ability to appreciate the possible, project future possibilities (Verstehen). As May (1983) notes, self-consciousness implies self-transcendence, and our ability to transcend the immediate situation "is the basis of human freedom". This transcendence is not a sense of being

"above" something; in the experience of insight, we are simultaneously in and below and above and around it, aware of its connections to the past and the future, to others and to ourselves. Insight reveals, and thus detaches us, frees us to make choices and move forward.

Examples of this in the current study were the two respondents whose insight concerned alcoholism - one that her father was an alcoholic, and the other that he himself was one. In both cases, the awareness that had been gained allowed freedom to change. The daughter understood that her father's alcoholism was not her fault or responsibility, and understood that she did not have to become alcoholic herself. "I felt I had broken free". The respondent who realized he was an alcoholic wrote: "The realization that I was an alcoholic was humiliating but the realization that there was a solution filled me with great hope....without [this experience] my life would not be anywhere compared to where it is to-day. If I had kept on drinking I would probably be dead, in jail or insane."

Apart from these major and minor themes of insight self-transformation, internal or insight-based theories accounted for most of the protocols (which also could be explained by life change theories). These included experiences of insight into one's mortality (for 6 respondents), into ethics (1), a new understanding of the world and others (7), of the value of others (12), of

consistency or inconsistency in the self (6) or in others (7). Insights directly concerned with the self included the respondents' own sense that their self became stronger (6), or was more withdrawn (6), more self-aware (3), or now had an internal "locus of control", a sense of responsibility for their own life (4).

Finally, insight helps us "discover and recover our emotions" (Fried, 1980). The five respondents who experienced a catharsis of a repressed emotion from the past would suggest that the opposite is also true. In these cases, the emotion helped the respondent to an insight. The role of emotions in the self-transformations must also be discussed.

How do strong emotions help us grow?

The protocols and surveys described strong and very strong emotions, including grief, anger, terror, and joy. Welleck (Arnold, 1970) noted the difference between explosive, "intense" emotions and "deep" emotions. What he terms intense emotions are excitable and "sentimental" (facile, phoney emotions), while the deep emotions are profound experiences which penetrate one's being, and are durable and resistant. Deep emotions like love are not consciously experienced throughout one's every waking moment, yet may last a lifetime and affect every aspect of one's life. Occasionally these deep emotions may also be

intense. Welleck noted that in situations like illness, old age, psychosis and death, one is

shaken to the roots of his being, is stirred by elemental forces, gripped by the strength of his emotions. They confront him with his total helplessness, open up an abyss before him, force him to look into nothingness.....(held out into nothingness) as Heidegger...puts it. The experience of being thrown into the world, of being doomed to death, is both profound and intense.

(Arnold, 1970, pg. 286)

Depression, despair, and sadness over something lost, all come from reasons "deep in the heart".

Other strong emotions, like terror, may be more the "intense" sort, which, being intense, cannot be experienced over a long time. Although it was a rare experience in the phenomenological sample, limited to the trauma situations, the affect of terror was long-lasting, leading to fear and mistrust in similar situations. It also seemed to lead to a freezing, even reversal, of the positive direction of growth, at least temporarily.

These strong, deep emotions may affect the self by leading to emotional maturity. Like physical or intellectual maturity, emotional maturity would signal the development of the emotions to their full potential, maximizing survival in the personal and interpersonal worlds.

Emotional maturity may involve having had the experience of many emotions, across a wide range, and of

strong and deep emotions, the sort that Welleck proposed touch us profoundly. One may be emotionally mature if one has experienced such emotions at a young age; or immature if one is old in physical years, without such emotional experience. It may be that profound loss is the archetype of a deep, profound emotion. It may also be that the first time one faces a transforming situation, including loss, the reaction is more intense, a panic or anxiety. One doesn't know if this loss can be survived.

As we grow older, emotions do change. There is less intensity, less fluctuation, and less susceptibility to events in the external world (Welleck, in Arnold, 1970). One's emotions are more enduring, deeper and more reflective of one's internal state. Perhaps it is not a change of hormones as one ages that moderates our emotions, but experience. Having been through experiences of devastating grief, or joy, or fury, the emotions associated with a new experience are moderated in comparison. As one respondent noted, if she could survive this (her overwhelming feelings of grief and loss), she knew she could survive anything. This would be a sort of inoculation effect such as has been reported in stress (having survived an extremely stressful situation gives coping skills and abilities that lead to less stress in everyday life) and for the so-called "invulnerable" or resistant children. A trip to the supermarket is nothing when one has walked to Mecca on one's

knees.

These experiences in emotions may develop a greater complexity of the emotional being, as experiences in intellectual reasoning develop the rational mind to a more complex, subtle form.

The ability to extend oneself out of one's own emotional experiences is an emotional maturity in the same way that the ability to think in abstract thought (formal operations) and beyond to dialectical reasoning is intellectual maturity. And it implies, and may entail, one's having had similar experiences of one's own. To continue the analogy, a child in preoperations learns not to be egocentric, and a child in concrete operations learns reversibility, and the understanding that when things change in apparent form, they don't necessarily change in nature. An emotionally mature person comes to understand that another's feelings may not be one's own, to empathize with these feelings, and to understand his or her own feelings across different situations. An "abstract" level of emotional maturity would be the ability to understand the nature of emotions, their specific characteristics, etc. As in the case of abstract reasoning, experience with the emotion is essential to fully develop to actuality the capacity of emotional understanding and complexity.

Also, emotional maturity involves empathy. Empathy develops from the primal empathy of an infant, (the other's

feeling is experienced as the infant's own, so he cries when another is hurt), to the empathy of a child who comforts the one in pain with his own teddy, to a mature empathy, or sympathy, in which the pain of the other is fully understood and shared without defensiveness, yet is felt as the pain of another, not as a vicarious or infectious emotion. At its most developed, sympathy becomes compassion, and compassion becomes "Care" or Sorrow (May, 1969). This is more than a "feeling with" someone, it is a state of being.

A fourth characteristic of emotional maturity may be that one is able to experience one's own emotions fully, both the ones aroused by the current situation, and ones from the past that remain within. When one experiences strong emotions, it brings one back to similar emotions in the past (Arnold, 1960). Thus, when we suffer a loss, it brings back other losses, some of which we may not have fully grieved at the time. The process of emotional maturity may be one in which we allow these emotions, those we could not and would not allow ourselves to feel in the past, to surface like water in a well, in which we allow ourselves to finally feel them. Five respondents noted that the emotions they felt during the experience they described were also a catharsis of repressed emotions from the past. One of the respondents, who had lost her baby at birth, did not, in fact, describe the death as transforming, but the time, seven years later, when she was finally able to grieve

it. Emotional maturity is the ability to accept all of one's present and past emotions, to feel them as they are.

This is not to imply that there will be a time when the grief or fear is over - respondents reported still missing the close lost relationships after years, and after positive growth. When the emotion is deep, it endures, it is a part of one. Emotional maturity is not getting "out" the emotion, the grief, so one no longer feels it, but allowing the emotion to well in order to accept it, experience it and integrate it as part of one. Eventually, the well of tears can nourish, as well as pain one (in Emily Dickinson's words: "And that White Sustenance -/ Despair -"). These experiences are essential fertilizer and moisture for growth, as they are accepted as part of the earth, the self, of the new growth.

A fifth characteristic of emotional maturity may be experience with relationships. Intersubjectivity in general (Solomon, 1970), relationships of many sorts and degrees, would increase our emotional experience and therefore maturity. This would be particularly true of close relationships, which are characterized by mutual care for the other, mutual self-disclosure of feelings, being loved and loving.

The nature of the emotions that were noted in the protocols and surveys may also be important for self-growth. Arnold (1960), in discussing how emotions play a role in

one's growth to the self-ideal, notes many different emotions aid us in this goal. Guilt may tell us when we turn away from our self-ideal, boredom can be a spur that makes us change our lives toward it. Suffering may lead us to heights one can never otherwise reach. "Until it is tested through suffering, a man's self-ideal may be the casual outcome of an easy and successful life. Suffering seems to be the fire in which his self-ideal, and thus he himself, may be either purified or destroyed" (Arnold, 1960, p. 307). Positive emotions like joy, happiness, a love of beauty, and love and compassion for others, all add indispensable elements to one's growth to the self-ideal. All of the protocols in this study included strong emotions like these.

How does the negative valence help us grow?

Why were so many of the experiences negative in character, even those relationship crises which eventually ended in reconciliation or a closer relationship?

As has been noted, it may be that pain stretches us; it would take a force as inescapable as pain, like sudden life change (which often occurs along with it), to affect a structure as generally central and stable as the self. It has even been suggested that deep self-change is extremely rare, if possible at all. If so, it would take an experience which hurts like hell to touch us at a level deep

enough to change us at a similarly deep level. If one wishes to change the course of a river, one has to dig the new course at a level far below the river bed.

Perhaps it is because negative experiences challenge our self-identifications, structures, and views of ourselves, the world and others, in a way which positive experiences would not, that forces disidentification and growth. For example, facing failure in an area that challenges a crucial self-identification (i.e. in one's career, if one is identified with achievement and career success) would almost force one to face this self-identification, and may ultimately force one to let go of it. If not, one's self-esteem would change up and down with an external change. Success, on the other hand, would reinforce it; one would not change, except perhaps to become "more so". (On the other hand, if one is identified with a failure-self, with negative self-esteem, it would take success to challenge and possibly change the failure self-identification).

If the majority of these experiences are negative, one must ask if it always has to be painful. According to the protocols and the survey, positive experiences did occasionally occur, with positive emotions. There were some experiences of joy, of release and freedom, like giving birth, or peak experiences. Although 75% were mainly negative in valence, 15% of the phenomenological

transforming experiences were mainly positive, and 10% had some positive elements. Although even these mainly positive events had negative elements (in two examples, a respondent who was successful in a musical performance was very nervous beforehand, and a respondent who described given birth was in great pain as well as joy), the positive elements outweighed the negative. We have discussed mainly the negative elements of transformation through suffering and loss, but it can and did also occur through positive events in these protocols. Gain may also alter the self. In one case, it was success which changed the self, ironically in many of the same ways the failure experience had done for another respondent. Finding, for the first time, that one can successfully accomplish a task, even in a circumstance of threat to the self, gives one an experience of competence (as in Erikson's stage task of industry vs. inferiority) that creates confidence that one can prevail in the world. Trying oneself and succeeding tests one's boundaries, gives information about oneself that develops the self-concept in a new way, and strengthens oneself. (For example, being in an emergency situation, and finding out for the first time that one is the kind of person that keeps calm is a discovery that strengthens, even creates, a competent self). This may be why people voluntarily test themselves in risky situations.

It may also be why myths of transformation in youth are

success-based. The hero's quest and the romance are both metaphors of fulfillment, not loss. Childbirth not only creates a new person in the baby, but in the parent who has now become a new person - a parent.

Are the after-effects always positive?

Walter de la Mare thought that "There is no sorrow/ Time heals never;/ No loss, betrayal,/ beyond repair." (Allison et al., 1975, p. 458). Does this pain, crisis and internal or external event/change always lead to positive change in the self? According to the phenomenological descriptions, clear positive results occurred 35% of the time, and eventual positive results 30%. Clearly and solely negative aftereffects were limited to 18% of the experiences. It should be noted that in the case of loss, the positive results did not ameliorate the grief of the loss; when the relationship was very significant and close, this remained fresh, even after decades. But the effects on the self were described by the respondents as positive.

In some of the cases in which the results were negative, it seemed as if these had happened only recently, and there had not been enough time to fully deal with the loss or change. If true, this would imply that eventually even these currently negative outcomes could become positive for the self.

Yet there were a few who experienced a negative

outcome. In six cases, the negative outcome seemed to be a reversal of growth, in a direction away from previous gains, towards mistrust rather than intimacy, fear rather than security. However, it is a possibility that this apparent reversal of the positive direction of growth was actually growth itself. As noted above, failure may teach us more than success. If one has had an uneventful childhood, an Eden, one may need to learn limits and pain. Adam and Eve, after all, took the necessary step to self-awareness, to adult choice and self-determination, by eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. To fully integrate oneself, one must explore all aspects of oneself, including the shadow aspects that one can come to harm, that others can betray one's love.

It is also possible that negative outcomes may occur in self-transformation that are not growth even in a hidden way. There may be many more who had not and would not participate in this sort of study, whose negative outcome was so extreme as to jeopardise life functioning (so they would not be in university, or taking college or community courses), or whose transformation was so recent or so very painful that they could not bear to describe it in a study or survey such as this.

This possibility cannot be determined within the bounds of this study, since it relied upon retrospective reports after a transformation has happened.

One may speculate about some possible outcomes, using Lewis Carroll's metaphor of the transformation that Alice experienced in her dream:

Five brothers, journeying through the woods, encountered a well-dressed and hurried white rabbit. One by one the five brothers followed this white rabbit, the psychopomp, and suddenly and unexpectedly found themselves falling down a long and dark rabbit-hole into the underworld of the unconscious. This world was dark and strange, and there seemed to be no way back to the world they knew and to each other, and no way forward, except through a doorway too small to pass through. Transformation of the self was necessary or they could not go forward. The means to change, the magic potions, were at hand; but these potions of transformation had to be discovered, trusted and then attempted at the risk of death.

Each brother reacted differently to his predicament. One brother denied the fall, refused to see the small doorway, and tried to turn back, to climb back up the rabbit hole. This is the person who copes with a transforming situation in which he finds himself by denial, or by a retreat to a rigid former self-identity, a "foreclosure". The second brother panicked when he found himself in a double bind of no way back and no way forward, except at risk of death; he sat and cried until his tears became a pool. He swam in circles around and around in it, and could

not find the small door. This person is overwhelmed by the emotions of transformation, and the fear of change, and "drowns", a characterological moratorium.

The third brother, in his desperation, ate and drank whatever potion he could find. Perhaps he hoped to fill the void, but his fear of change or feelings of unworthiness prevented him from choosing the potion of change. Or perhaps his unwillingness to give up his large size, to transform to adult acceptance of limitations, caused him to drink other potions. He remained in the waiting room, in a dream, and did not see the small door. This person stays in the transition stage, unable to go back or forward, and copes with their emotions by anaesthetizing them in addiction - an identity diffusion. The fourth brother rebels against both the way forward and the way back. He turns to an opposing choice, a negative identity.

Only the fifth brother survives the pool of tears, chooses the right potion, and transforms to a size that can fit through the doorway, as happens in resolving the necessary trans-formations of adolescence in identity achievement. Of all the possible outcomes of a descent into the underworld, transformation may be only one possibility. One could instead resist self-change, or become overwhelmed by it, or hold it off through escape, or rebel against it. In this study, only those who have experienced trans-formation have been included. It is difficult to tell why

the respondents in this study, like the fifth brother, were able to allow the change. But it may be that the high proportion of themes of sudden, unexpected and unchosen life change, and of the intensity of loss, point a partial answer to this. It may also be that earlier small, unnoticed transformations prepared the self before the fall into the rabbit-hole, as occurs in cognitive development as a child's cognitive structure transforms from one stage to another.

Future Directions:

Future research should collect similar reports in older ages, both genders and across cultures. One could focus more clearly on the individual categories, and study them in greater depth (i.e. specifically study transformation because of a loss, or trauma). Outcomes of life change that do not result in self-transformation could be studied by looking at these individual categories, and comparing those protocols that describe a self-transformation aftereffect with those that did not.

An ideal study would collect an entire life history of transforming experiences, particularly in an older person who has achieved ego integrity and emotional maturity. In retrospection over a whole life span, we may get a different perspective about what ultimately created the person as they are. (In McFarlane & Honzik's (Neugarten, 1969) longitudinal study of subjects over 30 years, experiences

that their subjects later reported had been important to them were not even in the earlier records, since they had not then appeared important to the researchers at all). As part of this study, it would be important to specifically ask for an entire life history of experience, minor as well as major; all the experiences and events that contributed to making one the person that they are. This may provide those experiences that the individual might not think as major or dramatic at the time, but which quietly helped to create their self.

Conclusions:

One conclusion that seems evident is that experiences we as individuals and as psychologists may think of as "awful", to be prevented from happening in the brave new world of psychological engineering, do not simply cause destructive pain and grief. Although one might hesitate to wish anyone a Chinese curse, to live in interesting times, it may be that these agonizing experiences may transform the psyche in a positive direction of growth and self and emotional maturity. This is not to diminish the extent of the pain, even agony, which has been sometimes described in the protocols used in this study. Nor is it a suggestion to court and celebrate these experiences with a superficial positivity. It is to add that these experiences, which touch us in such a profound way, are not just painful, not just to be endured as a unavoidable part of life, but can also be understood as potentially valuable. As May (1969) notes, in connection with romantic loss:

to see the tragic in merely negative terms is a profound misunderstanding. Far from being a negation of life and love, the tragic is an ennobling and deepening aspect....The tragic is an expression of a dimension of consciousness which gives richness, value and dignity to human life. Thus the tragic ...makes possible the most humane emotions...

(May, 1969, pg 108)

Being aware of both the pain and the potential self-change that may result could lead to greater effectiveness as therapists, for example. It may at least raise the

question of whether we should necessarily encourage people to avoid the pain, although this approach could be taken if needed and applicable.

It may be that "coping" with life change so that it occurs easily prevents it from touching us profoundly. Or it may be that reinforcing the psychological barriers, preventing the tidal wave in order to support social functioning, may in effect support a barrier of defensive resistance to positive self-change. The individual remains a social self, never grows up to emotional maturity, although they may seem adequately, even well, adjusted to society. Or it may be that aiding an escape from the change through anaesthetizing the emotions may also prevent the change.

This is not to suggest we should insist the person let go into chaos, at the risk of drowning, but, like a midwife (May, 1983), realize the pain of birth is part of the experience, which gives the birth of the new self its corresponding joy. In this birth, it is not just the new self that is born. Giving birth also creates a self that is now a parent to itself, and further growth is enabled for the future. The role of the midwife, like the role of the messengers of Enki, is to help, coach, support, understand and empathize, and validate, not to take the role of an anaesthetist and deaden or remove pain, or insist on social adjustment. If we, out of pity, remove tragedy from life,

we remove the depth of experience, and the joy, as well. It is for exactly this reason that women, having collectively experienced a generation of anaesthetized births, now chose to be awake and aware, to have both the pain and the joy.

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Appendix A

Respondents in the phenomenological portion of the study who had had a transforming experience were asked to describe it:

Describe a transforming experience: a powerful experience (of any cause, nature or emotion) which you feel has significantly transformed your personality, your self, your life or relationships. This would be an inner and/or outer experience that you feel your life would not be the same if the experience hadn't happened. At the time of its occurrence, it may be positive or negative, and the after-effects may be positive or negative.

The following instructions were then given.

Relate this experience in as full detail as possible.

- 1) Begin by taking some time to fully remember the experience. This may take quite a lot of thoughtful consideration to completely recall.
- 2) Relate the experience, from the subjective beginning to end, and include all the contents of conscious experience you can remember (thoughts, memories, sensations, images, perceptions, behaviour, etc.) in the order in which they occurred. Describe the experience in complete detail. DO NOT EDIT, or analyze. Simply report the experience, as it was to you at the time you experienced it.
- 3) After the experience has been completely described, discuss all relevant background details. These should include:
 - a) The external situation in which the experience occurred: the physical and social environment, and relevant life circumstances.
 - b) The internal situation: your mood, state of mind, perceptions and interpretations.
 - c) The background may also include relevant historical details of your life experiences (e.g. past experiences), all details of your life that are relevant to the experience.
- 4) Finally, relate in as full detail as possible short and long term after-effects of this experience, of what ever nature (personal, interpersonal, situational, etc.). How do you feel about the experience now, looking back?

Appendix B

Self-Transformation Survey

Gender: F M

Age: _____

This survey is about the experience of self-transformation, an experience of self-change which has profoundly and significantly affected your self, your life and your relationships. You could say that if you had not had this experience, you would not be the same person. Your participation would be much appreciated, and your responses will be confidential.

1. Have you ever had an experience which you would identify as self-transforming?

More than once: _____

Once: _____

Never: _____

If you have had more than one such experience, **describe the strongest** in questions 2 to 7. If you have never had such an experience, omit the rest of this survey.

2. What age were you when this occurred? _____

3. What were the general circumstances or causes, if any, of the experience? (If you have had more than one, **describe the strongest.**)

Circle as many categories as were involved, and briefly give details in the space provided.

a) An experience of loss, or potential loss, of a person or relationship because of:

Unexpected death

Expected death

Illness/accident (self or other) _____

End of relationship (breakup/divorce)

Abandonment _____

Relationship to person involved

b) An experience of trauma:

Physical abuse

Other physical trauma _____

Sexual abuse/trauma

Other: (describe) _____

7. What were the aftereffects of the experience on your self?

Thank you for your help. If you would be willing to participate in a further study on this topic, please note your name and phone number below for future contact. If you would like information on the outcome of this study, call Janet Waters, 298-1991.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Appendix C

Phenomenological Theme Analysis

The procedure for theme extraction was adapted from Colaizzi (Colaizzi, 1973; Valle & King, 1978) by Lyman & Sims (1988). First, the protocols will be read to become familiar with their sense and structure. At this stage, the entire protocol will be read, including the respondent's discussion of the background, cause and after-effect of the experience. The researcher will develop an understanding of the meaning by actively participating in the hermeneutical apprehension of meaning, using imagery, social context, and literary convention to make sure the description is fully understood. (Hermeneutic study, originally a discipline of guidelines for the study of scripture, has become a more general method concerned with how humans interpret the meanings of linguistic expressions (Gergen, Fisher, & Hepburn; 1986).

Next, phrases and sentences that do not contribute to the contextual meaning will be eliminated. This will be done following Lyman & Sims' (1988) procedure for theme extraction detailed below:

This decision was made by substituting examples for the original statement that was suspect, and re-reading the description with the substituted example. In order to determine which parts of the original statement were suspect, a set of questions was used which were developed from the categories used by Hall and Van de Castle for classifying the imagery reported

in dreams. These questions were:

1. Can the physical surroundings be changed?
2. Can the objects be changed?
3. Can the characters or certain aspects of the characters be changed?
4. Can the social interactions between the different characters (or groups) be changed?
5. Can the type of activity be changed?
6. Can the achievement outcome be changed?
7. Can the descriptive elements be changed?
8. Can the time reference be changed?

.....If the description retained its contextual meaning when substitutions based on answers to the above questions were made, then the original phrase was deemed superfluous, and eliminated.

(Lyman & Sims, 1988, pg.267)

Phrases or sentences not eliminated, which have contributed a sense to the meaning that cannot be substituted and still retain the meaning, are then to be reread to determine if there is an abstract class of ideas of which the phrase is a concrete example (e.g. a saxophone is a particular of the class of musical instruments). Again, care is taken to ensure the level of class or category substituted is congruent with the meaning of the protocol. (For example, if Vancouver is the reference, "city" may not be the appropriate category, but city of birth or of residence may be). The category is to be identified, according to Lyman & Sims, by "substituting examples for the concrete attributes.... and determining the content of the class of idea as represented by the concrete attributes which could not be altered in order to understand it." (Lyman & Sims, 1988).

At all times in the theme analysis, meanings do rely on socio-cultural and linguistic context; the researcher must in a sense go beyond the words to the context "given with" the protocol, yet always stay with the data. If the meaning is unclear, one must not read into it beyond its understandable meaning. Colaizzi gives an example of this in the following analysis (Valle & King, 1978). The respondent wrote, "It was as if the characters in the novel were purposely dredging up the most personal of my own philosophical beliefs". Colaizzi abstracted the following meaning from this protocol: "The book's different characters reflect the different dimensions of the self, or the different selves, of the subject." He warns against going beyond the data in the imposition of such theoretical interpretation as: "Subject's tendency to identify with book's characters suggests weak ego-boundaries."

The class of ideas and sentences which could not be so reduced into more encompassing classes would then be formed into a statement of theme. The themes are then organized into clusters, using categories of the referents outlined above. Colaizzi (1973) has emphasized the necessity to extract the theme categories from the data, in order not to impose on the data a biased assumption. In this topic, the transformation of the self, the theme of the self would be a central aspect of the theme category. It is quite appropriate in such cases to use the researcher's own

"presuppositions" to begin the theme extraction; these should be clearly explicated before the research has begun (Valle & King, 1978). However, this merely helps to classify categories or clusters of ideas; it is not imposed on the data. The data will always contribute themes, categories and experiences beyond the researcher's assumptions. As the theme analysis continues, more themes will be discovered, and must be added to the theme categories.

In this particular case, Lyman & Sims' classifications were used, modified as necessary for the specific question of self-transformation. More specific classification categories have been explicated in the Introduction; these were altered or discarded, and more were added from the data in the respondent's protocols. After the commonalities among the themes were identified and these commonalities organized into categories or clusters, a theme for each of these theme categories was extracted, and a thematic statement made. An example of this, from Lyman & Sims (1988), is the theme they identified from 19 protocols describing the contents of conscious experience in the emotion of depression.

The person is overwhelmed by an unpleasant event or a sequence of unpleasant events (including memories of past unpleasant events), which s/he judges cannot be changed or altered. S/He is left feeling numb, heavy, and lethargic, and with a perception of her/his surroundings and events as dull and drab. The person feels sorry for her/

himself and may have negative self-thoughts. The emotion is often long-lasting.

(Lyman & Sims, 1988, p.271)

Finally, the themes must be validated by referring these statements of theme from the theme clusters back to the original protocols (Valle & King, 1978). The researcher must ask if there is anything in the original protocols that has not been accounted for by the thematic statement, or if there is anything in the theme which is not implied by the original protocol. Colaizzi emphasized that "An effort is made to formulate the exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in as unequivocal a statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible" (Valle & King, 1978).

Appendix D

Content Analysis Coding Manual: Narrative Data

The content analysis of the data, like the theme analysis, must be individually conducted within the framework of the particular content of the topic. However, there are also universal concrete classes of ideas or categories that are common classes of linguistic referents. Thus, across most content analyses, there would be found references to the general categories of referents detailed by Hall and Van de Castle (1966) in their content analysis of dreams. However, the particular breakdown of general categories to a second level of subcategory content would vary according to topic and protocol.

The content analysis of the protocols was done according to the methods formulated by Lyman, Waters, and others in numerous studies using phenomenological data. Originally based on Hall and Van de Castle's (1966) categories for classifying the referents of dreams, it has been elaborated, detailed and validated by Lyman, Waters et al. (1982, 1987, 1989). This group of researchers have consistently found reliability in coding attributions, as long as the manual is followed.

The general classes include characters, relationship references, objects, activities, events, places, and time. The specific second level subcategories would evolve from

these according to the particular set of narrative data and topic. For example, in Waters' (1982) study of the imagery and emotion evoked by music, specific referents to music-associated content would be expected (and were found). Therefore, every class had a subcategory of music-related concepts, such as musicians (characters), instruments (objects), concert halls (places), and concerts (events).

In outlining the content analysis categories of a study, one must first ask oneself what meaningful categories would be present in protocols of the particular topic to be studied. The following are general categories of kind, referent, and quality of conscious experience which would be adapted for each specific topic addressed. These descriptions include those categories actually used in this study, as well as several which were found by a preliminary analysis not to be useful, and were discarded.

1. Referent Kind:

a) Content Element or Form: The form of the referent is coded in this category. Four basic elements of conscious experience identified by Wundt include sensations, imagery, affect and thought. The amount of each of these forms of experience may be coded and tallied. This may indicate to some degree the nature of the experience; Lyman, Bernardin and Thomas (1980) found that, for example, there was more imagery in emotion than in non-emotion experiences. Other

forms of conscious experience may be coded and tallied; these may include Bruner's (1986) two modes of thought, the paradigmatic or logico-scientific (which uses conceptualization and is driven by principled hypotheses), and the narrative mode, the imaginative story of human events. It is the latter type of thinking that one would expect to find in these narrative accounts of transforming experiences.

b) Descriptive Detail: As well as the relative amount of each particular form of the contents, the amount of descriptive detail provided in the protocols may indicate the vividness and elaboration of each of the elements. For example, the number of images mentioned could hypothetically be similar to the number of sensation references, while the imagery may be much more elaborately described, thus presumably more extensive and of greater impact in experience, than the sensations. An overall category of Descriptive Detail would include all descriptive adjectives, adverbs, and phrases that refer to, qualify or describe the object, figure or place. This category may be further broken down into elements such as colour, modifiers, etc., depending on what emerges from the protocols. The coding of descriptive detail would follow meaningful concepts that add new or different information to the particular image or idea. For example, in the image "a knight in black armour", there would be four descriptive details: 1) "knight", since

that specifies a particular kind of character, his role and his era; 2) "in", since that places the object "armour" on the knight; 3) "black", describing the colour, which would have a meaning specific to that colour (e.g. white could mean a completely different kind of knight); 4) "armour", a particular kind of apparel, signifying protection for combat, and dating the era of the character.

2. Referents:

a) Characters: The number of figures present and specifically mentioned in the protocol would be coded and tallied. Figures referred to only as a group are coded either as one referent, or in a separate subcategory. Subcategories that may be included in this class are figures such as the self, if specifically mentioned, other humans, animals, and fictional or fantasy figures.

Relationship references may be explicitly given in the character referents, and would need to be coded and tallied. These may include different subcategories indicating meaningfully different degrees and kinds of relationships, i.e. "significant other", children, parents, friends, family, acquaintances, strangers.

b) Activity: This category includes acts, actions, and movements in the protocol that were specifically mentioned. Subcategories could include passive (e.g. watching, sleeping) or active activities (walking, or dancing), and/or

natural (e.g. waves).

Events: This category includes the number of events specifically mentioned in the protocol. The concept of events includes the class of ideas such as dances, parties, earthquakes, wars. Subcategories could include human, natural, fictional or fantasy.

c) Place: Although the experience of transformation referred to in the protocol implicitly takes place somewhere, this category is also coded only if specific reference is made to it. Subcategories may include manmade or natural, urban or rural, public or private, or fantasy.

d) Objects: This would include the number of distinct, specifically mentioned objects. Subcategories may include manmade or natural, and third level subcategories of each of these.

e) Time: All time references, either specifically mentioned, or implied by the nature of the reference (e.g. to the respondent's childhood), were included in this category. Subcategories could include past, present (if specifically noted), future, and other, including season and time of day.

3. Quality Characteristics:

The protocol would be coded with respect to the overall quality of the experience. For example, a respondent's protocol would be coded as negative in tone or valence if

more than 50% of the references were negative in tone, or if the main or important references were negative when positive references occurred but were clearly secondary. If the protocol was a mixture of both qualities in the pair, both were noted as present (Lyman & Waters, 1989).

a) Valence: An overall estimation of the tone of the protocol, positive, negative, or both, would be noted for the cause, the experience and the after-effects of the transformation.

b) Memory/Present Situation/Extrapolation: The protocol would be coded according to which of these qualities characterized the overall sense of the experience. If two or all three of these qualities were present in sufficient degrees, they would also be noted. An extrapolation would be any reference which goes beyond the situation and projects into the future, including the expectation of the continuation of a current situation.

c) Realistic/Fantasy: A protocol would be characterized as fantasy if the references were to unfamiliar, imaginative and strange events or characters; situations that are unusual, unlikely to have occurred to the respondent (e.g. Viking warriors, or a landing on the moon), or are impossible in reality (Pope & Singer, 1978).

d) Tangible/Intangible: This quality indicates descriptions which are described in concrete tangible terms, (e.g. "walking on the beach"), vs. intangible, vague,

general references (such as "our past together").

e) Simple/Complex: This quality refers to whether the references seemed like short, simple, unelaborated scenes or ideas, or were well-developed, elaborated and detailed.

f) Positive-Vivid/Guilty-Dysphoric/Distractible: The protocol could be coded as having one of these three qualities according to Singer's (Pope & Singer, 1978) findings that these are three different, mutually exclusive qualities of thought and daydreaming. In the Positive-Vivid category, a great deal of positive daydreaming is reported, while the Guilty-Dysphoric category reflects thoughts and daydreams which are negative, hostile or self-recriminatory. The Distractible category is characterized by fleeting thoughts and an inability to concentrate.

g) Situation-Bound/Reactive to/Irrelevant: This category codes the protocol in terms of its relation to the present situation, which may or may not be the cause of the experience. The respondent's conscious experience may be focused on thoughts and images about the situation/cause, or it may be reacting to it (as one daydreams of Hawaii when bored (Lyman & Waters, 1989)), or the protocol may seem to be irrelevant to the cause or situation, indicating a "flight of fancy".

h) Situation Qualities: These may include such categories as:

i) Alone/with others

- ii) Situation self-initiated/other-initiated
- iii) Judgment of self implied
- iv) Length of experience
- iv) Intensity of experience

i) Cause: The cause of the experience would be coded in terms of valence and nature (External/Internal, etc.).

j) After-Effect: The after-effects of the experience would also be coded in these same categories, as well as an evaluation of oneself and of the experience.

More specific content categories, and a further breakdown of the sub-categories, arise from the data referents. A preliminary content analysis, which would include all of these content categories, should be done on a random percentage of the protocols, to enable the researcher to reduce the number of categories to those of value in the particular study. In this study, several categories were found to indicate individual style differences rather than differences in theme and were omitted from subsequent content analysis: referent kind, descriptive detail, activity/event and objects, and several of the quality characteristics (b to f).

In analyzing the contents, the protocol is considered as a narrative or literary (or visual/artistic) description of experience. (If it is written using a "paradigmatic" or "logico-scientific" (Bruner, 1986) mode of thought, it could

be analyzed in a similar way, as are other protocols of this type, such as essay style exams). Thus, in deciding whether a series of descriptions is connected in one gestalt experience, or is a sequential series of images or thoughts, one may use the analogy of film editing. The literary convention of a sentence constitutes a slow single shot, while disconnected sentence fragments or points characterize a rapid sequential series of shots. Though each "shot" is a single element, the elaboration or detail would be greater in the slow panning image or element. Although thoughtful consideration is given to what a respondent may have meant by a description or phrase, rigorous care is taken to stay with the data as reported. The data itself must always be referred to, to direct this decision.

Once the content is coded, the categories were first tallied and totalled across individuals for overall patterns. For example, there may be characteristic kinds of thought, referents, or quality of the transforming experience that can be identified across all the protocols. These overall patterns of content kind, referent and quality would expand and partially validate the themes.

After an overall analysis has been conducted for pattern, the content categories were compared between respondents according to the categories of transformation which emerged from theme analysis. If the particular protocols are different in theme, the content analysis

should also reflect this, and aid in an understanding of the meaning of the experience. For example, the content categories of the protocols with a theme of self/other identification would be compared to the content of the protocols with a theme of loss. Finally, the protocols of different subcategories of these transformation themes would be compared to each other (e.g. mortality with relationship crisis). In general, in content analysis, these comparisons could be analyzed by statistics such as ANOVA for the referent categories, and by Chi-squared for multivariate data for the quality characteristics. However, in this study, the numbers of respondents within the theme categories of the phenomenological data were insufficient for statistical analysis, and the frequency distributions of the content analyses were presented instead.