Active imagination and Christian religious experience: A study in relationship

George E. Trippe

Edith Cowan University

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Active Imagination and
Christian Religious Experience:
A Study in Relationship

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22 July, 1999
Abstract

The focus of this study is the relationship between Carl Jung's practice of active imagination and Christian religious experience. The research is qualitative, using the heuristic research method as developed by Clark Moustakas. The experience of active imagination is defined and the practice is explained. Consideration is given to its values and benefits. In the heuristic style, the research focuses on the active imagination work of the researcher and four research participants. The active imagination case material of the five participants is summarised and depictions of their material are included which identify the nature, essence, and meaning of their experiences. The broad spectrum of Christian religious experience is explored with particular attention to the contributions of James and Kelsey. The experience of discernment is highlighted and distinctions between "spiritual" and "religious" are considered. Jung's theories of religious experience are identified using the work of Chapman, and the differences and similarities between active imagination and Christian religious experience are examined.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.
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Figure 1. Soul Garden Series (pastel, collage, ink) 1996
INTRODUCTION

Personal background

About twenty-five years ago I met with some colleagues in my parish office in Ojai, California. We were meeting with the intention of designing a conference in which to explore the links between Christianity and the psychology of Dr. Carl Jung. In the course of our day together we realised that I was the only one present who had not come to know Jung's work through a personal crisis in my adult years. The others present had found that, in a crisis, their Christian faith had let them down. In turning to the insights and practices of Jung, they had found pathways through their difficulties. It had not been so for me. I was the only one who had been raised, so to speak, in Jung.

I was introduced to Jung at an early age, fifteen as I remember. The rector of my home parish, Morton Kelsey, had travelled to Zurich to study at the Jung Institute, and had interacted with several people there, including Jung himself. I began seeing Kelsey for counselling at fifteen and was introduced to dream work at that time. Jung's perspectives, through Kelsey at first, began to shape my understanding of Christianity, and I realised that day at the gathering with my friends that I couldn't possibly separate them. I had no idea what Christianity, without the influence of Jung, looked like. Likewise, I see Jung's entire psychology as a deeply religious exercise. I am inclined to the notion that Jung makes sense best
in a religious framework. My friends and I never quite got that conference organised, but I gained an important insight about myself during that day.

From my youth my theoretical framework has been composed of two strands: the psychology of Jung and the life of prayer in the Christian tradition. The first strand is Jung; his work has been a significant influence from the age of fifteen. My dreams have been constant companions now for over forty years, and my interpretations of these stories have influenced deeply how I see life. The framework of interpretation for the dreams has been Jungian. I have depended on the dreams for guidance, insight and understanding in my life journey, to the extent that I hesitate to make any major decision until the dreams have had their say. I value my dreams highly, and am amazed at all that has come to me through them over the years. In terms of bridging Christianity and Jung's work, I have concluded that the dreams are the gift of God. In whatever way they are created within us, the entire process is God driven, and given to us to help us hear individually relevant truth within. As I will mention later, active imagination became part of this framework in my adult years.

In addition to the dreams, I have experienced a combined total of over five hundred hours of Jungian analysis with Kelsey, and two Jungian Analyses in Los Angeles. I am one of those who often stayed longer in the
analytical relationship than needed, because I had no where else to go to talk with someone on such a level of depth. Often I was frustrated with the fact that I had few friends or colleagues within the Christian community with whom I could discuss the experiences I was having in analysis. I concluded long ago that Kelsey and the two analysts, Margaret McClean and Weyler Greene, have been for me, not only therapists, but also significant spiritual directors. I do not know what, if any, religious practices McClean and Greene followed, but I learned more from these two about the depth and significance of the mantle of the priesthood I wear than I learned from any of those involved in my theological training. The model of those analytical relationships deeply affects the way I engage with people today in my one-to-one work.

The encounter with Jung included coming to enjoy the richness of the symbolic world. Early on I came to appreciate the symbolic and mythic dimensions of biblical stories as well as of dreams. Over the years I have concluded that the symbolic layer of meaning in these sacred stories is the more important, and more life giving than the literal, historical layer. This perspective allowed me to engage what was called liberal biblical scholarship quite comfortably in my training years, since I had little stake in the factuality of most biblical stories. Oddly enough, I also found myself more willing to accept a literal aspect to stories concerning Jesus. This is largely because the symbolic world I met through Kelsey and Jung, led me to affirm the vital reality of a spiritual dimension that many of my liberal
colleagues would have doubted. That this vital spiritual dimension could affect historical, literal reality made sense to me.

The second strand of influence from my younger days, was a rich schooling in the life of prayer and an involvement with what is now called the Charismatic movement. At the same time that I was seeing Kelsey for counselling as a teenager, I was seeing Stuart Fitch for spiritual direction. He was the Associate Rector of my home parish. This work included guidance in the life of prayer, the devotional reading of scriptures, a beginning understanding of meditation, and involvement with prayer groups. I was eighteen when I received the gift of speaking in tongues. By this time a growing Jungian-influenced framework was well in place, and the result of this was that the tongues experience was interpreted in that framework. I never became involved with the later Charismatic movement as I felt it lacked psychological grounding and depth of understanding. Furthermore, it was too noisy for my introverted nature. The personal work with Fitch on my prayer life, and the experience of tongues has left me with two fundamental convictions: 1) personal experience is the foundation of any lively religious practice and life, and 2) it is possible to have a deeply intimate interaction with God, the divine energy.

Returning now to the Jungian strand of influence, as I mentioned earlier, it was in my adult years that the Jungian contribution to my life and
framework was enriched with the inclusion of active imagination. My longest course of analysis was with Weyler Greene, in my mid to late thirties. It was through him that I encountered active imagination. It was a dream that sent me to Greene. In the dream story, I had an infection in my testicles and the doctor wanted to castrate me. I objected, so the doctor gave me one year to get it cleared up. I called Greene that very day!

Shortly after beginning analysis with Greene, he encouraged me to use active imagination to follow up a dream image. He gave me little guidance on the method. He simply encouraged me to talk to the character and to write down what was said between us. This happened two times, the first with an old lady in tattered clothing, and the second with a man who was chasing me over a rough, desert terrain. In our sessions we talked very little in detail about the content of those exercises, but I felt drawn to the experience as a useful tool for connecting with hitherto unknown aspects of myself.

To describe active imagination briefly, it is an experience of dialogue with the unconscious, most commonly through images of people and animals. In the Jungian framework, the active imagination process is undertaken to interact with a figure who has appeared from the unconscious, usually in a dream. Because of this, active imagination is often described as a way of dreaming the dream forward. There are other beginning points for active imagination, but the dream image, in my experience, is the most
common. The most important characteristic of this dialogue experience is that it is a dialogue between equals (Johnson, 1986, p. 184), in which I, ego consciousness, interact on an equal footing with any images that emerge from the unconscious. It can take a variety of forms as I will describe later in this study. The most common form is the written dialogue. I use this form regularly, and produce a record of the encounter that is much like a play script. In chapter two I will consider active imagination in greater detail.

My deeper experiences of active imagination began with the "Dog" series that I use in this study. That series also was triggered by a dream. In the dream I had gone to visit an old friend one night. He was not home and his house was very dark. The door was slightly ajar, so I pushed it open, only to be confronted by a great dane dog which came bounding down the central passageway barking at me. Frightened, I closed the door and returned to my car. As I settled into the driver's seat, a man rose up out of the back seat and put a gun to my head! I woke up suddenly and with a fright. Greene encouraged me to go back into the dream and sort out the frightening experience by having an active imagination encounter with the dog. The challenge was to dream this dream forward toward some sort of deeper self-understanding and resolution. Thus began a series of eighteen encounters over two years with Dog and others that is the "Dog" series. There have been other one-off experiences over the years and three other series: the "Old Nun," the "Wise Old Man," and "Solitude," a series
of encounters with a three year old boy. I have found these experiences of active imagination to be life-changing and of immense value.

To summarise my theoretical framework, there are two strands of influence from my younger years: Jungian psychology and the Christian life of prayer. I am a Christian who is deeply influenced by Jung. Within the extensive and pluralistic framework that is Christianity, I am one who values above all else the personal, individual experience of God. I affirm this personal experience to be of primary importance in religious living, and assert that an intimate and personal relationship with the divine energy is possible. The influence of Jung has led me to value the symbolic nature of religious experience and the symbolic interpretation of our Christian tradition. I am not inclined to literal interpretations of our sacred writings, but rather am interested in their symbolic potential, and how this helps us understand our own lives. My orientation to personal religious experience leads me to be less interested in the more institutional forms of Christianity. I value contact with a community of faithful people, but am little interested in the dogmatic and creedal forms of religious expression, except as they are understood from this symbolic framework, and only as they interact creatively with the ongoing personal experience of the individual. Faith, for me, involves trust in God, grounded first in my own experience, and secondly as informed by Christian tradition, creed and dogma. I value the Church institution only as it manifests truth known through our experiences today. This truth
may or may not be consistent with the insights of previous generations or with the sacred writings and traditions of Christianity. From Jung's work I have come to value highly dreams and active imagination as symbolic experiences that are a vital resource in the religious life. These experiences have come to be included in the larger context of my Christian religious practice, my spirituality.

A fundamental issue

Over the course of my thirty years as a priest in the American Episcopal and Australian Anglican Churches, I have concluded that my personal vocation is to help people contend with and understand their experiences of God. The most comfortable setting for this is the one-to-one encounter. With my background, and in my theoretical framework, I suppose that this is no surprise. At various times this has been in the context of counselling, spiritual direction, and now, psychotherapy. Throughout these years I have encouraged people to listen to their dreams, and in recent years I have guided people to the experience of active imagination when it seemed appropriate. Some of these people have shared their material for this study.

An ongoing frustration has accompanied these experiences of the dream and of active imagination. It is that, by and large, people within the Christian community seem less interested in these experiences than do others. I remember in my days as a parish priest in the Diocese of Los
Angeles watching several friends leave active ministry in the midst of a crisis. Some went on to enrol in the Jung Institute in Los Angeles to study to become Jungian analysts. I investigated this path myself in the early 1970's, but did not pursue it. Over and over again these friends, and others like them, including those at the planning meeting mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, felt that the church, and their faith, let them down in a crisis. The manner in which the Christ story was being interpreted and marketed, if you will, did not meet them where they lived, and most especially, where they suffered. The community of the faithful seemed uninterested in experiences that I have found over the years to offer life-giving and positive benefits.

In the course of my work with clients I have encountered many others, for whom the traditional interpretations of the Christ story and the practices of the church do not address their lives in meaningful ways. Giving attention to the inner world, as encouraged by Jung, often brings the renewal, transformation and healing that no longer seems to flow through the churches or the traditional Christian interpretations of the sacred stories.

This study

Certainly Jung had an interest in Christianity and religion in general. A large amount of his work deals with religion in one form or another. Among the rich contributions he has made to religion is to affirm the
unconscious as a vital resource for the healing process and for the symbolic life. He has added a depth to Christianity in our time that has enabled me, and others I am sure, to remain with the sacred stories and, to some degree, with the church. Over the years I have experienced a deep frustration that so many within the Christian community continue to seem uninterested in what Jung offers, and that others feel they must leave the church in order to make use of insights and practices from Jung's psychology.

In the context of this long-standing and ongoing frustration, the task of this research study is to explore the relationship between Jung's practice of active imagination and Christian religious experience. It is the bridging between the two which interests me. The issue takes on an even more interesting character when I encounter specific religious figures in active imagination material. Several people with whom I have worked, and I too, have had specifically religious figures in our active imagination experiences. A complicating factor is that often the religious figures behave in ways that transgress the traditional boundaries set around them by the community of faith. In spite of this, the experiences themselves can have the characteristics of a religious experience. Out of my frustrations and these observations of experience has grown my desire to explore the relationship between active imagination and religious experience. My intention in this study to pursue this question: what is the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience?
In 1995 I became involved in the then Department of Religious Studies at Edith Cowan University as an external tutor. This was in addition to my work as University Chaplain. Conversations surrounding my work in psychotherapy and Christianity in general were common with my colleagues. One, Dr. Peter Bedford, challenged me to give serious consideration to doing research around this area of concern and interest.

At this time I was also offered an opportunity to complete training locally as a Jungian Analyst. It was a dilemma of riches, resolved by the dreams. I was drawn first to the training as an analyst and saw it as a way of continuing the dialogue between Christianity and Jung. After an interview with one of those involved in the analysts' training program, I had some very strange dreams. I then considered the doctoral research project more carefully and had the following dream in August, 1995. The text here is as it was written in my journal at the time.

"Off to University"
My family and I are taking AH by car to UCBerkeley to begin his studies. He is going to live in the Arts dormitory. We arrive and I go along with him. I don't experience the staff as helpful really. They offer minimum directions and replies. AH is hesitant and a little fearful. We find quickly that the first building we enter, Arts, is also his accommodation building. As we're being shown around, and taken to his room by a more extraverted student, who may be from Texas, we also discover the dining room, which has excellent and healthy food. I'm not sure how this ends.

I awoke feeling very moved and energised by this dream. I worked up an
interpretation of the dream with a colleague from which we concluded that it gave positive support to the PhD project. Soon after, I undertook the process of enrolment and began my research project in February, 1996.

In this thesis there are six chapters. In the first chapter I will consider the research question. I will explain some of Jung's key terms, and then look more closely at Jung's relationship to Christianity. I will also present the heuristic research method which I employ, explain the research process and present a review of relevant literature.

In chapter two I will present Jung's method of active imagination in detail. I will define it, look at how it may be used, consider its values and benefits, and conclude with some practical matters concerning its use.

In chapter three I will introduce the research participants. There are five of us participants in this study. In keeping with the heuristic method of research I have included myself in this study. Each of us has provided substantial active imagination material. I will also explain the process of choosing the other four participants, comment on those who refused to take part in this study, explain the use of case material that is not recent, and review the actual process of working with the other four participants.

In chapter four I will present the summaries and depictions of the active imagination experiences of the five of us participants. This chapter
concludes with a corporate depiction of our active imagination experiences. These summaries and depictions are essential to the heuristic method of research.

In chapter five I will take up the subject of Christian religious experience. The essential task of this chapter is to take the vast subject that is religious experience and identify a working definition, in a Christian framework, for this study.

In chapter six I will focus on the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience. I will use insights primarily from James, Kelsey, and Chapman to inform this description. Based on the literature reviewed throughout the project, and on the experiences of us five research participants, I will then highlight similarities and differences between active imagination and Christian religious experience.

In the Conclusion I will end with some thoughts on further issues for research and study that have emerged from this present work.

Several “housekeeping” items need to be addressed at this point. In terms of style: I intend to write in the first person singular; this is appropriate to the heuristic research method. This qualitative research method values the subjective personal experience of the researcher as well as the experiences of the research participants. Therefore, I am placing a
positive value on my personal point of view. Within the context of this method, I intend to reflect out of my own lived experience, and the experiences of the research participants, as well as to consider the research task from a more objective stance of the authors on whose work I draw.

There are two matters concerning referencing. 1) All biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), unless otherwise noted. 2) The dates used in referring to selections from the Collected Works of C. G. Jung list first the date of the original writing or the date of the substantial revision by Jung. The second date refers to the second edition of the Collected Works in which writings were consulted for this research project. In-text and footnote references to the Collected Works of C. G. Jung show paragraph numbers rather than page numbers. This is the common manner used in referencing the Collected Works.

In addition to the many written sources I have consulted, and the materials and interviews of the four research participants, I also had the opportunity to interview Morton Kelsey in reference to this project. We spent three mornings together in January, 1998, at his home in Coronado, California. I have six hours of taped material from those conversations, and, in accord with University policy, I have obtained his permission to use this material. In the course of this study, when I refer to these interviews, I will indicate the number of the interview, the tape and side on which the material is found. I want at this point also to acknowledge
my deep debt of gratitude to Kelsey. My learning from him as counsellor and mentor in the early years was extensive. It was to my amusement, as I later read Jung for myself, to discover how “Jungian” was Kelsey’s influence. Many perspectives and attitudes that form my framework first came to me in the “experiential-oral” tradition, and only later did I find them in the written material. It is still true that many things I “know,” experience as true, and incorporate into my own professional working perspective, I trace to the experiential-oral tradition more easily than to any written resource. I am most grateful for Kelsey’s early influence.

Finally, in reference to the art work: throughout this study I have used some of my own art work. When I undertook this study, I made a decision to switch to a more abstract form of visual expression as a compensation to the words and ordered thinking demanded of research. I have experienced and come to affirm this process as a form of active imagination, and in the Appendix four to this study I have entered a more detailed explanation of the process. The works are listed in the Table of Figures.
Figure 1. Soul Garden Series (pastel, collage, ink) 1996
CHAPTER ONE
THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Jung: some key terms

While it is beyond the scope of this study to outline Jung’s psychological framework in depth, I intend here to explain briefly certain of his key terms. The overarching reality of Jung’s framework is the psyche. This term includes both consciousness and the unconscious. The psyche for Jung is a dynamic reality of change and self-regulation (Fordham, 1953, p. 17). With the inclusion of the unconscious, the psyche expands in such a way that it becomes for Jung “existence itself” (Jung, 1938/1958, para. 18). It is a problem to grasp the sense of psyche since we are in it and not able to stand outside it, yet for Jung it is the locus and nature of all our experience (Jung 1931a/1969, para. 680). The characteristic dynamic of the psyche is dialogue. This dialogue is a dynamic process between opposites, in the interests of self-regulation, balance and wholeness. The fundamental dialogue is between consciousness and the unconscious, which, within the psyche, are the fundamental pair of opposites in our psychic reality.

The notion of the unconscious is essential to understanding Jung. In his work he delineated between the personal and collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is an aspect of each individual. It is composed of repressed memories, impulses and wishes, and of our personal complexes.

1. An excellent source for Jung’s terms is Fordham’s, An introduction to Jung’s psychology, as listed in the references. Volume six of Jung’s Collected Works contains a chapter of definitions by Jung, chapter 11, beginning at paragraph 672.
It is also composed of subliminal perceptions, and of contents which, though forgotten, are not necessarily repressed. The personal unconscious also contains those aspects of us that our early training taught us were not desirable or good. These become the content of what Jung termed the "shadow," the rejected, denied or unknown aspects of us that are usually the opposites of what we hold in consciousness to be desirable and acceptable (Fordham, 1953, pp. 47-49). An important dimension of the dialogic life of the psyche, in the interests of balance and wholeness, is that between the conscious ego, or the persona, and the personal shadow.

The collective unconscious represents a vast reservoir which we share in common with all people throughout time. As the personal unconscious is different in each of us, the collective unconscious belongs to all humanity. In one place Jung's (1938/1958, para. 88) language concerning the collective unconsciousness implies strongly the notion of psychic inheritance. For Jung, this collective reality existed before personal consciousness, and consciousness rises up from the collective unconscious like an island in the sea. We cannot know the collective unconscious directly. We know of it through common, instinctive behaviours, through the emotions which surround universal human experiences such as birth and death (Fordham, 1953, p. 25), and through the images which spring from deeper, proto-typical, realities within it. These contents of the collective unconscious Jung terms "archetypes" (Jung, 1938/1958, para. 89). The archetypes are primordial images and motifs or themes of
human experience, which reach back into the dawn of humanity. While they are ancient and from deep within us, they are also adaptable and influenced by the time in which they appear. Therefore, while the archetypes represent stable themes in human experience from the beginning, archetypes present themselves in an endless variety of "faces" in accord with the time of their appearing (Fordham, 1953, pp. 24-25).

We cannot experience the archetypes directly, but know of them through their images or faces, which appear in dreams, active imagination, mythology, fairytales and other symbolic experiences. Often these images are accompanied by an awesome energy that Jung referred to as numinous, after the work of Otto. This aspect of the experience will be taken up again in chapter six. From the images that appear, we can affirm that the energies of the archetypes exist in pairs of opposites, positive and negative. For example, the father archetype can have both positive and negative expressions. Some of the archetypes which Jung identified are the hero, trickster, the wise old man, the wise old woman and the self. Jung termed as the "anima" the archetype which represents the feminine dimension of a male and the "animus" the masculine dimension of the female (Fordham, 1953, p. 28). He also asserted that the persona and shadow were archetypal realities of the collective unconscious as well as being aspects of personal consciousness and the personal unconscious. While these archetypes may appear in imagery that "feels" personal, they are not part of us in the same way as is the personal
unconscious. They are part of the collective unconscious, and interact with us to serve the balance and wholeness of the psyche.

Jung posited that at the heart of the collective unconscious is the self archetype. I will mention this archetype in relation to Kelsey later in this chapter, but here affirm that, for Jung, the self is both the totality of the psyche and the centrepoint round which all else revolves. Its common appearances are as supraordinate personalities, such as the king, queen, prophet or saviour, or in symbols of totality such as the circle or square (Jung, 1921/1971, para. 790).

As I have mentioned, Jung saw the dynamic within the psyche as one of dialogue between polarities. This notion is essential to Jung’s understanding of the personality. Heisig (1979, p.117) points out that, for Jung, this principle rested on the first law of thermodynamics. The most important polarity of opposites is that between consciousness and the unconscious. This can be a dialogue between consciousness and the personal elements of the unconscious, or with the imagery emerging from the archetypal realities of the collective unconscious. For Jung, the dialogue between these two dimensions of our psychic reality leads to the ongoing formation of our own unique expression of what it is to be human. This dialogue is the individuation process and this is a central notion of Jung’s psychology. What results from this dialogue is an increasing awareness of the uniqueness of one’s own self, and the
reconfiguration of a self concept that is inclusive of the hitherto repressed or unknown aspects of the individual in the unconscious. This includes a sense of distinctiveness from others and a sense of commonality with others, with creation and the cosmos (Fordham, 1953, pp. 77-78).

Two resources which fuel the individuation process are the dream and active imagination. By example in the Introduction, I have indicated that dreams can be an important resource for insight and guidance in the unfolding of our lives. When interpreted symbolically, in the Jungian mode, often they present challenges and understandings that are practical in charting our life course. It is beyond the scope of our study to explore dreams further; excellent resources are available. I will take up active imagination in detail in chapter two.

Jung and Christianity

From my youth Jung and Christianity have been intertwined. As I indicated in the Introduction, the Christianity in which I was schooled was

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2. In addition to the various resources in Jung's Collected Works, there are a variety of others sources including the following works.
influenced largely by Jung’s thought through Kelsey. The stance within the Christian theological spectrum to which I most naturally gravitate is influenced significantly by Jung’s work.

Was Jung a Christian? In his autobiography, Jung (1961, pp. 52ff) writes at length over the trouble he had with the religion of his father. His first communion was a disaster spiritually, as was an early encounter with dogmatic theology. He could not accept his father’s emphasis on faith in the God taught by the Church, over the direct, personal experience of God, and concluded that “theology had alienated my father and me from one another” (Jung, 1961, p. 61). Kelsey (Interview, 1998, tape 3:1) relates a story he once read about Jung in an English publication. A woman who knew Jung told of how, during one part of his life, he walked out of the room whenever people mentioned the name ‘Christ’. Von Franz (1983, p. xxiv) reports that in 1912 Jung concluded that he could not return to the “medieval or original Christian myth.” Yet in his elder years, Jung (1976 [1 October, 1953], p. 130) referred to himself as Christian, even though he admitted that he did not use the word in a traditional manner. Drawing on Heisig’s (1979, p. 91) work on Jung’s notion of the image of God, it is possible to see that Jung saw himself as Christian in the terms by which he himself defined Christianity. The essence of this experience involved an engagement with the numinous archetypes of the unconscious, and a response to that encounter.
Jung’s ongoing attention to the Christian enterprise in his own work indicates some kind of relationship. I conclude that it was a complex and troubled relationship for Jung, influenced, in part, by the painful interactions with his father concerning religious matters. Stein (1985, p. 18) proposes that when Jung addressed Christianity seriously from the 1930’s onward, he approached the religion as a client, and applied his strategies and methods of treatment much as he would in a therapeutic setting. Jung was attempting to do therapy on Christianity. His approach was an attempt to heal Christianity of its one sided rational bias, by opening up the depths of the symbolic life in the Christian story. Dourley (1992, p. 8) parallels this notion with his assertion that Jung’s work represents a healing counter-myth to the form of faith-oriented, dogmatic Christianity followed by his father.

Homans (1990, pp. 22-23) asserts that Jung had a two fold approach to religion. These he terms a “hermeneutics of suspicion” and a “hermeneutics of affirmation.” In the hermeneutics of suspicion he interprets all of Christianity in the light of his theories in analytical psychology. In this sense Jung is reductive in his approach to Christianity. In the hermeneutics of affirmation he seeks to retrieve meaning from Christianity by seeing it as the matrix out of which he draws his psychology of the human person. This is largely in the form of his individuation process mentioned above. Homans (1990, p. 32) maintains that Jung’s attitude toward religion was very complex and
involves an attempt to synthesise modern, counter-modern and post-modern trends for contemporary people.

In an interesting passage, wherein Jung is talking about treating patients, he equates terms from his own work with Christian theological terms. Jung (1958/1980, para. 1664) states:

for instance, instead of using the term God you say ‘unconscious,’ instead of Christ ‘self,’ instead of incarnation ‘integration of the unconscious,’ instead of salvation or redemption ‘individuation,’ instead of crucifixion or sacrifice on the cross ‘realization of the four functions or of wholeness.’ I think it is no disadvantage to religious tradition if we can see how far it coincides with psychological experience. On the contrary it seems to me a most welcome aid in understanding religious traditions.

Across the years of my relationship with Kelsey, I remembered him making similar comparisons. In our interviews I asked Kelsey (Interview, 1998, tape 3:1) about this and he acknowledged that he did early on, for it facilitated teaching, but he no longer sees the two frameworks as parallel.

Over the course of my own involvements with Christianity and Jung’s work, I have concluded that it is simplistic to equate the structures, but the passage quoted above holds before us fascinating similarities. For example, the process of the reconciliation of opposites in the Jungian structure seems deeply dependent upon an energy moving in the psyche.

3. It is interesting to note that, in this same writing, shortly before this passage, Jung, in a parenthetical note in the text, indicates that he is hesitant to equate the self with the Christ (Jung, 1958/1980, para. 1631).
that reminds the informed reader of the activity of grace in Christian theology. For Jung, this energy is the transcendent function, which emerges of its own out of the courageous work of honouring the reality of two opposing points of view. In Jung's process, the individual holds the two in relationship, rather than giving in to one over the other. Out of this holding process, which is like a crucifixion, a third thing will emerge, which both honours and yet transcends the two. In a sense it emerges in response to one's effort, in a sense it arises of its own, independent of the individual. Jung (1958/1980, para.1661) himself defines the Christ function as being crucified on the opposites of his destiny. The emergence of the 'third thing,' as the result of holding the opposites in dynamic tension, is very much like a resurrection experience.

Also, it is interesting to read Jung's description of the self archetype and realise that passages sound much like the writer is talking about the divine life in the Christian framework. Most recently I noticed the similarities again while reviewing with Kelsey one of his diagrams of the soul's experience. It is in the revised edition of his book, The Other Side of Silence (1995, pp. 72 and 214), and is reproduced in Appendix one. Kelsey shows in his diagram that we have a two-fold connection with the Unlimited Divine Creator, or God. For Kelsey, the characteristic feature of the Unlimited Divine Creator is that it is both the reality that surrounds

4. A concise description of the self is found in Frieda Fordham's, An introduction to Jung's psychology. It is listed in the references.
all else, and yet it has a specific point of focus, through which we make individual contact. In my theological training, I learned that the Christian understanding of God includes both God’s transcendence and God’s immanence. This double characteristic is standard, traditional Christian theology when speaking about God. In this tradition, the Unlimited Divine Creator of Kelsey’s diagram is both transcendent and immanent. Again, this parallels Jung’s (1952/1968, para. 44) assertion about the archetype of the self. The self is both the larger life in which we live and the centre of our being.

Jung certainly seemed to have some business with Christianity during his career, so it is appropriate to wonder how his clinical method of active imagination might overlap with Christian religious experience in the same way that he at one time drew parallels between the notions and concepts of his own work and Christian theological terminology.

A research method
As I have indicated in the Introduction, as a result of conversations with colleagues about my work in Christian theology and spirituality and Jung’s psychology, I was challenged to consider taking up a research project. Since I have an ongoing interest in active imagination, and believe that it makes possible deep transformation for individuals, I decided to look at this experience in relationship to religious experience. As I have mentioned in the Introduction, this decision grew partly out of my
frustration at finding so little interest in Jung's insights within the Christian community, and partly it has grown out of my own desire to understand the relationship of the two experiences more deeply.

Like most, I did not find the formulation of a research question an easy task. It was the discovery of a method that helped me begin to get the ideas of a research question into a more useful framework. In the very early days of this project, a colleague, Dr. Mark Williams, introduced me to the work on qualitative research by Tesch (1990). I was clear that I would work in the framework of a qualitative method, but beyond that I had no sure direction.

Tesch (1990, p. 59) identifies four major research interests in her review of qualitative research. The fourth is "reflection" and is the smallest of the four categories. Tesch acknowledges that all research involves reflection, but that this category of research employs reflection in a specific manner. It is a reflection largely informed by intuition, it is examination with a sense of wonder, an introspective contemplation that Tesch sees as the meeting place of the social sciences and the humanities (Tesch, 1990, p. 69).

In this category of reflection Tesch places three methods of research. They are educational connoisseurship, reflective phenomenology, and heuristic research. In my initial reading of the descriptions of the three, I concluded that a framework of heuristic research would be an appropriate method for this project. Tesch draws her understanding of heuristic research
largely from a 1981 article by Moustakas. From Tesch’s work I was led also to Moustakas’ later work, *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications* (1990). It is clear in these sources that Moustakas has been a leader in the development of this method. He developed his early understanding of heuristic research through his careful exploration of a personal crisis experience of loneliness. Moustakas (1990, p. 9) asserts that the heuristic method, as an organised and systematic form of research, originates with the publication of this work on loneliness in 1961.

As Moustakas (1990, p. 9) points out, the word “heuristic” comes from the Greek *heuriskein*, which means to discover or find. The core issue in the heuristic method is about discovery. The process of reflection on the phenomenon also involves self-reflection and self-discovery. As distinguished from other research methods, heuristic research includes intentionally a subjective approach to the research task, in which the researcher immerses him/herself in the phenomenon, or question, under consideration. Tesch (1990, p. 70) asserts that “Heuristic research carries farthest the notion that the researcher is the research instrument....” The researcher works from the inside, so to speak, reflecting, exploring, sorting, sifting, discovering patterns of meaning. It is an intuitive process. Moustakas (cited in Tesch, 1990, p. 35) even uses the phrase, “a mystical reaching.” The focus in heuristic research is not on the goal so much as on the process itself. The process begins in what Moustakas (1990, p. 70) calls “inner searching for deeper awareness....” As part of the process the
researcher listens to the experiences of others, "with objectivity and warmth," (Moustakas, 1990, p. 70), and subsequently enriches the research reflection with references from a variety of art forms. In heuristic research it is discovery rather than verification or corroboration that is important.

In the process of reflecting on how this research method was appropriate to my task, I realised that I function personally within a post-modern framework to a significant degree. Drawing on Anderson (1996, p. 4), I understand post-modernism to include a post-Enlightenment, and post-scientific, rationalistic perspective on reality. Post-modernism questions the validity of all “metanarratives,” and the notion that one story can be applied to all people as a framework for meaning or salvation. Post-modernism supports a multi-cultural and pluralistic approach to social structures. It also involves a re-defining of our relationship to objective realities. This involves an emphasis on, and appreciation for, the ways in which we make, or socially construct, our realities rather than receiving our understanding from objective sources (Anderson, 1996, p. 8). On the one hand, our framework in a post-modern setting is a global civilisation, in which we partake freely, and from which we are always learning. The character of our reality is more as process than as a static, unchanging picture. We live in a big world that tends to relativise our local, personal understanding of things. We are challenged to understand our local story as one story among stories. On the other hand, we are re-valuing the local story, and the individual, subjective experience. In a post-modern
framework, we find people shaping their reality through their own experience, through dialogue with others' about experience and through choice out of the dialogue.

Working from this brief understanding of post-modernism, I am aware that I function largely as a post-modern Christian. My interests in terms of Christian religious experience are not around the universal application of the Christ story to all people. I am interested in individual stories, and in their power to heal and transform. Only secondly am I interested in how they fit with the prevailing metanarratives that currently shape and guide Christian thinking and theology. Further, I have never been able to convince myself of the singular validity of the scientific-rationalistic point of view. I came to the dream early, and it is not a rational experience. Neither was the experience of speaking in tongues a rational experience. In my teen years these two pre-rational experiences were deeply influential on the shaping of my worldview. Later my experience of active imagination only served to deepen my commitment to placing high value on the pre-rational or non-rational dimension of human experience.

While it is beyond the scope of my work here, I would propose the possibility that Jung himself is, to an appreciable degree, an early post-modern thinker. Homans (1990, p. 32), as mentioned above, proposes the same. It is Jung's influence that caused me to value the dream and active
imagination. As explained earlier, these local, personal stories are an essential part of the dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious, and as such are key aspects to the individuation process. In a post-modern context, the individuation process might well be seen as a dialogic process between consciousness and the unconscious that allows individuals to construct their unique reality in a particular social context. Individuation can be seen as a post-modern exercise in making one's reality.

As I reviewed the heuristic research method I was convinced that it, too, represents a post-modern research process. It begins from within the experience itself, searching for its essence and character. The method values the subjective approach and includes the researcher as a subject in terms of his or her experience. Part of the discovery is self discovery. It is a method grounded, then, in story and the shaping of reality out of the experience-story. It makes no goal of universal truth, it values the process of the research more than the end results of the work, and only at the end focusses on how the local experience fits into the larger, more objective picture of the experiences of others. It involves the valuing of local story.

There is a distinction between one aspect of post-modernism as presented by Kvale (1996) and heuristic research and Jungian psychology. Kvale (1996, p. 24) asserts that “postmodern thought focuses on the surface, with a refined sensibility to what appears...the appearance has become the essence.” He claims that post-modernism is a suspicion of the modern
hermeneutics of suspicion, which saw a deeper meaning below the surface of things. In this sense then, heuristic research and Jungian psychology continue the quest for a deeper sense meaning beyond or within the apparent signs or symbols. The notions of essential significance in heuristic research and symbolic meaning in Jungian psychology are central to each, and represent a distinction from post-modernism as Kvale presents it. I recognise that I still subscribe to the possibilities of deeper essential and symbolic meanings within experiences, and this is an essential driving force in this research project.

In the process of considering the heuristic method, two other factors of a lighter nature came to light. First, I realised that heuristic research seems designed for people of my personal temperament. According to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is built on Jung's theory of type, I am an introverted intuitive-feeling person (INFJ), and intuition is a key factor in the research with case material. Since the method fits with my temperament, I concluded that it would be easier to sustain my interest when things became tedious. Second, I was intrigued to find in Moustakas' (1990, pp. 18-20) description of the heuristic process, examples of "self-dialogue." These are part of the self-discovery process within the research framework, and the examples given by Moustakas parallel closely the written forms of dialogues in active imagination. Moustakas exhibits no awareness of this parallel, but it helped me to realise that the research method aligns well with the research task.
It was my conclusion that the heuristic research process, as defined by Tesch and Moustakas, was the appropriate method for my study. The method, my own framework and the focus of this study are all postmodern in character. The method affords me an opportunity to begin with experience, including my own. The experiences, the stories, are the focus of my interest and concern. The method challenges me to focus on the inner dynamic and essences of these two experiences and enables me to work toward an understanding of their interrelationship. Finally there is the conviction in heuristic research, which I share, that significant exploration of personal experiences leads not only to personal insight, but also may contribute to an increased understanding of our human experiences on a wider social scale. While I concluded that the heuristic research method was my best option in addressing my research project, I also became aware, through conversations with my supervisors, that any qualitative researcher will adapt a method to fit individually with the shape of the project as it unfolds.

The research process

Using Moustakas' (1990) work as a guide, I designed a four part structure for my heuristic research work. I presented this as part of my public research proposal seminar in 1996. The four parts are these.

I. Framing the question
II. Carrying the question within
III. Listening to other voices
IV. Tying it together

In giving substance to these four areas I was able to chart a course for my research work that I have followed relatively closely. One insight that emerged from the reflections on step one, framing the question, is that it may well be presumptuous to attempt to have only one question. Indeed, as someone pointed out at the seminar, there may well be several questions, or several ways of asking the same question, and at any moment the form of the question may change. At the time of my proposal some of the questions that seemed relevant are these:

What is the nature and essential character of the experience of active imagination?

How does active imagination contribute to a sense of personal meaning?

What is the nature and essential character of Christian religious experience?

How does Christian religious experience contribute to a sense of personal meaning?

Is active imagination related to Christian religious experience?

These questions led to the formulation of a statement of intention for this research project. In this project I intend to explore the nature, meaning and essence of active imagination as developed by Dr. Carl Jung, and to examine its relationship to Christian religious experience.

An important suggestion was made at the proposal seminar in reference
to the research question. It was suggested that I limit my work to Christian religious experience. I accepted this and have limited the scope of my work to Christian religious experience.

Step two, carrying the question within, has the sense of being a solitary process of reflection in which the researcher is consumed by the question. Moustakas (1990, p. 28) even suggested that it could emerge in the dreams of the researcher. Moustakas (1990, pp. 28-31) defines several aspects of this process. They are: immersion, incubation, illumination, insights, and explication. These various aspects of this second step are applied first to one's own case material and experience.

It is at step three, listening to other voices, that the researcher, in a heuristic framework, begins to look at the other materials available. This includes the case material of research participants as well as a review of relevant literature. My original intention was to work with fifteen people in this project. By the time I presented the proposal I had cut this to ten. I intended to review their case material in active imagination and to interview them again using Moustakas as my guide. The details of this process will be described later. As I later began to work with the material of the research participants, and produce summaries of, and reflections on, their experiences, my supervisors and I agreed to limit the research participants to four because of the amount of material that was generated out of the interactions with each participant.
As a modification to the heuristic method, I began to review relevant literature before the presentation of the research proposal. I will comment on this in the section following.

In my original proposal I had included a third part to step three. It was to interview church leaders in parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Perth. I intended to present them with sample readings of active imagination and to ask their opinions of the material as religious experience. Early into the work it became clear that this was too ambitious, and it was set aside.

Step four of this project, tying it together, involves preparing a document for assessment. In the heuristic model, this would be not so much to prove something as it would be to offer some responses, insights, and conclusions concerning the research question. At the time of the proposal I had no idea of the shape this would take.

The committee within the faculty responsible for reviewing my proposal asked that the review of literature be expanded before the proposal was forwarded to the final approving body. I complied with this, and final approval was given in late 1996.

Literature review

As I have indicated above under step three of "the research process," the
review of relevant literature usually takes place after the researcher engages the question as an inner process. It is explored in tandem with the research material from other research participants. In this way the project begins from within the experience on a subjective level, and moves out finally to engage the relevant, objective materials and points of view. My approach has been to modify this aspect of the heuristic approach both to comply with the expectations of Edith Cowan University and to satisfy my own interest in learning more about the literature available. My intention has been to work with the literature in two stages. The first has been to review literature in preparation for the presentation of the research proposal. It made sense to me to determine where in the larger landscape of the Jung-Christianity dialogue my interests were placed. Had the question been addressed? Was the research project likely to break new ground or add a new dimension to the Jung-Christianity dialogue? The second stage was to review and utilise significant works in the development of the material around the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience, and to be watchful for any relevant material that would inform this research work.

The landscape that is the Jung-Christianity dialogue presents a rich and interesting picture. Stein (1990) notes that, in 1973, when Heisig produced a bibliographical essay on Jung and theology, he identified over four hundred items. At the time of his own publication Stein (1990, p. 3) asserts that the number would have increased three or four fold, and that
no one could possibly know it all and be up to date. Since then I am sure that the number of publications has continued to grow substantially as Jung’s contribution to, and relationship with, Christianity continues to interest people in both traditions.

In this section I intend to comment primarily on the literature that comprised the first stage of the literature reviewed for this project. I will also highlight other material that was used later during the research period. I include the broader background of the Jung-Christianity landscape, and the foreground subjects of both active imagination and Christian religious experience.

Jung’s own writings are both background and foreground in this project. I have read essays in his Collected Works over many years, some having been reviewed carefully and others dipped into here and there. Among the essays that have challenged me, and that provide a background for this research project, are several from Volume 11: “Psychology and religion (1937/1940),” “A psychological approach to the dogma of the Trinity (1948),” “Transformation symbolism in the Mass (1954)” and the “Answer to Job (1952).” From volume 18, I have been influenced by the “Tavistock lectures (1935),” and various papers and short articles, including “The symbolic life (1939)” and “Jung and religious belief (1956-57).” I first encountered Jung’s autobiography, Memories, dreams, reflections (1961), in 1963, and have used insights from it in preaching and teaching on

In terms of Jung’s own material on the foreground subject of active imagination, some years ago I had reviewed the relevant sections in the Collected Works in preparation for a public presentation on the use of active imagination in spiritual direction. Through this reading and review I have found no instance in which Jung explicitly equates active imagination with Christian religious experience.

The broader background of the general Jung-Christianity dialogue is dominated for me by Kelsey. He is author of over twenty books, many of which address the interface of Jung and Christian theology. Much of his thought, both from our “experiential-oral” tradition, and from his written material, has informed me as I began to take up this research project. Specific works that are influential include: Encounter with God (1972), for which I co-authored a study guide for the publisher in the mid-1970’s; Myth, history and faith: The remythologizing of Christianity (1974), which involves the exploration of the mythic, symbolic dimension of Christianity; Dreams; a way to listen to God (1978); and Christianity as psychology: The healing power of the Christian message (1986), in which Kelsey clearly critiques Jung’s position from a Christian point of view, and describes how Christianity might inform psychology. Two works of Kelsey’s that have specific influence on this project are Companions on
the inner way (1983), and The other side of silence (1995). In the former, Kelsey offers extensive insight into the nature of religious experience, and in the latter, he presents in detail his image meditation, which has its roots in Jung's active imagination. This subject was a central topic with Kelsey in our interviews in 1998, and I will return to the relationship between Kelsey's image meditation and active imagination in chapter six.

In this background landscape also are the works of John Sanford. Sanford, like Kelsey, is an Episcopal priest, but has also become a Jungian analyst. His work of bridging Jung's psychology with Christianity is largely biblically centred and includes Dreams: God's forgotten language (1968/1989), The kingdom within: The inner meaning of Jesus' sayings (1970/1987), The man who wrestled with God (1974), and King Saul, the tragic hero (1985). While each of these demonstrates an integration of Jungian insights with Christian literature and thought, none addresses the practice of active imagination. I became aware of Sanford's book, Mystical Christianity: a psychological commentary on the Gospel of John (1994), during the research project. I will incorporate his insights later in this thesis as they have direct bearing on active imagination as a religious experience.

Several other writers in recent years have contributed significantly to the Jung-Christianity landscape. These include Dourley (1984 and 1992) and Clift (1982). Dourley (1984, p. 13) asserts that Jung saw the experience of
God and the experience of unconscious compensation as "virtually indistinguishable." Since active imagination is an experience in which unconscious compensation takes place, it is possible to see the implication that active imagination is also religious in character. Likewise the same implication is found in Clift (1982) who entitles a chapter of his work: "Religious Experience as a Union of Opposites." Active imagination often results in the experience of the union of opposites. Neither Dourley nor Clift, in the works cited, mentions explicitly active imagination as a religious experience.

From the perspective of Christianity, Bryant (1983, p. 118) makes a passing reference to the similarity between a traditional form of imaginative reflection or meditation and active imagination, but does not elaborate further. Edinger (1987, p. 74), a Jungian analyst, draws the same parallel in his commentary on the life of Christ.

Rollins (1983, pp. 103-04), working from a Christian perspective with attention to the biblical material, implies a direct relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience in his application of imagination to ongoing biblical interpretation. This parallels Sanford's (1994) work mentioned above.

Stein (1985) approaches the dialogue from his work as a Jungian analyst. I have mentioned his work in the brief section on Jung and Christianity.
above. It does not address the practice of active imagination in reference to Christian religious experience.


Bianchi (1988, p. 35) brings active imagination and Christian religious experience close together in his assertion that Jung has developed a hermeneutic of the imagination. This perspective, “open to the numinous encounter with one’s own depths, can also become a way of interiorizing religiousness.” He concludes his essay with a statement that points directly to the bridging nature of this research task. “The challenge today is to understand the interweaving of psychology and religion in the zone of the psychically religious.” (Bianchi, 1988, p. 36). Stein (1990, p. 16), asserts that for the conscious individual in Jung’s framework, the practices of dream work and active imagination are Jung’s version of the spiritual life. This implies that, in Jung’s understanding of religion, active imagination is a religious experience. While Homans (1990) places Jung in reference to post-modernism, he does not address the practice of active imagination.
As we consider the foreground subject of active imagination itself, it is interesting to note how few longer published works exist that are dedicated solely or primarily to the subject. These include: Weaver (1973), Hannah (1981), and Johnson (1986). Weaver, Hannah and Johnson work from a Jungian point of view, and while using language that could be seen as religious, or spiritual, in describing active imagination, none of the three connects active imagination to Christian religious experience explicitly. Likewise, Watkins (1986), in her work on imaginal dialogues, does not address the relationship between active imagination and religious experience. Watkins (1986, p. 100) does refer to a lecture by Jung that is not in Jung’s Collected Works, which connects the notion of the numinous to an ancient prayer practice that he sees as “an abbreviated method of active imagination.”

During the course of my research I encountered various journal articles and book chapters on active imagination. These include Hannah (1953), Hull (1971), Humbert (1979/1991), Dieckmann (1979) and Dallett (1981). Of these, Hannah’s (1953) is the most pertinent in that she draws distinctions between active imagination and religious practices of meditation. Humbert (1971) uses a case study from Marie Louise von Franz, which is taken from an anthology of articles on meditation in religion and psychotherapy. The placement of this article in the anthology implies a relationship that is not explored further. These resources mentioned here have helped shape the content of the chapter on active imagination.
Toward the end of this project, as I was composing this thesis, I encountered Chodorow’s (1997) collection of writings from Jung on active imagination. Most of her selections I had already accessed in my research. In her introduction, Chodorow (1997, p. 2) mentions Jung’s development of a religious attitude toward the psyche in his psychological work. This has implications for seeing active imagination as a religious experience.

In terms of the foreground subject of religious experience, I realised early that I needed to set limits for this project. I have chosen to limit myself primarily to the work of James (1902/1985). It is my conviction that James is still the benchmark in the exploration of the subject of religious experience. Kelsey’s (1983) work on religious experience, mentioned above, is also a major resource for this project. I supplement James and Kelsey with my own background on the subject from my personal theological work for the last thirty years, with my own experience and the experiences of clients and directees over many years. It would be difficult to document these experiences that have shaped the perspective on religious experience that I bring to this project.

I came across the work of Chapman (1988) at the time of my proposal. A quick review of his work led me to conclude that he makes no direct mention of active imagination in reference to what he sees to be Jung’s three approaches to religious experience. I decided to look at Chapman’s
work in more detail during my research work, and I will refer to this in chapter six. As part of my initial review of literature, I surveyed the Religion Index One Periodicals from 1983 to 1993, under several entries, including depth psychology, imagination, religious experience and C. G. Jung. No title listings make reference to the practice of active imagination, much less to its relation to religious experience.

My own place in this landscape of the literature has been addressed in the section on my background in the Introduction. I recognise that I stand in the Christian community, on the edge, and have been deeply influenced in my own perspectives by Kelsey and Jung. I recognise that I stand separate from both, closer to Jung in some cases and closer to Kelsey in others. I seem to appreciate Jung’s challenges to theology more than Kelsey now does, and this was certainly the case in our 1998 interviews when we spoke about Jung’s essay, “Answer to Job.” On the other hand I am more appreciative of the role of community, dogma, and creed than is Jung, and find Clift (1982) helpful in respect to these aspects of the Christian experience. Yet, as I indicate in the Introduction, I began this project driven by a frustration concerning the seeming lack of interest in Jung’s work in the larger Christian scene. I believe there is much to gain in bridging the two, and this research project is aimed at exploring one aspect of the bridging possibility.

As a result of the initial literature review undertaken before the proposal,
I concluded that the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience had yet to be explored thoroughly, and I was justified in continuing this research project.

In this chapter I have looked briefly at key terms used by Jung and at Jung's relationship to Christianity. I have also presented the heuristic research method that has formed the structure of this research work, and have explained the research process. Finally, I have presented a literature review that is primarily of the resources consulted before the project began, and I have highlighted some sources encountered during the research work.
Figure 3. Untitled (pastel, ink) 1996
CHAPTER TWO

ACTIVE IMAGINATION

An Example of Active Imagination

In order to introduce the practice of active imagination, I present first an example from the work of Louisa. Shortly after Louisa came to see me it became apparent that her marriage was collapsing and she needed to separate from her husband. She did so and eventually divorced him. It was a difficult experience, and she was ambivalent about the process for much of the time. A dream came in the midst of her turmoil which introduced the image of a lovely garden with a fountain. As dream figures emerged, I suggested to Louisa that she might enter active imagination with them. I referred to her image of the garden and suggested that she talk with them there as it was, for her, a place of serenity and safety. I also suggested that the dialogues might happen at afternoon tea to allow a gentle setting for the meetings. Louisa took all these suggestions and began to invite the various characters to the garden for tea. Over a short time the group grew and for several months she continued to meet with them all at least weekly to discuss her circumstances. As the group took shape it was clear that various points of view were represented. This setting gave her a way to negotiate with herself as she moved through difficult days.

Before presenting Louisa’s material I offer some guidelines that apply to this case material here, the extensive case material in chapter four, and the
brief offerings of case material in chapter six. In textual quotations I replicate the spelling and punctuation of the original text. I leave spaces between words where there is no punctuation in the original text, and where punctuation would be appropriate. If clarification of the text is needed, brackets [ ] are used to include any additions to the text. I underline words underlined in the original text, and use bold type for those words which are underlined twice. Brackets enclosing full stops [...] are also used to indicate deleted text. Three full stops ... are used to indicate pauses in quotations. For convenience I will repeat these guidelines at the beginning of chapter four.

Louisa describes the characters who joined her for the tea party dialogues as follows.

Army Captain (AC): Emerged from recognising a large part of my behaviour/coping strategies in the marriage. Plus all the women in my family are captains.

Nathaniel (N): A wonderful caring beautiful sensual man from a dream. He guided and supported me before other figures emerged.

Little Louisa (LL): Free spirit wise child emerged after the elevator dream.

Cab Driver (CB): Ocker Australian chauvinist pig good natured mate type. came from a dream.

Scared One (SO): Pale frightened terrified head bandaged from ECT's age 19 - emotionally 16.

Traditional Girl (TG): Convent good girl-marriage is forever-don't rock the boat.

Michael (M): a priest - from dreams.
Benedict (B): Originally came from [name] in a dream - renamed Benedict similar to Michael.

Philomena (Phil): The one who wants change Radical Outspoken Attractive Empowered.

Anger (A): personified the feeling.

In this dialogue the characters are sitting around a rectangular table in the garden. Louisa begins the conversation.

The Tea Party

L. Thank you all for being here in my garden. I've asked all of you to give me some perspective and clarity on my marriage. I'm also asking you to be co-operative with each other so we can all hear each other's viewpoint.

Phil. I don't mind starting - I want some change, something different to happen; the old way went on far too long. Louisa, my advice is to stay with what is, no matter how difficult, and truth will emerge for you. Lots of change has happened and is still going on. Have courage - don't cave in on yourself - you seem to lose your courage and panic. Change is essential. You have to know what you want, and what you don't.

CB. God you are talking about a decent bloke here - What are you on about! The guy provides for her, loves the kids, works hard and she up there (Louisa) takes it all for granted and creates difficulties that aren't even there. She probably crucifies the guy. Poor bugger - save me from bitches like her.

SO. I wouldn't hurt him. I just want harmony and a good man to take care of me and my kids. It's important to look alright and for the kids to have a normal home. What do you expect - the world? You can't expect everything in a marriage, and you are dumb and can't do lots of things. How would you look after yourself if it wasn't for [husband]. He saved you from the gutter in the first place. Make amends, look after him and forget about yourself. You have enough! financial security, a great house, and great kids. You would be mad to change that, and how would you take care of yourself Answer that.
N. Well she's finding a new way. The old one doesn't apply anymore.

AC. I think you both need to smarten up. You need to pull him.....

L. Please be quiet. I've invited you along in a minor capacity, not to tell me how to run my life.

CB. You want to run everything - even forcing him to go to a therapist. The poor bugger just wants some peace.

L. I'm not forcing him. He needs to go for himself.

CB. Smartarse - normal people don't need therapists. Why can't you work things out for yourself?

Phil. Because she's stifled not heard by men like you rulers of the world - so long as she's the good little girl, passive dumb wife, level of a servant generally, except when he feels generous and pretends it's a one to one relationship. There's other men around, you know they are not all like this guy here (cab driver). Anyway you need to learn to stand on your own two feet, and you can't with your marriage like this.

N. I support that. Keep your temper under control Louisa. Find a way you'll see much clearer then.

L. Little Louisa do you want to say anything?

LL. Just don't stay there if it's not right for me. We've only just got together after 41 years. Don't abandon me again.

SO. Go along with him. You have done it all this time. What's so different except in your mind? He hasn't changed.

Phil. No, and he won't unless you do. Meditate each day. stay tuned.

L. Thank you all. I have Philomena, Little Louisa, and Nathaniel all telling me to keep centred, know myself, have courage and journey on. I have the Scared One, and the Cab Driver telling me I'm stupid and ridiculous and to toe the line, with the Army Captain being irrelevant. Here is my priest coming late. Please come and sit down next to Nathaniel. Would you please tell me your name?

M. It's Michael and I'm glad to be here.

L. Would you please tell me how you see my marriage.
You are not your marriage. There is more to you than that. In many ways it is a good marriage, because you are both good and caring people, but the good marriage is only on the outside. The union inside doesn’t exist. As I see it, you are both unfulfilled and unhappy. You need to want to love each other to look and see who is there now. You are neither the same, meeting from the old way. You will both want to have commitment to each other to ride through this change. If one doesn’t have that commitment to see if love can grow, it is over. Your marriage is in a shaky position. You cannot afford to ignore the changes. This is a crucial time. My advice is to listen to yourself your higher self, ask for guidance when you need and go down this road. You have the courage to discover what is already there.

Thank you. Thank you all.

This was one of many dialogues Louisa had with her inner characters in the garden as she worked through the steps of separation and divorce, and then as she undertook the process of redesigning a life as a single person.

In this chapter we will explore active imagination. I will define it, and explain how it can be used, consider its values and benefits, and deal with practical matters in terms of its use. First, we need to define the experience.

Defining Active Imagination

Active imagination is a method or practice by which ego consciousness enters into dialogue with images that emerge from the unconscious. Hannah (1953, p. 38) suggests that it is more a creative function than a method. The images engaged are symbolic of interior realities residing in
the unconscious with which the conscious mind must contend, and to which it must relate in some way.

Active imagination was developed by Jung beginning as early as 1913 out of his own need to engage the images of his unconscious. In another reference, Jung (1934/1969 para. 623) indicates that he used this practice as early as 1916. Hannah (1953, p. 38) stresses that Jung did not invent this method but developed it out of his own need to relate to the images that were emerging from the unconscious. Humbert (1971, p. 105) asserts that, while Jung wrote about this method as early as 1916, it was not labelled "active imagination" until the 1930s. The implications of Humbert's remarks is that active imagination was originally known as "the transcendent function," which is the title of Jung's 1916 essay. Humbert (Humbert, 1971, p. 105) claims that Jung developed the method as a way of continuing the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious after analysis. Hannah (1981, p. 3) and Dieckmann (1979/1991, p. 184) both assert that active imagination has been used since the dawn of time for personal insight, healing and for relating to the gods. While this is so, it is to Jung that we owe its place among the ways today in which we relate to the inner life.

Hannah (1981, p. 3) defines the experience as a form of meditation. Jung
(1948/1969, para. 398) himself refers in one instance to this process as "visionary meditation." In several instances he refers to the method as an exercise in fantasy wherein the individual would focus upon a particular image from a dream or fantasy with deliberate, conscious and prolonged concentration, and allow further fantasy images to add themselves quite naturally to the original image. In one instance Jung (1954a/1966, para. 100) indicates that he developed the technique as an extension of Freud's method of free association. He makes it clear that this is not free association, with the images being linked sequentially to one another, but direct association with the subsequent images linked always to the original image (Jung, 1936/1969, para. 101). The images are attached to the original image like spokes are attached to the hub of a wheel.

Johnson (1986, p. 138) defines active imagination as a dialogic experience that we enter into with the different parts of us that live in the unconscious. He compares the experience to dreaming except that we are fully awake and conscious during the experience. He affirms that the inner images often express opinions that are radically different from those of our conscious minds, so we can be startled by what is expressed. Storr (1988, p. 194) refers to active imagination as a state of reverie in which our rational judgement is suspended while we remain conscious. We allow the images to speak and pursue their own path so that we learn about previously hidden parts of ourselves.
The starting place for active imagination is often a single image from a dream or fantasy. It can also be a mood or feeling that we invite to take an imaginal shape so that we might relate more easily to it. As noted above, it is important to stay with the original image in active imagination and to contend with whatever comes forward. As the process unfolds other images may also appear, and a whole dramatic series of fantasy images might well develop into a story line.

The actual practice of active imagination can vary greatly, and can include a variety of media for expression. The most common expression is the written dialogue (Hannah, 1986), which usually takes the form of a script between characters. Louisa’s dialogue above is an example of this form. In its variety the process includes painting, drawing, dancing or clay modelling as a way to give form or shape to the original image. I have found the experience of dance accompanied by simple chant to be a deeply moving experience of active imagination that makes sense and has coherence, even if I cannot explain it rationally. The reproductions of my own pastel and collage works that are placed before each section of this thesis are also examples of active imagination in a visual arts form. As mentioned in the Introduction, this active imagination/art process is explained in more detail in Appendix four.

Jung (1916b/1969, para. 180) claimed that the hands often know how to solve a riddle that has escaped the understanding of the conscious mind.
To "hands" I would add the body as well. The process of expressing ourselves through these creative media not only releases an energy but also can assist with the assimilation of unconscious contents into consciousness as we reflect on the experience we have. Johnson (1986, p. 163) also includes dance, playing music or speaking aloud as expressions of active imagination. In my work with people, I have worked with some who have had much success with visual imagery. In one instance I found the sketches and doodles of an artist to be of enormous benefit for keeping the dialogue open between the conscious and unconscious.

In defining active imagination, two important distinctions need to be made. The first is the difference between active imagination and passive imagination experiences. While in the area of imaginal and experiential work the boundaries of distinctions between styles will remain somewhat blurred, Johnson (1986, pp. 139-40) draws helpful distinctions in speaking about dreams, passive fantasy, and active imagination. The simple distinction is the stance of the conscious ego. In the dream the conscious mind does not participate during the experience. In passive fantasy the conscious mind is not active but functions more like a person viewing a movie or video. In active imagination the conscious mind is actively involved in the encounter. The encounter is between equals who both engage one another, discuss, disagree, negotiate, argue, seek compromise, work things out. In active imagination, ego consciousness actively engages the images and energies of the unconscious. This is intentional
and deliberate, and the individual is in the awake state in the experience. It is no longer a matter of watching an interesting drama "out there" on the psychic stage. In active imagination the person jumps up onto the 'stage' of the psyche and becomes involved in the unfolding encounter or story. In the written forms of active imagination it is easier to experience and define the dynamics of this process. In other forms, such as painting and dance or music, the dialogue is more subtle, but the participant often can intuit the movement of the two aspects, consciousness and the unconscious, as they interact with each other through the medium.

This distinction of active ego involvement was of the utmost importance to Jung. It is the key to understanding the entire exercise and its benefit. Jung (1954b/1970, para. 706) felt, as does Johnson, that there was no real change or growth in the individual possible until the ego became involved. Jung (1954b/1970, para. 753) said: "If this crucial operation [of ego involvement] is not carried out, all the changes are left to the flow of images, and you yourself remain unchanged." In another place, Jung (1954a/1966, paras. 101-106) sees the movement from passive involvement to active involvement of the ego as parallel with moving from childhood to adulthood in terms of one's own capacity for change. I will return to this notion later in this chapter. Von Franz (1974/1980, p. 74) mentions how struck she was by this capacity for change. She, too, concluded that the experience of active imagination enabled substantial transformation and had a greater effect for change than did the dream.
Active ego conscious involvement, then, is what distinguishes active imagination from other meditative and passive fantasy activities, and this active stance of the ego contributes greatly to the capacity for transformation of the personality. One very important reason for this, from Jung’s perspective, is that our actively involved behaviour signals the unconscious that we take the process seriously and that we are assigning a value of absolute reality to the unconscious (Jung, 1916a/1966, para. 350). This reflects a fundamental point of view of Jung’s concerning the importance of the unconscious.

As an aside to this point, Jung (1954b/1970, para. 753) is quite insistent that, when a person enters the active imagination exercise, particularly the active fantasy dialogue, one remains who one is as ego consciousness, and does not assume a fictitious personality. He stresses that such a change can lead to an overwhelming or weakening of the ego. This would risk destabilising the personality or even producing psychosis. Even without these dramatic results, it would defeat the purpose of the entire exercise, for it is precisely to the ego that the unconscious images want to relate.

The second essential distinction between active imagination and other meditative practices has to do with outside influences. Hannah (1953), Dieckmann (1979/1991), and Dallett (1982) all make the point that in active imagination the person engages only her or his own images and does not...
introduce any external images or influences. It is a process in which we let
the unconscious speak freely through the images rather than setting up a
preconceived framework or structure which will influence and shape the
encounter. In engaging the unconscious images in active imagination we
attempt to set aside any other framework. We take no resources except
those within the situation, and simply engage whatever emerges from
within.

The specific examples of the approach in which we rely on external
influences are religious in nature, wherein dogma, creedal belief or
preconceived notions of the sacred images shape or influence the content
of the encounters. Hannah (1953, pp. 39-40) mentions both yoga and the
spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola as examples. It is interesting to
note that Humbert (1971, p. 108), while subscribing to this distinction,
offers a case of active imagination, from the case material of von Franz,
which includes intervention. While Humbert affirms that the
intervention of an image was not “active imagination as Jung practised
it,” it was a necessary intervention. Humbert labels it a form of magic.
This second point of distinction signals an important distinction between
active imagination and Christian religious experience. Kelsey, in our
interviews, raised this distinction clearly and I address it in chapter six.

By way of summary, then, active imagination is a meditation process, a
creative method of engaging the unconscious, most often by using images,
sometimes by using movement or sound or art materials. The goal is to connect actively, from the standpoint of ego consciousness, with the unconscious life, through the symbolic images. Such engagement is transformative in nature. Dieckmann (1979/1991, p. 183) notes that among the authors who have written on active imagination there are three points on which there are varieties of opinions. The first has to do with the participation of the ego, and the second concerns when in the analysis process active imagination should be introduced. The third has to do with what experiences should properly be considered active imagination. As part of this summary of the definition of active imagination, it is important to affirm that the experience of active imagination encompasses a wide variety of practices that have come to be interpreted in a variety of ways.

As a method for engaging the unconscious, active imagination can be most useful in a time of conscious crisis. It can be used also as a way to explore a relationship with one’s own inner world for the purpose of growth. In the introductory case material, Louisa was not only confronting difficult challenges on the outside, her inner responses were conflicted and made any decision making an extremely difficult process. It was an appropriate time to employ active imagination.

Jung (1954b/1970, para. 706) states that active imagination could be artificially induced or that it could occur spontaneously. He gives no
concrete examples of the latter experience, but a client with whom I worked some years ago, when introduced to the method, exclaimed that he had been using this process for some time without knowing anything formally about it. On an amusing note, Watkins, (1986, p. 41) in her work, Invisible Guests, believes that we never stop the dialogues that begin quite naturally in childhood. She wonders who we are talking to when we stub a toe on the concrete sidewalk as we walk down the street, and begin unconsciously to comment on the experience!

In terms of the crisis experience, Jung (1954b/1970, para. 705) asserts, "As a rule it [active imagination] occurs when the analysis has constellated the opposites so powerfully that a union or synthesis of the personality becomes an imperative necessity." He also understood active imagination as an aid to help a person who was depressed or disturbed, for which no adequate cause could be identified in consciousness. In this instance, Jung (1916b/1969, para. 166) placed a significant value on such a disturbance or crisis, as it provided a person with the necessary energy to address the issues of life in such a way that could lead to healing. Jung's attitude implies a perspective toward crisis as, in part, an opportunity for healing. In the face of crisis, Jung (1954b/1970, para. 146) affirms that the purpose of active imagination is to "make enemies friends." The dialogic experience between the conscious mind and the unconscious is intended to create a kind of "third thing" between the two, allowing for the union of opposites and reconciliation. Jung (1954b/1970, para. 705) used the
image of a waterfall as the “third thing” between above and below. We will look at the image of the third thing later.

In a crisis situation, active imagination provides a way to engage the unknown or repressed elements of the personality. In this dialogic practice the individual can engage different perspectives and voices of opposition, as Louisa did in the dialogue above. It is a direct way to engage more clearly the other attitudes we have toward our circumstance. Active imagination is a way to work to resolve the crises that emerge frequently when our conscious point of view excludes our ambivalences and differing opinions. In terms of its purpose, active imagination is a process that seeks engagement, dialogue and encounter between elements of the psyche that might well be polarised and in conflict. It is an activity the energy of which is aimed at integration, resolution, harmony, bringing together, coherence and reconciliation.

The practice of active imagination

Having defined the experience of active imagination, and having considered briefly when a person might want to use it, I intend now to consider the method of the experience itself. The process I describe here has grown out of my own experience and the experiences of people with whom I have worked over the last fifteen years. It refers primarily to
written active imagination, and it is a description that is both personal and based on the experiences of others. For this reason I will move between singular and plural pronouns in this description. In actual practice each person needs to make variations on the general process according to individual need and temperament. My experience makes it clear that, while there are important essential aspects of the practice, there is no one single, simple, correct method.

It is important to choose a comfortable setting, usually indoors, for the experience. It is essential that it is private, a place where it is possible to be alone with no fear of interruptions. I find it important also to be away from the phone. Both Hannah (1981) and Johnson (1986) stress the importance of being alone and in a private setting. This eliminates having to worry about other people knowing what we write, or dance, sing, model or paint. In such instances wherein I have been invited by an inner figure to dance to a chant, it has been essential for me to be alone and in a private place, otherwise I would have not been able to get out of my chair. The setting also needs to be comfortable in terms of temperature. Any space that is too cold or too hot may be distracting. Active imagination, like most meditative exercises, is an altered state of consciousness in which the bodily functions relax and slow down. It is my experience that a warm room is very conducive to sleep.

By stressing privacy and an indoor place, I do not want to rule out the
possibility of engaging in this experience out of doors. Weather and circumstances permitting, this can be a very positive experience. In certain circumstances I have found it very easy to experience active imagination by the ocean. The rhythm of the waves almost always assists me in the settling down process. Likewise, I have had significant experiences by a mountain stream in the USA that was long a favourite and sacred place for me. Overall, if I am too close to the activities of other people, I find it hard to settle down and focus in on my experience.

It is also necessary to choose beforehand the method and medium for the experience. For most this will be writing. It's important to organise paper, or journal, and pen, and a surface on which to work. Likewise, if another medium, such as painting, is chosen, supplies need to be arranged adequately in advance. We need also to make sure that our setting allows adequate space for our chosen medium. It is, in fact, disorienting to begin this kind of encounter with the unconscious, and then not to be able to respond spontaneously due to lack of preparation.

Once basic preparations are made, the process can begin. For me, a moment, however brief, of centring is essential. Over the years this has differed in form. It is simply a moment of bringing myself and my intentions to the starting place of the experience, and indicating my hope for a successful result, whatever that might be.
The first step is crucial. It involves suspending the rational, critical function of the mind. Here we set aside this part of us by intention, so that we might engage the unconscious in its native language of poetic imagery, and approach the images with a sense of what we might call imaginative play. The process is a kind of emptying exercise that makes room for the unconscious images to come up into consciousness. It means taking the risk of letting go of conscious control of our minds and letting flow into our awareness whatever will come. Jung pointed out that this process is partly made difficult because our conscious minds don't like to give up this control. For that reason we may find ourselves at this point insisting that the process is only made up, though we're not sure how. Jung (1951/1969, para. 319) points out that this objection comes from the anxiety of ego consciousness, who wishes to share the master's role in our "house" with no one.

Several years ago I engaged an amusing imaginal process that symbolises the suspension of my rational, critical functioning. It is an image to which I still turn whenever I am having trouble settling down. In the image I sat next to an old, silent monk, who appeared in my internal world some years ago, and who almost never speaks. After I sat with him for a while, he stood, opened my head as if it were hinged, removed my brain, and closed my head again. That has become the signal to begin the exercise.
As with any meditative experience I have found it important to assist the settling down by paying attention to my posture and to my breathing. When I am in a room, I sit comfortably in a straight chair at a table with both feet squarely on the floor and my back relaxed but straight. In the out of doors I situate myself comfortably on a rock or on the sand in such a position that I can write, and avoid any cramping. I begin with a deep breath or two to clear my lungs, and then let my breathing take its own pace. For a while I may close my eyes and allow myself to settle down.

Soon enough I can sense that the time is right to begin. For me, the starting place is often an image from a dream or fantasy, or an image of some inner figure with whom I have spoken before. Sometimes I have no image. It may simply be a mood, feeling, or issue. In this instance I address what I term the "abyss," and ask the mood, energy or issue of concern to take a form so that we can relate to one another. It is a calling forth or inviting the unconscious into the dialogue.

When we engage the image for our experience, it is important not to use a person from our outer reality in our imaginal exercise. Both Hannah (1981, p. 12) and Johnson (1986, p. 197) stress the importance of this principle. Separating outer and inner figures at this point protects both from constriction, confusion and contamination. It has been my practice to suggest strongly that, when a person known to us appears in a dream with whom we then decide to dialogue, the first step is to negotiate a
name change. This frees the inner character to develop on its own, and respects the outer person as an individual in his or her own right, and as one separate from our projections. I tend to ask the image for the name by which it desires to be known, and sometimes make explicit the need to be separate from the dream person. I once made this suggestion to a woman who entered a dialogue intra-psychically with the image of a male friend she greatly admired, and who had appeared in her dream. She refused to separate the inner image from the outer person and ended her work with me in a matter of weeks. I was struck by her refusal to make this separation and was not at all surprised that she stopped her inner work at that point. I remain convinced that she made a serious error in judgement. Having made this point, I want to acknowledge that in chapter four I will present an exception to the rule in the work of one of the research participants. I will comment on this point in that place.

As we become quiet and pay close attention, we are to remain focused on the original image that presents itself. As mentioned in the definition of active imagination above, Jung (1936/1969, para.101) stresses that the process of active imagination is not free association wherein one builds out from an original image to subsequent images. It is direct association always to the original image. Hannah (1981, p. 21) also stresses that it is important to stick with the original image, and not to move quickly from one to another. She points out that if we move from one to another image quickly, we will slip into passive fantasy in which we simply watch
a parade of images, rather than move into active encounter with the first image that arises.

We are to remain active from the outset. In a sense we might say that the original image contains the answer to our dilemma or crisis, and we need to work with it, even if it seems strange, silly or frightening. In terms of being attentive to an image, Jung (1954b/1970, para. 705) maintained that attentive concentration on the image is what, in fact, animates it. If we remain focused on it, the image will take on life, so to speak, and almost always will respond to our attempt to engage it. It is as if we breathe life into the images simply by being attentive to them. In those rare instances when the images refuse to speak, it has become my usual response to suggest that the person be patient and affirm a willingness to wait, and to return again and again until the image is ready to speak. It is possible the waiting is part of the healing or solution. If, after a time, a person feels impatient at the continued silence, it may well be appropriate to express an impatience at the process, and to challenge the image to speak. This, too, may well be a part of the desired response that will lead to healing. In making decisions about our responses I have come to conclude that there is no simple, single solution. Judgements must be made in the context of the experience.

Whether we enter the process with an image from a dream or another source, or the image emerges in our first moments of focused attention on
the abyss, once we have a clear sense of that image, we are ready to proceed. If working with an art form, we begin to paint or draw, or sing or dance freely, with no concern for how it all "looks". If we are intent on dialogue, we enter that process by taking up the first exchange. I usually try to begin with a question, as this keeps me focussed on the image and actively engaged with it.

The mechanics of recording a dialogue process bears some attention. In my earlier experiences I engaged the characters spontaneously, and let the story unfold. Often there was action as well as conversation and I took part in it all while sitting quietly in my chair. Immediately after the experience I would record the experience in my journal, and recall whatever I could remember of the dialogue and action. Jung (1954b/1970, para. 706) recommends that we be more attentive to the dialogue as it is unfolding. He says, "It is very important to fix this whole procedure in writing at the time of its occurrence, for you then have ocular evidence that will effectively counteract the ever-ready tendency to self-deception."

This means that we are to write the dialogue, like a play script, as we are experiencing it. At first this seemed clumsy to me; now it has become my preferred form. I came to conclude that too much was lost when I recorded the conversation and action after the event. Not only is there the tendency to what Jung terms self-deception, there is the simple problem of being unable to remember the details of a sometimes complicated
exchange and actions.

In reference to our recording as we have our experience, Johnson (1986, p. 142) asserts that it is important to be spontaneous, and to let the material come forward without censorship. We have to resist the natural tendency to edit the language and to insert the proper punctuation as we go along, as if we were creating a great literary art form. He counsels against "dressing up" the recording and attempting to make it a flawless document. We usually do so at the expense of spontaneity and honesty. Johnson (1986, p. 142) reminds us that "This is a private matter between you and your own unconscious, between you and God, so let it be as rough, crude, incoherent, embarrassing, beautiful or unregenerate as it may be when it comes spontaneously out of your unconscious." As we begin the recording process Jung affirms that the conscious and unconscious unite in these preliminary steps. Out of this the images will take on dramatic character, and it is possible to shift into action. Jung (1954b/1970, para. 706) says, it is like theatre, or dreaming with your eyes open.

The dialogue, then, is most often recorded as a play script. As a variation, Johnson (1986, p. 161) describes his own process of typing, with one character in upper case and the other character in lower case. He makes no effort to punctuate the material, for he can tidy it up later if need be. I use a play script form, and immediately after the experience, go back through
and indicate in the margin who is speaking which lines. I also place in parentheses all narrative or action sections where there is no dialogue. The key to recording is to relax; I find that the dialogue waits for me as I settle into a pace.

It is important to remain focused and to listen, even if what emerges is unpleasant or shocking to our conscious minds. Often, as we begin to engage the unconscious, the early material is rather rude and upsetting. This is because we often meet the content of the shadow side of our personality first, as we come to explore the inner life. As explained in chapter one, the shadow* is the term Jung gave to that energy that stands opposite to our conscious, chosen persona. Of course our consciousness is shocked to learn that the opposite of all we have tried to be is still within us. The inner dialogue or creative process demands courage in order to continue, for often we are upset at the outset by those we meet and what we must learn about ourselves.

I have mentioned in the Introduction7 the dream that led me into my first series of active imaginations, the "Dog" series. As noted it was at the encouragement of my analyst that I took up an active imagination

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6. A concise definition of the shadow in Jung own words is found in a footnote in the essay, "On the psychology of the unconscious," in the Collected Works, volume 7, para. 103. A more expanded definition is found in Fordham's, An introduction to Jung's psychology, pp. 49ff.

7. The dream is on page four of the Introduction.
approach to the disturbing dream of the barking great dane. Some days after the dream, in active imagination, I approached the house with some care. For me, at my modest height, great danes are what we might call an “eye level” experience! When I got to the door and pushed it open, the great dane again came bounding and barking down the hall to scare me off. Here I changed the dream story in the active imagination process and stood my ground. I yelled back at the barking dog and told him to stop barking. I then told the dog I wanted to enter the house. He responded quickly with a surprising question. Dog asked, “Are you serious about this?” I was surprised and somewhat shaken at being confronted like this, but I answered, “Yes.” The dog stood aside and I entered the house, and was told to follow along behind. That open door led to extraordinary experiences of my own inner world over the next two years, and these experiences resulted in new self-understanding, deep and lasting healing, and an enriched inner life. These experiences of the “Dog” series are summarised in chapter four. It all began with the challenge: “Are you serious about this?” It is important to begin active imagination with serious resolve, and to be prepared with courage to engage whatever meets us eye to eye. I have come to conclude, based on my experience and that of others over the years, that the entrance into active imagination may well include an initiation process that tests our serious intent.

It is also important to remember that the process is a dialogue. As I have stated previously, it is meant to be a two way exchange between equals.
Several years ago I saw a woman for inner work for a short period of time. During this time she presented active imagination dialogues with a male figure. In their conversations he was rude, unpleasant and demeaning to her. I suggested that she stand up to him and disagree with his perspective, or even risk telling him off. She could not bring herself to do this. For her it was not appropriate to challenge the inner figures. In her outer life she was really stuck, and it had to do largely with the men in her life. I could see why. She was stuck on the inside because she would not dialogue with this inner man who berated her, she just stood there and took it, and she remained stuck on the outside because of it. Active imagination involves dialogue, interaction, sometimes dramatic exchanges. We are in dialogue with parts of ourselves, and attempting to create together a new and more wholesome life. This cannot happen if we invest some kind of awesome infallibility in the other within and never challenge or question what is presented to us.

In the dialogue, then, it is important to ask questions, to disagree, to argue. We come together in the inner dialogue process as equals. No one in the dialogue is custodian of the complete truth, and our task from the standpoint of ego consciousness is to engage the inner figures in order to learn with them what a more complete truth within might be for this inner community.

A part of honest dialogue may well be the stirring up of intense emotions.
Active imagination happens in the imaginal realm and is not simply a cerebral exercise. A man who worked with me for several years had a most surprising experience when he first encountered a shadow-like figure. He had not written out a dialogue, so he decided to stand and talk to the shadow-like figure in my office. He was agitated as he began; he was impatient with this shadowy one who would not appear clearly and speak. His voice became very loud and suddenly he started striking the air, trying to hit at the mysterious one who was there but silent. He became very angry, and to no avail, for the other was not prepared to speak at that time. While the experience did not result in any satisfactory dialogic exchange, he certainly got a workout! He also became convinced through his own experience of the importance of what he was doing, and went on to pursue encounter with this other figure in different ways.

Yet another man brought amazing dialogues with one, and then two, young boys for us to review. He had been slow to come to this method, but when he risked using it, the results were quite helpful. His readings of the encounters with the boys were quite amazing. The man was inspired and revealed the native talents of a grand story teller. In reviewing his dialogues with me, he read the parts of the dialogues with great emotion and character, even moving around in his chair as he addressed the others. The dialogues were as insightful as they were delightful, and I would propose they opened to this man a whole new dimension of his emotional life as well as giving him insight into his spiritual journey and
the issues he needed to address. It is important to enter the active imagination process fully and to feel it with the full range of our emotions.

Johnson, following Jung himself, offers an additional concern about the process that is worth noting here. In addition to the dialogue itself, Johnson (1986, p. 189) raises the concern for values. In the dialogue, and in other forms of active imagination, a variety of points of view may well be set forward. Indeed, this is the point of the exercise! It is the job of consciousness to take the ethical stance in the proceedings and to introduce the ethical perspective. Johnson sees the natural energies of the unconscious as amoral. Therefore, it is up to consciousness to carry the ethical concern in the process. Blind obedience to the unconscious disregards the essential nature of active imagination. The inner figures are to be seen as a balance to consciousness. The process is centred in compensation and balance, not domination.

Johnson (1986, p. 192) presents three elements involved in preserving the ethical aspect of active imagination. 1) We are to hold out for attitudes and conduct that are consistent with our character and our deepest values. 2) We are not to allow an inner part of us to swamp us and take over at the expense of the others. We seek balance, and cooperation. 3) We are to nurture and preserve those values that serve human life, keep daily life going, and keep human relationships alive.
With these points in mind it is important to affirm that one of the functions of active imagination is to "humanise" and render useful on the “outside” the energies of the unconscious. At the same time the values we have held consciously may be challenged strongly, and we may need to amend our stance in order to live peacefully with the new aspects of ourselves that emerge through our imaginal dialogues.

To conclude with the mechanics of the process, we stay with the encounter until a sense of resolution or completion emerges. Most always the experience will let us know when it is finished with us. After a time of such exercises we can see that they have their own coherence. Usually they begin with an issue or the statement of a problem, continue with a dialogue or other activity of engagement, in which various points of view are presented, and end with some sense of completion, at least for the time being.

It has become my practice to end the experience with some moment of reflection. This might include gratitude for the experience. Most often I simply say, “Thank you” aloud. Hearing my own voice assists me in making the return from the inner, psychic dimension, and in reconnecting with my present time and place. Occasionally this process takes a little time. It is important not to rush ourselves, but to take our time and make the transition a gentle one.
As I affirmed at the outset of this description of the practice of active imagination, any description must be very general; variations on the basic experience would be almost infinite. A remark by Hannah (1981, p. 242) makes the point:

I wish to make it very clear...that there is no recipe, nor any generally comprehensive method, of putting it into practice. The goal remains the same in every case: establishing contact with the unconscious and learning to know the infinitely wise guidance that exists in all of us, but which so few ever bring to reality.

To the actual process of active imagination Johnson (1986, p. 196) adds a final step. It is that of ritual. He suggests that we honour the experience in some simple way with our muscles. This ritual action is meant to help us begin assimilating the benefit of the experience into our conscious lives. The ritual act is not an acting out of the imaginal experience; it is not a literalising experience. The ritual can be any simple action that we connect to the experience of the active imagination. It might be as simple as lighting a candle, taking a walk, making a phone call, or writing a letter. Whatever the ritual is, it has benefit when we enact it as a response to the active imagination. It also seems wise to keep the ritual as one of those personal secrets.

Relating to what emerges

In his work Jung (1916b/1969, para. 172) identified two responses to the active imagination experience. "So far as my experience goes there appear
to be two main tendencies. One is the way of creative formulation, the other is the way of understanding." Each has value and each can be problematic as well. To become focused on creative formulation could mean to be sidetracked by aesthetic concerns such as form, conventional expression, and conventional aesthetic judgments. Here we get sidetracked by the simple question, "Is it art?". Jung does not mention a positive use of creative formulation, but implies that some attention on this level might be necessary. Often some editing of raw material is necessary, even if we want to share it with close friends.

The danger in seeking understanding of the active imagination content is that one can so overvalue the intellectual analysis and interpretation that the value of the symbolic character is lost. Hannah (1981, p. 218) reports that Jung usually advised against interpreting active imagination at the time it occurred, so as not to influence its development. She observes in another place (Hannah, 1981, p. 139) that too much general interpretation can serve to flatten the individual meaning, and is not, therefore, useful. Johnson (1986, p. 158) takes the point a bit further. He affirms that the

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8. While it is beyond the scope of this study, it is interesting to wonder if this editing process is how some myths are constructed. Mythic stories may well be the record of an individual's active imagination experience edited, developed and refined for collective edification. While this is clearly a personal speculation, I base it on the experience of people responding to active imagination and dream material that I have presented in lectures over the years. Often the stories seem to invite others to add their projections to the story line and to begin to embellish and develop aspects of the story. I remember observing a group of people once who discussed a dream in such a way that I found myself reflecting, "These people are already making this story part of their own mythology." They were quick to affirm this when I pointed it out to them. I assert that the same process can hold true for active imagination.
central importance of the active imagination experience is simply that we have it. Analysis in the midst of a series of experiences may well affect adversely the development of the content. Johnson asserts that it is entirely appropriate to review that material analytically after the series is complete or the issue resolved. The important thing is to prevent the analytical approach from contaminating the spontaneous nature of the active imagination process itself.

In dealing with active imagination material the primary value resides in having the experience itself, and secondarily, in how we understand and respond to it. The approach espoused by Jung and Johnson reminds us that we need not understand an experience in order to benefit from it. Like most poetic and artistic endeavours, active imagination brings us into relationship with the realm of the inexhaustible, with the realm of mystery. The entire exercise requires a respect for this realm of mystery, and the recognition that we can benefit greatly from imaginal experiences which we may only partly understand.

The values and benefits of active imagination

While there are benefits in engaging in active imagination, Jung (1916b/1969, para. 193), later in the same essay quoted above, affirms clearly that the benefits are not automatic. "Consciousness is continuously widened through the confrontation with previously unconscious contents, - or to be more accurate - could be widened if it took the trouble
to integrate them. That is naturally not always the case." To have the
to have the experience is not enough; we must take steps to reflect on the experience
and consider how it affects our lives. This is the process of assimilating
into consciousness the insights from the experience. It is possible that this
insight of Jung’s is what has led Johnson to explore so thoroughly the
experience of rituals as a way of response. Ritual contributes to an
assimilation of the unconscious content into one’s consciousness without
making that integration process completely dependent on the intellectual
process.

In his essay, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," Jung
(1916a/1966, para. 358) cites three basic benefits of the active imagination
process. The first is that we extend the boundaries of our consciousness by
the inclusion of previously unconscious material. This results in the
second benefit, which is the gradual diminishing of the dominant
influence of the unconscious in our ordinary living. The third benefit
arises from these two, that is, that we experience a change in personality.

The first benefit involves a growing self understanding. The active
imagination exercise has the immediate effect of expanding our conscious
706) notes that by engaging this “Other within,” we come to get to know
aspects of ourselves that we wouldn’t admit to ordinarily, and that we
wouldn’t allow others to show us. The process of extending our conscious
boundaries is a simple, enriching process. Jung (1952/1968, para. 448) describes it elsewhere as the "irrigation of the conscious mind by the unconscious." This he saw as the core dynamic of the process of individuation.

The expanding of our consciousness through the experience of active imagination helps us to relate to ourselves in a new way. Inner dialogues help us realise that we are really many selves rather than one self. While mental health requires a strong sense of ego-conscious self, our larger self actually seems to be made up of a group, or village, of people who represent different points of view, and who sometimes conflict with each other in their perspectives.

If we can expand our conscious boundaries by beginning to see ourselves more as a family or village than as a single self, we are able to cope more easily with the conflicts and ambivalent feelings so common to us in our daily living. A helpful tool in this regard is the adoption and use of the expression "part of me," in describing how we feel, think or want to react to certain relationships and situations. As we become aware of this way of

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9. An extended and excellent study of this important point is Watkins' Invisible guests: The development of imaginal dialogues (1986). Watkins challenges the dominant notion of developmental psychology that would have us move from a dialogic to a monadic sense of self as we mature. Her contention is that we never outgrow the sense of being more than one single self; that we must claim the integrity of the experience of imaginal dialogues for mature adult people.

10. In a public lecture many years ago, Kelsey referred to this as his inner zoo.
relating to ourselves we are also able to look at who’s talking when a specific mood, opinion or feeling emerges. This is particularly helpful if what emerges is in conflict with the values and principles we normally hold. Such a practice enables us more quickly and easily to come to terms with ourselves in all our myriad and varied feelings, attitudes, moods and opinions. This expanding self consciousness will bring us a deeper sense of peace with ourselves.

While Hannah (1981, p. 107) sees dangers inherent in the active imagination process in that the ego could be swamped by unconscious archetypal material, she also recognises the great value in that the ego tends, on its own, to become stiff and unbending. Life lived solely from consciousness - if such is possible - must become increasingly fixed, rigid and narrow so as to defend its small kingdom from the assaults of the unconscious.

Hannah (1981, p. 76) makes another point that is relevant here. She asserts that a maxim of Jung's psychological work is that one can only go as high as one goes low. The opposites seek balance. If this is so, then, in the inner journey, if we refuse to meet the energies and frights of dark images, we constrict the possibilities of seeing the blessings and joys of the light. Expanding our conscious boundaries, coming to know ourselves more fully, means engaging both the images of darkness and of light within us. This first benefit of active imagination requires of us the courage to face
difficult aspects of who we are, and in turn to experience more deeply our positive qualities as well.

The second benefit of active imagination involves the gradual diminishing of the dominant influence of the unconscious. Jung (1951/1969, para 320) asserts that this process will bring to light much that has been unconscious, and will often do so before it is projected onto others (Jung, 1954b/1970 para. 446). While active imagination will not eliminate the projection process, it does reduce the dangers involved by training our consciousness to connect with inner contents more quickly. This means that we and others, will be less the victims of our unconscious projection process.

Hannah (1981, p. 97) relates that Jung often said that we indulge in self deception when we say that we do not know what to do about something. He claimed that we do know somewhere within ourselves, but that we don't want to do it. She remarks, "It took me years to see that this is the truth, for the idea that we do not know is deeply rooted."

The second benefit of active imagination can help us withdraw our projections, and helps us to be less likely to fall prey to unconscious domination. It invites us to confront our conscious resistance to knowing and to risk paying the price of an expanded awareness so that we might also receive its many benefits.
It becomes apparent that, in Jung’s thought, consciousness is of the highest value. Hannah (1981, p. 98) remarks that the essence of Jungian morality is “...that we are responsible for knowing of the Self’s existence within us. Not knowing this is really the arch sin.” In another place Hannah quotes an unnamed analyst who is amplifying a dream image for a client. In the comments the analyst refers back to Jung. Hannah (1981, p. 189) records the remarks thus: “Most people think that they are not guilty when they do not know about deeds which they commit. But Jung shows us that we are guilty when we do not know about them. Not to know is the guilt!” While the logical extension of this insight could lead to a rigorist attitude concerning self awareness, there is a truth to be considered. The more we understand ourselves and come to terms with ourselves, the less we project our unfaced selves onto others and the less harm we’ll do. Self awareness is to be highly valued, and active imagination strengthens this awareness.

An important change that helps free us from the dominant influence of the unconscious is what Jung saw as a shift in the mid-point of personality. This has to do with an overall sense of identity and is a shift away from the notion that the centre point is identical with ego consciousness. This is not meant to discount the importance of a strong ego, but it is meant to give us a more comprehensive sense of our selves when we say, “I am”. This shift again highlights a key characteristic of
active imagination I mentioned in the Introduction, and earlier in this chapter, that it is a dialogue between equals. Jung affirms that this dialogue will be between distinct and opposite realities, which have equal value to one another.

Active imagination means that we take the unconscious seriously and give it a chance to cooperate with consciousness instead of having to assault it. In the dialogue each has the same value and is granted the same authority (Jung 1916b/1969, para. 183). Jung (1916a/1966, paras. 364-65) asserts that the result of this cooperative encounter will be the shift of the mid-point of personality. We sense in this that the centre of our personality shifts to a point midway between consciousness and unconscious. This mid-point becomes the new centre of balance in our sense of our identity. We value both the conscious and unconscious perspectives, and come at the life process with a new, richer and stronger sense of who we are.

The dynamic relationship that is developed is summarised in the notion of "balance." In the active imagination exercise we, from the standpoint of consciousness, are not meant to give blind allegiance to all that emerges from the unconscious. The essence of the relationship is dialogue wherein there is give and take, disagreement and compromise. The inner realities emerge in the end result not to rule, but to balance, to create a new vision of what it is to be us and what it is to be human. Hannah
(1981, p. 102) comments that in the dynamic interchange we are not to seek to become the other, but to relate to it, participate in the exchange and to be influenced positively by it.

As we encounter this inner, unconscious world through active imagination, a new sense of who "I am" emerges. We are less dominated by this unconscious and, through our new self-awareness, more cooperative with it. Paradoxically, this engagement with the unconscious actually strengthens consciousness, so that one is less likely to be caught up in the grips of the unconscious energy and influence.

The third benefit of active imagination is a change of personality (Jung, 1916a/1966, para. 358). This change appears gradual in character; it is usually quite subtle and not dramatic. It is a pervasive change, one that involves a transformation of our entire general attitude toward ourselves and life. Anthony Storr (1988, p. 194) offers a slant on this change.

Persistence with active imagination not only leads to the rediscovery of aspects of the personality which have been neglected, but to a change of attitude in which the subject comes to realize that his own ego or will is no longer paramount, but that he must acknowledge dependence upon an integrating factor which is not of his own making.

In the active imagination encounter this change is often foretold in a sense. Hannah (1981, p. 157) uses the term "anticipation" to identify an insight for change that is given during active imagination, and later is integrated gradually into consciousness. I have used the word "promise"
to describe the manner in which life-changing truths are declared in both dreams and active imagination, subsequently to become part of our daily living over a period of time.

It is important to acknowledge a contemporary issue concerning time, and to affirm a general difference between inner and outer times. We live in an era wherein we have a truncated sense of time as influenced by the media and the notion of “fast” foods and processes. In the computer world, the quicker we “boot up,” the better! Active imagination puts us in touch with energies which stir up change in us; but this change is slow, almost imperceptible, and requires patience and courage. What is declared in the inner life, what is “promised” or “anticipated,” may take substantial time to manifest itself in any noticeable way on the outside.

Years ago I had a most astonishing experience in active imagination that signaled a change in me. At first I noticed nothing new and was a little disappointed. About six months after the event, I had an experience the likes of which used to upset me deeply at an earlier time in my life. I noticed after the experience was over that I wasn’t upset and couldn’t even talk myself into being upset once I became conscious of the fact that I wasn’t. It was then I realised that the promise of the earlier active imagination experience was being completed. Gradually, over time, my reaction patterns changed quite deeply.
Slow as it may be, we do change when we honour, and seek to assimilate, the experiences of active imagination. Both Storr (1988) and Johnson (1986) speak of it as a healing process. Storr (1988, page 195) notes that it is not healing through insight nor an improved relationship, nor through problem solving, but through a deep change of attitude. Johnson affirms that deep healing is possible through active imagination. In reflecting on an example of a man’s work, Johnson (1986, p. 159) writes,

It will profoundly alter the long-range course of his life, the contours of his character. He will be acting eventually from a different center if he keeps up this Active Imagination, creating a different balance among the powers that make him up and invest him with energy. His attitude will alter; his choices will be changed - he will be different.

The gradual emergence of change does not mean that there are neat and tidy solutions to life’s problems. In fact Hannah tells how Jung noted that problems were often simply outgrown by his patients as a result of engaging the unconscious. In the context of a wider and broader sense of self, the problems simply faded away. Hannah (1981, p. 104) comments that it is like looking at a storm in a valley from a mountaintop after having seen it from the valley.

In Hannah’s (1981, p. 159) case study of Anna Marjula, in the fourth conversation between the patient and the Great Mother, the Great Mother says, “a part of the conflict has got to be suffered, for it is not to be solved.” In reference to the change of personality in active imagination, it is important to affirm that some of life’s issues are transformed, while others
must be carried differently by a change in attitude. While we affirm a change of personality that is sometimes quite deep and pervasive, it is also important to affirm that some changes are in the ways in which we carry our lives and our experiences or conditions. Ulanov (1981, p. 46) offers a challenging reminder: “Human life is imperfectible.” This seems true to my experience. Active imagination brings about a change in personality, one that is gradual, but pervasive; one that re-centres the person in a new sense of identity, one that can distinguish between what may change and what needs to be carried creatively, with dignity and even with purpose.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to these three values, I want to add briefly two other benefits of active imagination. The first I have mentioned briefly in reference to active ego involvement in active imagination. It is that the person who uses active imagination has the opportunity to embrace an adult stance in regard to her or his own inner life. Jung (1954a/1966, paras. 101-105) felt that as long as a person remained passive to the healing process, he or she remained in a state of psychological childhood. All authority in the process was outside the individual. Active imagination creates a shift from that stance by causing the person to become actively involved, and responsible, in the process. In this shift there is a sense in which the locus of authority shifts from the outer life to the inner life. The dialogue between the unconscious and consciousness carries the authoritative role

\textsuperscript{11} It is beyond the scope of this reflection to explore the nature of healing in reference to active imagination, but it is a worthy topic for serious research and reflection.
of revealing the truth needed at a particular time in a person's journey.

As this inner authority is acknowledged and honoured, it will foster a growing confidence and independence in the individual. The shift is appropriate in that Jung felt people really only took advice from their inner life. Hannah (1981, p. 218) comments: "Jung used to say that although people are interested in the interpretations of their analysts, they never really incorporate such interpretations into their actual lives until their own unconscious gives them its version." She quotes Jung to this point: "It is the things given them by their own unconscious that make a lasting impression" (Jung, quoted in Hannah, 1981, p. 137). The truth of this led Jungian Analyst, Petrina Morris, to remark to me once in conversation (ca. 1987) that a value of active imagination is that it shifts the transference energy from an outer relationship to an inner one. The challenge to any person who does inner work is to encourage people, through interaction with their unconscious, to begin to listen to the wisdom and truth that comes from within. As I commented earlier in this chapter, both Jung (1954b/1970, para. 753) and von Franz (1974/1980, p. 74) felt that this adult stance involving active involvement with the unconscious enabled a greater capacity for change than did the dream.

The second point is that active imagination puts us into right relationship with the essential nature of things. I am intrigued and challenged by this point, though I find it difficult to express clearly. Hannah retells the
experience of Richard Wilhelm who encountered a rainmaker in China. The rainmaker broke the drought of a particular area by placing himself in harmony with the Tao. Hannah (1981, p. 14) then adds: "The greatest use of active imagination is to put us, like the rainmaker, into harmony with the Tao, so that the right things may happen around us instead of the wrong." The point made is that through active imagination we put ourselves into right relationship with the essential nature of things.

To be in right relationship with the essential nature of things, to be in harmony with the Tao - or the unconscious, the self, the larger life, God - means also that we can project that right relationship out into our environment and affect it positively. The reverse is also true. Most of us know well what it is like to have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed, or to be at odds with the unconscious, and to project that energy out into our relationships and environment. Hannah (1981, pp. 15-16) goes on to give examples of saints in the Christian tradition who were so connected with God through prayer that, like the rainmaker who brought rain, they had an effect on the physical environment. While our rational, scientific minds may struggle with all this, it must be noted that people throughout the ages have believed these things possible when one is either in right harmony with, or out of sorts with, the unconscious, God, Tao, or the essential nature of things. We can affirm, I believe, the essence of this point, that is, that active imagination can help us be in right relationship with the unconscious, God, the essential nature of things. Beyond this we
seem well advised to remain open to possibilities, to discard none in haste, and to wonder.

In this section we have reviewed five values of active imagination. They are that active imagination: 1) extends the conscious horizon, 2) gradually diminishes the dominant influence of the unconscious, 3) enables a change of personality, 4) encourages a shift to a more adult perspective, and 5) puts us into right relationship with the essential nature of things.

Some practical matters

In the practice of active imagination, there are several practical matters to consider. The first is that it is important to have someone available with whom to discuss these experiences. Jung (1951/1969, para. 320) points out that active imagination involves a deliberate weakening of the ego, and that a person needs a strong ego at the outset. In another place Jung (1936/1969, para. 102) asserts that the practice is “not entirely without danger, because it may carry the patient too far away from reality.”

Johnson (1986, p. 137) picks up this theme in speaking of the compelling nature of the experience. It can be seductive and a person may need help pulling away. It is not unusual to have images or characters wait around the edges of consciousness for a right moment to try to get our attention. Hannah (1981, pp. 11-12) also issues her warning to the same need, seeing human companionship as “absolutely necessary to prevent us from
becoming frozen or lost." My own experience leads me to conclude that these warnings are not in the least overstated or too dramatic. It is essential to have someone with whom to share, who honours the process. The person need not be a clever interpreter of the exercises, but needs to help us to see possible ways to tie it all to outside living and to help us remain grounded in our outer life.

The second practical matter is that those who do active imagination are well advised to ground themselves in tactile, concrete activities as a compensating balance. Such things would include gardening, sewing, painting a room, knitting, refinishing furniture, building something, or taking up hiking or a group sport regularly. The important thing is to get grounded in the everyday, ordinary activities of life. This helps balance the compelling energy of the active imagination experience.

The third matter involves acknowledging that active imagination is hard work. Hannah (1981, p. 6) speaks to this:

Above all we must realize that active imagination is hard work - probably the most tiring piece of work we have ever encountered. We undertake it in order to open negotiations with everything that is unknown in our psyche. Whether we know it or not, our whole peace of mind depends on these negotiations; otherwise we are forever a house divided against itself, distressed without knowing why and very insecure because something unknown in us is constantly opposing us.

My own experience, and the experiences of those who have worked with
me, bears this out. Active imagination, engaged seriously, can be tiring both physically and psychically. In the light of this, I find it sufficient, in most circumstances, to limit the imaginal encounters to three or four a month. My own exception to this principle is instructive. A few years ago, I undertook the aforementioned “Solitude” series on an almost daily basis for several weeks. The result was beneficial, but also deeply exhausting. I felt “off” for several weeks after the series was complete, and I am sure that this feeling contributes to the fact that I have yet to go back to re-read the material. In observing the experiences of others, I am interested to note that people often wait instinctively between dialogues as if they are giving themselves time to absorb what has most recently come forward.

The fourth point is that active imagination can bring with it a sense of loneliness. Hannah (1981, p. 12) calls it “a very individual and even lonely undertaking.” She also quotes Jung wherein he says that active imagination experiences “bring about a serious alteration in the personality because they immediately form a painful personal secret which alienates the human being from his environment and isolates him” (Jung, cited in Hannah, 1981, p. 101). Even though we must talk about these experiences with someone, they are ours alone and can only be appreciated to a limited degree from the outside. Their individual nature usually means that the individual whose experience it is alone catches the numinous quality of the encounters. Certainly I have encountered this
frustrating experience in trying to share the content of my own dialogues. Active imagination has a lonely side to it that needs to be acknowledged; it is part of the price we pay for consciousness. Sanford (1987, pp. 45-46), in reflecting on the costs of personal growth, writes of the demands of becoming an individual, and the burden of becoming a person. These images connect with the felt experiences of doing active imagination.

The fifth practical matter concerns reality. In our age, dedicated to rational consciousness, this concern is quite common, and most authors take it up. Jung (1916a/1966, para. 353) contends that these inner imaginative experiences are very real, but they are not to be taken literally or to be concretised into outer experience. They are to be taken as seriously as any dimension of outer reality. He writes:

We must not take the fantasies literally when we approach the question of interpreting them. While we are in the grip of the actual experience, the fantasies cannot be taken literally enough. But when it comes to understanding them, we must on no account mistake the semblance, the fantasy image as such, for the operative process underlying it.

Hannah (1981, p. 5) goes a bit further. "This inner world is just as real as the outside world, with which we are familiar; in fact, it is more real, for it is infinite and everlasting and does not change and decay as the outside world constantly does."

In an era of pervasive literalism, the concretising of the images is a temptation because they are so meaningful to us in the experience. It is a
way of attempting to give value to the experiences. This temptation falls into the general tradition of the "golden calf" experience found in the biblical Book of Exodus. We are tempted to concretise, to read as literal, the symbolic, so as to capture or control its meaning and value for us. It is a temptation to psychic idolatry, and a fairly normal response in an age wherein the symbolic is little appreciated or understood. It might even be seen as a response of gratitude to the images and what they represent. Images in active imagination are real, the experience is real, but of an interior, symbolic reality. They are separate from our outer reality and we need to keep this boundary firmly in place when we consider the meaning and application of these vital, inner experiences.

In this chapter we have explored the practice of active imagination, what it is, and when it might be appropriate to use it. We have looked as well at the actual mechanics of the process of doing active imagination, and considered how to relate to what emerges. Finally we have considered some of the values and benefits of the experience and identified several practical matters. Having considered the practice of active imagination in detail, we next will meet the research participants before we turn attention to the actual case material used in this study.
Figure 4. Reflection on Resurrection (pastel) 1998
CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The interview process

Once the proposal process was complete, I began to organise myself to work with my own case material and with that of my research participants. While I was drawing up a list of candidates to approach, I also began to work on the actual process of engaging the case material. Following Moustakas (1990, p. 44ff), I designed a process involving several steps which I included in a letter to those whose participation I sought. The letter and a copy of the research participants’ release agreement are in Appendix two. The steps for the process have been as follows.

1. After reviewing the process as presented in the letter, I asked the participants to sign the “Participation-Release Agreement.” This also involved nominating a pseudonym to be used in reference to their material. I also co-signed the form and returned a copy to the participants for their own records.

2. I collected from each participant the written active imagination material they had to share. I specified that I needed at least ten dialogues, preferably in sequence. I invited them also to share any other material, such as artwork, that seemed relevant to the project.

3. I prepared a brief case description of the participant, and then began to
work with the material. First I made photocopies of the material, and returned the original material within two weeks. I then paginated the material in the order with which I would work with it. I read it through, clarified any handwriting I couldn't decipher with the participant, and then prepared a written summary description of the material. In this process I attempted, even when not quoting the material, to use the language of the original material. This summary gave me a deeper relationship with the contents and provided a workable document for this study. It also provided a document for my supervisors to review, so that they could discuss the research process more thoroughly with me. The summaries were necessary because the original materials, mostly handwritten, were of considerable length. It also allowed me to edit out certain sensitive sections in accord with the research participants' desires. After having prepared the summaries I submitted them to the research participants for their approval. I did this for two reasons: 1) to honour them and the integrity of their material, and 2) to acknowledge that I had constructed a second text of their experience, influenced, however slightly, by my own interpretive process. These "second text" summaries are included in chapter four.

4. At this point I arranged to meet with the research participant for the interviews. My initial plan allowed for three hours in total interview time in one hour increments. I planned to tape the interviews, which the participants knew in advance. Moustakas (1990, p. 47), referring to the
work of Patton, identifies three styles of interviews for qualitative data collection. While Moustakas advocates the use of informal, conversational interviews with no structured questions, as most consonant with the heuristic method, I capitulated to my need for structure and used the standardised open-ended interview method and designed questions to review with each participant. The interview questions are in Appendix three.

5. At the conclusion of the interviews, I asked each participant to write up a brief reflection of his/her experience in the light of our conversations. These were to be of no more than two or three pages in length. Meanwhile, working from the tapes, I prepared a summary of the conversations for my own use. Using these summary notes and the original materials, I prepared a depiction, or summary description of the essential character of the experience of active imagination for each participant as I understood it.

6. Each participant was given the opportunity to review the depiction and to discuss it with me. We discussed also whether any recent insights from their brief written reflection might be included in the depiction. I prepared the amended reflections and submitted the final document to each research participant for approval. These final depictions are also in chapter four.
7. The final step was to compose a composite depiction of the nature, meaning and essence of active imagination as experienced by the five of us. This composite depiction is in chapter four. This completed my interaction with the four research participants and their active imagination case material. Later in the research process, as I was summarising my own involvement with religious experiences, I returned to the interviews of the research participants and summarised their reflections on their religious experiences. The composite depiction of our religious experiences is in chapter five.

The first step in working with the experience of active imagination was to review my own experience. As I stated in the Introduction, my first series of active imagination dialogues was the "Dog" series. This was followed several years later by the "Old Nun" series. The "Wise Old Man" series picked up immediately at the close of the "Old Nun" series. There is a fourth series entitled the "Solitude" series. As I mentioned in chapter two, it is a very recent series of dialogues which I have not returned to since I experienced them, and I chose not to include the series in this research project. There are sixty-three dialogues included in this reflection. In order to keep the process of reflection on my own material within appropriate bounds, I summarised the "Dog" series only and prepared two depictions that include my experiences through the three series. The summary and the two depictions are part of the case material presented in chapter four.
Choosing the research participants

My next task was to choose the research participants. At the outset I decided that I wanted to work with an equal number of males and females, and to have participants representing a variety of ages. Also, I hoped to find people who had not worked with me whose material I might use. I inquired of two other colleagues and came up with no candidates. While there were people who used active imagination, I found that none of them wrote down accounts of their experiences.

I was able to draw up a list of ten people from my own connections. I placed the names in numerical order, alternating by gender, and began to make informal contacts. I decided, after working with my own material, to work with only one participant at a time, and to complete the process with each before moving to the next. Among the names on the list, two declined to participate. I will comment on these two later in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, as I worked with the first few research participants, my supervisors and I decided that I would limit my work to four people. This was largely due to the quantity of material that was generated from each interaction. All four are in the middle aged group. The four people, by pseudonyms, are Campbell, Helen, Tim and Lottie.

12. All names used in this thesis document are the chosen pseudonyms of the participants.
Campbell is in his forties, lectures in a university, and is a practising Anglican. He engaged active imagination at my suggestion and I worked with him as his material unfolded. At the time he was working on his own PhD project. His case material reveals some of the struggles Christians have when engaging the images of the unconscious. At the time of our interviews, Campbell's material was three years old. I will comment later in this chapter on using material for research that is not based on recent experience.

Helen was in her mid-fifties when she had the active imagination experiences that are used in this study. She had come to me for private therapy work and during this time she had engaged in the active imagination dialogues as part of that work. Helen herself is a mental health professional. Her religious background is Anglican, though she is not regular in attending church services and events. Helen's material was nine years old when I reviewed it and interviewed her for this project.

Tim was a surprise. He was participating in a dreams workshop I was leading and heard me mention my project. He then told me he had done active imagination extensively after having heard me speak about it some years ago in some lectures on Jung's psychology. I was delighted to include him in this study primarily because his actual active imagination experiences are not influenced by me. Tim told me he found a therapist with whom to work while he engaged the active imagination process.
Tim holds his own PhD, and is ordained a priest in the Anglican tradition. Tim's material was six years old at the time we worked together. He was in his early forties when he did this active imagination work.

Lottie came to see me some years ago to work through some issues and during that time did the active imagination work that I use here in this study. She was in her mid-fifties at the time. Lottie is German by birth and lived in Berlin as a child during World War II. Her family migrated to Australia when she was twelve. While raised in the German Lutheran tradition, her family did not attend church during the war, and she later found the experience "tedious and unbelievable" (tape 1:1). Lottie has been a practising Buddhist since 1976. From time to time she engages various aspects of the Christian tradition and theology. Her material includes Christian imagery and is very dramatic, so I chose to include her work and her reflections within the limits of this study. At the time of our interviews her material was three years old.

The two persons I did approach, and who declined to participate, were John and Thomas. Each had different reasons. John, a young man in his mid-twenties, engaged a process that resulted in hand written material of over one hundred pages in length. The series is entitled, "The Warming of the Heart." It began with a dream, and the dialogues and narratives of the series extended over a period of fifteen months. When I approached John, he was ambivalent about participating. He was interested, but
hesitant. He had finished his personal therapeutic work and the relevant material was about one year old. Yet when he began to re-read it and reconsider its themes, he realised he was not ready for this material to enter a public forum. It moved him very deeply and when he tried to describe his feeling reaction to it, he couldn’t finish his sentence, but only sat shaking his head. It was clear to me John had not attained sufficient distance from this material to consider it in an objective and dispassionate manner. We agreed that it was inappropriate for him to participate in this study. Shortly after this, however, John was content to give me permission to use his material extensively in a lecture on active imagination to the Jung Society in Perth, Australia. He made a conscious decision not to attend the presentation.

I wrote to Thomas and invited him to be involved. Thomas was in his late thirties at the time of his active imagination work. His material is also handwritten, over one hundred pages, and extended over a nine month period. His material was just over two years old when I wrote to him. He wrote back to decline. In his letter he said,

What I can say is that whenever I contemplate the process of reflecting on my experience of AI I get a blank in my head, and revulsion in my gut. The image is of a wet grey blanket being laid over a naked corpse!! ... The fact is I’m scared to engage in what will be painful and hard work (Thomas, letter, 4.6.97).

Both John and Thomas gave me permission to use their material in spite of not being part of the interview process.
In addition to the four research participants, Campbell, Helen, Tim and Lottie, I also use the work of three others: Louisa, William and Graham. In the previous chapter on active imagination I have used Louisa's material as an example of active imagination. I also have introduced Louisa there. William is the only non-Australian whose work I use. We worked together fourteen years ago in California, and I requested permission to use parts of his dialogues as they include images of God and of Christ. William was in his forties when he did this active imagination work. Graham gave permission to use the material he did while working with me a few years ago. He was in his early forties at the time. His material also includes images of God and Christ. The active imagination work that William and Graham have contributed is found in chapter six.

The "age" of the research material

In the course of my many conversations with colleagues about this project, some have found it unusual that I would use material that represents experiences from years ago. In the case of active imagination, this is advisable. The principle is an important one on which to comment since, in academic research, the strong preference is for case material that is current. I can appreciate the value assigned to working with current material. It seems that it might well have a certain freshness for the research participant, and could affect the amount of detail recalled about the experience.
There are two experiences I have had in the course of this study that illustrate the point. The first is John's experience as mentioned above, wherein he was not able to release his material for study, and was not able to participate in the interview process. He was not himself sufficiently detached from his series of active imagination dialogues to allow them to be objectified as case material. The second experience is my reaction to my own material. As I mentioned earlier, I have four series of active imagination dialogues, the earliest of which is now about seventeen years old. In order to prepare for working with client case material, I decided to review and reflect on all my own case material. I found the first reading of the material very moving. It stirred up an emotional response very quickly. I felt moved, somewhat at a loss for words, and driven to silences in which I would experience a deep sense of connection to an inner life, a gratitude for what I had learned through these experiences, a wonderment that I had been given such insight, and a solitude that included a kind of loneliness in that I doubted anyone could ever understand what this meant for me. These experiences create a deep sense of meaning for me. I realised after re-reading the first three series of dialogues that an emotional distance from the material now is possible. I can look at the material more objectively. That is not the case with the fourth, the "Solitude" series. This fourth series contains forty-five dialogues done in a short period of time. The experience was deep and very intense, and I couldn't face reading it over - not yet. It was too soon. For this reason I
have not included it in this study.

Over the years I have heard it affirmed among Jungian colleagues that inner material is not to be shared until a period of time has lapsed. It seems that the material needs time to "cool" before being shared. I have heard people mention a period of five years as the necessary cooling off period. I have noted that, in asking people for permission to share dreams, the period varies greatly and can be as short as a few months. The time period needs to be determined by the individuals themselves. People do seem to need some length of time before they feel a little more detached from the material and can be comfortable with it entering the public forum. This seems particularly so in reference to active imagination. My own experience with the Solitude series, and John's and Thomas' experiences with their material, all serve to underscore the general principle. The meaning level is often so intense that people are protective of the experience and the content. It seems that to share the material too soon may result in a loss of the benefit of the experience itself. Even more, there can be an attendant feeling of being exposed, invaded, and even violated, if asked to share too soon. Therefore, in this study it was not possible to use current or recent material. As indicated earlier in this chapter, in the introductions of the four participants, our material is from three to seventeen years old.

In this chapter I have introduced the four research participants and
identified the process by which I worked with them and their material. I have also addressed the important issue of the age of the research material. I turn now to the case material from the five of us, George, Campbell, Helen, Tim and Lottie.
Figure 5. Struggle to emerge (pastel, ink) 1998
CHAPTER FOUR
THE CASE MATERIAL

Introduction

In this chapter I will present the actual case material of the participants used in this study. It is a lengthy inclusion, but one that I have deemed necessary so that the experience of active imagination may be understood fully, and the later comparisons with religious experience be understood clearly. Each section of this chapter contains introductory information to the case material, followed by a summary of the actual case material used. In the heuristic method of research, I have included in the summaries quotations from the original texts and much of the original language. This represents an attempt to align this “second” text of the experience as closely as possible with the character of the original written material.

I repeat here the guidelines for punctuation in the case material texts which were presented earlier in chapter two. In textual quotations I replicate the spelling, abbreviations and punctuation of the original text. I leave spaces between words where there is no punctuation in the original text, and where punctuation would be appropriate. If clarification of the text is needed, brackets [ ] are used to include any additions to the text. I underline words underlined in the original text, and use bold type for those words which are underlined twice. Brackets enclosing full stops are also used to indicate deleted text [...].

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Following each case material summary there is a depiction of the participant’s experience. This is based largely on the taped interviews. In the heuristic model, a depiction of case material is a reflective description of the phenomenon. It is like painting a portrait with words. It is not an analysis in an objective sense, but is an attempt to explore the material in such a way that much of the original affect and significance is retained in the description. This chapter concludes with a composite depiction of the active imagination experience based on the experiences of the five of us.

I conclude this brief introduction with a note about the reading of the case material. While the depictions of the material may be read easily, readers may find the “second text” summaries somewhat more challenging. They are intense, concentrated psycho-spiritual material. Often the images convey something of the emotions experienced by the research participant. As I found in re-reading my own material, readers may need to engage the summaries more slowly and with well placed pauses along the way. I begin with a summary and depiction of my own experience of active imagination.
Summary and depiction: George

Introduction

As I indicated earlier, I have undertaken four series of active imagination dialogues over the years. For purposes of this study I have summarised the dialogues of only one series, the "Dog" series. I have prepared two depictions of my experience, and these are based on the three series: The "Dog" series, the "Old Nun" series, and the "Wise Old Man" series. The description of the "Dog" series is a summary of the eighteen narratives of the series.

Following the summary are the two depictions. The first is poetic in form. Originally inspired by examples in Moustakas' study of heuristic research, (1990, pp 60-68) this depiction began to emerge spontaneously as I lay awake in the middle of one night. Early that same morning I began to compose it, and worked it over as I continued to review the dialogues. All this amuses me somewhat as I have no illusions about myself as poet; it is a medium of expression with which I have always struggled, and in which I almost never write. It was my strong conviction that I should respond first in this form before preparing a narrative depiction. In this first depiction I have given no references. The second depiction is in narrative form and includes references to the dialogues as appropriate. The referencing is explained below.

There are eighteen dialogues included in the summary of the "Dog" series,
and sixty-three dialogues from the three series used as resources for the depictions. The details of the series are as follows:

“Dog” series: eighteen dialogues, 30 May.79 - 7 May.81;
“Old Nun” series: fifteen dialogues, 5 May.87 - 9 July.88; and

In terms of recording the original experiences, the “Dog” series texts were experienced as meditations first, then written up immediately after the experience. These texts include both whatever actual dialogue I could recall at the time, and the narrative description of the experience. The “Old Nun” series texts were written as dialogues concurrent with the experience and later typed out. The “Wise Old Man” series texts were written as dialogues concurrent with the experience and remain in written form in my personal journals. The method of the practice of active imagination follows generally that outlined in chapter two.

In the matter of textual references, the following codes for the three series are used.

Dog 3:1 = “Dog” series, third meditation, page one;
Old Nun 14:3 = “Old Nun” series, fourteenth dialogue, page three;
Wise Old Man 3:134 = “Wise Old Man” series, third dialogue, page one hundred thirty-four in the journal where it is originally recorded.

The list of characters of the “Dog” series follows here. The references indicate the dialogue and page on which they first appeared.

Dog 1:1
Power/Golden young man 1:2
Woman/witch/Soul 1:3
In terms of the research process, I acknowledge that it was very helpful to begin with my own material. It was a moving experience, one in which I felt myself walking on sacred ground. I also felt vulnerable in wondering how others might respond to my reflections on these soulful texts. Starting with my own material has prepared me to approach the material of others more thoughtfully.

Summary - George: The "Dog" series

The "Dog" series includes eighteen dialogues over a two year period. As mentioned in the Introduction, I first met Dog in a dream. He is a Great Dane and in the dream he was barking fiercely at the entry of a house. I chose not to enter, and the dream ended with me sitting in my car about to drive away, when a man rose out of the back seat and put a gun to my head. My analyst at the time helped me to realise that I needed to go back into the dream and have the courage to enter the house.
In the first active imagination exercise I return to the house to negotiate entry with Dog. He then becomes my host and guide for this entire exercise. Though I am still hesitant, I follow Dog as he leads me down a long hall. We turn right at the end, and almost immediately left, and begin to descend a circular stone stairwell. It is dark and I am frightened. At the bottom, at what later becomes the first level, I ask Dog what this is and he tells me it is a prison. Then I hear noise. In the cell is a man big, strong dressed in black armor like Darth Vadar. He makes a noise and it frightens me. I then ask who he is. 'Who are you?' 'I am Power.' 'Power?' 'Raw, naked Power,' he replies. 'Why are you here?' 'Because you keep me locked up,' he replies. He goes on to tell me that I do not use him well, abuse him in relationships [...]; also that I need him & that he can help me. I tell him I am afraid of him. (Dog 1:2)

While frightened of Power, I spend time with him in his cell, during which I remove his hood to reveal a handsome young man with golden blond hair. "He tells me that he is not awful - if used well" (Dog 1:2). I learn that his cell is located near the ocean as he is related to the great unconscious. As I leave I invite him to return with me, but he declines. "'No,' he says, 'I will stay here near the ocean.' And he asks that I come again. I tell the dog to leave the cell unlocked, that I don't fear him anymore" (Dog 1:3). I see Power on many of my subsequent visits, but he is never again frightening.

Halfway up the stair, I see a landing and ask Dog about what is there. He
tells me to go find out. Nervously, I go down a long hallway that is dark. As I knock on the door it is opened by an ugly old witch. I enter, spend some time visiting and learn that her name is Soul. She, too, has been neglected. She tells me that a kiss will reveal her beauty. I oblige, and she is transformed into a lovely young woman. I am encouraged to return to visit again. I return to Dog who then guides me out.

At the car the man in the back seat identifies himself. He is the one who will seek control if I do not relate to Soul and Power. If I refuse to do so then he tries to take over to murder, cheat, steal, harm and do destruction. Since I have done what I am supposed to do, he leaves me unharmed and goes on his way. (Dog 1:5)

In the second encounter Dog takes me down the stairs and I spend the time with Power. The third encounter begins much the same way; Dog and I greet cordially. The descent is routine, and not quite to the first level. On a landing I encounter a hallway.

At the end is a door - I can hear noise - crying. He tells me to “go.” I go to the door and this time I must open it w/o assistance. I pull it out to open & it is not a room but a dark closet. In it is a small crying child. He comes out & grabs my thigh crying “Daddy.” He is dirty, neglected unkempt. I pick him up & hold him - there is no place for us here so I take him back to dog and announce that I want to take him up into the house. (Dog 3:2)

Up in the house I rock him in a rocker, bathe and dress him, prepare his lunch and eat with him. I leave then asking Dog to watch him and to see that he gets his rest.

In the fourth encounter we start down the stairs, and we seem to branch
off another way. It is frightening and dark; the air seemed oppressive and creepy. "At one point he told me to keep my hand on his back or on the collar at his neck" (Dog 4:2). We passed by all manner of ugly and awful creatures. We then come to a flatbed boat in a canal and are taken by the boatman to the next landing. The boatman is grey, faceless and, when I asked him if he was death, he did not speak. We landed near Power's cell, he was in a rage, and after a short time there we returned to the house upstairs. Dog then instructed me that each can become the other. Each of those I meet here has two sides. "Don't ever forget that," he said. "Each can become the other" (Dog 4:5). I take my leave. "Outside, after saying goodbye, I even said goodbye to the house - "my house," - I said, - "all of it is my house." (Dog 4:6)

The fifth encounter begins with the descent down the stairs. This time it is very dark, with no torches, and I am very frightened. During this descent Dog says, "This is the way to your holiness" (Dog 5:2). On the first level at the end of a long corridor, I am sent on alone.

It is so dark I must touch the walls to proceed. I am thinking wildly to myself as I go trying to imagine what I will find. I come to a small, low door. I open it & there in a niche is an infant; a male child who appears to be sleeping. He is utterly still I take him in my arms and suddenly feel that he is dead. But dog said "asleep." So I determine in a flash of remembrance to blow breath into his nostrils as God did to man in the Creation story (Genesis). I blow air into his nostrils & he jerks in my arms. He moves. He is alive. (Dog 5:4)

I return to Dog with the infant. We take him upstairs, see to his care and
then I leave him in Dog's care with the boy and go on my way. "I leave singing hymns w/ a heart full of joy & expectancy" (Dog 5:5).

As we were on the stairs descending for the next visit we heard a shattering scream. Soon I saw the young man, caged in a large area, pulling at the bars and screaming sounds but no words. I am so frightened I almost end the meditation, but Dog says, "Stay!" I watch & the young man continues - he is throwing pieces of wooden furniture yelling in English now; banging pieces of table and chair against the bars hollering until I am really losing my grip" (Dog 6:2). This is my introduction to Anger, who, much later, is renamed Passion. During this visit I risk entering the cage although he has already tried to attack me. As we are together he enters me at one point to possess me and I cry to God for help. "Soon he comes out of me again. He wants to prove, he tells me, that he can take me over, he can overpower me. 'You may be in charge, but I can take you over,' he says" (Dog 6:5). He challenges me to a better relationship, after which I return with Dog to the house. This visit has worn me out.

On the next visit with Dog I let him know that I am not up to a "difficult ordeal but more need to be cared for" (Dog 7:1). He indicates he knows that and we begin down the stairs. Soon I am surprised to find myself with the Christ.

'What are you doing here?' 'Where else would you expect
me?' he asks. 'You can always find me here,' he adds. He offers me food, it is bread and wine. For a moment it appears that he has taken it right out of himself. I realize that it is Himself he gives me - his Body & Blood to refresh me (Dog 7:2).

I am very weary so Dog and I return to the house and I leave.

On the next descent on the stairs I remark that "They are beautifully rugged. I love them. It's like coming home" (Dog 8:1). Though a page is missing of the photocopy of the original, I am able to reconstruct that this is the visit when I meet a little gardener who is connected to wisdom. He seems to tend only one tomato plant. He seems a good-natured sort, who admonishes me "to get back to the earth" (Dog 8:3). I have a brief, jovial meeting with Power, and return to the nursery to see the boys before leaving.

My entry for this ninth encounter is difficult, and "Soon I feel a tugging and a yank. I am down; Dog has pulled me down" (Dog 9:1). I am excited and happy to be there (here). For the first time Dog greets me outside the house and we make our way through an obstacle of broken glass to enter it. I call it "home" and he tells me that these within are my family in the deepest sense of the word. As we descend I am moved to tears at the joy of being here. On the descent winged beasts and an old woman calling for help distract me, but Dog insists that we continue. Soon we come to a stairwell.
I am surprised. We begin down; it is straight & steep. ‘We are going deeper,’ says Dog. ‘I didn’t know there was a deeper place to go. I am startled as we come out to a beach. Dog tells me that we are deeper now in that place where all begins to become One. To the left on the sand stands Jesus. He comes to welcome me. (Dog 9:3)

We have a warm and friendly visit on the beach. The beach scene is lovely, but in a momentary flash I also see the menacing nature of the sea. “Jesus tells me that here in this region we live more closely with these opposing forces. It is simply the nature of things - and one does so in peace” (Dog 9:4). We eat together and then return to Dog and he and I begin back up to the house. On the way I meet the needs of the old woman with a simple touch. Up in the house I greet the children, and then leave, this time by a ladder and back through the obstacle of broken glass.

On this next encounter I am taken deeper than before and down a different stairwell.

We start down, it curves, is short & very dark. We come to water. It is murky; I become frightened The water is dirty & in it are wretched awful sea creatures. I brush against one, step on another, yet another pulls on my leg to pull me under. The water is waist deep, and awful. I really am afraid and call out to God. We come up out of the water to a low cavern like tunnel. (Dog 10:3)

Here in this place I encounter an adolescent boy chained up to the rock wall. He tells me he is me 13 years of age. I release him from his bonds and we start back.
At the water's edge he climbs on my back & I am to carry him across. As we start I cry 'Oh no! no!' I am stunned, for I intuit in the crossing the image of St. Christopher carrying the one who turned out to be the X-child. I keep saying half in protest & disbelief - 'Oh no - no!' 'It can't be.' But it is. I hear one say 'You must understand this.' (Dog 10:4)

The child then transforms into an angel of God. He says, "To set free and carry the imprisoned one is to transform the relationship - the being - the nature of things" (Dog 10:5). I am struck dumb by this experience. Dog and I return to the house. For the first time we go into the living room and sit for a while. He tells me that it will take time to absorb what has happened, and then I leave.

My next visit finds me making the usual descent and greeting those on the first level happily. I then go down the stairs to the beach and greet Jesus. We spend some time there together. He then tells me he wants to "show me a deeper truth" (Dog 11:4). We travel another stairwell that opens in the sand, and soon come to another level. We arrive at what seems like a large underground cavern. From the ceiling all around come tube like protrusions - below is a single hole & it is deep - endless -. 'Here,' X says, 'you can see that all is ultimately one. One life gives life to all [...]. Many never see beyond the difference of the particular, but you must do so. I am amazed. As we begin to return we are suddenly confronted by a big black creature. Christ marks an "X" before us & he is killed. As we return to the beach, he speaks of evil. 'Evil is true, & real. So many people do not understand it, but you must understand it and how it can tear at your life.' He stresses that I will never understand it all, but it is important to understand. (Dog 11:4)

At his encouragement I then leave.
In the next dialogue I come again to the house. I am greeted by Dog, and am overjoyed to be there, to be "home." We start our descent on the stairs. The winged beasts fly at my face and "At the bottom I feel the snakes across my feet, but am hardly bothered" (Dog 12:1). On this first level first I see anger and then the old gardener. Anger "...is yelling and banging uncontrollably" (Dog 12:1). I console him and calm him down. The old gardener is sad as his tomato plant is wilting. "As I console him, touch him, the plant springs back and appears to be recovering nicely" (Dog 12:2). We descend down further, to the beach and then on down the next stairs and come to the abyss. I see Jesus near the abyss.

He wants me to sit with him quietly. I realize that a time comes when there are no images, below all of them there is Being. As I sit I see darkness rise quickly up from the abyss and recede. I wonder, at this level, how darkness and light are related. The theme I hear over and over again is that All is One. I am unable to sit for long, so we go back to the beach. (Dog 12:2-3)

Jesus remains there and tells me to go make my connections. I return to the first level and visit with Power and Soul. Up in the house I stop to have warm, affectionate visits with the boys before leaving.

My next visit begins with the usual greeting by Dog and the descent on the stairs to the first level. There I find Anger. He is angry at me for a missed opportunity. As he raves on I finally "Yell at him. I said I'm sorry, and I am. [...] You can't always have your way. I don't always get my way so
why should you?" (Dog 13:2) I spend time with him talking and consoling him before moving along. I greet the old man who shows me the first set of a tomato on his vine. He tells me to be careful as I go on my way.

Suddenly there is a great enormous bear-like animal that rises up before me. He is vaporous, but black dark - more than bear-like. He growls - roars - he is frightening. Dog steps in between us. 'Back' he yells - over and over again. He backs the monster down the cave-like tunnel. It is frightening - disorienting - 'What is this?' I wonder. X [Christ] is called by me or Dog and he appears. He dissolves the creature to a handful of ash. He shows me the handful and then tells me that sometimes we are subject to forces beyond ourselves. This was not of me, but came from beyond. It was evil, demonic. (Dog 13:3)

Christ and I then travel down to the beach and take some time to play. It is a "...beautiful experience of freedom..." (Dog 13:3). We then descend down again, deeper than before.

This is a new experience. We go down 2 flights & come to a level that is sublimely serene. We cross a stream and I ask if water is at every landing. Jesus says that water is close to the places in this region. We walk a short path and come to an enormous amphitheater. The area is circular and full circle. Seats for a few surrounds the abyss. It is indescribable, so vast, so quiet, yet so full of life. We sit; I wonder if others will come as we are there - they do not. X tells me to be quiet - to sit in the solitude & contemplate the abyss. I look into it - it is endless, deep, beyond dimensions - yet not terrifying. I imagine falling in - would I land on something? All I can imagine is that I would not be hurt or destroyed, but I can't imagine what would happen to me. We sit & I try to be still & simply 'be' in the presence of this reality. (Dog 13:4-5)

We leave and return to the beach, Christ tells me to trust him and I depart.
After an absence of over two months in outside time, I return to discover Dog and those on the first level all weak and sickly. It seems my absence is the problem. I greet them all and revive them through touch and attention. At the beach I meet Christ. "I tell him how surprised I am. He tells me that we are interdependent - these people and I & that's simply a truth that 'is.' W/o them I will be come shallow - a whited sepulchre; one w/ no substance" (Dog 14:2). We descend then to the amphitheatre around the abyss. "Here X tells me to 'be'. He tells me that beneath all these people there is the abyss - the void. It is the more real & and I must learn to contemplate it" (Dog 14:3). Christ then enters the void and disappears; I am alone and, for a moment, frightened.

I look at the void - the abyss. It is no-thing but it is not nothing. I see subtle vaporous movements of light - the abyss is alive in the most subtle of ways. W/ the abyss I am not alone but w/ life. I realize that more than that I am with love - pure flowing LOVE. (This is not emotion or emotional) It is hard to be here long so I go back w/ permission. (Dog 14:3)

I return to the house and find the kids sickly, but they become well with me. "This has been a remarkable meditation" (Dog 14:3).

When I next go to see Dog I am distracted; he finally pulls me down. We begin our descent on the stairs, but bypass the landing and continue down. I ask what we're about, but Dog offers no explanation and simply tells me to follow. We finally come to a landing. It is very dark. "I see, periodically, wild contorted mad-looking creatures in walled cages, along the way. At first I become curious, but finally frightened & tell Dog I want
to go the way I know. He calls me on & I hold on to him" (Dog 15:1). A momentary image of the Christ in white helps me along, and finally I see light ahead. I have come to the abyss by another way. A voice speaks from the abyss; it is the Christ. He tells me

I have been called w/in to simply be with Being. I am asked to contemplate the presence of God in the Abyss. I see that what looks so still & clear teems with life & energy. Images come and go; I feel myself doze; but I am to do nothing, to contemplate nothing but the abyss. I realize that a training has begun; of course I'm not good at it - it will take time; perhaps a long time. At some point I am told that I may go;... (Dog 15:2)

I return by the new way and see no one else. "There is a sense of presence that I have experienced. It is all pervasive and makes me feel quiet inside. [...] This is all new to me" (Dog 15:3).

I go to the house. On the porch I have a brief encounter with a Brooklyn-type lady. I meet Dog, and we greet cordially. Before going down we see the children, who are well and happy to see me. We descend as usual and on the first level. "I come first to ANGER whom I now re-name PASSION" (Dog 16:2). We greet each other warmly, and I thank him for his recent help in outside things. As I leave I ask Passion to come with me, and for the first time he leaves his cage and comes along. As we go the same happens with the old gardener, the woman/witch, and Power. I go on then to the beach alone to meet Christ. We visit on the beach before heading down to the amphitheatre.

It was all so quiet & yet so very alive, vibrant. Life pulsed
there. He told me to be still here - to simply contemplate the center. He spoke of it as the center where all is One. Here there is Oneness; as it moves up it is particularized, concretized & appears in forms of good, bad, evil & and like, but at its deepest levels the Center - Life is One. Then he walked into it & disappeared, saying he'd be back. I sat alone sensing the vibrancy of the One Center. It was so still, yet so very dynamic. It is awesome, yet also difficult to contemplate. (Dog 16.5-6)

Jesus joins me again and we return to the beach. I leave him there, and greet the others as I continue on to leave.

When I next arrive at the house and greet Dog, I decide to visit with the children before going down the stairs. I see both the little boy and the infant. Both are doing well, growing and very happy. As I leave I hug the infant. "For a moment it seems as if he has come into me. I realize that he is me in some dimension of myself. [...] I also intuit that he must be separate from me" (Dog 17:1). We then start down the stairs. The descent "...seems darker than before. I am more aggravated & frightened of the flying beast and the snakes are really awful through which to pass" (Dog 17:2). At the first level I have a good visit with Passion. "He reminds me to live from the soul, not the head. [...] As I leave he says 'Call on me, that's all you need to do; I am here'" (Dog 17:2). After a visit with the old man gardener I then see Power. He is quite tired and tells me that it is directly related to my not living from soul. He also encourages me to live from soul. I then descend alone to the beach to meet Jesus. We then begin down the stairs. We visit the top of the abyss, and the level of the
amphitheatre, but continue deeper.

Here we come to the opening again & there is only a seat for one. It is in the center of the abyss suspended by a walk way bridge to it. I am to go out & sit on the chair to be 'in' the abyss. It is deep & silent here; but there is movement & life here in this abyss. Jesus leads me out to this place. I am seated. I am becoming so still I am dozing off. Jesus goes into the abyss. As I sit I see a woman come & place something before my feet, and depart. [...] After 'being' here for some time it is time to go. Jesus comes to take me up. (Dog 17:5)

We return to the beach where Jesus remains. The others greet me as I pass through the first level. I wave to them as I go. I find the steps hard to climb. It is after this experience that I draw the first sketch of the diagram. (see page 141).

When I arrive for my next visit, the last in this series, I struggle to settle in. Dog greets me and we begin the descent. At the first level "...I become disconsolate. I begin to weep and cry out loudly - my cries & shouts echo through the cavern. I fall to my knees & finally on my face" (Dog 18:2). My lament has to do with outer circumstances, and the people all seek to console and comfort me. I am urged to go to the beach to see the Christ. I hit him with many questions but he is evasive and parabolic in his responses. He wants me to go deeper. I try but am distracted, and give it up. "At the beach X tells me that I need to be here - it will only be a short time, but good for all" (Dog 18:3-4). As I leave I see the boys in the house. They are growing, healthy and doing well. I then leave.
Who are these
who arrive in my dreams, or
who emerge from the shades of the Abyss,
who haunt my waking hours
with their strange ways and
their unexpected points of view?

Who are these...
so intimate,
so close my skin seems distant
from my body when I compare,
who know me deeply, yet do not flinch
in my presence as sometimes do I,
who are these who ask no shame,
and only such guilt that moves me
along a way I cannot see,
in which they believe?

Who are these
who believe so deeply in me, and
who, without sentiment or put down,
    lift me up with unending support
for whoever it is I am meant to be?

Who are these
who come, and frighten and console me,
who demand and who give,
who leave me wondering,
    with my feet more firmly placed
on the pathway of my own life?

Who are these
who at differing moments offer me no comfort,
    and yet who are such deep comfort
in the face of life’s confusions?

Who are these
who variously strike fear into my heart and
cause the sweet heart ache of knowing love,
who accept me and support me,
who cry my tears when I am weary or aggrieved,
who scream my agonies and rages,  
my "Whys?" at a silent and  
sometimes indifferent cosmos  
yet who seem a cosmos within?  
Who are these?

Who are these  
who whisper sweet somethings in my ear,  
who insist on their truth and  
counsel my obedience?

Who are these  
who sometimes are angry and aggressive  
in the face of my neglect,  
yet whose hostility turns quickly when I turn to notice?

Who are these  
who present me with oracles and imperatives -  
"you must understand this..."  
"Listen..."  
"Do this..."  
"be patient..."  
"stay with the vision...?"

Who are these  
who welcome me warmly  
on my coming to their place within,  
a place that is no place,  
a kind of home beyond all homes -  
refuge...sanctuary...haven  
on the beach  
in a darkened room or  
a prison cell,  
at a small camp fire,  
on a rock by the stream?

Who are these...  
Dog,  
the wild-eyed shaman with whom I dance,  
Power storming in a cell,  
Anger smashing chairs,  
the witch at her cauldron,  
the beautiful maiden,  
the old nun and silent monk,  
the wise old man,  
the munchkin gardener with one tomato to tend,  
contempt,
the menacing men,  
the youth with the knife,  
the chieftain,  
the man emerging from the smoke,  
the voice,  
she who takes the feminine of my name,  
my own back spewing the anger over things held in too many years,  
a mob of boys whose ages tell the story of wounds past,  
a Christ  
whose unchristly ways  
offer me strange consolation and  
leave me in silent wonderment,  

these and many others,  
the “other” within,  
a family unknown before their appearings,  
surprising familiars,  
who are these?  

Who are these,  
and because they are these,  

Who am I?  

These are they, the unexpected,  
who surprise me with their comings and  
who leave well-being, contentment,  
insight and peace in their goings.  

These are they,  
who expand my sense of self,  
who enrich me with variety, complexity,  
   opposition, even conflicting points of view,  
who insist that differing perspectives,  
ambivalent responses and  
passionate struggles are preferred  
to the boredom of the singular.  

These are they  
who come to teach, challenge, guide, enlighten,  
who cultivate dialogue and mutuality between us,  
who strive for negotiation, reconciliation,  
   a deep harmony in me,  
   a working family in which we all get a hearing.  

These are they
who speak truth,
  truths tailored for my soul -
  "All is one is essence"
  "get back to the earth"
  "live from your soul!"
  "you have much deep truth in you" -
truths that are not unique,
  but that become mine.

These are they
who feel outside my sense of control
who come as gifts themselves yet
who counsel hard work and gritty effort.

These are they
  my denied, my lost, my forgotten, my never known,
  my family who with me compose
  a self of astonishing satisfaction.

These are they
who are committed to truth in the inward places,
who speak the honest word to liberate and to heal.

These are they,
  fringe dwellers,
  liminal, transgressive,
  breaking boundaries, crossing borders,
  by outer standards unconventional, strange and lawless,
  these are they who affirm the truth from within,
  who demand fidelity to the ways of the soul.

These are they, and
  because they are these,

  I am who I am.

Second Depiction - George

The first word which describes the essence of my experience of active imagination is 'intimate.' It is a deeply personal experience, very individual; it feels tailored for me. Various qualities contribute to this
intimacy. It includes a sense of being known, well known from within, and yet accepted as I am. There seems to be no need for shame or apology, except as they contribute to moving forward in the discovery of myself. It invites, indeed requires, a kind of blunt honesty, truth telling, in the interactions. The people within tend to speak their minds; we are sometimes blunt and rude. There is little concern here for the well-turned phrase. Yet in all this there is a sense that the "others" who come from within are deeply committed to the enterprise of this life. Even in the midst of conflict, there is an overriding sense of concern for the well being of my life - of me. I have advocates, ones within, on my side. For all the conflicts I have endured, there is a deep sense of energies pulling together, of cohering into a larger whole.

The intimacy includes as well an expanded sense of self, and provides a way for me to cope with the diversity that I discover within me. A net result of this process is that I have a stronger sense of self, a deep sense of "I am"; but I do not have a singular sense of self. I am made up of many voices, opinions and attitudes. I am noble, I am wretched; I am weak, I am strong; I am selfish, I am caring; I am fearful, I am courageous; I am old, I am young; I am masculine, I am feminine; I am wounded, I am well.

As a result of these experiences, I have settled on the image of a village to explain myself to myself. In my village there are as many houses as needed, gathered in a loose configuration of a circle, all facing in to the
centre. In the centre is a large tree providing shade, and a place to gather for the working out of life. We do our best to live together in harmony in the Village of Trippe. Even the violent, the angry, and the wounded have places in the inner village. In our interactions it is agreed that I, George, am responsible for our corporate expression into the outside realm of reality.

The intimacy includes a sense of love. It sounds trite, but love seems to be the essence of the entire enterprise. The dialogues have been about coming to know people within who were previously denied or hidden away, and ones who were never before known. Often names reflect qualities like Power, Anger, or Thirteen. Some come from the dreams, others from outside suggestions, but the thrust in the enterprise is to make room within for those who come or are discovered. The task is to make room, to honour them, to listen to other points of view, and to begin to care for each other. It is to make civil war cease, to “make enemies friends” as Jung says (1954b/1970, para. 146).

With such a focus, this intimacy includes healing. Power was the first. He was locked in a cage deep within. In risking engaging Power and listening to him, his positive side was revealed and his positive contributions to our life began to take shape. (Dog 1:2) Anger, too, was locked away. After several attempts at hearing each other, I could leave his cell unlocked, and his positive contribution to our life began to emerge. (Dog 6:6) The
healing includes recognition, acceptance, honouring, listening to the other point of view, reconciliation, valuing, learning to love. With simple attention and care the skinless infant grew skin, and became a happy child in the nursery (Wise Old Man 22:49 and 23:100).

The second characteristic of active imagination is that it is a journey of self discovery. It is an adventure, one that can be both exciting and frightening. Each time I centre down and travel in to the inner place, I risk an experience of surprises. The process challenges me to suspend the rational, critical aspect of consciousness and to give way to the imaginative process. In this I allow the images to take form and to speak. In a sense I suspend control, and risk a spontaneous, creative process which seems to have a life of its own. It is a journey which requires courage and trust. At times I have been terrified, at others challenged, and at others surprised. My first encounters with Power (Dog 1) and Anger (Dog 6) were terrifying, while the discovery of the sleeping infant was an experience of great excitement (Dog 5). The discovery of the adolescent chained to the wall in a deep place left me shocked beyond speech (Dog 10). Many encounters with the Christ on the beach were times of great joy (Dog 9, 11, 13).

The essence of this journey of self discovery is that of coming to myself. This sense of things is heightened by the image of being home when I am with my inner family. "You are home in the deepest sense. We are your family in the deepest sense of the word" (Dog 9:2). It involves learning
the vastness of my inner places, and engaging a variety of characters, most
of whom speak truths and offer insights that challenge my sense of self.
Both insights and imperatives abound in these dialogues. Some are
perspectives on issues that seem new to my conscious awareness, others
are commonly held notions that seem to become more deeply mine in
this inner process.

Using a more traditional word, one of the key functions of this process is
enlightenment. It is usually a contextual experience, that is, the insights
or imperatives that are offered in the inner place, often relate to the
circumstances of the outer reality at the time. While contextual, yet many
apply generally as well. A brief sample of insights and imperatives that
have come to me follows.

Insights

This is the way to your holiness. (Dog 5:2)

Here you can see that all is ultimately one. One life gives life to all.

(Dog 11:4)

Beneath all these people there is the abyss-the void. It is the more real. It

is the No-thing, but it is not nothing. (Dog 14:3)

When are you going to learn that you are not doing this all by yourself?

(Dog 16:5)

Your wounds keep you human, humble and even are often the source of

nourishment for others. (Old Nun 2:1)

Whatever comes will have value if it is born out of the struggle.
(Old Nun 7:2)
There is no protection from uncertainty. (Old Nun 10:1)

Truth doesn't need to be complicated. (Wise Old Man 1:66)

You belong to the people; you are marked for the people.
(Wise Old Man 9:181)

Ah, much good happens in you—much good through you. Truth is in your soul. (Wise Old Man 13:113)

Do not look for relief, but know that on every side you are surrounded by the angels of God. (Wise Old Man 25:88)

Imperatives
Get back to the earth. (Dog 8:3)

You must understand this. (Dog 10:5)

Continue to listen within to these truths. (Old Nun 3:2)

Stay faithful to your decisions. (Old Nun 4:1)

Be compassionate, obedient to mercy. (Old Nun 5:1)

Do not rush ahead too far. (Old Nun 10:2)

Keep dancing. (Old Nun 11:4)

Blame no one outside. (Wise Old Man 5:113)

Listen deeply; the voices of the gods stir deeply; listen.
(Wise Old Man 12:18)

You must care for yourself; you must care for yourself.
(Wise Old Man 24:113)

Stay with the vision. (Wise Old Man 28:166)
The journey of self discovery includes the idea of learning to rely on truth from within. In all the dialogue series there is the general theme of learning to trust truth from within and allowing a sense of meaning, purpose and vocation to emerge from within me. Dog restates in one place a biblical teaching in affirming that I will only be given what I can bear (Dog 7). In several instances this inner truth is stated in the most unsentimental of terms (Dog 6; Wise Old Man 11, 15, 23). More than once I am challenged to be faithful to this inner truth as it emerges. In the "Wise Old Man" series the shaman and the "Voice" both present truths and insist on my fidelity to them (Wise Old Man 14:131; and 25:87).

The list of imperatives above and this insistence of fidelity to the truths that emerge illustrate the notion of an ethic that has been part of my active imagination experience. In a sense these experiences expect and demand some sort of response. This response is not only in terms of an inner process of thought and reflection but also one of action in my outer reality. Often a variation on a simple imperative comes with an insight: "Do what must be done." A personal ethic for my life has emerged from these experiences.

The essential quality of this ethic is that it is directed from within me. It involves the development of a strong sense of my self out of which I take responsibility for my life and its unfolding directions. It is not developed
in opposition to the collective ethic as much as complementary to it. There is the sense that when the two are in conflict, I am encouraged to choose the individual path. Yet oddly enough, the very sense of myself as a village carries its own sense of the collective. I no longer have the luxury of a singular, simple sense of myself. Decisions about the unfolding character of my life require a sensitive awareness of the needs of the various villagers.

A third essential quality of my active imagination experiences is the sense of "other" that marks the encounters with the various characters. From an objective point of view I understand them as personifications of energies or complexes of my psyche; that is, they are part of the unconscious me. But in the actual experience they seem quite other than me, and often I am surprised by their attitudes and the points of view they present. It is not too strong a statement to say that these characters have an almost revelatory sense about them. Outside time does not diminish this sense of other. I have lived with some of these folk for quite a number of years, and yet they still feel quite outside me, that is, outside my conscious point of view.

This sense of other is deepened by a quality of numinosity that surrounds these characters. They seem sacred, holy, not in some pious sense, but in the sense of coming for sacred purpose, beyond the control of my consciousness, demanding attention, response, and change in my
perceptions of myself to include them. They are a compelling lot, these characters, and I remain fascinated with them long after their first appearances.

They seem like gifts I have been given by the larger life of the unconscious. Most have come unbidden; I did not ask most of them to appear. Some arrived through the dream, others emerged when I went in to that place with an issue or concern. I did ask a few to take shape and speak to me. The most notable was my own injured back, which request was answered with an astonishing image and unforgettable encounter which has had a longer term effect on my outer life (Old Nun 12). The "I" in me would not have created these folk, especially the more frightening ones. While I have become more comfortable with the ravings of Power and the ragings of Anger/Passion, I am still somewhat on edge in the presence of the shaman. He has communicated his good will, but he is a demanding character, with little patience or sentiment, and of substantial energy. For him I have some fear and awe, and for all those who have come I hold a great respect, and some reverence. In spite of much conflict and some moments of terror, they have demonstrated their good will and concern for the unfolding of my life. We are in this together.

Since these visitors/villagers come from an other place within, I experience my conscious self, "I," as living in a larger life. I have a sense
of being cared about, cared for, a sense of working together. While, in one sense, I still think of me as "I" in a narrow way, in another way my sense of "I" has been enlarged to include these in the village.

While I have rarely felt out of control in these encounters, I do not feel in control of them or the process. Yet this sense of being not in control does not feel chaotic and dangerous. Since the overall result of the process is one of well being and enlightenment, I tend to trust this mysterious sense of other.

The fourth quality of these active imagination experiences is that they contribute to my personal sense of meaning. In the simplest sense this has to do with connection. I have a deep sense of belonging with others who are interested in, and part of, my life journey. The image of family, mentioned above, is strong in these experiences. The notion of meaning is supported also by the sense of love that pervades these dialogues. In reference to those I have met, I experience myself as living in a larger world of love and care. In the midst of my experiences of enlightenment I am continually encouraged, affirmed, valued, honoured. These experiences have confirmed to my conscious mind, through images, the notion of carrying the God within. With this inner experience comes a certain dignity, and a sense of purpose for my life. The exploration of purpose, primarily in the "Dog" and "Old Nun" series, has enhanced and enlarged my self understanding. A specific sense of purpose has been
forged, largely through the “Wise Old Man” series of dialogues. Several of these address the issue of vocation. In dialogue twenty-four, in the presence of the shaman and in dialogue with the Old Man, I affirm: “No matter how I make my money, my vocation has to do with interpreting and assisting people with the inner life, and with God” (Wise Old Man 24:110). While the wording is clumsy, as is often the case in these dialogues, the essential notion provides the core of a vocational statement I later composed, and that informs the way I live my life. As a result of my interaction with these characters in active imagination, my life has a sense of meaning, purpose and dignity. These have all been taken shape from within me with the help of this inner family.

In the course of these dialogues several images have emerged that contribute to an understanding of the overall experience. These images are in addition to the characters who have emerged. These have been mentioned previously, but merit mention here. They are: place, home, family and abyss. The notion of place has varied in the three series. In the “Dog” series the sense of place is well defined and quite specific. It involves the house of the original dream, and circular stone stairs down below the house, the first level where most of the characters were found, the beach, and the subsequent levels below that along the side of the abyss. In the “Old Nun” and “Wise Old Man” series the notion of place is a sense of being with these host figures and the others who emerge. In several instances in the “Wise Old Man” series there was a circular stone seating
area around a fire at which we sat to talk. The dominant sense of place that emerges is a more psychic location, and has become a place to go to talk out issues at hand. Over the time, in spite of it having no visual characteristics, it became a place of substantial significance.

The images of home and family develop early in the “Dog” series. The quote recorded earlier and taken from the dialogue of Dog 9, affirms both images. “You are home in the deepest sense. We are your family in the deepest sense of the word” (Dog 9:2). The quality of both of these images deepened across the course of these dialogues, and has continued. Out of this work, I have a deep sense of being home in myself, and feeling that my inner village represents a family deeply committed to my life.

The abyss appears in the “Dog” series, and highlights the teaching nature of the dialogues. The image first appears in Dog 11, and I encounter it at three levels during the course of these dialogues. The abyss is the Nothing that is not nothing. It seems empty, it is boundless, bottomless and without form, yet the abyss teems with life. At the top of the abyss are tube-like protrusions, through which life moves up from the abyss into life as we know it. Moving up through the tube-like protrusions, the essential life energy is changed by humanity. For us, therefore, the life energy will look quite different in its various final manifestations. Christ explains the image.

Here ... you can see that all is ultimately one. One life gives
life to all. Each aspect of life appears different for as life flows through it man must mould it and adjust it to a particular image or shape. In so doing often the flow of the life is constricted or almost cut off. But all is one in essence (Dog 11:4).

Further down the abyss there is an amphitheatre with seats for only several at a time. Down yet further is a bridge “across” the abyss on which there is a seat for only one at a time. Christ took me to both of these places. To sit in the solitary seat I had to leave him behind. This image, first encountered in 1980, continues to have a deep impact on me.

It would be an extensive exercise to sketch all the characters who have appeared in these three series. In general they have often been surprising, sometimes violent and demanding, not infrequently rude and anti-social, and now and then quite frightening. Above all they have spoken honestly, and have been open to working with me if I have been willing to pick up the task. They would ruin most parties, but they are my friends who I have come to value deeply.

These two depictions, the poetic and the narrative, together give some insight into the essence and nature of my experience of active imagination.
Figure 6. “Place” in the Dog Series (Dog, 11:6)
Summary and depiction - Campbell

Introduction

As I indicated in chapter two, Campbell was in his early forties at the time of these dialogues. He begins this series in response to problems with his stomach and colon. There are twenty-nine dialogues in this series. In this material there are also some interlude entries of dreams, and dialogues related specifically to those dreams. The text is thirty-four typewritten pages, beginning with page two. A diagram map follows diagram eight on page eleven. The diagram is reproduced at the end of the summary description of the dialogues. The dialogues cover a four month period. There are eighteen characters including Campbell. Campbell acknowledges the influence of Tolkein's writings on some of his characters and imagery.

The characters are listed here. The dialogue and page number that are shown after their names indicate when they first appear in the dialogues. This numerical referencing style is used throughout Campbell's material. References to the tapes are clearly indicated as such, and contain numerical references which refer to the tape number and the side of the tape.

Campbell: (1:2)
Tom Bombadil: (1:2) who becomes Keeper (22:23)
Stum: who first appears as Pot Belly, Fat Gut, and Fatty Jumplin (1:2)
Col: who at the outset is named Elephant Man and Colon Man (1:2)
Smacker: also called African (1:3)
Jesus: later also named Older Brother Jesus (2:4)
Grey Face: first seen as a red-indian singer (3:5)
Zelda: (5:6)
Daughter: also called grown daughter (5:6)
Boy Campbell (BCB): who first appears as Crippled Boy;
also called Boy (5:7)
Man 1: also named Dick (5:7)
Man 2: also named Harry (5:7)
Nurse: (6:9)
River Man’s Daughter: (8:10)
Father: who initially is identified as Grey Hair (14:15)
Commander: (16:17)
Under: Who first appears as a Shabby Old Man (18:19)
Engineer: (19:20)

Summary - Campbell

Campbell begins the first dialogue by asking his stomach and colon to “assume human form so that we can talk” (1:2). The first to appear is his stomach, Pot Belly, who “can’t stop jumping around” (1:2). Then Campbell sees a “grey slimy vegetative looking thing .... It looks like an elephant man with huge growths all over it and things like slimy grey tree roots hanging from it and trailing on the ground” (1:2). This is his colon, known at first as Elephant Man. Campbell acknowledges the mess these two are in, then he hears some whistling.

Along comes a very bright chap who strides along in yellow britches with long brown boots and blue top with a coloured feather in his bright yellow hat. He is sturdily built, not tall, striding with hearty humour and inner purposefullness. He is completely at home in the deep forest we are in. (1:2)

It is Tom Bombadil. Campbell calls for help, and Tom comes over to them. He assesses the situation and whistles a tune that seems to help the Elephant Man. He then invites the three to his cottage where he lives
Tom moves off at a good stride. The others have trouble keeping up and Campbell calls to Tom for help. Tom calls out encouragement and keeps on, Campbell comes along behind with Colon Man and Fatty Jumpkin.

Campbell then asks Tom to show him the healing songs for these two.

Tom demonstrates what to do.

He begins to whistle and I see that I and he start to move into a different dimension in which Colon Man is young and fresh and bright and full of health. It is like going into a mind trip. The healing flows from the perception. I need to act and sing out of this bright way of seeing the world. It is Tom’s way of healing the world to what it was and what it might become again. I see Colon Man as pink and healthy and then as a young man dressed in red britches and happy. I hear Tom singing a little song that goes up and down and rambles along - it is a healing song for Colon Man. It is not so much a meditative song but rather a young health song of agile movement. It is as if the slime and long root shaped things hanging off of Colon Mand [sic] drop off or disappear to reveal this healthy fellow underneath. He is like a European walker with a Swiss or Austrian old fashioned leather hat with feather in it. His name is Col. (1:3)

A similar ritual is provided for Fatty Jumpkin. Campbell notes as Tom sings: “I slip into seeing in the new dimension and see Fatty Jumpkin as a young stong [sic] youth with perfectly formed stomach muscles” (1:3).
Like Col, Fatty Jumpkin also receives a new name; he now becomes Sturn.

Campbell then asks his "gums to assume human form so we can heal and talk" (1:3). A young African with large lips and protruding, bleeding gums appears. He is Smacker and he seeks healing. Campbell calls Tom who returns singing. He begins the healing song for Smacker. Campbell reflects: "I put my hand to my mouth and hummm Tom's song and 'see' healthy gums growing into the receded areas" (1:3). As this happens, Smacker encourages Campbell to pay attention to Tom. "He was here before the forest came and he'll be here when we're all gone" (1:3). Campbell responds: "I will smack and grind you no more Smacker. (to Sturn) I will pump you up no more in the way I eat. (to Col) I will not allow myself to get stressed or worried and thus affect the rhythmic [sic] muscle contractions in my colon" (1:3-4).

Tom then invites all to the cottage. Smacker chooses to return to the forest. Col and Sturn join Campbell on the way to Tom's cottage. Tom leads the way.

Three weeks later Campbell takes up the second dialogue. He is in the forest with Col and Sturn. Tom is off at his cottage. Campbell reflects: "I want to go there and be safe and secure like a boy in a home of refuge and safety yet with adventure" (2:4). Campbell then experiences a cottage like Tom's with a figure like Tom who changes to become "more like a creepy
spook with a witch wife. I am scared. I cry out to Tom for help. He comes a-whistling and as he whistles the spook cottage becomes thinner and more insubstantial” (2:4). Then, as they talk, Campbell confesses to wanting to be more like Tom and Tom talks about who he is. Campbell calls on Christ Jesus to join them; he “walks in wearing a white robe and smiling - shining” (2:4). Campbell asks if this is all okay.

I mean, do you bless this or is this stuff far from you. Jesus: This is in you Campbell and I love you. I know old Tom - some call him Father Earth and the River Man’s daughter is known by some by the name of Mother Sky. He is created. [...] Learn more Campbell - this is your call. You will use all this to be a healer for me. Yes - this is all OK. (2:4).

Campbell then asks about a meeting place for these his inner characters. Jesus encourages him to stay with Tom for a while. He then reports that others from former inner work are well, and he encourages him to learn the songs from Tom. Jesus departs “in a cloud of golden mist” (2:5). Campbell, Col and Stum return to Tom’s cottage to sleep.

The next dialogue is brief. In the morning at Tom’s they meet a tall, grey man in the kitchen who “looks like a red-indian singer” (3:5). He sings and as Campbell listens he reflects that he “should be able to learn some songs from this fellow” (3:5).

The story continues in the fourth dialogue at Tom’s house with Grey Face, the red-indian, singing songs of creation and beginning. Tom says:
Hullo me boys. I hope your [sic] listening to old Grey Face here. He knows some songs he does. I know the songs of the trees, plants, the land animals, the birds and creatures - even some of the hills and stars and the moon. He knows the beginnings even before the earth. He knows the empty greyness. (4:5)

As Tom indicates it is time to go meet the River Man’s Daughter, Campbell indicates that he’d like to hear more songs and learn some. Grey Face responds: “If you are serious you can learn. If you make time you can learn. Are you serious? Will you make time” (4:6)? Campbell indicates that he wants time to think and pray about it. Tom and Grey Face then talk briefly.

Grey Face: All things pass Tom - there will be a time of empty greyness again.
Tom: Aye but it will be changed Grey Face. All living things grow or whither [sic] and we too have been given our form of life. Did you not hear and feel the presence of the glory close, so close. He talked to them and blessed us. Did he not bless you Grey Face?
Grey Face: I felt his glory close and was blessed. That is why I came. Will he learn Tom?
Tom: We must wait in hope and love. (4:6)

Grey Face then leaves.

Dialogue five departs from this story and is in response to a dream. In the dream there are 2 women and 2 men. There is violence, shooting, by these four at Campbell. In a room Campbell senses a “dark shadow behind me - to the left” (5:6). In the dialogue Campbell makes peace with the women and men, and then seeks to connect with the shadow.

Campbell: I would like to talk. I will wait and if it is OK with
you we can talk. Can you come out to the front?
(I wait. I am aware of a sort of small character in the shadow. I sense some fear. Out of the shadow comes a twisted paralysed wreck of a young adolescent boy. He is on a hospital trolley or a wheelchair. He is like half dead. Some parts of him are like a skeleton sticking out. I can see a skull. He is purple coloured in parts. He has kind of cerebral [sic] palsy. He comes out quickly. I am appalled. I don't even want to look at him. I force myself to look at him.) (5:7)

Campbell talks to the boy but he won't answer. He then sets a time to visit again, the boy nods agreement and darts back into the shadow. Campbell ends saying, "I am amazed at how well such a wreck of a human can get around" (5:7).

At the appointed time, Campbell returns. He has trouble settling into the process, but when he does the boy appears quickly. "He seems over-efficient and over-business-like and competent but cold" (6:7). Campbell asks the boy his name, but is distracted and the boy is silent. Campbell tries again.

(I image the crippled boy coming from behind me again and I can see his skeleton face and mess of a body. I feel repulsed and sad. I bend down near to him. He smells of a hospital type old people's home smell. His skin is very pale and sickly blue. I get down close and look into his face. I reach out to touch him on the hand which is cool and limp.)

Campbell: I really need to know you better. I am sorry that I have run away or ignored you in the past. Please forgive me. (6:8)

The boy finally speaks: "Pray for me like Tom Bombadil showed you" (6:8).

Campbell enters into a prayer experience including a singing for the boy
after the manner of Tom Bombadil. "I see a look of baby-like health in his eyes and face. It does not seem now like a skeleton. He is still on the hospital trolley and his body is still a misshapen wreck" (6:8). In the midst of a moving moment the boy departs quickly. Campbell is concerned about his care. He follows him through the door and sees that he is in a hospital corridor. A nurse shows him the boy's room. He tries again to talk but the boy won't. After speaking with the nurse and arranging to return, Campbell leaves.

The next day Campbell takes up the task again. He goes to the hospital to visit the boy. "I go to the room. I see the boy sitting up in the bed. He doesn't look crippled any more. He looks OK. He is looking well and even happy" (7:9). Campbell and the boy now talk, though the boy still refuses to give his name. Campbell understands his hesitancy and asks how he is feeling. "I feel good just now. I don't know why they are keeping me in this hospital" (7:9). When Campbell pursues the idea of his going home, it turns out that he means Campbell's boyhood home. This causes Campbell some fear, to which the boy responds, "I see that you don't understand" (7:9).

The boy affirms that he was healed "when you prayed like Tom Bombadil showed you" (7:9). When asked if he would like to meet Tom, the boy responds, "For sure" (7:10). Campbell offers a prayer and then leaves.
The eighth dialogue begins with Tom who announces that it is time to meet River Man's Daughter. Campbell asks Tom if he will go to see the boy with him, but Tom asks Campbell to bring the boy to him. This seems a significant undertaking to which Campbell agrees. They then start off to Tom's cottage accompanied by Stum and Col. Soon they see her.

We go out to a small grassy knoll at the rise to the side of the house. River Man's daughter is standing there. She is dressed in a long blue cape gown with hood down. Her hair is black brown and her skin is fair. She looks kind and soft and accepting as she looks on us approaching with a patient kind smile. (8:10)

After exchanging greetings Campbell tells her that they are going to bring the crippled boy. She responds warmly and ends saying, "Go with my blessing and my love and my care" (8:10). With Tom's help and encouragement the three pack up to travel to the hospital; they then begin their journey.

The next dialogue begins with a dilemma for Campbell. He has promised this night to see the boy, but to do so means that he must leave Stum and Col on the journey. A part of the dilemma in the deliberation is that Campbell can move in an instant over vast distances and time in his thought, but if he does so, he remains thin and insubstantial. If he travels at the same rate as the others, he becomes more real and substantial. After prayer and deliberation it is agreed that Campbell must keep his promise to the boy and go alone to the hospital room. The visit is brief. Campbell tells the boy that soon he will return with Col and Stum to take him to
Tom's cottage. The boy is very pleased. They share a prayer before Campbell leaves.

As agreed, Campbell then re-joins Stum and Col. The three make a campsite "near a rock overhang" (10:12). They make their meal and prepare to bed down for the night. As they settle down, they talk of their own healing. Stum comments that the long journey to the boy is a sign of Campbell's serious intent to live in a new way. Col responds:

It is still early days yet Stum. Campbell has spent thirty years getting us into the state we were in before Tom sang to us. We must remember that in a way Tom's song has freed us but still not completed the healing. I sense as if we are a picture of what might be in the future - Campbell's colon and stomach are still playing up and he is still living wrongly. We may still be left in the Old Forest as Fatty Jumpkin and Elephant Man.

Campbell: Yes, there is always that chance. I realize that I have not understood how to allow the deeper energies of Campbell to blossom and bear fruit in this life. This journey to take Crippled Boy to Tom Bombadil is a sort of acceptance and willingness to work with all parts of this creation. All of this around us, all the people and creatures are a creation which makes up Campbell. It is a consistent [sic] creation. (10:12)

Stum takes first watch; Col and Campbell fall to sleep.

Campbell continues on the journey in the next dialogue; soon they arrive at the hospital. The three make their way to the boy's room. "Boy is sitting on the bed dressed. He has a knapsack packed near him. He is dressed in a red cap. He has purple trousers on and white sneakers" (12:13). Campbell is quite impressed with how well he looks. He
introduces Stum and Col, and then they inquire into the processes of signing the Boy out of the hospital. At this point Campbell needs to learn his name.

Campbell: Can you tell me your name now Boy?
Boy: Haven't you guessed by now?
Campbell: I don't really know you're [sic] name - maybe it is Campbell [...] or Campbell junior.
Boy: Yes my name is Campbell like your's [sic]. Can we be friends?
Campbell: Sure - I'd really like that. (12:13)

The necessary forms are signed and the four leave the hospital. Campbell reflects: "I feel good. We are all happy and I feel in good company. I feel that we have achieved something important. We walk along the track retracing our steps to the Old Forest" (12:13).

In the next dialogue the four continue along the track. At one place they stop for a rest. While eating their snacks they each tell Boy Campbell and each other a little bit about themselves. Campbell notes in a reflection that Boy Campbell is about ten years old. After walking further they make a night camp along the river.

In the next encounter they come to Tom's house. It has been a good walk, "uneventful and refreshing. We have got to know each other better" (14:14). As they approach the house they are greeted by someone new who at first looks like Tom. It is Grey Hair, also called Father. Here the
imagery from the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son\textsuperscript{13} becomes influential. Campbell introduces Father to the others, and Campbell invites him along to Tom's house. Tom appears from behind the house and greets them all. All go inside and the four go to the sleep-out to wash up. They have a meal together, then Father and elder brother leave. Campbell learns that after Boy Campbell is settled and he learns more songs, that he is to live next to the University and near Tom. It is a happy homecoming.

The next dialogue finds everyone at Tom's cottage seated around the dining room table. It has been arranged for Boy Campbell to stay with Tom and River Man's daughter. Campbell tells the others of his recent dream of the sink hole and the British and French troops. Tom says that I may need to go down to investigate the sink hole and the French and British soldiers. He says that he hasn't been down that part of middle lands for a while and offers to come with me. He wants to drop in on Grey Face on the way to introduce Boy Campbell. Boy Campbell is excited and wants to come. Stum and Col offer to go with us. (15:16)

Campbell relates another recent dream, after which they share a meal and then head off to bed. In the morning, after breakfast, Campbell, Tom, Boy Campbell, Stum and Col head off for the sink hole on the beach.

In the next dialogue the group arrives at the beach and finds the sink hole.

\textsuperscript{13} The parable is in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15:11-32.
Campbell notes that it has a "little stone wall around the sinkhole on the beach" (16:17). Also

there is a merry little stockade with a kind of log cabin village inside with little houses and chimneys and smoke and women and children. It is open so we go in and up to the central house. We knock and enter to find the commander. (16:17)

After introductions, Commander takes them to the sink hole. "The sinkhole is about the size of a manhole and yellow slimy stuff seems to be in it. We all look down. We ask questions about what's happened but the commander says nothing. We ask him to place two men on a full time watch" (16:17). The group all goes back to the village for dinner and the night.

At breakfast the next morning Campbell tells of his dream, and then the group discusses the need for earthworks at the sink hole. They decide to get the engineer and to go to the sink hole to talk it over.

In the next dialogue Campbell talks with the group about the sink hole. Boy Campbell suggests that Campbell sings to the hole as he did for him, but Campbell responds: "I guess I'm a bit uneasy about singing because I don't know how to sing except to a person" (18:18). Boy Campbell suggests that they ask the sink hole to become a person, and, after deliberations, this they do. Campbell speaks for the group.

We are here to call on you sinkhole. We ask you to assume human form so that we may be helped and perhaps that you
may be helped. We wait for you.
(There seems to arise a yellow large misty shape from the
hole. In it are visions of crocodile jaws snapping. The
sinkhole seems like a boil or a pimple or cyst full of pus.
There is a shabby old man next to the sinkhole inside the
wall.) (18:19)

The old man identifies himself as Under, as he has to do with that which
is under the surface. He is the spook who appeared in the ghost cottage
earlier on. As Under talks to the boy, Campbell notes that his appearance
has already begun “to change and look more golden - more like Gandulf”
(18:19). Introductions are made all around, then they go up to
Commander’s log house to talk things over.

In the next brief dialogue the engineer comes to Commander’s house and
they all sit around to discuss the sinkhole. Boy Campbell still wants
someone to sing to the hole. Campbell agrees and they all return to the
sinkhole.

In the next encounter Campbell begins by raising Boy Campbell’s idea
again.

Boy Campbell wants us to sing to the sea. I have also been
thinking that I would like to consider using holistic or
natural energy systems engineering to solve the sinkhole
problem. What do you think engineer?
Engineer: I am interested in this but I have not had any
experience.
Campbell: We need help here. Should we sing now? Has
anyone experience or knowledge or insights about a natural,
holistic, ecologically suitable way to link the sinkhole to the
ocean? I would value hearing your comment.
Under: I have knowledge and experience. I know the songs.
But I would like to know one thing before I share this with you. That is - are you serious Campbell? You talk about natural, holistic, ecologically sustainable ways but are you seriously willing to change your personal ways? How important is it for you to clean and link the sinkhole to the ocean in a sustainable way? Are you serious in changing your habitual patterns of thought and action? Are you serious in changing your goals and vision? Are you willing to commit yourself to this way? Is this just a fad? If I am to teach you and the boy from the depths of my being I need to know this. I am serious - are you? (20:20)

Campbell acknowledges the issue raised by Under and decides to take time to think it through. Before concluding this dialogue, Campbell places this task in the context of the demands of his outer life. They then return to the Commander's house; Campbell is excited about the ideas.

Before the next dialogue Campbell records in the text six dreams. In the dialogue Campbell decides to ask Col and Stum what they think of Under's challenge. They commit to the process whatever the cost, since they have experienced healing through this work. In approaching Tom, Campbell observes: "I need the healing, both psychological and physical, that could come from here. I'm sure that Under's song could heal me of some septic wound in my psyche. I do want to be serious" (22:23). In his response Tom begins on a different subject.

Campbell, you call me Tom and I have allowed you to call me that. The others have taken the name too. Now you should call me Keeper. I am the Keeper of the Old Forest - which includes your body. You can think of me as Tolkien's Tom Bombadil but I am more than a character in a story. (22:23)
Keeper then pledges his support to the project, as much as he'd like to get back to the forest. There next follows a dream and a reflection on it.

In the next dialogue Campbell talks to Boy Campbell about the challenge of Under to be serious. Boy Campbell responds with enthusiasm:

I think that it's great. You'll get more serious and Under will teach us the songs of the sea and of the under lands just as Tom showed you the songs to heal the parts of the body in the Old Forrest [sic]. I want to learn. I want to be a healer and a keeper and to know the songs of the sea and land and sky. (23:25)

Boy Campbell tries to ease Campbell's anxiety about his commitments in the outer world by offering to be the learner in the inner place of the middle lands. He sees them as a working team. Campbell is pleased with this, then indicates that he feels Under's challenge has to do with his outer life as well. "I have a sense that Under is calling me to be serious about this journey in another way also. I think he wants me to be serious about learning the songs and using them in the outer world to contribute and serve and heal others" (23:25).

In his next dialogue Campbell seeks the opinions of Commander and Engineer. Both are supportive of the challenge in the interests of seeing how this problem of the sinkhole can be resolved. Campbell then talks again with Under and commits himself to continue to be serious about this endeavour knowing that such a serious commitment may well change or reshape aspects of his outer journey. There follows another
interval with dreams.

In the next dialogue, number twenty-six, Campbell meets with everyone at Commander's house around the table. Some speak up and support his serious intent, and then Campbell says, "I have decided to committ [sic] myself to the level of seriousness that Under indicates is necessary" (26:31). All agree to meet in two hours at the sinkhole for the singing.

As they all gather at the sink hole Campbell leads a prayer, and then Under speaks: "I will sing. Tom can join in with what he can. Boy Campbell - listen carefully and learn and remember. Be aware that as the sinkhole changes I will change with it. I do not know what will be the result. It is my sacrifice" (27:34). Under "looks to the sinkhole and then to the ocean" (28:34), and then begins to sing.

Ya ya ya ya ya ya ya ya ya ya........
Heal-ing oh heal-ing, heal-ing oh oh heal-ing............
Clar-ity oh oh clar-ity yyyy............... 
Rain- ing oh oh rain-ing....................
Flow-ing oh oh flow-ing.........................
Crystal clear oh oh crystal-clear......................
Thoughts of water flowing, raining, water flowing......................
It begins to rain and I envisage flowing water under the ground moving in ecosystems. The dirty, puss coloured, putrid smelly sinkhole begins to clear in the rain and then becomes crystal clear water. I see that it is artificial with concrete-bag circular construction. I look down and see a skeleton at the bottom. It is then empty of water. I go down the bagged concrete walls and pick up the skeleton. It has a skull and dagger phantom type silver ring. I take the skeleton over my shoulder and up and lay in [sic] down on the sand. We take the skeleton and ring up to the village graveyard and create a proper grave and have a proper burial service. Under is now silver in colour and looks august with
The group decides that the well is dangerous and needs to be filled in. Before that Campbell checks the well again and finds a pocket knife which he gives to Boy Campbell. "Before the soldiers start filling the hole in we gather around and pray for the situation and for the people who created the hole and the person who died" (27:34).

The group goes back to Commander's house. Plans are made to return to the forest and to Keeper's house. Under decides to come along and they leave the next morning. They arrive there and are greeted by River Man's Daughter and the two daughters. After a wash and a meal they bed down again in the sleepout. Campbell drifts into a delightful sleep listening to the sounds of the forest.

In a final dialogue Campbell returns to the grave of the skeleton with Jesus. He asks who it was and is told it was his father, and that he need not know this part of his story. Campbell asks: "Do I need to learn anything more form [sic] this? Jesus: It is enough for now. All will be well in good time" (29:35). Campbell returns to Keeper's cottage in the forest.

none of the old man shabbiness. (27:34)
Figure 7. Diagram map following dialogue 8, page 11.

Depiction - Campbell

This depiction is drawn from taped interviews with Campbell concerning his active imagination experience. We met for three conversations, each about one hour long.

In the first conversation Campbell described his actual process of doing the "Tom Bombadil" series of active imagination dialogues. He did this work during the time he was working on his PhD. Usually he engaged in the dialogues late in the evening. At first he wrote them out, but then he
transferred the material to computer and then typed the dialogues into the computer. He prepared for the dialogues by sitting on the floor in a semi-lotus position. Usually he would breathe deeply for a few moments and sometimes he began with a prayer. At other times he slipped quite easily into the process. Overall he found it easy to enter the experience. The actual time spent in the dialogues varied from about twenty to forty minutes. To end the experience, often he offered a short prayer, packed away the computer and sometimes did a few simple exercises. He noted that he rarely went back over the material.

In his reflection on his experience, Campbell recognised that he felt ambivalent. After the second taping he used the expression of "being of two minds." As we talked we focussed mainly on his experiences in the series summarised above. At the time of the interviews this material was three years old. Campbell indicated that he has recently had active imagination experiences that differ markedly in quality and style from those first experiences. The satisfaction with these recent experiences has led Campbell to question the earlier ones to some degree. The earlier experiences now seem more forced. He experienced himself as "quite jumpy, forcing the issue, at times intellectually shaping the direction of the sequence" (tape 1:1). He sees that he was "definitely not relaxed" (tape 1:1), more task oriented, frenetic, and forcing characters to keep it going. In his present experience he is more at ease and relaxed.

I don't want to force it or create a story out of my own energy
or intellect, just see what happens, and if nothing happens it's fine...just be there - making time to be in that inner world ... spend lived time there rather than just rushing in trying to get something and rushing out (tape 1:1).

Also, Campbell found the series style of active imagination less intense than doing a one off imaginal dialogue immediately after a dream. When he had an intense or scary dream, Campbell would often do an active imagination dialogue with the central character to bring things to a resolution. Usually these would be more intense, emotional experiences than the Tom Bombadil series, and this issue of emotional intensity seems to contribute to Campbell’s ambivalent feelings about the series material.

In the third interview, Campbell struck on the notion of cycles. “I think there’s cycles for me. During this time I took it very seriously. I did a lot of inner work and that was an important part of my life. Now it’s not so important. It was vital and central to me when doing it” (tape 3:1). We talked about cycles, rhythms like the tides of the sea, and times for assimilation of insights. This led Campbell on to reflect further on this ambivalence. “And I find that sometimes when I’m in that process I react against it, at least my conscious mind does” (tape 3:1). Campbell went on to reflect on an ornery side of himself. “It could just be an ornery part of myself. You see, I could be thinking that George is trying to prove that active imagination is like religious experience; I’ll blow him up, I’m gonna white ant his jolly thing” (tape 3:1). This ornery part “somehow reacts against ideas of people” (tape 3:1). In a more general way Campbell
realised that this response also would be influenced by the rational bias of our culture. Sometimes it is difficult to give credence to such imaginal work, even if it is one's own.

In spite of this general ambivalence toward the material, Campbell identified several positive qualities of the active imagination experience. I have grouped these under two headings: 1) it was a challenging experience and 2) it was a transformative process.

Campbell has been challenged in several ways by the active imagination experience. First, he felt challenged to be committed to the series process. He was challenged to stick with something for a while rather than to jump from thing to thing. In one instance he referred to this as settling down to an inner work (tape 1:1). The discipline of doing a series was a challenge as he didn't want always to go back to the material. He talks of learning to become steady in a process.

To, as it were, stop jumping from scene to scene, or person to person, or... and to just to try to concentrate on the journey, the details of the journey with Stum and Col, and to try to get to know them better, as it were, then the boy along there.. to settle into it (tape 2:1).

Along with this challenge of commitment was that of being serious about the work. He referred to the challenge of Grey Face in dialogue 4:5-6, about being serious in order to learn some of the songs. The challenge of commitment also became important when he signed Boy Campbell out of
the hospital. He was “making a commitment to do something for the boy which would affect my outer life” (Tape 1:2).

Campbell felt challenged to engage images that were frightening. He felt quite confronted by the image of Boy Campbell when he first emerged through the dream. This was “quite emotional, this has a pull, an emotion on me, scary, I was weeping, crying at one point, quite a number of points following the dream” (tape 2:1). His first response to Boy Campbell included “shock and repulsion ... fear; I felt afraid. I then got to know him and that was overcoming some of that” (tape 3:1). He was also frightened, in dialogue 2:4, by the creepy spook and witchy wife who appeared in a cottage like Tom’s. A general sense of anxiety about the process led Campbell in the dialogues to seek guidance from the Christ figure. He speaks of Christ as

a steadying and calming figure of grace and constancy that I read in the gospels ... trying to make that come into the story, like I’d say a little prayer - is this okay? ... It was reassuring, a checking with something and there’s a calmness that comes about (tape 2:1).

Part of the challenge for Campbell has been to see himself more deeply as part of a larger life. While he sees a certain forced and intellectual attitude in the active imagination series, he also affirms that the story took on a life of its own in which he then, as ego consciousness, participated. It is being part of a story that rolls along of its own accord, bringing up material out of the dynamic of the story as it rolls along. So the figures, the past, the events, actually create a story which rolls along and I am part of that ... I’m entering
another way in which I live ... I'm not above it, I am part of that story, my ego's part of that story. I've created a story, but then become part of it. The story I've made up has its own dynamic now, and so I'm not alone (tape 1:2).

This very dynamic challenges the attitude of forcing or controlling the story. Campbell is challenged to wait on the process. "The story [...] when the initial characters are made, forms a life of its own because the characters are there, and how they relate goes on and you don't know what's going to happen. So you are waiting" (tape 2:2). Throughout the process of these dialogues Campbell recognises that he was challenged substantially by the experience.

The second general characteristic is that this is, for Campbell, a transformative process. In an initial response as to how this process has changed his life, Campbell identifies four ways. The first has to do with a shift in his understanding of the nature of his Christian faith. "My Christian faith has become far less literalist, more open to understanding major themes and key elements of my Christian faith in terms of the power of, the power of things other than the intellect" (tape 1:2). The second has to do with the unconscious. "I guess I've understood the power more - the power? - the importance, the difference of a strong view of those elements we don't know - which I guess some people call the unconscious - about us, how powerful that is" (tape 1:2).

Thirdly, he recognises that he views humanity differently. "So my
understanding of a model of man, a model of the human being, a model of being human, has changed. However, I still operated from the old model, it's a very slow process” (tape 1:2). At another point he reflects further on this point.

There's the whole idea that there's something much deeper that comes up in stories and daydreams and imaginations and active imaginations, that can communicate with me, that I didn't know was there. It comes up with unusual things, and that I can understand that and relate that to my life” (tape 2:1).

The fourth change affects his understanding of commitment to growth. “It is a long term commitment to nature, commitment to the earth, commitment to your body in a different way than just fixing it up. It's sinking into the reality of the fact that I have a body, and it's not there just to be fixed up. It's got its own message, it has its own story to tell” (tape 1:2).

In addition this dialogic process has changed the way Campbell sees himself. It has resulted in a “broadening of the boundaries of the self” (tape 2:1). This he sees as the “major one” of the changes (tape 2:1). In another comment he remarks that his understanding of who he is has changed a lot, and that “it was the dream that made it change” (tape 2:2). At another point he observes that “obviously I changed enormously,” but related this more to actions he has taken rather than to how he interacts with himself (tape 1:2). In response to this comment I offer him the image of a hearty mob within and he finds that an acceptable way to
imagine the inner characters. He notes that his sense of having "a lot of aspects of myself" is getting stronger and that this is "a definite change, and it's a definite change for the better" (tape 1:2). One notion about this new sense of self that he values is "the idea that at different phases or stages of your life you can actually move over and choose to live out of one side of your life than another, but knowing that you can move back" (tape 2:1).

Another transformative quality has to do with the notion of becoming more steady. In reference to the process, Campbell observes that the series form of active imagination has "a steadiness about it, it steadies the whole process of listening to our dreams, puts it into a more long term perspective, calms you down a bit" (tape 2:2). He also uses this word several times to identify a quality in himself that is emerging in distinction to his jumping from thing to thing.

How do I feel different? I guess I'm more steady for the long run, for the whole process of the human journey. I can appreciate that in mid-life you have your ups and downs, you have your urges and changes, but that will go on and different things happen. So there is a sort of resting in the continuity of life (tape 2:1).

Concerning the notion of rest he goes on to observe that he is more rested in that I will be helped at crucial points, as it were, that things will arise, whether they're dreams, or things will happen, and it's connected to God, of course, but it's the way of viewing God. God will work through a dream, through something that will happen ... so there's a vehicle as it were. I always thought God could do other things through other people, and, of course, guide me. But this is a specific
way that you experience something that is different from myself, I now know about, so I’m more comfortable (tape 2:1).

Another aspect of this transformative process, has to do with a growing sense of inner security. Campbell asserts that “I feel less insecure around people I would have been insecure around before, a bit less” (tape 1:1).

In addition to the changes within himself, Campbell also notes changes in the way he lives his outer life. He remarks that he undertook these dialogues in the Tom Bombadil series when he was in a time of real crisis. It was a groping time for direction with his thesis, in his family and marriage. Campbell notes that his wife and children began to share their dreams openly in the home and that he began to share with others in his Anglican Church congregation. At home he observes that the family seems more able to share feelings and the imaginal side of life. At another time he noted that this led to “new dimensions in our sharing” (tape 2:1).

In reference to his thesis Campbell makes the following comments.

When I was finishing my thesis, writing it up, this whole way of thinking got me to change my whole writing style and scope and became the core of the thesis, a post-modernist writing style, a heuristic writing style looking for essence and depth. [...] The entire structure of my thesis was changed through this whole process ... a dialogical process. I guess you’d have to say that the dialogical process of the inner dialogue became the prototype for the whole dialogical writing style of the thesis (tape 2:1).

Campbell goes on to remark that this experience “led me into an unusual
arena of academia" (tape 2:1).

While Campbell felt ambivalent about his experiences in the Tom Bombadil series of active imagination dialogues, it is clear that the experiences have had a substantial impact on him. Specifically, these interviews reveal the variety of ways in which he found them both challenging and transformative.
Summary and depiction - Helen

Introduction

There are ten dreams and thirteen active imagination dialogues in Helen's material. Most of the dialogues follow a specific dream. There are also two paintings, one large work of some of the characters in the dialogues, and a small work that serves as the menu cover to dialogue six. A poem is also included with dialogue two. The material covers a time of twenty months; there are forty-nine pages of text and most of it is handwritten. The characters are listed here; I have capitalised only those names that appear capitalised in the original texts. The page numbers indicate the page on which each character first appears. In addition to Helen, the characters include:

the Gardener, p. 3
the English choir boy, p. 5
the criminal, p. 11
father, p. 13
E., p. 15
James, p. 16
Hobo, p. 18
Fear, p. 24
child/little girl, p. 29
old lady/grandma, p. 32
W., p. 34
dark child/son/Sun, p. 34
Shaman woman/Drenda, p. 39
the people of the psyche listed in both dialogues three, ppgs 10-12, and twelve, ppgs. 42-45.
As I indicated in chapter two, these dialogues took place in Helen's inner work nine to eight years before this research project. In this text the parenthetical references are to the pages in the original material.

Summary - Helen

The first dialogue is a brief exchange with a Gardener. The starting point is a dream in which the Gardener saves some special bulbs for Helen to plant "when the semester started" (p.3). In the dialogue Helen acknowledges that she has met the gardener before and that he seems "to be looking after my welfare" (p. 4). She also asks for help in learning the best time to plant the bulbs, which she identifies as "potentials" (p. 4). The Gardener responds with some guidance and concludes saying, "Once you have planted them they need feeding from the unconscious. You will take care of that I am sure" (p. 4). Helen thanks him for "your concern and your cherishing" (p. 4).

The second dialogue springs from a dream about an English choir boy. In the dream were three boobook owls, and their presence led Helen back to a poem known years before. It is by Gwen Harwood, entitled, 'Barn Owl,' from the larger piece, Father and Child. Helen provided the poem with the dialogue material. For her the important line in the poem is, "end what you have begun" (p. 7).

The dialogue begins with Helen greeting the choir boy. She asks him to
"tell me about yourself and how you came to be here" (p. 8). The boy tells her that he came because she conjured him up. "I am part of you and have been with you unrecognised for years" (p. 8). She identifies him as a very spirited person and asks how she might "get in touch more with this spiritual side of myself" (p. 8). The boy tells her to wait, listen and learn to hear what is being said. "When you have heard - respond, care, and follow what seems to be right for you" (p. 8). Helen indicates that she would like to call on the boy, to talk more often and seek his "opinion about a lot of things" (p. 8). The boy asserts that this attitude is perhaps your greatest problem at the moment. You are searching as if you had lost something - but it has never been lost. Believe me you have so much potential - so much of the spirit in you - what you need is an outlet for that spirit. Listen carefully and it will find you - I promise" (p. 8).

Helen then asks what she must do to be of use to the world, and the boy responds that she is of use "by being - by working as you do" (p. 9). Helen admits to being "a little over awed" by the conversation (p. 9). She then asks the boy to stay and help her listen and understand and work at whatever it is the spirit calls me to. I feel a tremendous love for you, it is a quite remarkable feeling. It is as if you are opening my heart chakra right up. You are, indeed, the spirit. I thank you. It is you who can help me to create - you who can help me to write. I ask you with open heart and with love - please help me to put the story together. You who are part of it - you who are so much part of me (p. 9).

The boy confirms that he will help. Helen concludes: "I don't know what is happening, but something is. Good night" (p. 9).
The third dialogue is with a criminal who appeared in a dream; Helen spent most of the dream holding him down. Once loose, in the dream, he runs away. The dialogue begins with Helen calling out to him to come back so they can talk and get to know one another. She acknowledges her need to know him. She asks “why are you in my dream and why am I trying so hard to keep you down - I don’t understand what this is all about” (p. 11). The criminal identifies himself as “the part that has worked so long for recognition - tried to gain recognition just for being myself” (p. 11). Helen is surprised that he is masculine and not feminine. He explains that he represents a part of the masculine that has been completely ignored, “never been made conscious” (p. 11). She asks why she has worked so hard to keep him down and hidden and he explains that he “has as much energy and verve” as the animus she sees displayed in two women friends, and this terrifies her. Helen clarifies that it isn’t the animus that is the problem, but their inappropriate expression of it. She asserts “I would love to be able to use that energy and have an animus like that help me to explore and write and do many other things. Would you be prepared to do that for me” (p. 11)? Helen and the criminal come to an agreement and she then introduces him to other members of the psyche.

May I introduce you to the Father, to W. and to the deep masculine. It is great to feel that we can accept a brother and one who has been hidden so long but can now be acknowledged. Now I would like to introduce you to the Mother, the child, the new feminine who has an unusual
quality about her, may I introduce you to the Most Senior Analyst. I'm sure you will get on well (p. 12).

At Helen's invitation, the others welcome the criminal.

The fourth active imagination is the continuation of a dream in which Helen's father comes home, and "for the first time I saw some of the story through his eyes" (p. 13). It is his birthday and after the others have given him their presents, Helen gives her father a present from her. In her remarks on presenting the gift she acknowledges that she wants him to stay.

Now all I know is that I hear you, I see you and I understand and love you, and want you to stay. It seems to me as if I have to start the story all over again. You are both the rascal and bishop and so am I. I have hurt and so have you. I have loved and so have you, I have risked and so have you. Most of all I have deserted my family for the pearl of great price and so have you. Somehow it seems important that you dared to live, dared to risk your life and to plunge into the unknown [...] Don't go away because I love you and I need to write about you (p. 13).

The next dialogue follows after a long and complex dream that centres around a yacht that belongs to Helen's sister, E. In trying to retrieve the yacht from where she has beached it after it went adrift, Helen becomes involved with others on a picnic. It is a frustrating and involved experience. Helen completes the dream action as the dialogue begins. She returns to a man to whom she has given her car keys and asks for them. She has decided to drive herself to the river bank and try to get the beached yacht to sail again so that she can return it to her sister. The man
is James from a seminary, and he accompanies her. She first asks for food as she was never fed by the others. James offers her food and then they go to the yacht and float it. They sail successfully to the other shore where her sister greets them and is grateful for Helen's efforts. The sister, E., then drives Helen back to her car and James back to the seminary. Helen proposes that sometime James might come sailing with them and he indicates that he'd like to do that.

In the next active imagination experience, Helen talks with a Hobo who hands her a menu in a restaurant. "The menu has on the front cover the motif of a large tree with many white birds" (p. 18). Helen has actually painted this motif as a menu cover to this dialogue. When asked why he offered a menu, the Hobo responds that he is offering her food, "qualities of food spiritual food but abundance of life and love also" (p. 19). He continues to explain food in terms of the tree on the menu. The food is for her growth, and helps her grow like a tree grows. She asks about the roots, which remind her of the shadow. The Hobo talks of the necessity of shade and how it helps us appreciate the light. He then goes on to talk about the wholesomeness of the food on a menu such as this. Helen asks about the white birds. "They are creatures of love, of life and intuition. They are the very essence of the spirit of life. They come together to celebrate the feast which has been prepared for you. In my house are many mansions" (p. 20). After another comment on the birds, the Hobo talks about the shape of the tree. Helen has pointed out that it is "shaped
like an hour glass" (p. 21). It is to remind her of time and the growth that will continue to take place. Helen asks if there are other meanings and the Hobo plays with the word menu.

The words ME/NU Me and you. That is the two of us in harmony - the two of us integrated. The pure and the soiled - the light and the dark. The sky and shade. When you have truly understood this, truly experienced this you will know. It also means MEN U. Men and you. Your relationship with men will change - because you will become more related to the man in you. (p. 21).

The Hobo also encourages Helen to be more experienced in her tastes and to be willing to try everything that is offered to her.

Helen then asks about the newspaper cuttings and the Hobo focuses on the notion of truth. He asks, "What is the truth for you? The truth for me is something that I relate to as intuitively right. Something to which I can say 'Yes - Right - I know.' I don't always believe what I read in the newspaper" (p. 22). The hobo goes on to talk about her truth. "For your full growth and spreading you must constantly check your truth - make sure that you are living your truth and not somebody else's" (p. 22). At the end the Hobo asserts "You are the instrument of process" (p. 22). Helen responds:

Lord make me an instrument of your grace. Let me play fine music on my instrument. Let me stay well tuned to myself, to others individually as their needs arise. Help me to cope with my own needs well and allow others freedom to cope with theirs - and help if and when genuinely needed. Help me to know how to put myself in another's place but not to
In the course of the next imaginal dialogue, Helen mentions the dream that has led to this conversation, but it is not provided with the text. The dialogue is with Fear, and is in two parts over two days. Helen begins by asking Fear to identify itself. She wonders why she is reluctant to take on a responsibility that is suggested from within. She learns in the response that this Fear is “like a shadow which has hung over you for most of your life” (p. 24). Fear identifies some of its sources and asserts that, early on, Helen took to apologising for herself and seeing herself as victim. The safe way was to fail. He then catalogues a short history of how some of her fears affected her life, including those around her first born son, her self development, and the relationships between her husband and her sons.

Helen understands all this, but questions why she still carries “this feeling of inadequacy around with me” (p. 25). Fear responds by making a distinction between intellectual and intelligent people. As they discuss this difference, Helen admits that she has been hurt in the past by intellectual people who are out of touch with their eros, their feelings, and she tends to connect the two qualities. Beyond this she realises as they continue that she is simply anxious about the daunting responsibility of other peoples’ souls. Helen affirms that she has a strong faith and that this “is what kept me going in all those situations” (p. 26). At the end of the first part, Fear encourages her to trust. “You have a strong faith and faith
has brought you through so far. I promise that help is always there when you need it. Love casteth out all fear - fear can be transformed” (p. 26).

In the second part Helen and Fear continue the discussion. Helen recognises that she has good skills for dealing with people, but also points out that she lacks the usual, formal qualifications for working with people. The lack of a piece of paper, “puts me in a position of risk all the time” (p. 27). This is an assault on her confidence along with all the other experiences in her history. Fear continues to be affirming, using the example of her parenting and the quality of her unusual wisdom. While she accepts these truths, there is still the issue of outside validation of her skills. “So somehow this seems to be a battle between the collective and the individual. If I give myself enough recognition for what I am good at then others will also recognise me and doors will naturally open” (p. 28). Fear affirms this and adds that it is “a case of believing in yourself and believing in God who will take you in the right direction if you continue to listen to the inner voice” (p. 28).

Helen expresses her perception that those who are licensed professionals seem almost to have the license to make mistakes, but that she does not. Fear responds by telling her not to expect perfection of herself. Fear concludes “I do believe that an inner commitment to your own Soul and to God while you continue your inner work is the most creative way you can help your clients or any who come to you for whatever reason” (p. 28).
The eighth active imagination dialogue is with "a very pale, wan child" (p. 29). She is standing behind a curtain on a stage area. When Helen asks her about herself, the child tells her that she is

that pale haunted child who all her life has wanted to be given some recognition for some of the things she was good at. Nearly always people found fault. There were some things that I was quite good at but I've always pushed against a tide of disapproval. I wasn't allowed to shine out too much at school (p. 29).

Helen remembers the torture of the school years, which the girl sees as the cause of her present shyness. Helen also imagines that she is angry and the girl readily agrees. "Yes. I am angry. I feel as if I have never been allowed to reach my full potential because I have always been made to wait in the wings but have never been actually allowed on stage" (p. 29). The child recalls some of the remarks made to her: "'Look you have made an error', or 'My dear girl,' or 'Not good enough,' or 'You stupid, stupid girl'" (p. 30).

Helen asks the girl if she is prepared to risk going on the stage now. She says that she is if Helen will back her up by being her friend, the one who believes in her. Helen affirms that she is willing to be that friend,

because you are part of me that I can really understand and relate to. I realize that for years and years you have swallowed insults, snubs and even some quite creative ideas because others were not prepared to see the creativity which you had hidden away (p. 30).
Following a comment about difference and prejudice, Helen reaffirms her support and the child expresses her gratitude.

The next dialogue follows a dream in which “a frail and neglected old lady in a nursing home” (p. 31) is welcomed home by her family. Helen begins with the child again, but then the old lady is included. The child calls her ‘grandma’ and tells her “I can feel a great new surge of creativity in the psyche since you have returned” (p. 31). The grandma is happy to be home and adds that she feels that “I am right in the centre of a very holy place” (p. 31). The child reports that the confidence of the old lady has already helped her in her interactions with the outside world.

Dialogue number ten follows a dream in which appears a “delightful little dark child who seems to be my son” (p. 34). W. goes to get him from the house where he is staying with friends or neighbours “who speak another language” (p. 34). W. brings him to Helen. In the dialogue Helen talks to W. and the boy whom she calls “Sun” instead of son. She thanks W. for getting the boy, but then asks him about his son and the boy. W. replies that he is “here to help you to communicate between the outside world and that world which is deeply unconscious” (p. 36).

W. then describes the boy.

He is an ancient part who has been in the unconscious for millennia - he has sacred insight, insights and contacts with the earth spirits and spirit kingdoms which you have never
dreamt of. He is you, he belongs to you but he also belongs to your dark neighbours who speak another language and look at the world with the insight of a so-called 'primitive' which in many ways has an ancient wisdom which has been lost through our many years of 'civilization.' Through this dark child these people can get you in touch with the spirit of this wild wise harsh land. Their instincts are wiser than any complicated technology we might employ (p. 36).

Helen asks if the boy speaks her language and W. affirms that he does. She then addresses the boy, admitting that she feels "almost shy to talk" (p. 37), and asks him about himself. He responds that he comes

from that part of you from which you have often turned away - the places of the red soil, the open desert, the tall trees - the places of isolation and heat. The places of the lovely water-hole. Places where the distance shimmers and the noises are of birds and the song of the earth and the trees, the cicadas, and the haunted sound of a distant crow, a parrot or a lorikeet (p. 37).

Helen wonders if she can understand all this and the child tells her that she can. She adds that she believes this to be a journey with the child that will also include music and alchemy. W. refers to it as an alchemical journey. The boy tells Helen that they can meet at a water-hole whenever she wants to see them. W. affirms, in response to her concern, that they will only move at the pace that she sets in this learning adventure. The child adds, "We have many things to uncover for you that unless you come with us and allow us to lead you to you will miss in this journey" (p. 38).

The eleventh dialogue results from a dream of a woman who was staying
in the house where Helen was also staying. The woman made "magnificent portraits in a kind of coloured sand of the person who was celebrating the birthday" (p. 39). Helen notes that these portraits were of sands the "colours of the desert - red earth yellow brown & white - colours bright" (p. 39). The woman had the ability in her portraits to catch the presence of the person.

In the dialogue Helen comments on this ability to catch the "essence of the person in those bright sands" (p. 40). She then asks the woman how she was brought to these paintings. The woman, named Drenda, replies:

These paintings have come to me across the sands of time and yet they are timeless. They are images of the timeless woman. The woman with whom you are becoming increasingly in touch. You glimpsed these numinous portraits because you are being led in a completely new direction. You are coming closer and closer to your primitive self while becoming more and more refined. [...] This is indeed a paradox but it is the result of the coming together of your sophisticated and your primitive selves. These portraits are the result of an alchemical process - the third which comes from the original idea and its opposite. These portraits are a celebration of a new birth - a whole new way of exploring the world. (p. 40)

Helen asserts that now that she is conscious of a totally new direction to take, she will watch for signs and asks Drenda to come back with insights for the new way. Helen expresses her gratitude "for sharing your thoughts with me" (p. 41).

The next dialogue is a long narrative in which Helen introduces Drenda to
the others in the psyche. She welcomes Drenda to her new home. The
house is new and bigger “to cope with this infusion of the new energy” (p.
43). “The home is set in rock, it is in fact part of the landscape. There are
trees growing on the roof, but the area inside is huge and there is room for
you as well as the others” (p. 42). It is in this dialogue that Drenda gives
Helen her name and comments that “I have lived for millennia. In one
sense you have known me since you were born” (p. 42).

The introductions begin with W. and Sun, and Man and Woman “who
have given me the key to this house” (p. 43). Helen introduces the men
first. These include deep earth man, the clergyman and the bishop, ocker,
the Hobo, the lover, the lawyer, my father, Billie and his friend Atman, a
young “shining white child” (p. 44). She realises, through these
introductions, that Billie and Atman are the light side of W. and Sun.
Helen then introduces the women. These include the deep cave woman,
The Mother and my mother, the young woman who is learning all the
time, the little girl, the sensual woman and the Most Senior Analyst.
Helen concludes this experience by asking the men and women to inform
and relate to each other and to take into account the shadow. She then
announces a celebratory feast with dancing to follow.

The last dialogue results from a dream in which Helen is with a tribe and
W. is off on a hunt with other men. The dream centres on the
homecoming of the men. The time away may have been a male
initiation, perhaps even W's initiation. The dialogue is between W. and Helen and is at the waterhole in the night. Each has come because of some thinking and reflecting that needs to be done. Helen admits "and a lot of it has to do with you" (p. 47). The two then discuss the change in their relationship. This is due to the growth toward independent manhood by W. and because Helen has learned to separate herself more completely from the mother function. Helen affirms, "I have grown a great deal since my 'Smother Mother' days" (p. 48). They agree to an honest relationship which will include the freedom to assert when each needs time alone. Both also affirm that they feel at home in this tribe. Helen reflects, "It is as if it has opened up a whole new area for me" (p. 49). W. gives Helen a kiss and leaves, affirming that they will talk again tomorrow.

Depiction - Helen

This depiction is based on Helen's dialogues, the taped interviews concerning her experience, and her final, brief, typewritten reflection on her experience. We met for two one-hour long taping sessions.

Helen began by describing the actual process of her active imagination work. She said that she sat in a bean bag chair and tried to be very comfortable so that she could remain still for the time. She would "often ask ... for God to be with me ... it's like a prayer ... I guess you'd call it a prayer ... I just get myself into a very relaxed situation ... into a really meditative state" (tape 1:1). Helen sees the settling down process as an
opening up. “In the process I really get out of my head and into my body ... into the soul space” (tape 1:1). Helen records the dialogue on a pad of paper. Sometimes she uses two pens, “especially with the child” (tape 1:1). The right hand is for the adult, the left hand is for the child, “who writes very slowly” (tape 1:1).

The agenda for these dialogues emerged primarily from her dream life. The exception she mentioned was the dialogue with Fear. The dialogues were easy to do, and the experiences were anywhere from ten minutes to one hour in length. In talking about ending these experiences, Helen stressed the importance of honouring the images. In re-reading her material she realised

how much I honoured those images, how ... very sacred they felt to me, how ... yes, how much they needed to be honoured for having visited me, and that does feel very important, to end it with ... not just quickly, but to give thanks. [...] I would sit quietly for a while to honour, if you will, the experience ... let it work in me ... the honouring is also for that soul part of me (tape 1:1).

While Helen found it difficult to talk about her experience, her reflections group around three essential qualities. They are: 1) change, 2) learning, and 3) the sacred. In terms of the first quality, change, the overall impact is summarised by Helen’s reaction on re-reading her own material in preparation for our interviews. As indicated, this material is nine to eight years old for Helen. She wondered: “Who is this poor little bugger? I don’t know her anymore (laughing). Yes, that’s me then, but I feel so
different now, even in that short time” (tape 1:1). Helen continued later:

I suppose it’s a little bit like going back to a family situation that you’ve known very, very well in the past, that you know is still in you in some sense, but then you know that you’ve grown from and probably grown out of in some sense (tape 1:1).

Certain of the specific images Helen associates with change. The dream of the choir boy, the poem about the barn owl, and the associated inner work (2:5-9) “totally changed my life” (tape 1:1). The encounter with the dark child, named Sun, was an experience that changed Helen enormously. “In a sense there’s part of me that’s a lot more earthed” (tape 1:2). Her reflections on the encounter with the Hobo also signalled change for Helen; “he was wonderful; I enjoyed him” (tape 1:2). In two separate instances Helen remarks that she “moved to Fremantle to find my Hobo” (tape 1:2). It was his influence that helped her to realise that “it’s okay to admit you’re not perfect, it’s okay ... to let all that shadow stuff come up, and face it” (tape 2:1).

In reflecting on the dialogue experiences, Helen describes how she has changed.

The whole process of learning about dreams ... but also learning to use the figures from the dreams ... I think it has taken me from being a fairly immature and reasonably superficial young woman [...] and it has just helped the maturity and ... but it’s not even that ... because this isn’t ... these aren’t just one-off experiences, these are a way of living (tape 2:1).

Helen continues: “it has deepened my life and it has made my
relationships with people authentic” (tape 2:1). Further on she adds: “I generally know more about myself. I generally know more about most aspects of myself, the good, the bad, the indifferent ... I tend to be just very straight forward in my relationships with people” (tape 2:1).

Helen comments that this process has changed her persona, and has actually made it difficult for her to relate easily to people who “are where I was” (tape 2:1). The persona for her used to hide her hurt and pain, now it tends to mediate her personality differently in a variety of circumstances. “So the process changes the function and nature of the persona and gives you versatility” (tape 2:1).

In terms of change, Helen asserts that this inner work process has a physical dimension as well. In one instance she talked about a sensation of her heart chakra opening right up as she talked with the choir boy (2:9; tape 1:2). In another, she comments on the sensation of light: “it has to do with the sort of light that one sees in the old mural paintings” (tape 1:2). Yet another has to do with a sensation of “sharpness” that she experienced in the dialogue with fear (tape 1:2). “I don’t think [...] it wasn’t easy to do, and yet the way it changed ... it’s almost as if something had happened here (points to the centre of her chest) and opened up in a different way” (tape 1:2).

Helen extends her experience further, affirming that active imagination
changes us physically, "even the way we meet people, even the way we stand, even the way we are with people ... the way we move, walk, approach people ... present ourselves" (tape 2:1). It affects our sense of presence. Helen is reminded of someone's phrase "loving presence," which describes what she is affirming in terms of change.

The second quality, learning, is implied in all Helen's remarks about change. Early in the discussions she refers to the experiences as times of "great learning" that took her "deep inside, into yourself." (tape 1:2). "I learned a lot from them, there's no doubt about that, that I was amazed at what came up, and how specific it was" (tape 1:2). She comments as well that as a result of the dream-active imagination experiences, she was opened up "to a different consciousness" (tape 1:2). Later she remarks: "With each one of these the process grows ... I think so does consciousness" (tape 1:2).

Another aspect of the learning was to learn to take a risk and trust the process.

One of the things I've learned out of doing active imagination and dream work is to take a leap of faith [...] to actually trust enough to go over the edge and know that something will ... that God, if you will, will be there [...] trusting enough to take a risk - facing the criminal was a bit like that (tape 1:2).

This aspect of the learning also underscored the ethical imperative present in the process for Helen. Concerning the criminal, she admits that she
"didn’t want him back, but I know that this was something that if I didn’t face it [...] I had to do it" (tape 1:2).

A quality of the learning that Helen affirms on several occasions is that of surprise. Various she talks of her amazement and astonishment, “especially when one of the figures comes out with something unexpected” (tape 1:2). Another aspect of the astonishment comes “from just ... the actual being able to contact and feel the reality of these figures” (tape 1:2). This element of the unexpected contributes to a kind of awe that is part of Helen’s overall experience.

Early in the interviews, when Helen describes her actual process, she comments:

I’m usually surprised how easily it comes ... I’m also amazed sometimes at some of the answers ... my head’s not doing this ... I’m often quite aghast at the answers that come. But I know I just write ... but I could never have got them from my head. The aha! is so strong (tape 1:1).

The third quality is a sense of the sacred. Helen offers as a framework for her remarks an insight into her childhood and an experience from her younger adult years. Helen’s childhood was somewhat solitary since her siblings were quite a bit older than she. She looks back and reflects that, as a child, “I lived in a pod of luminescence” (tape 2:1). In her younger adult years, in her marriage, Helen had a still born child, during the delivery of which she also had a near-death experience. Her family and doctors did
not respond to the experience in the slightest. "Nobody wanted to hear about it, the doctor didn't want to hear, my husband didn't want to hear [...] so I just buried it in the unconscious" (tape 2:2). The experience came back to her some years later. She was waiting at the counter of a book store and on it saw the book, *Life after Life*, by Dr. Moody. She began leafing through it and realised that she had had the kind of near-death experience recounted in the book. An old family friend verified her experience, having heard of it from Helen herself at the time it happened. This perception of her own childhood, and her near-death experience, form the context for Helen's sense of the sacred in her inner work.

In reflecting on the essential qualities of the dream-active imagination experiences, Helen includes "a deep connection to the divine" (tape 1:2). She talks of Jung's famous BBC interview in his elder years wherein he was asked if he believed in God and responded that he did not believe, he knew.

That's how it is for me...I know...and I can't actually say I know because I've been to church, or necessarily because I've walked in the woods, or because I've been to various places, although that can be part of it. But this is one way that I can be met [...] it's trite to call it conversing with God, because each one of these characters is still part of me, and I'm aware of that, but there's a holy element to this, which I find extremely difficult to put into words (tape 1:2).

In another instance she talks of the sacred element in the experiences. In regard to the individual characters, Helen explains that "each [...] in their own way seem to have an element of that numinosity I spoke of. They
don’t always start off feeling that way.” (tape 1:2). In speaking of the overall experience, Helen describes it as having “a skin of light around it” (tape 1:2). In another place she talks of the “sacred space within” (tape 2:1), that envelops and contains, like a wombic container. In her final reflection Helen indicates that she sometimes wonders whether she does the experience or it does her.

and I think the answer is ‘both’. By this I mean that while I am working with active imagination I am working in that mandorla which is the overlap of two equal circles, one which is the conscious world and one which is the unconscious, and somehow there is genuine co-operation in this state which in some sense brings about a new dimension which feels like the sacred space (reflection p. 1).

Frequently she remarks that this is “such difficult stuff to talk about” (tape 1:2).

In the framework of her previous near-death experience, Helen sees herself in relation to others as a conduit for that energy. “The word conduit actually ... is one that is important” (tape 2:1). The previous religious experience is like a light source into which Helen can tap now. “In a sense what happens to me when I go in is that I ... it’s as if I bring that light source in with me and then in a sense am able to bring something out with it for clients” (tape 2:1).

In addition to the three essential elements of change, learning, and the sacred, there are two other points to mention in depicting Helen’s
experiences. The first involves the sense of the reality of these characters and the experience. For Helen they are deeply real, though in a different way than outside things are real. As mentioned earlier, she felt such astonishment in being able to “feel the reality of these figures” (tape 1:2). In her final reflection she writes: “both active imagination and what I have described as religious experience are as real as my day to day life and have influenced and continue to influence this day to day life tremendously” (reflection, p. 1). Once again she found this difficult to articulate, but a meaningful point to make.

The second is that this overall experience of inner work has had outer, social consequences. In addition to the points made about the effect on the body and the way we live in our bodies, some difficulty in relating to people who are part of her earlier life, and the contribution to her work with clients, Helen also found that these experiences affected her general and family relationships. She affirms that her relationships have improved because of the whole process of analysis and this inner work. In speaking of her family she notes, “they recognise the change in you [...] they themselves appreciate how much I’ve changed” (tape 2:1).
Summary and depiction - Tim

Introduction

The Tim material is a series of thirty active imagination dialogues and several associated reflections. There are thirty-three entries in the series. The material is comprised of one hundred and five handwritten pages. These dialogues were experienced over a three month period. As stated earlier, at the time of Tim’s participation in this research project, the material was six years old. In the material there are thirteen characters, including Tim. They are listed here and the numerical reference after each name indicates the dialogue and page reference for their first appearance.

Jesus, most regularly referred to as Guide/G (1:1)
Knight, also Sir Anger (2:3)
Shadow (6:12)
Mr. Can't-Get-it-Right/Mr. Put-me-Down/PMD (8:16)
Castle Steward/Lord Doubt (10:26)
Controller of the Whirlpool/CW (12:32)
Mr. Believe-everything-you-hear (16:45)
Mrs. Appease-Please/AP (16:45)
Shadowy Figure/Professor Higginbotham/Manipulator/M (18:56)
Mr. Outward Show (24:80)
Girl from dream (26:86)
Small male figure on the cliff (29:96)

Summary - Tim

In the midst of a painful experience, in their first session, Tim’s therapist suggested that he attempt to “visualise the pain I felt. I saw a large concrete lined pit filled with fiery red” (introductory notes provided by
Tim). Tim begins his active imagination experiences by returning to the image of the pit. The first two experiences are narratives which set the scene and begin the journey. He decides to look into the pit and he asks “Jesus to be my companion” (1:1). Tim turns to look and the “next thing I knew I was falling with my companion & almost immediately enter a tunnel - still slipping & going downward” (1:1). They continue going down for a time, more than once passing through a red glow. “I know the red is pain/hurt but I pass through that with feeling - the journey is past that & not for it” (1:1). Tim interprets the process as “passing down through memories [...] - the cool tunnel show[s] where things were ok or have been healed red spots show areas still tender” (1:1).

They come to a “huge underground cave like chamber” (1:1), and end up on a beach/sandbar on which Tim finds a tube sticking out of the floor. He senses “that that is where I have to go next” (1:1). As he starts to enter the tube he sees “that it is red inside & very steep & I am afraid & resist all attempts to put me inside” (1:2). Tim goes blank & then feels himself “on the journey downward” (1:2). He stops the exercise, but later reflects on his resistance and the tenseness of his body. In his reflection he hears a “deeply felt and long drawn out noooooooo” (1:2). Yet later he returns again to ask his companion why he pushed him into the tube. “He replied I had asked him to guide me & be with me & this was the way I needed to go. I was reminded of the Garden of Gethsemane” (1:2). Tim allows himself to be put into the tube, but resists several times along the way.
I then go headlong into an area where I have to squeeze through with my head - it opens but it is still quite hard work initially & I get through & my body becomes absolutely tensed up in resistance so I am shaking with it. I stop & get up to break it (the situation) somewhat shattered by the depth on the response and resistance to go on (1:2).

He performs a ritual dance to honour this initial experience.

In the second experience Tim goes back to the original incident. He asks what the feeling was and gets in touch with anger. He is then in a tunnel walking along toward a light “which is always just around the corner” (2:3). They come out into a large area open to the sky. As they walk “there is an explosion and a black volcano blows its top off sending chunks of debris everywhere - some must hit me because I can feel the blast but doesn’t damage/hurt me” (2:3).

A bubble appears out of the ground as it breaks open. The bubble bursts and Tim enters it, because “I know I am supposed to” (2:3). He soon finds himself “walking next to small volcanoes which have a kind of leathery skin to them & they are erupting - some mainly hot air but some are violent with debris exploding out” (2:3). Another bubble appears from within the ground and bursts open. “A knight comes out in full armour & drawn sword he doesn’t say anything but looks as if he is looking for a fight/quest” (2:3).
Things blur for a while then Tim finds himself in a car speeding “very fast on a road with no lights” (2:3). It is an exciting experience which involves crossing a bridge and moving through an Australian countryside scene. The car is airborne then comes to a river “which I knew to be significant [...] with many islands in it” (2:4).

In the third experience Tim returns to the scene where the knight first appears. Tim calls out to him and they have their first conversation. The knight is at first reluctant even to speak with Tim. He responds to Tim’s inquiry: “Why should I have anything to do with you - you have ignored me these forty years. When I tried to attract your attention you have ignored me & wallowed in your self pity” (3:5). Their exchange continues:

T. I acknowledge my fault I had no understanding
K. Go away can’t you see I am busy
T. I will not go until you tell me who you are & what your role is - how can I treat you as you should be treated unless you give me understanding
K. I don’t believe you are truly serious
T. I am - I am recording our conversation so that I will not forget it
K. That makes a change!
T. I am not usually this persistent - I really do want to know who you are & what your role is
K. I don’t tell just anybody, let alone those who have treated me as enemies (3:6).

As they continue, the knight reveals that he has come only because he was summoned, and that “I had to cut my way out to meet you” (3:6). When Tim indicates that he must end and go “back to the real world” (3:6), the
knight is furious. When Tim asks if he is angry, he responds:

Yes, that is what I am & you have not allowed me to work as I need to work. I am totally frustrated by these bounds you have put on me - all these restrictions no wonder you are such a wimp - you restrain me when you ought to be with me in the fight & then let me go when you should remind me of my knightly honour. You piss me off - NOW when you summon me you pester me with all these questions & just as I am ready to answer you say you must go (3:7)!

Tim ends acknowledging that he has much to sort out. “Thank you Sir Anger I will come & meet with you again” (3:7).

The next entry is a reflection on Sir Anger’s accusation that Tim has “been wallowing in self pity all these years” (4:8). The following dialogue begins with Tim contacting Sir Anger again only to discover that he needs “to unlock the key [lock] I cannot come on my own without causing damage” (5:10). The knight tells him that he’ll have to find the key and the warder, “you know who he is - He holds the key” (5:10). Tim bids Sir Anger farewell and turns to Christ, the guide, for help. Tim asks Christ to lead him.

G. Are you sure you want to go? the road is hard and dangerous
T. I know I need to go, that this is the way I must go. I know I can’t go in my own strength - I will fail that way. I know that if you will be my guide then even if I walk in the valley of the shadow of death I need fear no evil you will comfort/strengthen me - I know with you as guide and strengthener all evil will be overcome and a new creation will come into being. But please don’t ever leave me.
G. Come, let us be on our way (5:10).

Again they are at the original pit opening. Guide tells Tim to let go and jump. He does and they fall down a vertical mine shaft. They land and
walk along a passage and eventually, out into a "bright sunlight (but underground)" (5:11). In the distance, in the hills they see a city and castle on top of a hill. "It is like a fairy tale" (5:11). They stop to rest, and will go no further this day. Tim reflects on his fear of meeting one he calls Manipulator who is a snake.

In the next dialogue Tim encounters "a big shadow coming over us - as if a huge person with hands on hips. It is between us and the city on the hill" (6:12). The shadow identifies itself as "warden of this land - no one may enter it without my permission. I have not heard you ask me. Who do you think you are entering here. What are you doing here" (6:12). The shadow goes on to indicate that he knows Christ the Guide and resents the presence of both of them. Tim identifies this shadow as "shadow of manipulator - and you look fearful. Nevertheless I have put my trust in my guide - if I have to move into your land & encounter you face to face because that is where he leads me that is where I intend to go" (6:12).

As Tim asks about where they next are to go, he becomes aware of two options, a shorter and longer route, each with obstacles. Tim chooses the "low direct route [...] I sense I am being told that it is shorter in distance but not in time - the length of the journey is still considerable - I must take the time; treat each person/obstacle with equal respect giving them the time so that I may learn the lesson most fully" (6:13). Having chosen this path Tim realises that, in confronting the shadow, he has done the day's work
and that he has progressed along the path. He notices the two paths run close for a while, then diverge and seem finally to go in opposite directions.

The next entry is a reflection on the choice of the path. Tim realises that he actually has "three choices - left - right - stop whole process - & am being confronted with whether I will do this properly" (7:15). Tim then writes out a contract in which he commits to the left path and to encounter anyone he meets thoroughly and to the satisfaction of his guide. The contract ends, "I pray that God may give & continue to give me the strength to follow this thru until it is thoroughly finished" (7:15). He contracts further to record the travel and conversations.

In the dialogue following the writing of the contract, and on the same day, Tim receives affirmation from his guide for the contract. He has a headache that began during the contract writing exercises and he addresses it. "Who is it in me that presents me with this headache. I ask that you show yourself, reveal your name to me and tell me what it is you do" (8:16). A dialogue ensues with one who is finally named Mr. Put-me-down. He is critical and dismissive of Tim's efforts and focuses on his previous good resolutions and intentions that did not get fulfilled. Tim defends himself with equal examples of completed goals and then looks more in detail at a list of "put me downs." His reflections lead him to affirm the voice of the Guide saying that this is a good contract. "This is a
new beginning - the old is past the new has come” (8:20). Tim ends asking his guide to “lead me on in your time” (8:20).

The next entry again is a short reflection in which Tim focuses on his reluctance or resistance. He is reminded of the experience of having to get into the pipe at the very beginning. Again he commits to moving on in this journey. “I set aside these anticipatory fears of failure. Mr. Put-me-down, I unhook your power over me. Mr. Put-me-down deflates & sinks away from me. I feel peaceful & relax & nearly go to sleep” (9:21).

After an initial reflection, the next dialogue begins with Tim soaring above the road with Guide. He wonders how he will ever meet the necessary people up above, but Guide tells him to be trusting.

Soon “we fly above a black castle with several rings of battlements - roofs are coppery green [...] It is on a cliff - we see the sheerness of the cliff from close up it is very high. I ask - Is this where Sir Knight is imprisoned” (10:22). Guide answers that he is not, but that Tim will meet the next person here. They land on the road and enter the castle. He is then confronted with a loud thundering voice asking who he is. Tim and the voice speak. The voice identifies the castle as the castle of gloom, built on the cliffs of despair, with gates of hopelessness which “traps you inside” (10:24).
Tim expresses his fear and concern to Guide who assures him that he has the key to get out of the castle, “but you will only know its [sic] the key when you make use of it” (10:24). Tim realises that the issues are gloom, despair and hopelessness and he reflects on the presence of these in his life. Having done this he realises that the darkness of the castle is falling away.

I am outside the castle which is bathed in sunshine with light stone walls. An army marches out - in black - I sense they are vacating the premises. The castle is not called castle gloom anymore, the cliffs are the heights of trust, the gate is hope (10:25).

Tim realises that “resolution of grief is the key” (10:26).

As Tim contemplates the exit of the army and wonders if he is to take possession, the castle steward comes out. He is doubt, or self doubt. Tim acknowledges his long possession of the castle and affirms they may meet again in “another context” (10:26). The steward “looks - vengefully - and passes out silent” (10:26). Time ends this dialogue reflecting on what it all might mean.

The next encounter is very brief. Tim feels discomfort and Guide simply responds, “ask it” (11:28).

Dialogue twelve continues the issue. Guide asserts “that person you questioned has been waiting to speak, listen” (12:29). Tim attends to the
one waiting to speak. "After looking round I am aware of a large mass of water. A whirlpool forms in it & after a time & against my will I am drawn into the whirlpool - long thin & deep - we go down a tunnel rushing with the water gushing around" (12:29). Along the way Tim tries to resist but is continually swept along. He falls "down a deep chasm with very turbulent water beneath. There the water level seems to recede & I find myself on a series of shelves in the rock just above the water" (12:30).

After Tim records this, the voice speaks in answer to his question. "You asked to see me - for that you had to come to me" (12:30). To see the speaker, Tim has, again, to jump into the water with Guide. He comes to the bottom and turns round as instructed by the voice. "I see a rock shelter with chains coming out of the walls and someone striving against them. I can't see the person but I see the place where she is striving against the chains - I know the person is female" (12:31-32).

Tim asks about the water and learns through following her instructions that "this turbulent water is my tears" (12:32). He returns to the woman and asks "who then are you & who put you where you are" (12:32). She identifies herself as "the Controller of the Whirlpool" (12:32), and she asserts that she has been chained up for allowing him to cry when others thought it inappropriate. Tim is "dumbfounded" (12:32). The two discuss Tim's experience with crying and controlling his tears. She offers to control the expression of tears for him and he fears trusting that. "If I let
you have control I wont [sic] be able to control my tears at all - my strong feelings will run rampant. I'll be in a bigger mess" (12:34).

Tim turns to Guide for advice and they recall a particular incident. Tim then realises that, according to the terms of his contract, "We stay here until she is released & restored to her rightful place, don't we" (12:36). He re-affirms the dangerous nature of this journey. Here the danger lies in coming to trust" (12:36).

Tim then comes to realise that Controller of the Whirlpool actually has to do with his entire feeling life and not just his tears. She affirms this: "Yes. I am as necessary to you as you are to me [...] we are partners in this process" (12:36-37). Tim releases her from the chains and affirms her as "Controller of the Whirlpool, I abdicate from my usurped authority" (12:37). He then asks Guide for help in this new relationship. "We 3 come back to the castle - outside the gate where this started" (12:37).

When he comes again to the encounter, Tim wonders if he's not "building up things that have to be finished - there is more work with Sir Anger, with the castle & with my new companion - our new companion on the journey" (13:38). Guide reminds him that not all will be finished, it is a life-long process. The focus then turns to his relationship with Controller of the Whirlpool and their willingness to trust each other. Both are hesitant. Tim says to her: "I feel I need to forgive you as well as ask your
forgiveness - I do forgive you please forgive me” (13:38). Tim further proposes an agreement for the relationship, but Controller of the Whirlpool is silent. He makes his commitment nevertheless, and honours her reluctance at the same time. As he concludes this visit, Tim decides to plant “something in my garden as a token of our new relationship” (13:39).

Tim meets Guide at the castle gates and they focus on the book Tim was reading and his responses to the material. [Why am I afraid to Love? John Powell] Tim recites pre-natal, infancy and early childhood experiences that might have affected him. In reference to having taken control of the whirlpool himself, he explores one of these image memories with Guide. Nothing is resolved before he ends the encounter.

On the same day Tim returns and dialogues with Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool to gain more understanding into the image he has remembered. He realises in all this that there was a time, very early on, when she, not he, controlled the whirlpool.

Again they meet outside the castle. Tim is distressed by a mental conversation he is having involving “conflict/potential conflict” (16:44). In talking with Guide he identifies conflicts of expectations, and then, on Guide’s recommendation, addresses the feelings directly. “Who in me makes me feel like this, who are you, what is it you want” (16:44). Two
people respond together who identify themselves as “Mr. Believe-everything-you-hear” and “Mrs. Appease-please.” They admit freely to having made things difficult for Tim. When he responds that they have made things difficult, they respond:

Distress he calls it! What a laugh We‘ve made you cry with frustration, we‘ve made you sick with apprehension, we‘ve hurt you in every way we could think of & then some. You‘ve played along so nicely - we can lead you by the nose wherever we like - and you can‘t stop us” (16:46)!!

Tim is silent and realises that this might be the best response. It reminds him of Jesus’ response to his tormentors. He recognises that to respond with retaliation is to get hooked in. They taunt and he remains silent. “As I look at them I see they are full of hooks - like burrs - no wonder they stick so fast when you let them get close” (16:46). Tim realises that a response to Mr Believe-everything-you-hear requires discernment in what is heard. As they continue to threaten he decides to work this issue by making lists to assist him in discernment. Guide affirms this approach. Guide pushes him to decide what to do with these two. He reviews some of his actions thus far.

I confronted the shadow, I unhooked Mr. Put me down & he deflated, I confronted Lord Doubt with the other side of the story I unchained Controller of the Whirlpool...I have wondered what she & I could do together here - a pair against a pair. I have wondered if these two don’t have a good side. Believe everything you hear could have something to do with trust & discernment of true & false. Appease please could have something to do with restitution of wrong” (16:48).

14. The subject of discernment is taken up in chapter five.
Tim affirms that these two could be useful "if properly directed or properly channelled" (16:48). He asks Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool to help him with this.

The next dialogue continues with concern for Mr. Believe-everything-you-hear and Mrs. Appease-please. Tim's not sure he's got a clear understanding of what could be their good sides. He then sees an image of a large scorpion. Guide uses the image to talk about the toxic effects of these two. In sorting out what to do, Guide tells Tim to review what he presently knows of them. He affirms that he can't please everyone and that discernment is essential to deciding what to accept or reject. She asserts: "listen to me - I put you in touch with what is going on through your feelings" (17:51). Here too, Tim will need to practice discernment of his feeling reactions. At the end Tim looks around for the two. "I look around expecting to see them standing there - I am sure they were before. I see the cliff & they are down at the bottom & and sea washes in over them. I sense they are covered rather than killed. They are very small" (17:52).

As he begins the next dialogue, Tim recounts some fantasy experiences that involve thoughts about Mr. Believe-everything-you-hear and Mrs. Appease-please. He is pleased to see the issues closer to consciousness. He also affirms how small they have become. Guide is pleased with all this. Tim admits to a certain reluctance to continue on, as things on the outside
are better, but he commits again to finishing the journey. The three then travel again “at breakneck speed along a square tunnel” (18:54). The journey is varied, one part of it is like being in the London Tube in an open air carriage. Eventually they come to a station and get out onto a platform. Here Tim is to meet the next person. He enters into dialogue with Tim and asks him to come to meet him without his companions. Tim refuses on their advice. The encounter ends as Tim must attend to the outside world. The other will stay as “I have no choice” (18:57).

In the next dialogue Tim picks up where he ended. He continues to ask the figure to come forward, but he delays in several ways. Finally the three move forward toward him in a line. “We come to a pillar & I put my arms round on both sides & catch hold of a very thin shadowy figure. There is a struggle & guide and C/W help me to pin him down” (19:60). While holding him gently Tim asks his name but gets no response. The exchanges turn to how this one created problems for Tim. Tim persists in wanting his name and specific instances of his influence. Finally the figure reveals that he is Professor Higginbotham. Tim does not believe him, and indicates that they will meet again and hopes he will be “more co-operative” (19:62).

As dialogue twenty begins Tim is back at the station. He is a bit churned up and says to Guide: “I am aware of a long anger in me which is part frustration & part being incensed at injustice. I have been snappy &
impatient with this person and outside too & it started yesterday when we encountered this person” (20:63). Guide commends him on becoming aware of his feelings and encourages him to look deeper. “What was behind the feelings you were talking about when we started” (20:63)? Tim reflects on these incidents and this leads him to an insight.

I think I can see something of this person’s role - he acts as a kind of malicious means of gaining control over others - why don’t I say it out loud - Manipulator - in another form. His allies have been Lord Doubt, Mr. Put me down, Mr. Believe everything you hear, Mrs. Appease please. Between them they have a go at others - or if that is not possible they have a go at me (20:65).

A tense exchange then follows between Tim and Manipulator. Manipulator pictures Tim as powerless to do anything to stop or control him. Tim affirms this once was so but is no longer true. I am no longer alone on this journey - I am in partnership with C/W & under the protection of my guide. The fact that you had to come out to meet us here tells me something can be done about it. Your power to hurt can be diminished whether that is power to hurt me or C/W & me or hurt others through me (20:65).

Tim suggests that Manipulator, who trades in half truths, “could become a persuader of the full truth” (20:66). Manipulator responds: “Bugger off - that puts me in your power - not you in mine. I am not relinquishing my power so easily” (20:66). As the conversation continues, and Tim explores the dynamic of manipulation, he realises “with something of a shock that I hate him” (20:68). He sees also that this kind of manipulation is behind a desire to be hurt to attract pity and love.
Finally Tim address Manipulator. “I do not accept that you have power over me to rule me” (20:68). Manipulator is dismissive in his response. Affirming again that he is not alone, Tim declares again that Manipulator has no power over him to rule him.

M. I'll catch you
T. you may well try to catch me - but you will not rule over me
I will have the key please
M. Key - what key
T. to the knight's prison
M. I don’t have the key I am the key but I am not unlocking it for you - no fear.
T. What made you put him in prison anyway
M. I didn't - you did - you used me to do it.
T. So I need to undo the manipulation
G. Yes. (20:70).

Guide encourages him for the task to come. They then return to the castle gates from the train station “with M held between us” (20:70).

The next day Tim makes note of an image that occurs to him of what is the goal in this process. He sees himself holding hands with Controller of the Whirlpool, Manipulator and the Knights, perhaps with Guide in the centre, and moving in the same agreed direction “in which there is more power than the sum of our individual powers” (20:70).

After several days Tim returns to the castle. He is feeling somewhat out of sorts and spends this visit reflecting on this with Guide. In the next encounter this again is the case. Guide and Tim discuss a situation
involving Tim's sons and Guide explores it with him from the perspective of undoing the manipulation. "This would be one way of unravelling or undoing the situation where manipulation could come into play with me as victim" (22:75). The interchange is helpful and at the end he feels "quite a lot better - some of the tension has gone" (22:76).

When Tim comes again he begins by admitting that he cut the last visit short to avoid engaging some of the questions about his feelings. As a result he only felt better for a time, but again feels tense. Guide affirms his actions but turns them to a different agenda, his relationship to Manipulator. "I see we have swapped places. M is now between C/W & me who have him by the hands. G is behind M with a hand on his shoulder & one on mine. M is quiet, subdued for the moment" (23:77).

Guide affirms this new arrangement, but encourages Tim to be discerning with Manipulator. He also affirms that a new relationship "is starting to grow" (23:78). Tim thanks Guide and addresses Manipulator. "I believe Guide because of who he is rather then about how I feel about you. My offer to be persuader of the whole truth still stands" (23:78). Manipulator responds: "You may have me in your power right now but when he goes then things will be different" (23:78). Tim responds by reminding him that Guide has a hand on each of their shoulders. This creates a new relationship, which, "if you allow it will bring you a new kind of strength & a new ability to work with us...." (23:78). He affirms as well that the new
way will also bring a new freedom. Manipulator remains silent.

Tim’s next encounter begins with a reflection that leads him to realise “the Knight is wrongly named Sir Anger - he is angry because he has been imprisoned not honoured & respected & acknowledged as he ought to be. I had had my focus on the ‘failure’ side of things which had shown up in different things” (24:79).

After thanking Guide for all that is happening, Tim acknowledges the tension in his body and recognises that it is someone he hasn’t yet encountered. Guide agrees with this, but first addresses an outside occurrence which they review. It then transpires that the outside event actually is an example of the presence of this next person. Tim summons him to meet them.

V. What do you want with me
T. to find out who you are & what makes you act in me as you do.
V. Turn round and you will see me.

I turn & see a very dapper individual - almost oversmarterly dressed with a kind of show-off air” (24:80-81).

Tim and this man discuss his clothing and the appropriateness of his appearance. Tim finds him a bit “too smart” (24:81), and the man is hurt by his remark. Tim continues his approach until the man finally exclaims:

I don’t like this tone you are adopting with me. It hurts my feelings. I want you to like me for the way I look. I dressed up especially this morning so you could see me look nice - & all I get is this shower of abuse (24:82).
This brings Tim to the problem: "You are very sensitive to how people accept you & your own mouth tells me you put on an outward show to please. You go out of your way to make a good impression" (24:83). They end on a more friendly note with Tim inviting Mr. Outward Show to dress more appropriately and come back next time.

In the next entry Tim muses with Guide about the way in which Mr. Outward Show is manifest in his outside life. He also connects with Controller of the Whirlpool concerning a "sore" feeling about all this. He is left with the task of checking back in this material for a feeling response which he will bring along for the next encounter.

Tim begins the next dialogue with this same reflection, but then asks Controller of the Whirlpool concerning a dream image if she is the girl in the dream who is running away. She tells him to ask the girl herself. Tim returns to the dream sequence and calls out to the girl to stop; "please don't run away I won't hurt you" (26:86). She stops, but keeps her distance, and asks "how do I know" (26:86)? It is clear that this girl doesn't trust Tim because he has kept "my cousin chained for years" (26:86). She is cousin to Controller of the Whirlpool, and she decides that she will not talk alone with Tim. He offers to have Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool join them, but they can't because they are guarding Manipulator. Tim explains the situation and asks the girl to come to the
castle gate to speak. She follows Tim at a distance. Controller of the Whirlpool and Tim enter a dialogue about the girl and her feelings. As they hold hands she encourages Tim to try to put himself into the girl’s feelings. He does so and realises how he must have frightened her. He then apologises to the girl. “I am sorry I came running after you & frightened you so badly - I acted very thoughtlessly - Please will you forgive me” (26:90). The girl accepts this but still doesn’t want to speak with Tim; “It is not yet time” (26:90). Tim accepts this and hopes a time will come; then she leaves. Tim and Controller of the Whirlpool continue to hold hands. Manipulator is critical, yet he is invited to join them. The encounter ends with “all three together with Guide behind with his hands on C/W’s and my shoulders” (26:90).

The next dialogue has to do with a relationship on the outside that Tim has found taxing. He speaks with Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool about it. In the next dialogue Tim continues the discussion. Controller of the Whirlpool helps him explore his feelings about previous experiences that are similar. He identifies experiences with con-men and bullies and then remembers childhood behaviour of his own that is similar. He and Guide continue to consider bullying behaviour and Guide again brings him back to himself. Tim resists meeting any such one within, “because I am afraid I might despise him” (28:95). Guide encourages him along and asks what happens “if you despise part of yourself.

T: I disregard it, avoid it, push it down, turn my back on it, but it is still
there & I still feel it. I suppose it must poison the whole" (28:95). At this point Tim decides to leave it until the next time, because of things on the outside which need to be done.

When Tim next encounters Guide the first item of business is whether he is willing to meet the one he avoided meeting last time. "Yes. It came to me strongly [...] that I had to meet everyone you wanted me to meet & only move on when the encounter was finished to your satisfaction" (29:96). Guide asks him to stop recording and to be quiet. Tim is with Guide, Controller of the Whirlpool and Manipulator. Together they "float off the cliff face" (29:96), and as they do, slightly below the top, "we see a small figure coming out of hiding from underneath the overhang & climb on top" (29:96). Tim has the impression that he has climbed the entire cliff face which is "very high - hundreds if not 1000's of feet" (29:96). Even if he had just been hiding underneath in the cliff face, Tim is impressed. "I am filled with admiration for the person's climb or that he could stay there - something I wouldn't even dream of doing. There is a courage & bravery there, & a steadfastness which I am awed by" (29:97).

As they float above the scene, they discuss whether Tim will meet him now. Tim then is astonished to see "the Knight stride out of the castle, upright, in armour but with sword sheathed. He goes up to the person who has climbed the cliff, lifts him by the hand from the place where he sits resting & the two embrace" (29:97). The two then enter the castle with
their arms around each other's shoulders. He realises "this is someone not to despise but to honour" (29:97).

Tim can't quite understand how this one is related to the one in him who has let himself be bullied. Guide nudges his reflection along, and Tim realises that he has changed. Guide leaves him to ponder the possibility that "you are further than you think" (29:98). Tim is awed by this encounter and in the next one begins with the realisation "that this person who was bullied is capable of facing & overcoming things represented by that climb, that height, that overhang. He has a worth far greater than I ever conceived. How did he change" (30:99)? Guide affirms that he's always been there "at the centre of your being" (30:99). Tim acknowledges this possibility, but admits that it's hard to believe. "I don't feel worthy of him. I don't deserve him" (30:99).

Guide indicates that this response is irrelevant. He affirms that the man is "the one who has helped you persevere to the end - who has helped you with this journey. He has remained hidden but now has allowed you to see him" (30:99). Tim is interrupted and ends abruptly.

The following encounter is largely a reflection on previous experiences. Guide plans to take him onwards, but Tim gets caught up in an image of trees of various kinds that seem to represent various stages of his life. Guide has stern words for him in that Tim appears to be taking control.
Tim apologises, they sort it out, and plan the next time to continue on.

As the next experience begins Tim reflects back to the stern encounter with Guide. He realises that his behaviour was influenced by Manipulator, but that all is resolved. He is greeted by Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool with warm smiles. The four release their hand holding, and put their arms round each other in the group. Then they share individual hugs with each other. They sit down on the grass & Guide brings out bread and wine, breaks the bread & shares it out to us & we eat. The wine is passed round by him in a beautiful chalice with scenes on it which I can't make out. Then I notice all the others we have met have joined us - the shadow, Mr. Put me down, Mr. Believe everything you say [hear], & Mrs. Appease please. B/E and A/P have only a few hooks on their bodies now. Mr. PMD is smaller [...] the girl is there from the forest, 'Mr. Outward Show', the Knight & the figure who climbed the cliff too. G distributes the bread, I follow with the chalice. It is all done - from the initial coming together with G/C/W/M - in silence - there is no need for words" (32:103).

Each is satisfied in the meal and a circle dance follows. Tim then greets each one present, holding their hands in his and looking into their eyes. There is a sense of deep acceptance. Tim feels at home anywhere in the circle. He concludes: "I sense that I am there as one who serves & and am reminded of the text 'let the one who wants to be first among you be the servant of all" (32:103).

Tim begins the next encounter recalling the meal. He is left with wonder at the sharing in the experience. He also experiences pains in his body and
works with Guide and Controller of the Whirlpool to identify the cause of these. He realises that the pains come from some of the people he has encountered. "Some of these people have caused me pain" (33:105). Guide encourages him to continue building the relationships with these people he has met. Tim affirms that he has changed, and that the knight has been released. He wonders if the journey is complete. Guide responds: "This journey's mission is complete - there is more work to do which we will continue [...] if you are willing" (33:105). Tim is willing and he acknowledges the value of what has been done and "of the nature & necessity & value of inner work. There are some things which involve some pain and upheaval in order to bring about healing. Thank you for the offer & for all you have done for me on this journey" (33:105).

Depiction - Tim

This depiction of Tim's experience is based on Tim's own material, two, one-hour taped interviews, and a final, brief typewritten reflection about his experiences.

For the actual process of the active imagination dialogues, Tim chose to sit in the church. He reasoned that there he would stand little chance of interruption. From the beginning, "I knew I had to write this down" (tape 1:1), so he fortified himself with paper and several writing instruments. At the outset he prayed and asked Jesus to be his guide, because he knew "it was the safest way to go" (tape 1:1). As noted in the summary, the point
of origin for these dialogues was an image that emerged in his first therapy session. For the first experience he returned to that image. He describes that first experience as hard work, and very frightening. He had no idea what it would be like. He found recalling it so moving that we stopped the tape for a few moments while he experienced his feelings and then regained his composure. Going down into the pit was like a journey into the bowels of the psyche, "like going down, down, down, down, down" (tape 1:1). The first narrative experience was a very physical one which Tim actually experienced in his body. He had resistance about being put into the other tube, like this [stretches out rigid in his chair] completely stretched out, you know, like a dog on a leash being pulled along [...] and I was physically in that place. There were considerable physical things that went on at the same time (tape 1:1).

Tim notes later that it was "actually easier than I had expected once I got into it, that I could see that I was not just making this up ... there is actually something going on" (tape 1:1).

While the first two narratives were experienced first and written down afterwards, the dialogues were written "absolutely simultaneously with the experience. I would write something and wait for the voice to reply, as it replied I wrote it" (tape 1:1). Tim describes the dialogues as "real conversation," in which "things were being said which I was not in control of saying" (tape 1:1). Whenever Tim felt he was being controlling of the dialogue he would cross out the material in the text.
The dialogues were quite varied in length. Most were ten to thirty minutes, "but some took up to an hour - like Controller of the Whirlpool" (tape 1:1). As noted he did a dialogue almost daily for this series, and found this to be an "highly exhausting" process (tape 1:1).

The contract in dialogue seven was "an important event" (tape 1:1). Tim notes that it came out of a school prayer, the prayer of Sir Francis Drake. The key image for him is "to continue until we are thoroughly finished" (tape 1:1). Once the contract was written, the process of each encounter was to start at the altar, read the contract aloud, leave it on the altar, sit down, re-read the previous material, then go on from there. At the end he collected the contract from the altar. He did not end with prayer, and notes that he was sharing this material with both his psychotherapist and his spiritual director.

Out of his reflections, three themes emerge that describe the essential qualities of Tim's experience. They are 1) change, 2) learning, and 3) depth.

In his initial reflection, Tim comments, "As I look back through it, I see that I've changed, and I think I learnt lessons that I continued to work with consciously for some time after it" (tape 1:2). He notes that the process more accurately triggered change which then happened over a period of time. His initial reaction to re-reading this material was less
considered and more spontaneous. It also reveals a sense of having changed. He exclaimed: "You berk! What a stupid thing to say" (tape 1:1).

Tim observes that he has changed in several ways due to these experiences. The first is that he has a greater self awareness, a "much better sense of who I am [...] there's a long term sense of change of awareness of self because of the experiences six years ago" (tape 1:2). When asked if this was a kind of enlightenment, he responded, "Oh, absolutely" (tape 1:2)! He notes that he talks to himself differently. "The level of passive imagination has dropped off enormously, like hugely" (tape 1:2). Tim realises that this was largely self-pity stuff, and asserts that it has dropped off "by about 90%" (tape 1:2). He affirms that "a need has been met, some process has been put in place to meet a need rather than having it syphoned off in passive imagination" (tape 1:2).

The second area of change is in the way he relates with others. His insights and understandings have helped him relate differently to others, including his wife and children. Specifically he notes that his experiences have affected "How I lead [...] it's made me more open to listening" (tape 2:1).

In addition the experiences have influenced the way in which Tim relates to himself, and the "way I look at things" (tape 2:1). Tim agreed with the summarising statement that the process has deepened and expanded a
sense of his self worth. This is focussed in how he sees the knight in the
material. At first he was Sir Anger, and Tim saw him as his anger, but
then he realised that the knight was angry for Tim because of his low self
esteem. The knight “has to do with worthiness and self worth” (tape 2:1).
Another change for Tim is that he is less moody. This he sees as directly
the result of doing this inner work.

The second essential quality is that of learning; the active imagination
dialogues have been an experience of learning. Primarily, Tim has
learned to relate to his feelings differently. The character who helped the
most with this is Controller of the Whirlpool. “That was an amazing kind
of encounter...one that I had quite a lot of resistance to [...] I did not want to
go” (tape 2:1). Initially there was a relationship of mutual distrust, but he
had to see her as a companion.

We actually had to learn to work together, that was part of
the contract almost on having met her, that we had to learn
to work together. I had to learn to trust my feelings a bit more, and she was actually quite helpful in many ways
during that time (tape 2:1).

Earlier he comments on this learning process with the characters.

To ask who it is is [...] I was going to say a dangerous thing to
do, yes, actually sometimes a dangerous thing to do, a scary
thing to do. I don't know who it is in me that's doing this -
providing me with a headache or feeling really sore in my
stomach, almost like a knife going up and down here [points
to this chest/abdomen]. [...] You don't know who you're
gonna meet. Some of those people I met, Mrs. Appease
please, and Mr. Believe everything you hear, I really didn't
like! They have done me huge damage at school. They are
sources of huge amounts of pain. (tape 2:1)
Another character that has prompted much learning for Tim is Manipulator. He has taught Tim “how manipulative I was” (tape 1:2), and Tim has continued to dialogue with him up to the present time. He both can show Tim when he’s being manipulated, and when he is manipulating. Recently he has shown Tim his manipulative behaviour in a teaching situation. He has also helped Tim to be more defensive in protecting his inner life.

The third aspect of learning has to do with “reading” his own body. Tim has learned to pay attention to his body and “to hear in it things he hadn’t heard before” (tape 1:2). Another learning for Tim came through the image of the child/young boy who appears toward the end of the dialogue experiences, and who climbs up, or out from under, the cliffs onto the land at the castle. Tim realises that this was a person with him from his own youth. He is a person of great tenacity, the one who is embraced by the knight and welcomed into the castle. While Tim found his feat awesome, he also realises that “it’s not part of me I wanted to recognise” (tape 2:1). He now sees this tenacious one as he who “helped me stick with the active imagination process” (tape 2:1). In his final reflection Tim acknowledges that this image of the small male figure is much more important to me now than it was when I first encountered him. I am more and more intrigued by his welcome by the knight and want to sit with this. I don’t want to analyse it but experience it. I may not know what has ‘really’ gone on until sometime
later" (reflection p. 1).

More generally, the learning experience of the active imagination became two way, a kind of dialogue between his outer and inner lives. Tim perceives that the inner and outer processes feed each other. "Learning about social process gives me clues as to how to protect my inner life" (tape 1:2). An example of this is the dynamic of triangulation. The inner work process has also affected his relationships in his family, and in his professional work.

The third essential quality of these active imagination experiences has to do with depth. Tim found the experience "profound. I hadn't realised quite how deep it was in many respects until going back over it again - just how important it was" (tape 2:1). Tim also describes the experiences as life-changing and integrating - "certainly that fitted the bill in all of it" (tape 2:1).

Part of the depth aspect of the experience has been dealing with the painful side of it. As quoted above, he met characters he didn't like and had to stay with the process in spite of that. Tim talks about standing firmly in the encounter, living with the pain, knowing relief, and experiencing a deeper sense of self worth. He found some of the dialogues a mixture of pain and healing, and often things got worse before they got better. "Yes, there is in some instances more pain at first" (tape 1:2), but that often lessened over
the course of the dialogue and gave way to relief. Usually the relief came “almost immediately” (tape 1:2). Tim realised that “standing in the encounter is a very important thing to do and I’m realising that it’s the opposite of what I did as a child. It’s a new kind of thing that’s come to me” (tape 1:2).

Another part of the depth experience was the sense of self acceptance. Tim found that “some of it was highly affirming, hugely affirming” (tape 1:1). Out of it came acceptance.

Ah yes, acceptance is definitely ... that I can be ... I can be who I am, I don’t have to denigrate myself. There are bits of me I might not like, but they are part of me, they just must not be allowed to control. And there are some others who need to be given some extra space (tape 2:1).

A significant aspect of the quality of depth in these experiences is that, for Tim,

most of the “ai” [active imagination] was religious experience as well. Again it’s explicit, the guide is Christ and that’s deliberate, and he takes me in places where I do not necessarily want to go [...] and the whole thing is illuminating and revealing [...] and I come to a new place of who I am. It’s like the image of God is being re-formed in me. It’s like that, I’m not saying that it is that. [It’s like] being transformed from one degree of glory to another. [...] There’s a sense of wholeness at the end that isn’t there at the beginning, [and I] am reconciled to myself (tape 2:2).

This reconciliation means that he can relate creatively to aspects of himself of whom he was unaware or with whom he was in conflict.
These three essential qualities, change, learning and depth, all have resulted in growth. This was an "immense time of growth" (tape 1:2) for Tim which has caused a transformation into a deeper, richer and more varied sense of self. When reflecting on the contributions of the experience he asked, "Oh, where hasn’t it contributed" (tape 2:1)? In his final reflection Tim speaks of the active imagination experience as seminal, that is, "it seeds and fertilises my understanding of who I am and gives me courage to face the future" (reflection, p. 1). He concludes acknowledging that the seeding and fertilising process continues to operate. "It is probably one of the most important experiences of my life" (reflection, p. 1).
Summary and Depiction - Lottie

Introduction

The Lottie case material consists of dreams, reflections and active imagination narratives; the experiences took place over a seven month period. Though much of the imagery overlaps, it divides easily into two sections. The first begins with a dream of arriving at a crossroads, and ends with a dream of a border crossing. This material is on A4 paper without page numbers. The second section follows immediately in time and is from a bound journal entitled “Lottie’s Journal.” The entries are without page numbers and often are not dated. The task of this section differs from the first, but is also introduced through a dream.

During the period of time in which Lottie was having the experiences in the second section of this material, she began to have another series of experiences centred on her shower at home. The shower experiences are like a separate “text” of experiences woven in among the other dreams, reflections and active imagination narratives. Thematically they relate to the other material that was being narrated concurrently, but are quite different in terms of structure.

Lottie’s shower becomes the “place” of difficult, terrifying experiences related to the death showers in the Nazi concentration camps of World War II. These are more embodied experiences, often without dialogue.
They are a different form of active imagination, through which Lottie had to move very carefully. It was a terrifying time for her. The experiences subsided over the time she completed the task of this second section of active imagination. Here are three excerpts from the journal which illustrate these experiences.

1. 13 January

This morning I have a shower and with the previous day’s insight face the experience of terror. I stand facing the corner and put my hands on the walls to steady myself; as the breath comes rapidly and shallow I focus on it and suddenly these words come up ‘forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ I breathe deeply into the words and the terror leaves me -

FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW
NOT WHAT THEY DO

2. Tuesday

The shower is again a stressful place - it stinks appallingly and the thought of rotting human flesh comes into my consciousness. I hear voices. What am I experiencing? It is not like hearing the voices and music in Lincoln Cathedral, not like the music and chanting at the Mother Temple in Bali, for I am not in the place where things happened but only in a setting which might connect to something experienced by others. I feel like a conduit through which something passes in order to be released. Learning to let go! to release the pain, to empty.

3. Sunday

In the shower I begin to scream silently. I feel small & helpless. The question comes up as to what could I have done to help other people, to prevent people from being murdered? Nothing, because I was too small, too young, too ignorant. Then I get confronted with the question “and what would you have done if you had been an adult?” “I don’t know, I don’t know,” I scream in silence, as my eyes burn with unshed tears. And I contemplate the terrible possibility that I might not have done anything. “Forgive, forgive, for we know not what we do.”

Following is a list of the main characters of the Lottie material. The references indicate the dream or active imagination experience in which
they first appear, and the page numbers assigned for this study.

Lottie
Parson/Jesus: dream, p. 1
Mary/Mother Mary: p. 4
Joan of Arc: dream, p. 7
Rosa Luxembourg: dream, p. 7
Mary Magdalen: dream, p. 7
Joy/Joyce Inanna: dream, p. 11
old man: p. 14
Zeus: p. 15
Joseph: p. 15
Bishop Tutu: p. 15
camel: p. 34
group of men: p. 35
lion: p. 38
Hitler: dream, p. 46
horse: dream, p. 51
ogre/giants at party: p. 56
monks at Haein-sa, p. 73

The Lottie material consists of all handwritten material. There are thirteen dreams, twenty-five active imagination narratives, four visual arts pieces, and three "shower" entries chosen from the larger body of general reflections in "Lottie’s Journal." The photocopied material for this study numbers seventy-eight pages.

As a final comment in the introduction of Lottie’s material, I acknowledge that Lottie’s images include historical persons, both dead and living, and I made no attempt to encourage her to change their names. I state above in chapter two in the section, “The practice of active imagination,” that this is a critically important step to take to avoid contamination of the inner image with outer qualities, and of the outer relationship with inner concerns. In this instance I did not address the matter for two reasons.
First, Lottie did not know personally the living figure, Desmond Tutu, and second, because I considered the possibility that the issues being addressed in Lottie’s work were not solely intra-psychic. Intuitively it seemed possible to me that some broader spiritual-social agenda was also being addressed. Were her experiences overall, including the “shower episodes,” addressing the spiritual redemption of social tragedies as well as illuminating individual issues? In the light of my experience of Lottie’s process up to that point, and in light of my own psychological and theological perspectives, I was not prepared to rule out this possibility, and to treat these images solely as intra-psychic phenomena. After several discussions with the supervisor of my private practice, a Jungian Analyst, I decided to let the images stand as they emerged, and thereby, to leave room for a social as well as an intra-psychic aspect of the experiences. I might add that this is the first time in my work with active imagination that I have encountered what I term a specific social agenda, in this instance the spiritual redemption of the social tragedies represented by the Hitler material and the shower experiences.15

15. The notion that social tragedies may be redeemed through spiritual experience rests in the Christian tradition on the affirmation that, in Christ, humanity shares a sense of oneness. The traditional doctrine of the mystical Body of Christ is the foundation, and this doctrine finds its scriptural roots in Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the last judgement. Verse 40 includes the famous teaching: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” The intercessory prayer life of the Christian is based on a similar idea. Prayers offered for others, individually and collectively, can affect positively the lives of others, both present, future and past. The somewhat recent practice of the “healing of memories” draws on the same perspective. With such a background, it is possible to extend the same possibility to active imagination.
Summary - Lottie

The Lottie material begins with a dream wherein Lottie alights "from a bus early in the morning in an unfamiliar Australian country town" (dream 1:1). She is at a crossroads in front of a community hall. She goes to the right and ends up in "a small church at the end of a street" (dream 1:1). Inside she hears a children’s choir singing the song sung at her parents’ wedding. She stays for morning tea in the community hall at which she meets the parson. "He then went outside with me, climbed into a very old Holden ute and called out to me, ‘I’ll be back’" (dream 1:1). He tells Lottie he is going to the stable on Parable Road. A map/diagram follows the dream showing the crossroads, community hall, church and stable.

In the first active imagination encounter, Lottie talks to the parson about the trouble she is having making scones. "He pointed out that the scones and tea were like the bread and wine at holy communion and were used in an informal way in the community hall" (1:3). He tells her that her scones were much more like the bread used in the early church and "asked me to bring some along to the last supper" (1:3). As they talk, Lottie cries remembering a childhood experience, and then she asks him what "I’ll be back" means. The parson only smiles.

At the next meeting Lottie asks again what "I’ll be back" means, but she
gets no answer. The parson takes her back to the church which is now full of sheep. He loads them into the ute and they drive up to the stable on Parable Road. There the sheep are shorn and their fleeces are added to "an enormous heap of wool which filled the whole structure" (2:4). Lottie then sees sitting outside the shed "an enormous Mary knitting an absolutely gigantic carpet on huge knitting needles - the carpet was to cover the whole earth with warmth and protection" (2:4).

When she next visits Lottie discovers that "Mary was now normal size, but still knitting, this time small soft jumpers - one for each baby born into the world" (3:4). Lottie is now sure that the parson is Jesus. He and Lottie are both wearing caps. She asks about them and Jesus tells her that his woollen cap is a Christian cap - Jews wore black ones. Hers is white cotton and she realises that it is a Muslim cap. The back gate to the shed now opens and

in trotted the three wise uncles each carrying a gift - a spinning wheel, a huge comb and a loom. I suddenly had the sensation that in Australia Christianity was not very holy and experienced a yearning to be inside a cathedral in Europe or Asia (3:4).

The next encounter is very brief and centers around the remark, "I'll be back," for which she still receives no explanation from Jesus. In the encounter which follows this, Lottie yet again asks about the remark, but this time has an experience of floating up above the scene. Jesus asks her
about the experience then asks her what "I'll be back" means.

And as I open up to the question and distance myself from my previous anxiety about getting his answer to the question, I have a real sense of knowing the answer. 'I'll be back' is not a promise, is not a hope, not a belief, 'I'll be back' is a fact, it is the truth; that is, whenever I reach out, open up, then it is that 'I'll be back' in a space and time that I feel complete. 'I'll be back' is right now, it is not something in the future, it is a state of beingness that happens again and again and again. (5:6).

Lottie then has a dream in which she is invited to tea by Jesus at her favourite cafe in Cambridge opposite King's College Chapel. Jesus is wearing a long white robe with a gold belt, and on the way to the table she notices that his crown of thorns is hanging on a hat stand. Also there are a red feather boa, a grey felt cloche, and large flat blue hat. Jesus tells her that the others are already at the table.

I immediately recognise the others: Joan of Arc, dressed in a stunning silver-grey Chanel suit; Rosa Luxembourg in a beautiful Chinese red silk suit; and Mary Magdalen in a sapphire-blue dress. We embrace, and kiss, and laugh, and talk and are extremely excited. We have an absolutely marvellous time eating scones with cream and honey, drinking tea and chatting about our friendships (dream 2:7).

On the way out of the cafe, Lottie notices that Jesus' crown is "sprouting leaves and rose-buds" (dream 2:7).

When next she visits, Lottie finds the parson/Jesus sitting on the steps of the community hall. She asks him why he turns west [left] when he goes home, instead of going straight ahead to the stable. He tells her that he
only delivers sheep and wool to the stable, but goes home the other way. She asks if she can go along and he consents. They drive off in the ute, and travel "quite a distance along a straight road" (6:8). They come to a steep mountain, park the ute and "walk up a small path until we get to a cave" (6:8). Lottie sees the three women from her dream, Joan, Rosa and Mary Magdalen, in the cave. The three wave them in and they enter and remain for a visit. Jesus leaves to "die over the weekend" (6:8), and Lottie stays with the women.

The next entry is a dream which places Lottie in the deserts of Central Asia. She reaches a fortification, up on the ramparts of which she uses a toilet to have a bowel movement. Fearing that she has soiled the tail of her silk blouse, she reaches behind her and instead of shit, she retrieves a lump of gold.

Another dream follows in which Lottie discovers that she is next in line to collect a baby! She is presented with a little girl child, who is "small and brown and most loveable" (dream 4:11). She discovers that she is already named; she is Joyce Inanna, and called Joy.

In the next active imagination Lottie takes Joy to the cave to show her to Joan, Mary and Rosa. "They really like her and knock up a crib for her out of a fruit box" (7:12). The three offer to care for Joy so that Lottie can go off "and do my thing" (7:12). Lottie enquires after Jesus; the response is the
shrug of three shoulders - well he's off you know; doing things as usual; can't stay still for long" (7:12)!

Lottie watches Joan pick purple grapes from a vine, squeeze the juice into Joy's mouth, eat the pulp and spit the pips. "The whole act is incongruous in her Chanel outfit - and I love it" (7:12). The women discuss using their hats for the hens to nest so they can have fresh eggs for breakfast, "esp. for Joy in a few months" (7:12). Lottie discusses the blue fabric of Mary Magdalen's outfit with her. "She says she was given the fabric by one of her admirers, in Damascus, and as his old father had been a taylor [sic] he had made it up into a versatile outfit" (7:12). She then demonstrates the parts of her outfit including the hollow heels of the shoes which contain Mary's diamonds from admirers, and the hat as a document holder.

Lottie then watches Rosa dance with her red feather boa to entertain Joy. She is amazed and asks Rosa how she moves so easily in her red Chinese outfit. The encounter ends with Rosa explaining this and giving Lottie advice on focussing and control.

In the next encounter Lottie begins by checking on an old man who lies slumped against the wall in the garden. Earlier in the day "I had picked him up by the beard and[,] swinging him until a nice momentum had built up, thwacked him against the wall. His beard was stuck against the blood splattered wall, and he was still alive" (8:14). Lottie puts him in a
pram and wheels him to the cave; she has decided to ask the women what to do with him. She arrives at the cave just past twilight. "The women were sitting outside by a little round table, and by the glow of a large beeswax candle were busy: Mary plucking a musical instrument (a zither?), Joan cracking hazelnuts, and Rosa shelling peas" (8:14). Lottie explains her mission.

I have this old guy here, who has pestered me for decades, abused me, belittled me, threatened and intimidated me, and I lost my cool this morning and nearly killed him, What shall I do with him? I don't want to excuse myself, but right now I want to have some idea from you whether I ought to get help for him or let him die" (8:14)?

Each woman takes it in turn to talk of her experiences with men. Lottie finds Joan's story particularly moving and weeps uncontrollably in response. After each has spoken, she asks again and the women respond as one, "Let him die" (8:15)!

When Lottie turned toward the pram she "noticed Zeus, Joseph and Bishop Tutu standing by it as if guarding it" (8:15). Jesus also had arrived and was standing nearby. The three men each pleaded for the old man's life, but the women "were not touched, and did not respond" (8:15). Jesus then spoke: "I appeal to your love for the child to let this man live" (8:16). The women then take him into the cave and tend him. With the men standing guard outside, the women fall asleep. In the morning Lottie discovers "Joy sitting on the old man's legs and the two were entertaining each other" (8:16).
The next entry is a dream. Lottie finds herself in the midst of an international political arena virtually surrounded by old men in two rows of tiered seating. She addresses the men: "Gentlemen, in your jacket pocket each one of you has a small statue which belongs to me. I request each one of you to come down here and return the statue to me" (dream 5:17). Slowly each man came forward and placed the small statue on the table. Each was a tiny black replica of Queen Nefertiti. Each small statue fit together jigsaw puzzle style, and they made up a normal sized black replica of the Nefertiti statue. Finally only one piece was missing from the left side of her head. Silence fell on the gathering.

I could hear the silence in all its power - and then it opened a small chink for a man whose face was hidden beneath a hat to come forward and add the missing piece. I knew who it was from the hand, because I had once met him and refused to shake that hand. He placed the little figure in the place for it and stepped back into his seat (dream 5:18).

The statue was now complete, a black queen composed of hundreds of small ones. Lottie touched her forehead with her fingertips, and the scene changed. The walls disappeared, the seats and the men faded away, and the black Nefertiti took on the colours of the original bust. "And I could hear the sound of silence, and it was full of the sound of joy" (dream 5:18).

In the next active imagination experience, "the three women have organised a motorized 4-poster bed for doing the shopping down in the town. It's a very solid affair with drawers in the bottom for the shopping,
and curved sides at the head end to give a sense of security” (9:19). Joan is the driver, and the three are accompanied by Joy and the old man, a small, spotted dog and a macaw in a cage. The shopping seems for something special and takes most of the day. The mob arrives back at the cave by evening to find that the four men have swept the cave, built a wood heap for a bonfire and prepared a meal. “Everything is ready for a grand party” (9:19). The entire group eats and then the dancing and singing begin.

While the Old Man and Joy watch the goings on, we four women and the 4 men perform an intricate weaving dance using the threads of wool, silk, ribbon, rope, fabrics, furs and all the other bits and pieces that had been bought during the day. We moved backwards and forwards, in and out, in pairs and singly, but always working in a coordinated way to weave a carpet which was an extension of our being - it seemed to grow out of our movement as if our bodies knew the pattern it had to have, and when it was finished it was a beautifully coloured square carpet with an intricate Tibetan mandala in the centre (9:20).

With Joy and the old man sitting in the centre of the carpet, the others lift and lower it five times whilst singing “a strange mantra” (9:20). The old man then lays down and the carpet is placed over him, and Joy sits on top of it. The others sit in a circle and keep watch. Lottie has a sense of anticipation.

In the next encounter Lottie checks on the scene. All is still in waiting, and the mound had gotten a little higher. The next two encounters are the same. The mound is higher each time, and Lottie notices that the eight change places each day. At one point the mound looks like a small
version of a Chinese royal tomb.

Over the next five days the waiting continues. Lottie checks in each day. At one point the mound is glowing and Lottie can “see the distinct outline of a very large red egg” (12:23). Lottie wonders if it will hatch, and she waits. The glow becomes more intense, more red. Mother Mary is still knitting little jumpers, and Jesus is bringing them to the cave. There is now an enormous pile of them.

There is next a dream in which Lottie flies high above the earth with an exhilarating sense of freedom. She sees the earth from a great distance and feels that the “earth is safe” (dream 6:25).

As the next encounter begins, Lottie is at the cave and senses movement from behind the cave. Large numbers of children begin arriving in groups. As they gather, “the egg melts through the carpet and the children touch its shell gently and with reverence” (13:27). Some of the bigger children turn it on its fat end, and a baby is carried to it, taps it and it cracks open to reveal a lotus flower floating in water. As the children touch it and the waters inside, the egg changes into a fountain, and the children bathe naked in small groups in it. Then each is clothed with one of Mary’s jumpers. “By this time it is morning and the women prepare breakfast and the men serve it to the children” (13:27).
The next encounter is on Christmas. Lottie walks up to the cave at night; and finds preparations underway for the Christmas celebration. All are there, Zeus, Joseph, Desmond, Mary, Joan and Rosa. Jesus arrives with his mother, Mary, in the ute. Joy and the old man are playing nearby. Under the tree are presents for Lottie. After the meal, the parcels are brought to Lottie. They are all the same shape, "sort of triangular, like a piece of cake, but much larger" (14:28). Lottie opens each parcel, they are all coloured glass. The last is a round shape from Mother Mary.

I have an intense feeling of joy and anticipation, of knowing that she is handing me the 'centre of things' - her present is the piece that goes into the middle and now I realise that this glass structure is the rose window from the western facade of Chartres Cathedral: in the centre is Christ at the last judgement of good and evil, of dark and light, of all opposites (14:29).

The last entry in section one is a dream in which Lottie finds herself at a border crossing. "I have to get behind the border to get a story. I know I will be safe and get what I want once I am over the border; the dangerous part is to X the border" (dream 7:30). Lottie finds herself in an anteroom for the crossing that reminds her of China. Two male guards keep watch on the door to the transit lounge. Lottie then notices two women in the anteroom, "who look like me - short, squat, with straw-yellow hair [...] one wears a green dress, the other a yellow one, while mine is yellow-green" (dream 7:30). Lottie tries to find out if they are friend or foe. To do this she does a sort of "finding out" dance: they are friendly. As part of the dance the women remove their pantyhose and put them over their faces.
We dance into the transit lounge screeching and in total abandonment: my two companions distract the 2 guards while I slip through the open glass doors and am on the other side. (I have a sense of the importance of trust - cooperation in the face of great odds + intuition needing to be taken seriously). Trust the process (dream 7:31)?

This dream ends section one of the Lottie material.

Section II

The second section begins with the narratives of the first two shower episodes quoted in the introduction above. The next entry is an active imagination encounter in which Lottie returns to the cave to ask "for support in this time of suffering" (15:34). She is invited to stay the night and for breakfast. It is a friendly, jovial visit, but she senses that something is going on. Soon she discovers what it is.

I am being presented with an apricot-coloured camel, a sword and a lance, a basket of roses, with the words 'you need these in order to go into the desert.' The sword and lance have been borrowed from Don Quixote and so I call the camel Rosinante and decide when to ride off (15:34).

The next entry is a dream in which Lottie sees herself as "dark-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned" (dream 8:35). She is in a desert community, and realises that she has broken some social convention for which she is to be punished by the men. There are no women or children present. She is unsure of what she is supposed to have done, but is sure that, whatever it was, it was right. She is, therefore, unrepentant. Her punishment is carried out: "The men scower [sic] me to the door of a public building with
two curved daggers through the top of my chest and leave me to die. I have no fear” (dream 8:35).

Lottie then has a dream which flows immediately into active imagination upon waking. In the dream she is about to board a plane for Xi-an when she is wakened.

I come out of the dream with the message that I am off to Xi-an, the ancient city along the Silk Road, on the edge of the desert! When I come into full consciousness, I think “well, now that I’ve missed the plane, how will I get there?” And my heart replies “you’ve got your camel to take you there!” So it seems as if nothing can/will stop the journey into the desert - I’m off to Xi-an to get my ‘provisions’ and then off into the western regions” (16:37).

In the next active imagination, Lottie returns to the dream in which she is left scoured [sic] to the door. In the dark she sees a face of Mother Mary in the night sky. She asks for help, and hears a reply: “A lion will come to help you. You must shave its mane, which will grow again” (17:38). Soon a lion comes and removes the daggers from her shoulders. He then gives her the daggers as part of her resources for the journey into the desert. She then shaves the lion’s mane with her sword, and collects the hair in a large silver bowl. The two then retrieve the camel from the forest, and watch the sun rise over the desert.

Lottie then returns to the cave for a last attempt to get her friends to come with her, but it is clear that she must go alone. As she says her goodbyes, Jesus gives her a blessing, the child Joy gives her a pearl ring, the old man
gives her a newspaper, and she takes a lightening bolt from Zeus’ attache-case. With these she re-joins the camel and the lion.

The first thing I decided I needed to protect us, was a shield. So I made a shield. I also collected together a number of sacred amulets and put them into a silk purse - a wooden comb, a crystal (an amethyst), a string of beads (Buddhist prayer beads) and a Tibetan coin. Then we had a last look around, checked the wind direction, the temperature and the position of the sun. Noting that it was overhead we knew that it was foolish to leave until later in the day, after a mid-day nap, so that we could travel at night using the stars to navigate by (17:44).

The next entry is the third shower episode quoted above. This is followed by another dream. In this dream “I am standing in front of a picture of Hitler in a very large elegant room” (dream 10:46). As she looks at the picture, the image takes on three dimensional qualities and suddenly Hitler’s head falls off and out of the frame. Lottie catches it “in my basket and decide that I have to dispose of it properly” (dream 10:46). She exits through a door on the left at the far end of the room and finds herself in a courtyard with an incinerator. It is “exactly like the incinerators behind Buddhist temples used for cremation” (dream 10:47). A monk puts the head in the incinerator, “and he says to me ‘we also need the body’ so that the soul can go to heaven. I decide to go on the journey to find the body. My camel is waiting outside the back gate and I begin my search” (dream 10:47).

In her next encounter Lottie returns to the “elegantly proportioned room” (18:48). It becomes the scene of her 8th birthday, and all her family gather
for the celebration. It is a festive and joyful occasion. She is presented
with a little brown horse, who is outside on the terrace, behind the french
doors where surprises are hidden. As the family is seated, Lottie goes to an
unusual floorboard across the room and removes it. Under it she finds “a
large ornate gold key on a red velvet cushion” (18:52). This she retrieves
and places before her grandfather. When she returns to close the floor
opening, she notices a “black velvet-covered book” (18:52-3), which she
removes and places before her grandmother. It is the family bible with the
entire family tree in it. During the meal her grandmother “read out
names and we laughed over some of the funny places where people had
been born” (18:53). Later in the afternoon “grandpa gave me the key and I
had a feeling that he looked like Carl Gustav Jung” (18:53).

The next entry includes dream and active imagination encounter. In the
dream Lottie is in Berlin, in the parliamentary area. “Suddenly a figure
comes running down the steps of a huge columned building and plants a
nazi - flag on the nature-stripe of the footpath” (dream 11:54). She realises
that this is Hitler and the body she is looking for, but wakes up trembling
for she must sever the new head from the body, and is not at all
comfortable with the need to kill.

Lottie picks up this story in her active imagination. Next to the flag on the
nature footpath is a tree where her camel and horse are tethered. The
lion, now with a new mane, joins them. Lottie takes the lance and sword
and enters the building. She passes a raucous party of ogres in a front room and makes her way down the hall to a door standing open. She pushes it open with her lance, and there finds Hitler sitting behind a desk. “I demand/command that he stand up by pointing the lance at him, and when he is erect I cut off his head with my sword [...]. The lion catches the head in the basket & immediately the head shrivels into a hazelnut. [...] I drag the body out of the room, down the passage & steps, and heave it onto the horse” (19:58-59). Lottie mounts the camel and leads the procession out of town towards the Far East.

Lottie next has a nightmare of being raped and beaten, “feeling sick, terrified and wildly angry - murderous” (dream 12:60). In her active imagination she drags the headless body off the horse onto the desert sands, and beats it with a piece of wood until the intestines spill out.

The next entry is a dream. Lottie wakens in her dream and finds herself in the desert. She takes the lance and sword and walks a distance from the tent. She lays them down on the sand “the lance pointing N, and the sword intersecting it, pointing E. I notice that the lance has letters engraved on it above the hand section; the letters are: F - R - E - U - D. The sword has a set of letters engraved on it as well: on the blade J - U - N - G. Shine in the star light” (20:62-63).

In the next encounter, Lottie returns to the sword and lance. “In the
ground, underneath, is a square hole through which I squeeze; I drop down & fall into an underground stream of water which I follow upstream - I'm walking northwards" (21:64). Lottie follows the stream to its source high up a mountain. From there she can see back to the tent and to the intersecting lance and sword in the sand. To the east she sees a "long green line from which a light is gleaming" (21:65). She realises that she must go towards the light, and rejoins the animals to do so. The green line turns out to be a "tall very well-kept hedge" (21:65). At first she sees no way through, but watches a red bird disappearing and re-appearing from the hedge and discovers a break in the hedge line. They pass through the hedge and find themselves in an oasis where they rest.

Lottie then returns to the cave to ask the men the significance of the sword and lance, which she has left in the desert sands in their intersecting pattern. She tells them what she has done, and "Zeus does his block - He shouts & carries on like a two-bob watch telling me that the sword and lance had been borrowed for my use, but that I had broken that trust and lost them" (22:67). When Zeus finished his tirade, Lottie informed him that she knew exactly where the lance and sword were, and that she had used them as she understood she was to do. Zeus stormed off "bolts of lightning flashing from his suit pockets" (22:68).

In the next encounter Lottie returns to the cave to talk again with Zeus. "He cannot be allowed to just stomp off in a huffy rage - he is abusing his
power" (23:70). She follows him to the very back of the cave and wakes him. She challenges his behaviour, and accuses him of bullying. She also points out his long history of abuse which he defends with the assertion that women need to be raped. Lottie then leaves saying "I'll be back" (23:71).

The following entry is a mandala drawing with the words, “I found God in myself and I love her, I love her fiercely,” printed in a circle around a centre.

In the next encounter Lottie continues across the desert. “The red bird leads me on ever eastwards over stoney plains, across streams, across mountain ranges and finally we are near the ocean” (24:73). They follow the coast, until they cut through a gap in the mountains and finally arrive at Haein-sa and the temple. The monks are expecting them and they are given water for their ablutions. Behind some trees Lottie sees “the symbol of inner wisdom being illuminated: the swastika turning anti-clockwise” (24:74). After a meal they keep an all night vigil in the inner temple in preparation for sending Hitler's body to the incinerator. In the morning the action is taken:

As the sun rises over the horizon, the body is consigned to the flames and as the smoke begins to rise up out of the chimney, the solitary nun amongst the group says in faultless English - 'it is finished.' I cry with relief, with compassion, with the overwhelming feeling of achievement, with the sheer beauty of the ceremony and the kindness of the monks in their caring and nourishment of me, the horse and the
camel and the lion (24:75).

Later in the day the horse wanders into the village below where it is sacrificed by the shamans "to the dark powers of the night" (24:76). Lottie reflects that she must sacrifice the horse, given to her on her eighth birthday, in order to grow up.

In the last encounter in this section, Lottie returns to Zeus. She hears a sound at the cave entrance and discovers that her camel has returned with the lance and sword. She removes them and thanks the camel for her part in the journey. She is reminded of another camel she met in her psyche years ago in China. Lottie then challenges Zeus' assertion that women need to be raped. She claims that it is not a sign of power, "but an indication of a lack of real power - i.e., power over one's self interests, sense of self-worth, security, nourishment, especially over connectedness" (25:78).

Depiction - Lottie

This portrait is based on Lottie's active imagination material, and two, one hour taped interviews.

Lottie identifies three different forms of imaginal dialogue in her experience. She uses terms interchangeably to describe them. The first she came to use instinctively. "Right throughout the late 70's and early 80's,
when my life was going through some horrendous traumas, I used, I suppose, a version of active imagination and image meditation" (tape 1:1). Her method was simple: “ideas would turn into images with which I would dialogue” (tape 1:1). Lottie would write these as dialogues as the experiences took place, and this process she identifies as dialoguing. She later refers to this as a secular process for dealing with emotional and intellectual problems and issues. The second she calls image meditation. It is a more sacred process by which to be in touch with the soul or spirit. The early form of image meditation takes as its starting place an experience Lottie had in China.

I go back mentally to a place in China ... which is a very special place to me ... it's ... the lake's surrounded by mountains ... I've only ever been there once ... one reaches the lake up a mountain going through the mountain pass and then by the lake. The only time I went there I encountered twin girls, about 8 years old. They were standing by a boat which was carved out of the local timber, brightly painted, and ... I talked with them and then they ran away ... and then I climbed one of the other hills up to a Tao temple and then I came, climbed, down which was really on a little chain, I think ... quite a risky, scary process. I looked down and the lake was green and the boat was there.

And when I go into a meditative state I see myself in that boat and I go down into the lake, just down, until the waves close over me. And it's a trusting process, I don't drown, but I know I'm in the water, and I'm still breathing and I go down into this lake until I get to the bottom. And then I get out of the boat and walk on the bottom of the lake until I find a grotto and inside there's a standing Buddha, pale green, and I talk with this Buddha, and that's what really my dialogue then is ... and it's not the normal kind of dialogue. It is as though the two of us speak heart to heart ... we don't use words ... we communicate heart to heart. [...] And so I never write it down like a dialogue ... it is an experience and hence a narrative (tape 2:1).
This imagery then changed for Lottie. In the second image the grotto wasn't there, but Lottie walked along until she found a tunnel into which she entered. "It went up and up and up" (tape 2:1), until finally the tunnel finished above ground in the inside of a cave. There Lottie encountered a huge sitting Buddha with a big belly, gold and smiling. The Buddha was facing Lottie with his back to the cave entrance. To leave she could either go back through the tunnel or exit the cave behind the Buddha. This setting existed for a few months, then changed again. In these experiences with the Buddhas, Lottie explains that there was no verbal dialogue, that could be recorded. In both instances the dialogue was heart to heart.

The third experience of imaginal work is the style used in the material reviewed in this study. Here there is actual dialogue with a variety of characters, some of which is included in the subsequent recording of the experiences. Lottie refers to this interchangeably as image meditation or active imagination. To distinguish the three forms of work, I will term the first, "dialoguing," the second, "Image meditation," and the third, "active imagination."

The process of imaginal work is also surrounded with ceremonial preparation and ceremonial closure, which Lottie describes.

When I meditate very seriously, I go to my meditation room [...] and I sit on my meditation cushion. This started in winter and so I have a special shawl from Tibet which I put around my shoulders, and before that I light candles and incense [...] in order to feel ready (tape 1:1).
Lottie imagines the energy moving from the emotional chakra "in the belly" (tape 1:1) into the heart chakra. The actual experience is a mental imaging process, usually of 5-20 minutes, no longer than 30 minutes in length. Lottie describes a winding down process: "I bow to the Buddha nature in all human beings, and give thanks three times, extinguish the flames of the candles, take the shawl and fold it up and place it on the meditation cushion ... I go out of the room backwards and close the two doors" (tape 1:1).

Within the next hour, Lottie then records the experience in her journal. She places her hands on the journal in a kind of blessing and writes "until it is finished" (tape 1:1).

As noted in the introductory Notes on page 1, Lottie’s dialogue material divides easily into two parts. The overall emotional tone of each is quite different. The first part is the series that begins with the crossroads dream and centres often around the cave.

The cave experiences I found extremely joyous...there was fun, there were bizarre bits and pieces, funny interludes, the four poster bed image (we laugh) [...]. When that came up in the active imagination, I remember laughing so much that tears were streaming down my cheeks, and yet there was also a terrible seriousness about it, this was not ridiculous, this was absolutely serious and to be taken seriously ... There were those fun things, and I think I began to treat them as a way of building a very strong framework in which I could do active imagination on some of the more horrendous experiences. I need laughter to give
me strength. [...] Now that I look back on it, I see it very clearly as something ... a huge, very powerful foundation that had fun, joy, relationship, positive images in it. [...] And the people ... to help me feel secure, yeah, to give me strength to go through the hell (tape 1:1).

Lottie comments further that the theme of the Virgin Mary knitting a carpet and the vests for the children of the world, empowered her to believe that the world was safe. This contributed to the safe framework for the second part of the work.

The second part of her material begins after the border crossing dream. It centres on the task of retrieving Hitler’s body for cremation and includes the separate aspect of work in the form of the shower experiences.

One of the most horrendous experiences was going into the shower ... into my own shower and feeling the absolute terror in it ... a terror that I don’t think I’ve ever experienced in reality, even though I’ve experienced bombs falling around me and people being shoved against a wall with a gun pointed at them. I’ve never felt that kind of terror that I experienced in the shower, yet I know it was my own terror - not somebody else’s terror (tape 1:1).

Joy and terror, then, are essential qualities of these experiences for Lottie, though they each characterise different aspects of the overall work. Lottie mentions in two instances the courage required to undertake the work. The first is in her reflection on reading the summary of her material. “I think what I was amazed at after going through the weeping [...] was to feel the tremendous courage that I had to go through that ... that really dark night and survive, because I knew there were moments when it seemed
terribly black" (tape 1:1). Later she remarks of the process: "so part of the journey is learning courage and accepting the pain as well as tasting the joy" (tape 2:1).

Another word that points to the essence of these experiences is change. Lottie had the sense, in reading the summary of the material, that she was reading someone else's experience.

They touched me very, very deeply, but almost as though it was somebody else's experience that was touching me rather than that this was me at some previous part of my life ... And it was almost as though I was sharing an experience that one person, and ... in fact, a number of people had experienced - it was like I was reliving something for a number of other people by reliving my own experience. That was very, very strong for me (tape 1:1).

There are several aspects to the quality of this change. First, Lottie sensed that she was going through a time of "deep inner change" (tape 1:1), which she experienced as spirals going down and down to different levels or layers of her inner life. This spiral image continues to describe her ongoing response to her active imagination experiences. Change also describes her emotional response to the experiences themselves.

To start I was terrified, and gradually I became more and more secure in the knowledge that I could trust this process ... that it was safe ... that there was an inbuilt part of my psyche which will always protect me which would insure that I could only go as far as I could cope (tape 1:1).

She comments that this process, which felt terrifying at first then became "like a good friend" (tape 1:2). The nature of the change was
transformation, but for Lottie it was not a matter of changing one thing into another in separate episodes of active imagination. It is "a change which is like a metamorphosis where one stage is the precursor of the next stage, like a larva turning into a caterpillar or into a butterfly. It's as though there is a predetermined connection" (tape 1:1), and that the work as a whole is part of a transformative change. The change is a larger movement within a process, neither at the beginning nor at the end. It is a part of the whole deep life of change in which transformation stages take place. For Lottie, active imagination contributes to the overall process of change and transformation. Change is "a life long process and this is a slice" (tape 1:1).

One way in which this change has been manifest is in Lottie learning to trust her own inner insight more deeply. This was manifest in her relationship to D, who was her partner at the time. The process of active imagination so connected Lottie with herself that she began to trust what she was hearing from within. "My psyche was giving me messages that could be trusted ... I was more able to trust those intuitions, insights hunches" (tape 2:2). This process of active imagination "helped to deal in a very constructive way with accepting, letting go, dealing with my anger, the sadness, the grief, the loss, and moving on" (tape 2:1).

In relation to the Hitler image, Lottie also experienced significant change. For many years Lottie had great difficulties with the images both of Hitler
and the swastika. Whenever she saw them she'd feel quite nauseated. Through this process something has shifted and changed that Lottie describes as "enormous" (tape 2:1)."

It's as though a resistance which had existed at some stage ... to wanting to really deal with something which had been a part of the first seven years of my life ... is now able to be engaged in ... as if something had become transparent, translucent, transformed (tape 2:1).

Lottie now feels that she can confront the horror that the image represents. In talking about the process as having slain a dragon in her life, Lottie refers to a Taoist teaching which holds that "it's not a matter of slaying the dragon but befriending it, so you can go to sleep side by side with it. That's what it feels like, as though I can rest in peace and feel that it will no longer engulf me, overwhelm me, kill me" (tape 2:1).

The change this work represents also has affected how she keeps her books on Hitler.

I used to keep all the books about the Third Reich and Hitler in the toilet, I don't read them at all, but that's where I keep them ... and I have, in the last month and a half, actually been able to take them out of the toilet and bring them into my study, into the house, so they are part of my inner collection of books now, they don't have to be where the shit is gotten rid of (tape 2:1).

Lottie tells of buying a pictorial book of Hitler's life recently. She found herself able to look at it, and able to think about who he was and what he was like. She now can see him simply as another human being and to wonder about his life and influence.
Awe is yet another essential quality of these experiences for Lottie. She mentions this quality in her reflection on fright and fear. While there had been terror and fright at the outset, these gave way to this sense of awe. It is "much beyond terror, much beyond fear" (tape 1:2). "It's really a sense of absolute awe, something which is so wonderful that ... I just move back in absolute awe and wonder, 'How can the psyche bring that into existence'" (tape 1:2)? Lottie realises that "I could never with my conscious mind have thought it up" (tape 1:2).

For Lottie "awe moves from fright in an appreciation of the mysterious" (tape 1:2). An essential quality of the process is mystery, and with mystery there is a quality of surprise. Lottie found that she was "constantly being surprised" (tape 1:2) in her unfolding encounters. In her ongoing experiences since those of this study, she finds "there are still times when I don't understand what's going on, subsequently, maybe a day later, or when you [the interviewer] make a comment on something that's happening, then it becomes apparent very quickly where the connecting link lies" (tape 1:2). The quality of wonder is a part of Lottie's awe in her experience. This is focussed on the insight "that there's something beyond me" (tape 1:2). With this also is a sense of finding the experience deeply moving.

Lottie observes in her reflection on the variety of her experiences: "If what
I've been doing has been active imagination or image meditation, then that, for me, is a religious experience or a spiritual experience, because ... the journey is a ceremony ... an experience [...] something which deeply moves me” (tape 2:1). In reading the summary of the material Lottie tells that “at a number of spots [...] I just wept copiously” (tape 1:1).

Another quality is that of illumination. Lottie connects this in one instance to the notion of surprise. "

Active imagination in one way is like feeling really liberated to let something in without ... predicting it, in which case, in not being ready for it either. [...] Sometimes in not being ready for something and really being hit between the eyes - that's the most illuminating (tape 1:2).

In reflecting on how these experiences have contributed to her life, Lottie responded, “They are my life” (tape 2:1). This active imagination work has contributed to her discovery of her own truth, but Lottie sees it as illumination that is “not so much a revelation, but a confirmation” (tape 2:1). For Lottie, the image of the acorn is essential in understanding this distinction. Life is like a process of growing into who one already is; it is an unfolding of one's essential nature from within in the same way that an oak tree emerges from an acorn. Her active imagination work has contributed to a fuller understanding of her being and her destiny.

Lottie mentions briefly several other qualities of her experience in her reflections. The first is peace, but not the kind of peace that is static. It
involves blessing and is a dynamic peace. "It's like jumping over mountains, it's joyous, active, the peace of driving a four poster bed to the shopping centre because it has fun in it" (tape 1:2). Lottie mentions as well an incredible sense of loving and a real sense of compassion, of knowing that all the people out there are just like me, that they have feelings, that they have mistakes, [...] and that we're all in the same four poster bed together ... and that life can be hard, but it can also be good (tape 1:2).
Composite Depiction
of the active imagination experiences

For the five of us, our personal experiences of active imagination have been quite different. Certainly our content differs greatly, even though four of us have explicit Christian images, especially Christ, in our experiences. In the heuristic framework the focus of concern is with the essence of experience. Among the five of us, certain core, or essential, qualities emerge that give a composite picture of active imagination as we have known it.

The first quality centres on the experience of change and transformation. Each of us experienced active imagination as a life-changing experience. Tim defines this process more closely in asserting that active imagination triggers a process of change that then happens over a period of time. This would also reflect my own experience. It is as if active imagination sets in motion a process of change that even continues well after the experiences have ended.

For several of us the experience of change felt deep and lasting. Lottie uses the phrase, “deep inner change,” and Helen comments that “I feel so different now.” Campbell identifies several changes quite specifically in terms of how he sees things differently, in relation to humanity and to himself, the power of the unconscious, and his Christian faith. He
remarks that he feels more secure in himself and sees himself differently. Helen, Tim and Lottie marvelled at how much they had changed when re-reading their older material for this study. They were amazed at who they had been. As Lottie observed, it was almost like reading someone else's experience.

The primary focus of this experience of change is our sense of self. We each described active imagination as involving illumination, insight, learning, enlightenment, encountering a personal aspect of truth from within. Each of these was in reference to our understanding of ourselves. As Campbell put it, it has to do with expanding the boundaries of the self, it involves learning a new sense of self. Each of us has a greater self awareness or expanded self consciousness. Tim mentions that he has a much better sense of "who I am," as well an increased sense of self worth. He asserts that the active imagination experiences were an immense time of growth. I mention a stronger sense of personal identity in the larger context of being known by an other in the experience. Helen claims that she is more self aware and knows a lot more about herself. For Lottie, the changes in self understanding are from the work as a whole - a transformative work - and also seem part of the changes life itself brings.

Several of us mention changes in our outer lives as a result of the changes within us. Campbell, Helen and Tim mention changes in family relations, Campbell and Tim mention changes in how they relate to their
own bodies, and Helen mentions interaction with friends as well. Tim notes that he now listens more to others, and Campbell mentions changes in how he relates to people in his church congregation. Lottie observes that the experience has deepened her sense of loving compassion for others. The experience, for Lottie, includes a deep sense of “there’s something beyond me.”

Helen, Tim and Lottie mention specifically being empowered by their experiences for their lives. Helen felt enabled to be more loving, honest with, and useful to her clients. Tim felt empowered to face his future, and Lottie felt empowered to face her personal history. For each of us the changes also involve learning to trust this process as a source of truth from within. In a sense this is like an ethic for the outside life which results from the experiences within. These reflections on change resonate with Jung’s comments as identified in chapter three, in the section on the values and benefits of active imagination. Jung asserts that active imagination extends the boundaries of our conscious horizon and changes our personality (Jung, 1916a/1966, para. 358).

The second characteristic of our active imagination experiences involves fear, fright, terror and resistance. Each of our active imagination experiences includes aspects of these. Campbell felt challenged to engage images that were frightening, and in one instance sought the assurance of the Christ that he was on the right track. Helen felt called to take the risk
and trust, she called it a "leap of faith." Tim, Lottie and I met some frightening characters in our dialogues. As Tim said, "you don't know who you're gonna meet" (Tim, tape 2:1). Lottie felt terror at first in the second section of her work, but worked through it to confidence. Tim experienced strong resistance to the process, and admits that he didn't want to go into the experience. He felt it to be dangerous and scary. I struggled through with the help of the Dog and the Christ, both of whom protected me from frightening creatures.

The third quality of our experiences involves deeply positive feelings of calm, joy and peace. Campbell mentions a deep sense of calming that developed in him and that included a deeper sense of inner security. He also felt a developing sense of inner community with his images, that gave him a new sense of not being alone. Helen, Lottie and I identify joy in reference to some of the experiences, and Helen implies this in reference to her sense of amazement with the process itself. Along with joy, which she describes as "tasting the joy," Lottie adds the hilarity and laughter that characterised her first series of experiences. She also mentions a sense of dynamic, active peace. Tim summarises the process as hugely affirming. I mention several words to describe the positive aspects of the encounters: well-being, contentment, healing, liberating, a sense of being home. Tim and I mention the sense of being accepted for who we are.
A fourth quality, mentioned briefly, has to do with surprise. While each of us had encounters that we did not anticipate or expect, three of us mentioned specifically elements of surprise. Helen mentions being amazed and astonished, Lottie mentions her wonder and being constantly surprised, and I mention several instances of wonder and surprise at what emerges in the dialogues.

A fifth characteristic is the sense of the sacred. Each of us mentions qualities associated with the sacred in reference to our active imagination experiences. Campbell mentions a sense of the "other," and an awareness of a larger life in which he participates. I found the encounters like gifts of grace, and several of us affirmed that we couldn't have made these dialogues up out of our conscious minds. Helen finds a holy element in her experiences, and had a sense of a deep connection to the divine. It was an aspect of her experience that was, in the end, ineffable. Tim clearly sees his experiences as part of his religious experience. For him the dialogues were profound, integrating, and led to a sense of wholeness and reconciliation within himself. They rank among the most important experiences of his life. Lottie speaks of awe and mystery; she found her dialogues deeply moving. Helen and I both mention a sense of the numinous that we experience with the various characters in the experiences. Helen also mentions the sense of being in sacred space within during her experiences, and having the sense of a skin of light around her encounters.
Our active imagination experiences, while very different, all share qualities of change and transformation, aspects of fear and terror, elements of joy and peace, a sense of surprise, and a sense of the sacred.

In this chapter I have presented my own active imagination case material and the case material of the four research participants, Campbell, Helen, Tim and Lottie. For each of us I have included a summary of the case material as well as a depiction of the active imagination experience. I have concluded this chapter with a composite depiction, in the heuristic model, of the active imagination experiences of the five of us.
Figure 10. You founded the world: Psalm 89:11 (pastel) 1998
Figure 8. Who made heaven and earth: Psalm 121:1-2
(pastel, collage, ink) 1998
CHAPTER FIVE
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Introduction

We have now looked in detail at Jung’s method of active imagination, have met the research participants and have looked at their case material and my own. It is the task of this chapter to consider Christian religious experience with which I intend to compare active imagination. In reflecting on religious experience in a Christian framework, I will consider several aspects of this broad field of experience. In these considerations I will refer primarily to the works of William James and Morton Kelsey. I begin these reflections by considering the broad spectrum that is religious experience. My method here will be in the spirit of Jung, that is, to circumambulate, to walk around the topic, rather than to attempt to address it in a systematic manner. Next I will address the distinctions between spiritual and religious experience, and then explore the nature of discernment. In a heuristic model, I will summarise my own religious experiences, and report on the responses of the case participants in relation to their religious experiences. Finally, I intend to establish a working framework for Christian religious experience for the purposes of this study.

A broad spectrum

As we have seen in chapter two, the “canon,” or rule for measure, for active imagination is Jung’s work. While his definition may include
historical experiences as Hannah (1986) demonstrates, Jung is the simple source for a substantial understanding of the active imagination experience. It is not so simple a matter with Christian religious experience. To attempt to define Christian religious experience brings us quickly face to face with the pluralism that is Christianity. In the Christian tradition, religious experience is part of a tradition that is worldwide and encompasses almost two thousand years. There are historical movements, differing cultural factors and ever changing world views, which affect what people mean by religious experience. These also affect the images that are often a part of the experience. There is no simple reference point, no single definition or point of view.

Looking at the entire spectrum of religious experience, Martin (1987, pp. 325-28) divides the phenomenon into three different aspects with very different expressions. These are realisation of duty, meditational insight, and personal devotion and worship. My reflections and considerations fall into Martin's second and third categories. Martin, in his conclusion, refers to the work of Hardy. Hardy, in summarising the findings of the Religious Experience Unit at Manchester College, Oxford University, identifies ninety-two categories of experience and their implications for life and belief. The analysis of the concept of religious experience is "...clearly unfinished business" (Martin, 1987, p. 330).

Kelsey (1983, p. 84) identifies more than thirty ways through which we
come in touch with the spiritual dimension of reality. He groups these into five categories. The first is spontaneous religious experiences and the second is natural and ordinary experiences which intimate or reveal another dimension of reality. Third are those experiences sought through the use of religious methods, including prayer and various forms of meditation. Fourth are neurotic and psychotic experiences, and fifth are what Kelsey labels "dangerous experiences." In this last category he places certain forms of hypnosis, the practice of mediumship, and the use of hallucinogenic drugs. In a later writing, Kelsey (1995, p. 166) simply groups spiritual and religious experiences into three categories: the sacramental, the non-image or contemplative, and those which are based in imagery. This brief overview allows us to see that the broad spectrum of Christian religious experience may be categorised in various ways.

Among those who address the issue of Christian religious experience, James holds a central position. At the turn of the twentieth century, in 1901-02, James delivered two series of lectures on the varieties of religious experience. These were the Gifford Lectures, delivered in Edinburgh, Scotland. There were twenty lectures in the two series, and they are now published in one volume. These lectures remain a highly respected and important review of this broad topic.

James (1902/1985, p. 26) remarks at the beginning of his second lecture that, because there are so many religions and they are so different from
one another, he can only use the word "religion" as a collective name. This perspective serves to support the pluralistic reality of Christian religious experience that I have mentioned above.

A fundamental distinction that James raises in his lectures is between the personal and collective religious experience. In lectures one and three he frames this distinction as being between personal religious experience and institutional religion or second-hand religion (James, 1902/1985, pp. 6 and 29). Second-hand religious life for James is that which is founded on the experience of others. It is communicated over time through traditions, and takes on fixed forms because of the value of imitation. It is sustained by habit, and becomes, in time, conventional, the experience of ordinary believers. James (1902/1985, p. 30) comments: "Churches, when once established, live at secondhand upon tradition; but the founders of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their direct personal communion with the divine." Clearly James sees personal religious experience as being of primary importance, and this is the focus of his lectures. It is interesting to note a parallel between Jung and James on this matter. In a passage that is critical of the Church and its emphasis on the collective, Jung (1958/1980, para. 1637) asserts that the subjective, personal religious experience is the "alpha and omega of religion." I will return to this distinction later in this chapter when I give shape to the notion of religious experience for this study.
In his lectures four and five James explores in depth the nature of what he labels healthy-minded religion. He juxtaposes this to the experience of what he later labels the sick soul in lectures six and seven. These considerations lead him to comment on the "enormous diversities which the spiritual lives of different men exhibit" (James, 1902/1985, p. 102). An acknowledgment of the great differences between people results in the recognition that we not only have very different forms of religious experience, but that people actually do need different types of religious experiences depending on their individual circumstances (James, 1902/1985, p. 135). This point raises the importance of the relativity of any form of religious experience in reference to others forms. If differing people legitimately need different forms of experience, it will be difficult to justify one as superior to others.16

In Lecture Eight, James describes the process of unification. This process of unification offers a way to resolve the polarities of experience that James has identified in the previous chapters under the headings of healthy-minded and sick-soul religion. James asserts that most people experience some degree of disunity within themselves in life. He acknowledges that this varies on a broad spectrum of experience from severe to very mild.

16. While the pluralism of the Christian movement is beyond this study, it is a fascinating reality to consider, the truth of which contemporary Christians seem reluctant to embrace. I suggest that this is largely due to the character of religion under the primary influence of creed and dogma. Such influences tend to lead us to believe that there is only one correct way to believe and to relate to the divine life. To engage our pluralism seriously, will require us to revise our notions of belief.
Within the religious context this disunity is overcome through the process of unification (James, 1902/1985, p. 175). This process of unification occurs in a variety of ways: gradually over time, suddenly, as a result of altered feelings, by changing patterns of action, through intellectual insight or mystical experience. James goes on to point out clearly that there is a parallel psychological process of unification that does not take a religious form. Here James makes a distinction between parallel psychological and religious processes.

James (1902/1985, p. 335) makes a further point in reflecting on personal religious experience. "First-hand individual experience of this kind has always appeared as a heretical sort of innovation to those who witnessed its birth." From James' point of view, that which is new seems most always heretical at first. The content of personal religious experience frequently contains imagery that crosses the boundaries of conventional, accepted images. I remember clearly the morning some years ago when a woman confessed to me in a spiritual direction session the insight from her meditation experiences over the previous weekend. In her experiences she had concluded that the divine presence that met her in the depths of her being was more accurately "she" rather than "he." This was intensely personal and deeply meaningful, but it took her beyond the borders of her own experience to date, and beyond those of her community as she understood and experienced them. The experience left her shaken. In terms of personal religious experience, the new often takes
us where we have not been. This quality of personal religious experience has parallels with active imagination that will be addressed more in detail in chapter six.

As part of his review of religious experience, James devotes chapters sixteen and seventeen to mysticism and the mystical experience. James (1902/1985, pp. 380-81) identifies four basic marks of the mystical experience. They are ineffability, a noetic quality, transiency and passivity. He then identifies the range of mystical experience starting with those of no special religious significance to those of intense religious meaning. He groups these into seven categories and three assertions. The first category involves a heightened sense of significance of some maxim or formula or a phrase of a text. This meaning is usually experienced as a sudden insight, as if something has swept over us. James (1902/1985, pp. 382-83) cites examples including a line from the creed, as experienced by Martin Luther, a single word, passages in poems, the effects of light on land and sea, odours, and musical sounds. It is this form of mystical susceptibility, he claims, that keeps us alive to the various aspects of the arts.

The second category involves the sense, in an experience, of having been there before. It, too, has the quality of sweeping over us in a rather sudden recognition. The third is characterised by a sense of heightened meaning in the places and things around us, and the fourth James identifies as a coming on of a mood, not unlike a trance. In the fifth category, a shift into
a different form of consciousness is induced by intoxicants or anaesthetics, especially alcohol. James cites examples involving nitrous oxide, ether and chloroform. The sixth area involves encounters with certain aspects of nature. James (1902/1985, p. 394) remarks: “Most of the striking cases which I have collected have occurred out of doors.” It seems also the case that people are usually alone when these experiences occur. Examples include the sunrise, mountains, night on the ocean, seeing the milky way and the seashore.

As a seventh category, James identifies experiences from several religious traditions which are the result of a methodical cultivation of a practice as an element of the religious life. These include the practice of yoga, and the training in mystical insight in India, the Buddhist training in stages of contemplation, the dervish experience in the Sufi sects of Islam, and the practices of meditation and forms of prayer in the Christian tradition. In this latter group he mentions the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila.

In addition to these seven categories, James (1902/1985, pp. 422-23) makes three fundamental assertions about the authority of the mystical experience. The first is that they are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative in the life of the one who has had the experience. These experiences carry a sense of absolute truth for the person who has the experience, but that need not be true for others who stand outside the
experience. He stresses again the ineffability of the experiences and the subsequent loneliness that can ensue as the person realises that it is not possible to convey the meaningful experience to anyone else. Second, no one outside the experience is obligated to subscribe uncritically to its authority. Any such experience is open to critique, and is to be evaluated in the context of a larger framework of experience. Third, these experiences relativise the authority of rational consciousness and its processes for discovering truth. These points all will be taken up again as we compare active imagination and religious experience in chapter six. This brief review of James' work demonstrates that he remains a central resource to the consideration of Christian religious experience.

Another work that stands alongside James' in the discussion of Christian religious experience is Otto's work, *Idea of the Holy*. It, too, has become a classic in the field. Central to his contribution are the uses of the terms "numinous" and "mysterium tremendum" in reference to religious experience. The "numinous" for Otto (1923/1958, pp. 5-7) is a subjective feeling response to an objective Other that we find difficult to articulate, it is pre-rational, grasps us and heightens a sense of creatureliness in us in reference to a greater Other. The strong religious emotion that results from a numinous encounter with the Other is the "mysterium tremendum," or awful mystery. I will refer back to these two terms later in this chapter, and in chapter six we will encounter Jung's use of Otto's term "numinous."
Earlier in this section I mentioned that Kelsey (1983) identifies over thirty ways by which we encounter the spiritual dimension of reality. He groups these into five categories of experience. In addition to these Kelsey (1983, pp. 84-86) then identifies nine characteristics of spontaneous religious experiences. In this he draws on the works of James and Otto mentioned above. The first four come from the work of James. These experiences are, again, 1) ineffable, 2) noetic, 3) transient and 4) passive. The next two Kelsey draws from Otto's work. They are characteristics associated with the notion of the *mysterium tremendum*. They are 5) that we experience an almost overwhelming attraction to this Other in spite of ourselves, and 6) we experience the reality of holy fear, of holy awe. To these Kelsey adds three qualities out of his own experience and perceptions. 7) The experience can be either through a dazzling darkness or through quite clear and distinct images. 8) For some there is a sense of ravishing love, of meeting a divine lover. 9) At times there is a sense of being saved from something by this love. Kelsey (1983, p. 86) notes that this last quality is present in many of the conversion experiences recorded by James.

Clift (1982, p. 67) defines religious experience simply as a union of opposites. In this he is seeking to bridge one of Jung's central notions with Christian theology, and to demonstrate how Jung's insight can be seen "as correct, or at least heuristically useful." Clift asserts that people experience themselves as being divided against themselves, or in conflict with
themselves. Here Clift is influenced by Jung’s notion of the opposites which I have explained in chapter one. Examples of the opposites in Jung’s terms are the persona and shadow and consciousness and the unconscious. In theological terms an example is the spirit and the body, or the sensual and the spiritual aspects of the person. The dominant historical attitude of Christian theology toward sexuality can be interpreted as a result of this sense of conflicted, or split, opposites. Clift (1982, p. 71) quotes St. Paul’s famous remark in Roman 7:15 as an example of this split.

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” This split, in Jung’s framework, results in neurosis. The healing of this split in theological terms becomes a religious task. That which can heal the split must be able to encompass both aspects of the polarised opposites. For the Christian it is God, for Jung it is the God image in the psyche, or the self archetype.

For Clift, using Jung’s insights, religious experience is the healing of this split. It involves an honest confrontation with ourselves, and a coming to a deep acceptance of who we are. The process involves consciousness holding the opposites in relationship; specifically it is the conscious mind listening to the unconscious, in which the repressed or rejected pair of the opposites resides. Through this process of holding the opposites together, Jung affirms that a new position will emerge. This is the third thing, or transcendent function. This process, a healing process, results in a deep sense of personal liberation, joy, and a greater sense of wholeness for the
individual.

Clift, in his bridging work between Christianity and Jung's psychology, sees religious experience as a healing process for the individual of an inner, existential sense of splitting which is the natural result of the existence of the pairs of opposite energies and realities in the psyche. The individual is able to come to a deeper sense of peace and wholeness through following Jung's process of engaging the unconscious and addressing the reality of the opposites in the personality. Clift's notions of the healing nature of religious experience parallels James' (1902/1985, p. 175) notion of the process of unification in chapter eight of his lectures.

Another aspect of the broad spectrum of religious experience that is important is that which I term the "difficult" religious experience. I include this in this review of various aspects of religious experience, because, it seems, in popular religion, it is easy to overlook. I intuit that when we speak of the experience of God in everyday terms, we are speaking usually of some experience that settles us, comforts us, brings us peace, and assurance. James (1902/1985, p. 175) talks about the result of the process of unification as first relief and then happiness. He also identifies three essential characteristics of religious experience as rest, enchantment and happiness; these are all very positive words. (James 1902/1985, pp. 47-48). We will look at these later in this chapter. While these are valid, there is another whole tradition of religious experience that is also
important. Not all religious experiences are pleasant; not all encounters with God in the Christian experience are positive, comforting experiences. This is essential to affirm when I later reflect on the relationship between active imagination and religious experience in the Christian tradition.

In the biblical material there are substantial examples of the difficult religious experience. Abraham’s experience of God almost cost him his first-born son, Isaac (Genesis 22). Jacob’s wrestling with a man/angel resulted in his blessing, but also left him with a wound (Genesis 32). The call of Moses through the burning bush (Exodus 3-4) pushed Moses to the edge of his confidence. Moses tried to back out on the task and this resulted in an angry response from God, which led Moses to do as he was instructed to do. Elijah’s experiences of God (1Kings 17ff), and his subsequent actions in God’s name, put him at odds with Ahab and Jezebel, and caused him to flee for his life to the famous cave where he encountered the “sound of sheer silence” (1Kings 19:12). Jonah wanted no part of the encounter with God and ended up in the belly of “a large fish” (Jonah 1:17). The Book of Job is framed by the difficult experience of God, as the writer wrestles with the issues of suffering and righteousness. In the New Testament, Jesus is led “by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by devil” (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus’ suffering, from the Garden of Gethsemane through to his death, central events to the entire Christian enterprise, are the prime examples of difficult religious experiences. This is carried further in Mark’s gospel, wherein a central theme is that the way
of the Messiah is the way of the cross. Paul's experience of God on the road to Damascus, wherein he was temporarily blinded, was a dramatically difficult experience of enlightenment (Acts 9).

From the wider tradition, it is noteworthy that both Julian of Norwich (Colledge & Walsh, 1978, p. 27) and Ignatius of Loyola (Cleason, 1964, p. 12) gave birth to their spiritual teachings and insights through serious illness. Two works of imaginal literature pick up the theme of the difficult experience of being hunted by God: Thompson’s famous poem *The Hound of Heaven*, and Kazantzakis’ novel, *The Last Temptation*. Thompson (nd.) writes of fleeing from Him “down the nights and down the days, down the arches of the years, down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind.” In Kazantzakis’ novel (trans. 1961/1979, p. 31), Jesus, as he searches for a clear direction for his life, often feels the presence of God like the talons of a vulture digging into his forehead. These examples attest to the fact that we can document an entire sub-tradition of the difficult side of religious experience within the wider Christian tradition.

In this section I have walked around in the vast, general area of Christian religious experience. In this circumambulation, I have acknowledged that there is no single reference point or definition for religious experience. I have identified Martin’s three categories and Kelsey’s five categories of religious experience. Drawing on James, I have identified distinctions between personal and collective religious experience, what James terms...
second-hand religion, and acknowledged the reality of our different needs for different forms of experience. I have touched briefly on the nature of new experiences, summarised James' qualities of mystical experiences, and identified three points in reference to authority in mystical religious experience. I have identified key concepts drawn from the work of Otto, have reviewed Kelsey's nine characteristics of spontaneous religious experience, and considered Clift's attempt to bridge Jung and Christianity in seeing religious experience as a reconciliation of opposites. Finally, I have commented on the tradition of what I term the "difficult" religious experience.

In the process of moving toward a working definition of Christian religious experience for this study, I intend now to consider the distinction between religious and spiritual experiences.

Religious experience - spiritual experience

In early 1996, as I began this project, I was talking to a friend about the subject of my research. When I mentioned Christian religious experience, he immediately responded that I should change it to "spiritual" experience. He further commented that he felt done with religion, but was very interested in spirituality. This issue has run alongside this entire project. It is one that interests me greatly, though I also admit that I have no satisfactory or final understanding as to how to distinguish between the two. What I intend to present here are reflections towards an
understanding. First I present two brief anecdotes, and then part of my taped conversation with Morton Kelsey in January, 1998.

At the Australian New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts (ANZSJA) Conference in Melbourne, February, 1997, at LaTrobe University, David Tacey remarked that the categories of the spiritual and religious were, until recently, seen to be identical and to be the prerogative of the church. He maintained that only in recent times have we begun to separate the two. Tacey has seen this happen with students at the university and others. There are those who are developing a reverential attitude toward a larger life without being involved in the religious enterprise. For Tacey then, "spiritual" refers to this reverential attitude toward life in a broad sense. "Religious" focusses this attitude in a faith response to the gods.

When I was working with Alan Jones leading regional training programs for spiritual directors in the early 1980s in the USA, he defined spirituality as the art of making connections. These were fourfold: with God, with self, with others, and with the larger world. Jones asserted that all people have a spirituality; in our framework, ours is Christian.

During the taped conversations I had with Kelsey, we entered on a discussion of the distinctions between spiritual and religious. At first he asserted that these are not the same experience. When I pushed him for distinctions, he responded, "One is organised, that's a bad word, one is the
concretised religious with the historical setting... religious search within the historical setting” (Interview, 1998, tape 2:1). We agreed that the religious can involve an historical setting while the spiritual begins with a less clear and predisposed framework. We pushed on and then he stated “I would say that the deepest form of Christianity is a form of both deep religion and deep spirituality” (Interview, 1998, tape, 2:1). We talked for some time trying to align religious experience more with creeds and dogmas and organised religions, and trying to see spiritual experiences as more clearly aligned with a concern for direct experience apart from organised religious structures. Morton then talked about his recent work of revising one of his books. He confessed: “We purposefully, probably to avoid this very problem, would not confine ourselves to one word for the divine. the spiritual, God, ... that it is a multi-faceted jewel... If we could, I would say, if we could link the words together, spiritual-religious, so it is a double word. All the nuances of the spiritual can’t be covered in one word” (Interview, 1998, tape 2:1). In the remainder of our conversations we decided to hyphenate the words. We spoke of things as spiritual-religious in order to demonstrate to ourselves their connection.

Using the insights of Tacey, Jones and Kelsey as background, I intend to weave in other considerations as I continue this reflection.

First, I agree with Tacey that the distinction is recent. Certainly the world in which I grew up would have seen all things spiritual as religious, and
would have believed that these were the business of the churches. I do think that sweeping changes in recent decades concerning religious affiliation, practice and thought, require us to explore some distinctions between spiritual and religious. Practically speaking, I encounter assumed distinctions in my conversations regularly. I encounter it with my clients in my psychotherapy practice, and, as does Tacey, with university people, both students and staff alike. I meet many people who no longer involve themselves with churches, but who continue to be interested in the religious stories of the Christian tradition, and the activities of their religious heritage, including prayer and meditation. In my experience, people who no longer see themselves as religious often see themselves as spiritual. Tormey, (1998, p. 212) quotes Geneva, one of the women she interviewed in her research: “I don’t think people are on about commitment to an institutional Church in this day and age, but they are certainly on about a religious experience, going off on all sorts of off-shoots at the moment.” She further refers to the work of Schneiders who asserts that there is an experience of disjunction between spirituality as lived faith experience and religion as articulated tradition, and that the renewal of institutional Christianity will only come through the appropriation of a new Christian identity which will emerge out of dialogue with post-modern culture (Tormey, 1998, p. 213). Though Geneva still refers to religious experience in her remarks, in the minds of many people “spiritual” and “religious” have now been separated, but how we distinguish between the two is unclear.
I also agree with Jones that all people have a spirituality. As Tacey says, it is a reverential attitude toward a larger sense of life. Spirituality is concerned with understanding how my life fits into, or connects to, a larger framework of life and meaning. I want to amend Jones' original definition of spirituality and assert that it is the art of making and discovering connections with 1) the larger "Other," or God, 2) with myself, 3) with the others of the human family, and 4) with the entire creation. We make connections by our own efforts, and we discover connections through effortless experiences that visit us and through which we have a sense of being connected. In the Christian tradition, this is the balanced experience of effort and grace. In Jones' framework, to say that all people have a spirituality, but not all practice religion, is to imply that spirituality is the larger framework, in which the practice of religion is contained. Something similar is implied by Weaver (1973, p. 151) who speaks about "inner experiences out of which religions emanate." Religious experience is seen to be contained in a larger reality of inner, or spiritual, experience.

The alignment of "religious" with affiliation with a religious tradition, and the alignment of "spiritual" with a broader, or more open, framework seems simple enough, but seems not adequate to our experience. Another important dimension of this issue is raised by Jung (1958/1980, para. 1637) who separates the notion of religion from creed. He
was, at best, impatient with creedal religion which almost seemed to mitigate against the experience of God which, for Jung, was the central core of the religious experience.

A phrase that is close to Tacey's "reverential attitude" is "religious attitude." This notion opens up the issue yet further. In almost every instance "religious attitude" describes an attitude in people who do not affiliate with organised religion. It also parallels closely what I have termed "spiritual" above. It is Jung's intent to affirm that there is a way of being religious without being involved in creedal affiliation or organised religion. Storr (1972, pp. 286-87) comments that Jung described the individuation process in terms of religion, because the new attitude that emerged had something in common with a religious attitude. The common link was the acknowledgment of a dependence upon something other than "I". Storr indicates that, for Jung, it didn't matter whether this other was located outside the psyche as God or inside the psyche as the "Self." What mattered was the attitude itself. In his study of guru personalities, Storr (1996, p. 51) states that a main thrust of the teaching of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was a "religionless religiousness." Storr asserts that Jung agreed with this point of view. The phrase carries the same intent as that of "religious attitude."

Chodorow (1997, p. 2) asserts that Jung's own religious attitude was shattered in his early childhood, when he associated the Lord Jesus with
death. She claims that he spent his entire life re-creating what he had lost as he worked to develop ways to approach the psyche with a religious attitude. The implication in both Storr and Chodorow is that Jung’s entire system is a religious undertaking. Johnson (1998, p. 171) parallels Chodorow’s and Storr’s assertion in his memoirs as he tells of learning from Jung how to live with a religious attitude. Johnson claims clearly that Jung’s psychological term “individuation” is the equivalent of having a religious attitude towards one’s life. The religious attitude/individuation process for Johnson involves listening to your interior intelligence, taking it seriously and being faithful to it. Johnson (1998, p. 171) states that it includes “discovering the uniqueness of yourself, finding out who you are not and finding out who you are. ... it is ... your particular relationship to everything else.” Johnson goes on to note that this attitude he learned from Jung subsequently opened up the depths of the symbolic systems of the world’s religions. This included Christianity, which for him had become empty. Johnson’s attitude is reminiscent of that of my friends with whom I met to plan a conference years ago as recounted at the beginning of the Introduction.

James (1902/1985, p. 53) identifies two elements which are fundamental in the religious attitude of the soul. His notions parallel Jung’s ideas. The first element is a belief in an unseen order, and the second is the understanding that our own supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves to this unseen order. Tacey (1995, p. 185) takes a
similar stance in defining the ego’s task in the psyche. It, “like humanity’s task in creation, is to serve a greater reality (Jung), to attend to the needs of an Other (Eliade), to further the incarnation in this world of unmanifest Being (Heidegger).”

If we work with Jung’s notion of the religious attitude, then we may affirm that people are religious, and have Christian religious experiences, even if they no longer participate in creedal, organised forms of the religion. It is not necessary to separate spiritual and religious as if they were divided according to active participation in a religious tradition.

Yet another consideration throughout James’ work is the recognition that some spiritual experiences are not seen as religious. In his first lecture James (1902/1985, p. 20) observes: “Among the visions and messages some have always been too patently silly, among the trances and convulsive seizures some have been too fruitless for conduct and character, to pass themselves off as significant, still less as divine.” Later on he affirms that the process of unification can function as a purely psychological process without a religious framework (James, 1902/1985, p. 175). Further he affirms the same to be true of the spiritual process of conversion; it can be experienced as a psychological process in a non-religious framework (James, 1902/1985, p. 189).

In these reflections we have identified several possible categories of
experience. First, there are experiences, as James asserts above, that are psychological or spiritual experiences that would not be considered religious. Second, there are experiences that might best be labelled spiritual-religious as Kelsey suggests. Third, there are experiences which are spiritual, but which would not be considered religious by those whose experiences they are. Fourth, there are experiences that would be deemed to be religious by those who have them. While this may seem tedious, it represents an effort to identify and to organise the perspectives and opinions of these various sources. The exercise does make it clear that we use the language in a variety of ways that are precise.

This issue of the distinction between spiritual and religious experience, remains open-ended for me. I draw no simple, single conclusion. Through the efforts of this reflection, some things are clearer for me. First, I do agree that all people have a spirituality of some sort, as Jones claims. The fundamental function of spirituality is to help us feel connected to our own lives, however we understand and experience them. Second, I agree with Jung that it is possible to be religious without subscribing to creeds or dogmas, and without affiliating with a church in a particular Christian tradition. Third, I affirm that the development of a religious attitude is essential to our sense of meaning and well being. I am inclined

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17. One issue in regard to this position is the place of community involvement for the person following the Christ story. From the beginning of the Christian movement, involvement in community has been seen as essential. As a part of the bridging work between Jung and Christianity, the dynamic interplay between the collective and individual polarities of experience is an issue of importance and invites serious consideration.
to fall back on Kelsey's position at the present and accept that the words spiritual and religious are linked. To hyphenate them from time to time might well honour more fully the vast and overlapping territory that they are meant to describe. An aspect of our experience that touches on this distinction is the experience of discernment, and I intend to consider it now.

The experience of discernment

I was introduced to the notion of discernment through the activity of spiritual direction. I have no memory of it being raised as a concern during my training as a priest. It is the revival of, and the great interest in, the ministry of spiritual direction in the last twenty years that has brought the issue to our attention. Fenhagen (1981, p. 48) traces the word to the Greek, diakrino, which means I decide, or I discriminate. Discernment is the process of making discriminating choices or decisions. Usually the full title of this ministry is "Discernment of Spirits." It has to do with discerning, discriminating or choosing between spirits. Kelsey (1978, p. 6) remarks that "When religion is a matter of morality and rational and inferred faith, one does not need discernment." It is only when we are concerned with the experience of God and the spirits that discernment comes into play.

Discernment raises the whole notion of the spiritual realm, and the issue of evil. While both are beyond the scope of my present study, I will
comment briefly on them, as they do impact upon us as we make decisions about the religious nature of our experiences.

In the Christian tradition both the realm of spiritual reality and the reality of evil are traced back to the biblical texts that are a core resource for Christian identity. Jesus’ struggle with the devil by whom he was tempted (Matthew 4), the appearance of angels to minister to Elijah (1Kings, 19), to instruct Joseph through his dreams (Matthew 1), to sing at Jesus’ birth (Luke 2), and Paul’s notion of wrestling with cosmic forces of darkness (Ephesians 6), are stories well known to Christians. Our cosmology, variously described over the centuries, has been a lively world of spirits, and evil has ever haunted us as we seek salvation in Jesus the risen, victorious Christ. It must be added that we have never achieved unanimity concerning our pictures or understandings of the spiritual realm or of evil.

The notion of the spiritual realm has been of central concern to Kelsey for many years. It is through him that I became aware of the issue and by his influence many of my perceptions were shaped. I refer to his work to speak briefly about these two concerns in reference to discernment. I remember a conversation we had in his office when I was about eighteen years old. We were talking about healing, about the laying on of hands and praying for healing. His perspective is summed up in his final line of that conversation, which is etched into my memory. He said, “You see, it
all depends on your point of view." Discernment happens against a world view, a perspective on, or a picture of, spiritual reality. We have a framework against which we decide, discriminate, discern. For years Kelsey expressed his world view in diagrams of spiritual reality in his books. Over the years these diagrams changed as he modified his world view. The most recent diagram is the updated picture in his work on meditation, The Other Side of Silence, to which I have previously referred in chapter one. It was originally published in 1978, and he revised it substantially for re-publication in 1995. The diagram, which is reproduced in Appendix one, gives us a picture of the spiritual realm. In our conversation I shared with Kelsey my discomfort with diagrams. I stressed the need to sit loosely with any such image and he responded, "Always. It is merely a hint" (Interview, 1998, tape 2:1).

For our purposes the diagram offers us, hints at, a way of conceptualising God - the unlimited divine creator, limited spiritual reality, the personal and collective unconscious, the spiritual realm and the spirits - archetypes, and psychic contents, the deceased, and the reality of evil, all in relation to

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18. I reminded Kelsey of this encounter when I saw him in January, 1998. We talked about it and we both affirmed again the importance of a point of view. Without one he said simply, "You're in a swamp" (Interview, 1998, tape 2:2).

19. When we discussed the diagram at length in our visit, Kelsey stated that his motivation for changing it again was an attempt to resolve or end the dualism that appears in Christian thinking. He has made the image of evil much smaller "because of the resurrection." The diagram is meant to affirm "That this is not a dualistic world." I commented: "And that's the real principle you're getting at here. That the world ultimately is united in the reality of God, but in limited human experience, there is an experience of dualistic energies." Kelsey replied: "I would say that's right" (Interview 1998, tape 2:1).
the physical world.

The diagram approach of Kelsey's also raises the issue of evil. Kelsey commented in our conversations that he has changed substantially the way he pictures evil over the years. Jung was adamant in his disagreement with the Roman Catholic Church's position on evil as the privatio boni (Jung, 1958/1980, paras. 1592ff.). From my youth I have known through our conversations that Kelsey agreed with Jung's disagreement, though he also has differed from Jung in terms of the dark side of God. Kelsey's diagram, to which we refer, shows evil as being a spiritual reality within the limited spiritual realm, and as being able to affect both the personal and collective realms of the unconscious and the physical world. However we might respond to the diagram or to the notions of spiritual reality and evil, the diagram is an attempt to describe the reality of the spiritual world in which our discernment takes place. How we actually discern is the next issue that flows on from these considerations of our cosmology.

James offers an approach to understanding our religious experiences through his notion of spiritual judgement. In his first lecture (James, 1902/1985, pp. 1ff), he identifies two orders of inquiry: existential judgement and spiritual judgement. Existential judgement deals with the nature of the object, its origins, constitution and history. Spiritual judgement deals with its value. Neither answers for the other, each must
be answered separately, then the approaches may be combined.

Making spiritual judgements about an experience is to decide its value on the basis of our point of view. James (1902/1985, p. 5) makes it clear that we already have "in our mind some sort of general theory as to what the peculiarities in a thing should be which give it value for the purposes of revelation." This point of view is itself a form of spiritual judgement. We bring to bear our framework on the experience to discern its value, character and place for us. The concern inevitably arises as to how we actually make the discerning choices and apply the values to our experiences.

Shelton (1982, p. 334) offers ten questions for discernment that can give a specific shape to the process.

1. What role does Jesus Christ exercise in the decision?

2. How does my choice reconcile me with the community of faith of which I am a part, and how does my decision take into account the effect my decision has on others?

3. What are the ostensible signs of Christian love evinced in this decision I have made?

4. In making this decision, do I find time for interior silence whereby I can really listen to the Lord?

5. How open am I to consulting others about this choice in my life?

6. How do past decisions, or decisions related to the one I am presently making, influence my present Christian choosing, and how does this choice allow for possible future growth?
7. Can I recognize and admit the limits and imperfections of my choice, accepting my shortcomings, yet still relying on the need for ongoing and deepening conversion?

8. How does this decision proclaim Christian values, and are my own values authentic signs of true Christian living?

9. What feelings do I have when making this decision, and how might these affective responses influence my attempts to determine an authentic Christian choice?

10. Can I truly say that this decision is a responsible use of Christian freedom in my own life?

A review of the list reveals what, for Shelton, are the essential Christian values that are the framework of which James writes, and which are, in themselves, a form of spiritual judgement. Some of the core values that Shelton’s list reveals are the centrality of Jesus Christ, one’s relationship with the Christian community, the manifestation of Christian love in one’s life, and the importance of self reflection and silence in God’s presence. Also included are the importance of consulting with others, the need to discern in the wider context of one’s present life, the importance of dealing honestly with one’s own limits, the relationship of one’s decisions with prevailing Christian values, the place of affective responses in one’s decisions, and the awareness of how one exercises one’s freedom to act in reference to Christ.

The research participant, Campbell, struggled for some standard of measure for his experience in our final interview. He was wondering what objective standards a person could rely on to evaluate the nature of
his or her experience. Campbell asks these questions in his reflections:

Does it lead me to grow in love? Does it lead me to grow in graciousness? Does it lead me to grow in an ability to experience? Does it lead me to grow in an ability to contribute? Does it lead me into an experience of the greater, away from the narrow, false self, into deeper aspects of myself (Campbell, tape 3:2)?

He concludes by mentioning the fruits of the experience. Core values are revealed in these discerning questions which overlap Shelton's to a degree.

Of interest from a heuristic point of view is James' attempt to identify the essence of religious experiences. James (1902/1985, p. 45) states: "The essence of religious experiences, the thing by which we finally must judge them, must be that element or quality in them which we can meet nowhere else." He points to this essence through three words: rest, enchantment and happiness. I mentioned these earlier in this chapter when reflecting on difficult religious experiences. The first involves the freedom to rest so deeply in God's presence that the normal, ordinary fears of our fragile lives ultimately do not weigh us down. Even death loses its sting. The second adds to life an enchantment which is not rationally or logically deducible from anything else. The third is a sort of happiness in the absolute and everlasting God. It has to do with a point of view toward all of life and experience that emerges from the relationship with the divine. It is a quality that allows us to live beyond, or in spite of, the

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difficulties that might embitter us or drag us down. It is a kind of undying optimism towards life itself (James, 1902/1985, pp. 47-48). James (1902/1985, p. 48) asserts that “If religion is to mean anything definite for us, it seems to me we ought to take it as meaning this added dimension of emotion.” This dimension of emotion is made up in part by these three essential qualities that help us discern the nature of our experience: rest, enchantment and happiness.

To return to James’ notion of spiritual judgement in his first lecture, in this introductory material he is building a case for the fact that one must finally “judge the religious life by its results exclusively” (James, 1902/1985, p. 20). Here James aligns himself with the fundamental biblical measure of spiritual judgement which is also the larger framework for discernment. It is from Matthew 7:16, and is attributed to Jesus: “By their fruits you will know them.” Kelsey, in our conversations, also turned to this teaching as we attempted to sort out different experiences. (Interview, 1998, tape 2:1). For Sparrow (1995), who recounts contemporary stories of peoples’ encounters with Jesus, this teaching is the only criterion for evaluating what he calls spiritual experiences. He stresses also that it personalises the process of judgement in such a way, that we avoid making the experiences of one person’s life the standard of measure for others. James, Kelsey and Sparrow all affirm that, at the end, we can only judge or discern the nature of our religious experiences by hindsight on the basis of the results or fruits they bear. In a Christian context this
biblical teaching seems to have endured well as the fundamental approach in interpreting, or discerning the nature of, our experiences.

The research participants' reflections on religious experience
I have now looked at the broad spectrum of religious experiences, reflected on the distinctions between spiritual and religious experiences and considered the issue of discernment. In the context of the heuristic method of research, I intend next to present my own reflections and the reflections of the research participants on our religious experiences. I will conclude this section with a corporate depiction of religious experience as we view it.

Religious experience - George
My religious experiences have as their context my life-long involvement with the church. My childhood memories are many: the imposing structure of the Methodist church building, the long sermons we listened to from the balcony, Sunday school stories, a visit from the pastor when I was sick, the choir at the Episcopal church, my first solo as a boy soprano, and midnight Eucharists on Christmas Eve. From my adolescence and young adult years the memories continue: teaching Sunday school, summer camps and evening campfires, youth groups with games and endless singing, church dinners, baritone solos in the choir, my first sermon on Youth Sunday at age sixteen, mid-week Eucharists, beginning counselling at age fifteen and spiritual direction at sixteen, and the
introduction to dreams through which my inner story life became conscious, the habit of a daily prayer time, late night prayer sessions in the church with friends, being the church gardener for two years, feeling safe on the property, and knowing acceptance and love from peers and many adults. It would be difficult to define fully the significance of the church in my early life. In a very deep sense it was my home, and I was much loved. It is small wonder that I settled on the priesthood as my vocational goal.

Within this context, I don’t retain memories of experiences of God from my childhood years. My experiences seem to be more of church, people, and things religious, than of some personal interaction with God. Once I began the counselling and spiritual direction that changed. The dominant image for my experiences was of God as “Father,” and “he” felt close, accepting and supportive. This heightened dramatically at age eighteen when I received the gift of tongues. I remember the experience clearly. I was in the church praying with a friend at about 11:30pm. He was struggling with doubts, and we chose to go there to pray and talk. As we did so we were joined by another friend, soon to be married, who was all in a rage over some development concerning his wedding. As we then prayed for him, “it” happened. It wasn’t terribly dramatic, but was like the unlocking of an energy that then flowed freely without my understanding. It wasn’t very emotional, more a peaceful experience, like something had been set free. Certainly it was not expected; I was both surprised and excited.
The experience of tongues speaking settled into a quiet place in my personal devotions, and though I participated in prayer groups weekly for some years in later adolescence, I found no particular interest in the later charismatic movement. Through this experience of tongues has grown a deep intimacy with God that continues to this day. The one word that has consistently given shape to this relationship is "presence." This intimate presence is close, intensely personal, and involves a sense of unconditional love and acceptance of who I am. It is a relationship that requires no fear. Over the years I have come to name this presence the divine energy or divine lover. It takes a more physical or human shape through my imaginings around the Christ figure. I have for many years related more to the Christ than to Jesus, though the Christ figure often has traditional "Jesus" characteristics, such as a simple, white, full length garment. This intimacy with God and with Christ has been sustained through years of prayer, meditations of various sorts, dream work and journal keeping. From the beginning I was trained in what I would call an integrative spirituality, wherein everything in life fits around the central relationship with God.

As I have indicated earlier, I took the technique of active imagination into this framework at about the age of thirty-five. The "Dog" series came early in the piece. Active imagination, in my ongoing experience, continues to involve the interaction of effort and surprise. The interactions with the
figures also contribute substantially to the ongoing sense of intimacy I feel with this inner world.

The result of all this is that my religious experiences are quite varied and include many ordinary things. The spectrum of my personal experiences includes hearing the morning song of the birds in our trees, praying, listening to the souls of others tell their stories, attending to the stories of my own soul through dreams, and meditative experiences, listening to a piece of music, usually classical, working with my pastels, sitting quietly in the presence of a meaningful image, walking on the beach, working alone in the garden, presiding at the Eucharist, preaching, and lecturing. While some of these experiences do not involve a conscious dialogue with God, this divine presence is implied and never seems far away.

There have been times in these experiences when the presence has caught me by surprise. Certainly the tongues speaking experience was like that. At times an inner image or character startles me. At times in a moment of solitude in an ordinary place, I am drawn into prayer. At times prayer suddenly gives way to a deeper sense of presence which I do not seek. I remember some years ago in a parish having a series of experiences over a period of months wherein I felt like I was being stopped still in my tracks by a sense of presence and a longing. It was so strong that I was careful for many months not to pray before presiding at the Eucharist for fear that one of these "longings" would come upon me! They usually left me
feeling unable to speak easily and only wanting to enter a yet deeper silence. These were often quietly emotional experiences, that drew me into a deep stillness. I felt warm, very moved, utterly at rest, content, still. From time to time I continue to have this experience; it always comes unbidden.

Often religious experiences come in response to my efforts and disciplines. Times set aside for prayer, spiritual reading, meditation, walking alone in the bush, hiking in the mountains, working in the garden, all these and other practices I have used to open myself to this presence - God - the divine energy. I remember fondly the hikes I used to take for many years in Rattlesnake Canyon above the Holy Cross monastery in Santa Barbara, California. I would spend hours along the stream working on a sermon, writing in my journal, swimming, praying, meditating. These solitary hikes remain as a highpoint among my religious experiences. In these times the sense of deep contentment is an abiding quality. Sometimes these experiences are compelling or enthralling, now and then I am moved to sing. Often I feel quietly swept up into a very attractive and larger presence.

Most often these experiences take place when I am alone or alone in a crowd, like riding on a bus or train. Now and then they will happen when I am involved with others in corporate worship. Specific moments of awareness or insight are usually not very long, though their afterglow can
last for hours.

The result of these experiences over the years is that I have grown to feel centred, at peace, at rest, still, well within myself. More often than not I feel connected, at some deep level, to myself, to God or Christ, and in tune with the larger nature of things. These experiences have been, and are, deeply healing. An image of my desire that emerges from these experiences is that of being aligned with the purposes of God. Out of these experiences I feel compelled to offer others something like love or affirmation. I want, often, to give something of what I feel I have received. I believe this to be the simplest motivation for my various ministries. While these are special experiences in one way, in another they are ordinary, almost daily, and are at the core of my own experience of life.

Thus far in these reflections there is an aspect missing. It is the hard, difficult side of the experience of the Other. Most usually these come through dream stories or active imagination work. Sometimes they are triggered by a clumsy interaction with another person, sometimes by reading an insightful passage in the scriptures, a novel or other book. There is a stirring, a shifting; I feel moved and uncomfortable, even frightened. Dreams can wake me with heart pounding, active imaginations can leave me stunned in the face of an interaction. Insights can challenge my present points of view, stir guilt, shame, fear, bring me
face to face with the hidden, wounded, unpleasant aspects of who I am. Over the years I have felt also the influence of the divine life in all this, so these, too, I see as religious experiences. Years ago I learned to “see” these experiences in the larger context of God, as if they, too, were a part of me that circled round the centre where I meet God within. This image contributes to the sense of coherence that I feel amid the diverse aspects of my self.

An important example of this for me involves my experience of depression about twenty-five years ago. Soon after the physical symptoms appeared, I made an appointment with the priest who had been my first spiritual director in my teens. After I told him my story, he wondered aloud as to what God might be doing with my life through this experience. From that day I focussed my experience in the context of my relationship with God, and assumed that it had meaning. This one event has had a deep influence on me in terms of interpreting God present in difficult experiences.

My religious experiences, then, may also be characterised by confrontation, sudden insight, fearful encounter, anxiety, depression, terror, the challenge for change. These can leave me unsettled, worried, insecure in my conscious self, aware again that I cannot make sense of my life without this sacred Other, the cohering centre, the divine presence, God.
Over the years, these experiences have been the core of my spirituality and theology. They are the core of my life, and have shaped my sense of self, my perspective on human life and experience, my understanding of God and our interactions. As a final reflection, sometimes I wonder if I even believe in religious experience as a category any more. For years I have entertained the notion that I have only one prayer to offer to God, and it is my life. Perhaps at the end of the day, life itself is the religious experience.

Religious experience - Campbell

Campbell’s reflections in the taped interviews on his religious experience are marked by some confusion. This becomes clear to Campbell toward the end of our conversations, when he asserts: “You see, there’s two parts of me, George” (Campbell, tape 3:2). He then identifies within himself one part who is in the evangelical tradition, centred in God’s grace, salvation, the forgiven sinner, and one part who is oriented toward “God in creation, in me, and the immanent God” (Campbell, tape 3:2). Campbell recognises that “I’ve been profoundly changed by paying attention to my dreams and part of that is the active imagination” (Campbell, tape 3:2). He concludes at one point that “When I’m speaking of my religious experience, I’m really speaking of the experience I’ve had as an evangelical” (Campbell, tape 3:2).

In terms of his background, Campbell relates that he was baptised an Anglican, but in his university days became “a militant agnostic”
He lived a wild life in his time at university, but he was not always happy. One night, after a party, he was feeling depressed at the nihilistic scene he was in, and "I remember praying ... I'm in trouble ... if there's anything out there, I need help" (Campbell, tape, 3:1). Shortly after this he was invited to a yoga session. "The first time I did a yoga relaxation, a yoga exercise, to get in touch with my body, that was a tremendous religious experience" (Campbell, tape, 3:1). Campbell later changes this to a "spiritual" experience.

At university Campbell spent time connected to an ashram. There he had deep meditative experiences which he characterised as sinking deeply into an alpha experience, where one is asleep but not asleep, and the mind is crystal clear, pure, and without friction. These he saw as religious experiences. During some meditation sessions at the ashram, the readings were taken from a King James Version of the Bible. Campbell concluded that the Christians were "on to something." Subsequently he left the ashram and began going to church in his last year of university, and "became a Christian" at age twenty-three (Campbell, tape 3:1).

In speaking of his Christian meditation experiences, Campbell recognises that he "never got to the same extent of feeling actually at one with things that I did with the Hindu/Buddhist meditation" (Campbell, tape 3:1). He describes the qualities of those Christian religious experiences thus: "A feeling of surrender, a feeling of gratitude, a feeling of awe, a feeling of
how lucky, how blessed I am, a feeling of gratitude to others, of wanting to
lift others before this state, or this being, a sense of place, being part of a
community, part of a process” (Campbell, tape 3:1).

Campbell also mentions the interactive quality of his prayer experience.
He reflects: “It’s nice, I feel supported, I feel ... you give over burdens,
relieving and a gratitude to God for being there, gratitude to Jesus, he’s
such a prophet, such a lovely figure, uncompromising, willing to do
everything that was necessary, whatever the cost, you know, just a feeling
of love” (Campbell, tape 3:1).

Other qualities Campbell identifies are: “I feel that I’m not alone, I feel
that the universe is a warm place, that God is there, where God is there is
community, there’s others, there’s ... like heaven I guess” (Campbell, tape
3:1).

Campbell identifies a context for his Christian religious experience.

So I guess I rely very much in the Christian religious experience on the authority of Jesus, the death and
resurrection, what Jesus would say about God, Paul, the
whole tradition and stories I find in the gospels, springing
from the gospels.
But with the gospels and the Christian revelation, or
traditional stories, there’s something outside myself that ... there’s the Church, there’s all that have gone before, all
building on Jesus himself I guess, which gives it a sense of
awe, and gives me a sense of gratitude, of belonging to this
cloud of witnesses, being part of this tremendous story, this
tremendous community of people (Campbell, tape 3:1).
In his Christian religious experience Campbell identifies a quality of depth in terms of this broad context.

When I'm in the Christian religious experience I am not, uh ... I feel as though I ... I am part of a much greater process, that I am in the presence of infinite, you almost could say, infinitely more majesty and gratitude, and there's the reality of Jesus there, the great life, the great love, the cross, the mystery of the resurrection. You know, there's this actual pivot of history there. Then there's, you see, to me, it's the depth, the reality, the surrender to that, the being part of something so profoundly, the very pivot of all history, of the planet. To me, there's a depth, not so much a depth but a kind of reality there which is far more encompassing, and I go into it with a sense of great joy (Campbell, tape 3:2).

In answer to the question, "What makes an experience a religious experience?" Campbell reflects:

Well, it's something to do with God being there, and how is God there? Well, there's this mystery, there's this greatness, there's this other, this ... it could be either immanent, like in a Hindu/Buddhist meditation where you sink into this greatness, oceanic feeling, or it could be a Christian experience, where you sink into gratitude, love, the love that Jesus would express so powerfully, such a love, such a death and the great mystery of the resurrection, it doesn't end. I think there's not only mystery, you get this feeling of God there, of someone, some being, some thing that is undefinable, but yet is characteristic, you get the feeling that God's there. I think that, for me, is it. (Campbell, tape 3:2).

In speaking about his outer experiences, of "God in my outer world," Campbell remarks, "Just trying to live your life in a way that is congruent with the love I find in Jesus, that's a religious experience" (Campbell, tape 3:2).
Religious experience - Helen

Helen begins her reflections about religious experience by telling of the near death experience she had many years ago. As I have already mentioned, it came after a full term pregnancy which resulted in a still birth. She had buried this experience away and forgotten it because “nobody wanted to hear about it, the doctor didn’t want to hear, my husband didn’t want to hear [...] so I just buried it in the unconscious” (Helen, tape 2:2). One day, while waiting in a bookstore at the counter, she saw a copy of Life after Life. Looking through this book caused her to begin to remember her experience.

Helen remembers in the experience “being up like that [gestures toward the corner of the ceiling] in the corner, looking down on my body” (Helen, tape 2:2). She remembers going through the tunnel that people now describe. There were lights and dark, and noise, and light at the end like a doughnut shaped light” (Helen, tape 2:2), that was huge. Central to the feeling was “the most wonderful feeling of love that I’ve ever known before or since” (Helen, tape 2:2). That energy “which is the energy of love ... absolutely ... much more love than I’d ever experienced before” (Helen, tape 2:2). For Helen, this was “a huge experience, the memory of that was huge and that totally began my journey of change” (Helen, tape 2:2). Since recalling this experience, Helen has “felt as if there’s a reason for my being here” (Helen, tape 2:2). She also comments that she finds it very hard to talk about this experience.
This, for Helen, is her definitive, or primary, "what I would call ... religious experience ... there are other glimpses" (Helen, tape 2:2), but nothing she has had matches this experience. In another comment Helen admits that she is not sure she likes the term "religious experience." The central image was the light, the primary feeling tone is the "overwhelming sense of love" (Helen, tape 2:2). She reflects: "It's as if ... for a short time ... I somehow came to the source of life" (Helen, tape 2:2). This remembered experience changed the way Helen saw her life. It led to a deepening of her sense of life, and it also created meaning. She also notes that, since then, she has no fear of death.

Helen identifies briefly other religious experiences, but notes that they are far less dramatic than her primary experience. They include: the movement of certain stages of her life, synchronistic experiences, dreams and other active imagination experiences. It is Helen's conviction that the energy she encountered in her primary religious experience is the same source for these experiences as well.

In commenting generally on religious experiences, Helen describes them as grace, the unexpected, unplanned, a surprise. It involves no preparation, one doesn't know it's coming. There is a quality of being "totally overtaken" (Helen, tape 2:2).
In his reflections, Tim identifies seven religious experiences out of his personal experience. The first was coming back to church after leaving the church as a whole. This took place while at university in England, and was like a coming home experience. Tim had a "deep sense that this is the right place to be, that I know this kind of place" (Tim, tape 2:1). The experience included a deep sense of warmth and rightness. He comments that "nothing would have kept me away" (Tim, tape 2:1).

The second experience was going to a Friday night prayer and praise group in South Africa, where he was made to feel very welcome. There several things of importance happened for him. He had his "ears and eyes opened to another dimension of faith" (Tim, tape 2:1). He came to realise that faith actually impinges on life, that prayers were answered, and that it was possible to bring God into ordinary, humdrum, everyday life. Tim saw "ordinary life and faith put together in a way they hadn't been before" (Tim, tape 2:1).

The third experience was that of being baptised in the spirit, which took place on a Sunday morning while Tim was alone. Tim reflects on the element of surprise in these experiences.

I think that that's another thing that's part of religious experience, it takes you unawares. I wasn't expecting the kind of thing that I - in any of these - that I got. I wasn't expecting to feel that kind of warmth, I wasn't expecting that kind of welcome. [...] What took me by surprise this time was this
incredible feeling of joy coming from the pit of my being right down [...] just surged up and I sang, I just sang for joy, some tune I've never sung before or again - no words - I just sang, I don't know how long for (Tim, tape 2:1).

He describes it further as a deep springing up, like the living water imagery in the New Testament, and he comments: "probably that's the most close encounter with God that I'd had" (Tim, tape 2:1). Tim observes that up until this experience God had been experienced as a bit distant, "God had tended to be out there" (Tim, tape 2:1). This was the first time he had a sense of God within, which was the cause of the great joy.

The fourth experience was finally surrendering to the call to be a priest. Tim recalls that in this experience he said to God, "If you want me to be a priest I will" (Tim, tape 2:2). He notes that "This feeling of peace just descended on me, it was unreal, again not expected" (Tim, tape 2:2). He also notes in this reflection that prayer is a dialogue with God that is explicit and involves answers.

The fifth religious experience includes most of the active imagination work.

Again it's explicit, the guide is Christ and that's deliberate, and he takes me in places where I do not necessarily want to go [...] and the whole thing is illuminating and revealing [...] and I come to a new place of who I am. It's like the image of God is being re-formed in me. It's like that, I'm not saying that it is that, it's like that (Tim, tape 2:2).

It's like "being transformed from one degree of glory to another. [...]"
There's a sense of wholeness at the end that isn't there at the beginning" (Tim, tape 2:2). It involves for Tim a sense of being "reconciled to myself" (Tim, tape 2:2), even to what he refers to as the gross bits. He notes that there's a change in these gross bits as they relate to and come into consciousness.

The sixth experience Tim identifies is a recent one, and involves a man who comes to the church about once a month. Tim experiences him as manipulative and recently refused to see him because of their previous visit. Tim felt deep shame and guilt, and when he asked God for forgiveness he was able to hold the feelings of forgiveness with the sense of unforgivableness and "that brought me to a new place" (Tim tape 2:2). He had a "sense of having been in a place of extreme holiness" (Tim, tape 2:2).

The seventh and last religious experience Tim shares involves a man who prayed aloud during a Eucharist, and Tim found it to be awful. He notes that he was "beside myself with rage" (Tim, tape 2:2), and that he wanted to walk out, but he stayed and later gave him communion. He refers to this as the "angry" Eucharist. Tim notes that at the altar he spontaneously genuflected, which spoke volumes to him about the significance of this religious experience.

In reflecting on the qualities of religious experience, Tim notes that the
earlier ones mentioned were like invitations to something, while the later ones involved the "bringing together of opposites in a very strong kind of way" (Tim, tape 2:2).

Religious experience - Lottie

Lottie begins her reflections on religious experience by saying "I don't know what a religious experience is" (Lottie, tape 2:2). In an earlier reflection she comments that "if what I've been doing has been active imagination or image meditation, then that, for me, is a religious experience, or a spiritual experience, because ... the journey is a ceremony ... an experience [...] something which deeply moves me" (Lottie, tape 2:1).

Lottie goes on to share that "I've had experiences which I would describe as sacred, being in a sacred space and a sacred mood ... being overawed ... and at the same time being totally at peace [...] that it was alright to experience what I was experiencing." She then shares one of these experiences. It is an experience she had while in China at the university some years ago. She is walking back to her rooms, and sees the children at the school playing and is overjoyed at the sight of them. Suddenly she can't hear anything. The afternoon sunlight gets brighter and brighter, and then she could hear the sap in the trees "plop, plop [...] I could see the sap rising" (Lottie, tape 2:2). She stood still for a time because she couldn't move. Finally she walked home and sat for a couple of hours. She was shaking or vibrating during this time such that when she wrote
this down it wasn’t very clear. She still has the text of the experience.

“That to me was a religious experience” (Lottie, tape, 2:2).

Lottie identifies some of the qualities of these experiences.

The surprise, the unexpected. They happen, I don’t set out to have them. They happen unexpectedly. And it’s a [...] state of grace as though the world is the way it ... it’s perfect ... in that moment. In that moment it’s the best of the possible worlds. [...] There’s a shift of consciousness. [...] The normal five senses somehow shift into a different gear and either one of them becomes super sensitive or another one goes [...] I don’t know, but there is a [...] sense of awareness. [...] It’s a feeling of utter peace in one sense... being in a state of grace, as I said before, as though nothing is neither beautiful or ugly - it just is - the way it’s supposed to be. [...] A slice of reality that is perfect regardless of what ... and any attempt to make a judgement of it is absent. I experience it as a total appreciation ... that this is the way it is, this is the way it always is, but I will not always be aware of it (Lottie, tape 2:2).

She reiterates the quality of surprise in the experience, saying that “I don’t plan it, I don’t sit down to meditate in order to have it, it comes out of ... the blue.” (Lottie, tape, 2:2). These are spontaneous experiences.

Another quality of her religious experience has to do with the setting and content. “The religious experience for me always comes in a natural environment setting or relates to natural things” (Lottie, tape 2:2). These experience are quite devoid of people. She goes on to tell of an experience while camping in the Australian desert years ago. She was able to see the sun set and the moon rise at the same time and extended her arms to “hold” the two in her hands. This was for her a religious experience. As
a child Lottie remembers that her religious experiences "were related to the earth, what it produced, the sky" (Lottie, tape 2:2). She gives an example of planting string beans with her dad in a circle, and playfully using the word "abracadabra."

Our composite depiction of religious experience

In general summary, the five of us, George, Campbell, Helen, Tim and Lottie, identify several common qualities in our religious experiences. Four of us mentioned the quality of surprise in religious experience. Helen describes it further as unplanned; she has a feeling of being overtaken by an experience. Both Lottie and Helen mention a quality of grace and of the unexpected. Lottie mentions with this a spontaneous quality, and of having a sense of being overawed. I mention a sense of being startled in the surprising encounter, and a sense of excitement in the surprise.

Several of us use words that refer to a sense of illumination in our religious experience. Tim speaks of awakening, enlightenment and a revealing quality. The experiences, for him, have also produced change and have been transformative. Lottie and I mention the quality of awareness and Lottie adds to this the notions of a shift of consciousness and seeing into the depths of things. As part of an illuminating quality, I mention as well the experience of gaining insight and experiencing the challenge for change, feeling set free, and an unlocking of an energy.
In recounting our varied experiences, all of us imply or mention a sense of encountering, or being connected, to an "Other." This involves a wide variety of responses. Campbell mentions a sense of gratitude to God and to Jesus, and a feeling of being not alone. He also sees in religious experience an attempt to live life congruent with Jesus; Jesus is the authority, the reference point, the standard of measure for interpreting his life. In some instances it involves a simple sense of presence, the awareness that God is there. I, too, mention God, specifically God as father. Tim and I mention Christ, rather than Jesus.

The sense of presence is an essential quality of my own religious experience. It often carries a sense of closeness and intimacy, and a sense of being swept up into a larger reality. It is this sense of presence that led to the longings that I experienced, and that contributes to the sense of alignment with God, the larger nature of things, and also my own deepest self. Lottie implies something of this in her sense of apprehending things just the way they are supposed to be - a sense of total appreciation of things as they are and always will be in a narrow slice of reality. Helen speaks simply and directly of coming to the source of life. Tim mentions the encounter with the God within. Both Campbell and Tim speak of the quality of surrender to this "Other," and identify a dialogic quality in some experiences, which Campbell notes in relation to prayer. He mentions the quality of deep meditative experiences.
Several of us mention quite traditional qualities woven into the tapestries of our religious experiences. Campbell, Tim and Lottie all mention the feeling of joy. Tim refers to this as an incredible feeling, while Lottie sees some of her encounters as precipitating joy as well as including a sense of welcome. Campbell, Helen and I mention the feeling of love. For Helen, it is an overwhelming sense of love that is wonderful. I expand the feeling to include a sense of acceptance. Three of us, Tim, Lottie and I, also mention a feeling of peace; Lottie adds to this a sense of rightness. Tim and I expand this feeling of peace with a feeling of warmth, and I add further to it with the notions of rest, contentment, being centred and still.

Campbell, Tim, Lottie and I all mention a sense of ritual and ceremony in some of our experiences. Lottie mentions the importance of these in religious practice, and the importance of integrating these with life. Campbell mentions the awareness of the church and his community as important in his experiences. Tim and I identify some religious experiences as taking place in the context of eucharistic worship.

Finally, most of us mention, in recalling our religious experiences, a sense of their impact upon us. Campbell mentions the experience of being in touch with his body, feeling blessed, supported, and relieved, being part of a wider process and tradition, and having a sense of belonging. Tim mentions a sense of coming home in one instance, and of being reconciled
to himself in another. He notes as well a sense of forgiveness, of learning to hold consciously all of himself, and of feeling a sense of bringing together opposites within him. Lottie and I find some of these religious experiences deeply moving. I add as well the sense of feeling aligned with and connected to myself, feeling well within, and note that some experiences are deeply healing.

In addition to these common experiences, several unique qualities are mentioned. Helen mentions the centrality of light in her primary experience, and Campbell mentions a sense of place and of mystery. Tim mentions a feeling of invitation and a sense of rightness in certain of his experiences. Lottie mentions the importance of the natural environment. I mention the key quality of coherence in my experiences, as well as identifying some uncomfortable feelings that have been part of my religious experiences. These include fright, discomfort, confrontation, and feeling stunned.

These shared and individual qualities compose a rich picture of the essence of religious experience as known by the five of us.

Christian religious experience

In this final section of this chapter I intend to set out a definition of Christian religious experience for this study. In doing this I am working in the heuristic model by drawing on the resources that have been cited,
upon my own religious experiences, and upon the reflections of the four research participants.

As I mentioned earlier, at my proposal seminar it was suggested that I limit this study to Christian religious experience, and I do that intentionally. On reflection I have decided to frame this exercise around three essential characteristics of religious experience. I chose these at the beginning of my study, and three years later, I have decided to continue to use them to delimit and define the phenomenon of religious experience in the Christian framework. These three characteristics are: a sense of "Other," "meaning" and "well being." I will consider these each in some detail.

The first characteristic of Christian religious experience is the sense of "Other." This is a key characteristic for Kelsey (1972) and Otto (1923/1958). Consonant with this is the notion of the "more" identified by James (1902/1985). At the conclusion of his study James makes this comment on the essence of religious experience.

He becomes conscious that his higher part is coterminus and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck (James, 1902/1985, p. 508).

I acknowledge that I follow in the traditions of James (1902/1985), Otto (1923/1958) and Kelsey (1972), in identifying the first characteristic of
Christian religious experience as the sense of Other. The notion of the Other is consistent with the notion of the transcendent God which is the dominant theological definition of God in the Christian tradition from the biblical period to the present time. Central to the imagery of the Christian God is the image of the Trinity, God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Christian tradition the experience of this God, "Other," is personal and relational by nature. The mystical tradition reveals that this personal, relational experience can be deeply intimate.

Though the Trinity imagery is central, it is not exclusive in terms of revealing God, the Other. From the Biblical material, a review of the book of the Psalms reveals many other images through which we also connect with God. These include God as protective shield (3:3), refuge (91:2), protective wings (17:8), strength (18:1), rock (19:4), fortress (59:17), deliverer (18:2), stronghold (31:3), and life sustainer (54:4).21 The Hebrew people knew God present with them in the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night as they travelled out of Egypt with Moses (Exodus 13:21). At Jesus' baptism, the spirit of God is revealed like a dove descending on Jesus (Matthew 3:16). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer declares that "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). The images of the dove and the fire have long been linked with the Holy Spirit of God. In the Gospel of John, the author has Jesus describe himself, the Christ of God, in

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simple earthy images, including bread of life (John 6:35), light of the world (John 9:5), and as the vine in which the branches live (John 15:5). The light was the dominant image in Helen's primary religious experience (Helen, tape 2:2).

In contemporary feminist theology, the imagery of God has been expanded to include maternal and feminine imagery. Mollenkott's work (1984) identifies this imagery within the biblical tradition. Her examples include God as woman in the process of giving birth (Isaiah 42:14), as nursing mother (Isaiah 49:15), as midwife (Psalm 22:9-10), as female homemaker (Psalm 123 and Proverbs 31), as mother eagle (Exodus 19:4), as mother hen (Matthew 23:37) and as damsel wisdom (Proverbs 8). In light of this I include in this notion of the Other, such maternal and feminine imagery of God.22

As I have identified, the notion of God as transcendent is a dominant one in the Christian theological tradition. This is expressed in the notions of God as responsible for the entire creation, of Jesus as sitting at the right

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22. I am convinced that one of the most important and most fundamental tasks facing contemporary Christianity is the re-imaging of God to include more intentionally the feminine and the maternal in the divine imagery. Mollenkott's work is a very significant step toward this. She demonstrates that such imagery has always been with us, only we haven't noticed it. Additional resources include:
hand of God after the Ascension. In distinction to this is the second aspect of the being of God, God's immanence. The immanence of God is expressed through the earthly life of Jesus whom Christians see as the fulfillment of Isaiah's notion of messiah as Emmanuel - God with us. Immanence is also expressed through the notion of God present with the people through the Holy Spirit. As I mentioned in chapter one, transcendence and immanence form a pair of complementary opposites which make up the fullness of God's revelation in the tradition. As I have previously indicated, this pairing of opposites is a fundamental concept in Jung's work.

While the transcendence of God forms a backdrop for understanding a theology of creation, the immanence of God forms a backdrop for the entire mystical tradition of Christianity. Today, the immanence of God is the foundation of the charismatic experience, and the concern of much that is practiced in terms of contemporary spirituality. In a sense the immanence of God leads us to talk of the God of our personal experience, the Other, God within. This notion of God as immanent rests on Jesus' promise in John's gospel about the coming of the advocate who "will be in you" (John 14:17). It is this aspect of the Other, the Other within, which is the focus of this study. I acknowledge in making these comments that such divisions in God are for our conversation. In fact, in the Christian tradition, the God we experience at any time is fully God, even though we may separate the images to interpret our experience and to enhance our
understanding.

A dimension of the Other which may be connected in our experience to either the immanence or the transcendence of God is that of the numinous. Otto (1923/1958, pp. 5-7) used this word in his study of the holy. The numinous is that quality of the holy which we experience in a feeling-response to an objective Other that precedes either rational or moral conceptualisation. It is the holy before its rational and moral aspects. It is the irreducible core of an experience to which we can only point, or grasp by speaking of experiences that are akin to it. It is an experience that is ineffable, inexpressible. According to Otto (1923/1958, p. 10) the experience of the numinous leads to a deep sense of our creatureliness, or "creature-consciousness." To describe the strong religious emotion that this experience of the numinous evokes in the creature, Otto (1923/1958, p. 13-40) uses the term "mysterium tremendum" or aweful mystery. This emotion includes awe, or holy fear, majesty, and urgency or energy of the numinous object, a sense of the numinous as wholly Other and a sense of fascination with the numinous.

This brief review of Otto's study is meant to add a dimension of depth to our understanding of Other. Beneath the many images, whether transcendent or immanent, we are engaging here with an Other who touches our feeling life intensely, who defies our descriptions and renders feeble our articulations. This Other, God, is numinous for us in that
regard. God, the Other, also inspires in us from time to time the range of emotions gathered under Otto's term, "mysterium tremendum." There is the sense of awe, an awareness of the majesty, a sense of the energy or passion, the sense of this reality as being wholly other from us, and a compelling fascination with the numinous object.

There is another aspect of the experience of the Other that complements Otto's sense of the numinous. It is known in our present experience largely, though not exclusively, through charismatic experiences. This aspect is characterised by a sense of intimacy and familiarity with God. This element of the relationship centres around images of the Father as loving and caring, of Jesus as brother and friend, and both Jesus, or the Christ, and the Holy Spirit as companion and guide. It is this intimate aspect of Other that the individual person of faith meets in informal, conversational times of prayer. In these experiences, the images are usually of the immanent God, but can also be of the transcendent God. The combination of these images, God as close, personal friend, with the God of the numinous, express what Kelsey (1995, p. 72) is describing in his diagram as previously mentioned earlier this chapter and in chapter one. There is a double image of connection with the Other. We have connection with the cosmic, transcendent God of all creation, who Kelsey names the Unlimited Divine Creator, and we have connection with the God who is friend, lover, guide and companion. I have previously shown in chapter one how this parallels Jung's concept of the archetype of the
As one of the three qualities of Christian religious experience, the Other here includes a broad variety of images, including the traditional images connected with the Trinity. It includes also both the transcendent and the immanent aspects of God's being. The Other includes Otto's notion of the numinous, the reality of God who cannot be described, and who can inspire in us the strong emotions of awe, majesty, passion, the sense of wholly other and fascination. The Other also includes the God who is intimate and familiar. Some of the images of this aspect of God are the loving father, Jesus our brother and our companion, and the Holy Spirit our guide.

There are two further characteristics of the experience of God as Other that I include in this definition. The first is that the appearances of this Other are often a surprise, or are surprising even when we enter the encounter through planned preparation, such as prayer or meditation. Tim mentions the quality of surprise as part of his religious experiences, especially in connection with his experience of baptism in the spirit (Tim, tape 2:1). The sense of surprise is such that we can wonder if we are having the experience or it is having us. Helen describes it as being overtaken by an experience. (Helen, tape 2:2). Clift quotes Tillich as describing it as "being grasped" (Tillich, cited in Clift, 1982, p. 69).
The second aspect that I include is that of the difficult experiences that I have mentioned earlier in this chapter in the section, “The broad spectrum.” It is important to affirm that Christian religious experience can not only be consoling but challenging, confronting and even disturbing. Tim relates experiences which included resistance, shame, guilt, rage and forgiveness which had the sense of extreme holiness and which brought him to a new place (Tim, tape 2:2).

Finally, while the notion of the Other in the Christian framework will assume that God is the ultimate presence, it must also be acknowledged that specific religious experiences can include angelic messengers or spirits and evil energies. The angelic appearances in the biblical stories continue in our day when people describe encounters with other people, often unplanned and surprising, in which something of significance takes place. Gifts are given, insights shared, needs met in startling ways, and the individual to whom these events happen will describe the experience as an angelic visitation.

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1ff) involves the presence of the devil seeking to seduce Christ away from his path. While the imagery today might well be different for us, people continue to have what Kelsey (1995, pp. 359ff and tape 1:2) calls “negative” religious experiences of energies which seek to draw them away from the encounter with the divine Other. James (1902/1985, p. 20) refers to experiences
which are of the demon. He refers to these as counterfeit messages and experiences.

Before leaving this reflection on Other in the context of Christian religious experience, I want to acknowledge the work of Tacey (1995) in regard to Other. In his work he sets Other in the broader context of Australian spirituality rather than in a specific religious framework. Tacey (1995, p. 61) explores Other in terms of landscape and asserts that for Australians there is a parallel between landscape and the unconscious. He also sees the Other in relationships including the relationship between Aboriginal and white Australians (Tacey, 1995, p. 135). Other is also known as an experience within oneself. The notion of self as Other he sees to be a fundamental characteristic of the post-modern condition. Tacey’s (1995, p. 115) work overlaps this study in regard to the self as Other in the post-modern framework. Beyond this study, his reflections challenge the Christian understanding of Other in terms of social relationships and environmental concerns, and he raises the important issue of the contextualising of Christianity in Australian culture. While Tacey’s work is differently focussed than this study, his insights are very useful for expanding the notion of Other in Christian religious experience. He offers a substantial challenge to Christians in the Australian cultural context.

As I refer to Christian religious experience in this study, the first characteristic is the sense of “Other.” This sense of Other includes a wide
spectrum of images including the Trinity, the feminine and the maternal. It includes the sense of God as both immanent and transcendent, and God as both numinous Other and intimate Other. The sense of Other includes as well the unexpected or the surprising, and the difficult and challenging as well as the consoling. Finally while the Other will always refer ultimately to God in the Christian framework, the Other in specific experiences can be imaged as angelic messenger or evil spirit.

The second characteristic has to do with the notion of meaning. Martin (1987, p. 325) affirms that “disciplined study and meditation may lead to the realization of identity of the individual self with the ultimately real Self.” While Martin’s meaning is somewhat ambiguous, I take his assertion to mean that, through such study and meditation, through Christian religious experiences of God, we learn who we are and how we are placed in relation to God. The Christian religious experience has to do with meaning in that it enables a developing sense of personal identity, including a sense of how and where one is placed in the larger cosmic framework. Meaning involves apprehension, awareness, and a sense of revelation for us. It includes enlightenment, insight, illumination and understanding. Tim speaks of awakening (Tim, tape 2:2), Lottie of awareness and seeing into the depths of things (Lottie, tape 2:1), and I speak of illumination in the sense of gaining insight.

A sense of place is important to the development of personal meaning.
From the writings of St. Paul forward to the present time, the central notion of place is that of being "in Christ." By virtue of claiming Jesus the Christ as lord and saviour, and being baptised in Christ, the Christian finds meaning for life in this relationship. One is "placed" in the Christ, and this forms a central aspect of the Christian identity. Biblical study, personal prayer and meditation experiences all aim at affirming for the Christian this simple identity.

Meaning develops out of response to the religious experience. It is not automatically given with the experience itself. Meaning most usually develops through a process, over time; rarely does it spring full blown from one experience. This process includes an interpretation of, and the assimilation of the insights, implications and influences of, religious experiences.

The development of meaning in life involves the development of a religious attitude toward life. I have taken up the notion of a religious attitude earlier in this chapter in the section "Religious experience - spiritual experience." In reference to the religious attitude, Storr (1989, p.

23. The phrase "in Christ" is used frequently by Paul in his writings. Examples are: Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 12:27 and 15:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 1:17. Three passages in the Gospel of John which support this notion of being in Christ are John 6:35ff., John 15:1-6, and John 17:21. John 6 is the bread of life teaching in which the faithful are in Christ by virtue of eating the bread who is Christ. John 15 is the vine and branches teaching in which the faithful actually are part of the Christ as branches are part of the larger vine. John 17 is often referred to as the high priestly prayer of Jesus. It includes the notion of the oneness of God and humanity in Christ. This notion of being in Christ is mystical in character and important to the nature of personal, Christian religious experience.
notes that the search for personal integration is a religious quest in that one moves from a sense of being self-determined to a sense of living under the guidance of "an integrating factor which is not of his own making." Personal meaning results first, from understanding that one’s place in relation to the larger life is "not of one’s own making," and, second, from seeking the guidance of this integrating factor that is not of one’s own making. In the Christian context we name this factor, God, the Other. Campbell refers to this attitude and process in his reflections in our interviews (Campbell, tape 3:2). It involves accepting Jesus as the standard of measure, or the authority, for one’s life and for the interpretation of one’s experiences. It involves attempting to live congruently with Jesus. In my experience I talk of this as aligning oneself with the purposes of the Christ. For the Christian, the spiritual practices which help us align ourselves with the purposes of Christ, are those which contribute a sense of meaning in life.

In speaking of the religious attitude, James (1902/1985, p. 38) asserts that "there must be something solemn, serious, and tender about any attitude which we identify as religious. If glad it must not grin or snicker, if sad it must not scream or curse." On the basis of my own long history of religious experiences, I disagree with James. It has been my experience that the interaction with God can contain both humour and anger. I have had many a good laugh with God or Christ as I imagine them present with me, and I certainly have expressed my anger at God and the circumstances
of my life from time to time. Without the ability to include these in my relationship with God, my experiences of God would be dull and incomplete. Both anger and humour with God have been vital for me in developing a deep sense of self and meaning for my life. An effective meaning for one’s life can only be developed by considering all the experiences one has in life, and the full range of emotional responses to them. Humour and anger in the relationship with God promote both meaning and well being.

The second characteristic of Christian religious experience has to do with meaning. Meaning includes the apprehension of the divine life and the recognition of the insights and illuminations that come from this experience. Meaning is fostered by claiming a sense of place in Christ for the Christian, and by developing what I have termed a religious attitude toward life. This attitude includes the recognition of the Other, God, as not of one’s own making and by accepting this Other as the guiding reality for one’s life. Meaning is also fostered as we open ourselves to the full range of emotions in the context of our relationship with God. These include both humour and anger.

The third quality of Christian religious experience I identify is that of a sense of well being. Martin (1987, p. 324), in speaking of the mystical tradition of religious experience, notes that the experience has an “inward, transformative, unifying character.” He goes on to identify the goal of the
mystical experience as the "...perfection of communion between the human and the divine...." (Martin, 1987, p. 326). The characteristic of well being rests on the notion of religion as a transformative, unifying and healing process, which leads the individual to a sense of wholeness. In the Christian context, Clift, (1982, p. 73) equates salvation with healing, and affirms a clear parallel between this aspect of religious experience and Jung's notion of the reconciliation of opposites. Tim comments that his latter religious experiences had to do with the reconciliation of opposites (Tim, tape 2:2). Christians have long identified the salvific work of Jesus the Christ as healing work manifest in the soul, which leads to a deep sense of well being.

The sense of well being is implied in James' process of unification mentioned earlier in this chapter in the section, "A broad spectrum." This process initiates a reconciliation in the individual who experiences a sense of inner division in a number of ways. The beginning of the process of unification involves relief and shifts then over into a happiness (James, 1902/1985, p. 175). Tim's experience of coming home to himself (Tim, tape 2:1), and my sense of a growing centredness parallel this process.

As part of well being, Tim includes the challenge of change and transformation (Tim, tape 2:2), I include the experiences of a sense of intimacy and acceptance of who I am, and Helen mentions the almost overwhelming sense of love (Helen, tape 2.2). These qualities result in the
sense of peace, and rest, contentment and stillness, which I mentioned as part of my experience. It is important to affirm once again that the sense of well being does not preclude the difficult or challenging religious experiences mentioned earlier. The processes of responding to these experiences enable them also to contribute to a sense of well being.

The third characteristic of Christian religious experience has to do with well being. This is a transformative, healing process, parallel to the process of unification explained by James, that includes the variety of emotional responses to our experiences herein cited.

These three characteristics, "Other," "meaning," and "well being," give shape to the notion of Christian religious experience for this study. Campbell, while reflecting in one instance on the qualities that are part of his religious experience, manages to include all three of these characteristics I identify as part of Christian religious experience. "I feel that I'm not alone, I feel that the universe is a warm place, that God is there, where God is, there is community, there's others, there's ... like heaven I guess" (Campbell, tape 3:1).

There is one other qualifying limit I want to set on Christian religious experience for this study. It is that this study focusses on Christian religious experience as individual, personal and solitary. In a sense this may seem an unnecessary qualification. Clift (1982, p. 69) asserts that Jung
saw religion itself as a personal experience because all religious experience happens to the person and in the context of the psyche, even if the person is part of a group at the time of the happening. While I believe this to be so, a distinction between collective and personal religion still needs to be made. The distinction I am making here is between institutional, dogmatic, creedal religion, which James (1902/1985, pp. 6 and 29) termed "second-hand" religion, and personal religious experience. I extend the distinction further to delineate between group religious experiences and personal religious experiences that take place in solitude. While this personal, solitary experience does happen in the larger context of the collective Christian life, it has an individual character. The imagery of the experiences may also take a very personal, individual form. The emphasis on personal religious experience here is important in that it forms an equation with the personal nature of the active imagination experience.

In this chapter I have reflected on religious experience in a Christian framework. I have reviewed a broad spectrum of religious experience, reflected on the distinctions between religious and spiritual experiences and considered the nature of discernment. As part of the heuristic method of research, I have summarised my own religious experiences and those of the research participants as reported in their interviews. Finally, I have set out a definition of Christian religious experience around three key notions: "Other," "meaning" and "well being," set in the context of the
personal, individual Christian religious experience. In the next chapter I will return to the original research questions.
Figure 9. You are God: Psalm 90:2 (pastel) 1998
CHAPTER SIX
RETURNING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

In this chapter I intend to return to the original research questions, and reflect on them in the light of the description of active imagination, the case material and reflections of the research participants, and the definition of Christian religious experience. As part of this reflection I intend to consider the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience in the light of the work of Chapman. I will address a key issue about the nature of the symbol, and then explore some distinctions and similarities between active imagination and religious experience. This will include recounting the insights of the four research participants, and a distinction as made by Kelsey in the course of our interviews. Finally, in the heuristic model, I will articulate my own sense of things in terms of the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience.

In chapter one, I stated the original questions from my proposal and presented my statement of intention. The questions at the outset were:

What is the nature and essential character of the experience of active imagination?

How does active imagination contribute to a sense of personal meaning?

What is the nature and essential character of Christian religious experience?
How does Christian religious experience contribute to a sense of personal meaning?

Is active imagination related to Christian religious experience?

My original statement of intention was: I intend to explore the nature, meaning and essence of active imagination as developed by Dr. Carl Jung, and to examine its relationship to Christian religious experience. In the spirit of my heuristic research model, it is not my intention to answer these questions in a simple, sequential manner. I believe that the first four questions have been addressed in the material presented in the previous chapters. The last question and the second half of the statement of intention are the focus of my reflections here. What can be said of the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience?

Jung’s religious theories - Chapman

In chapter one I raised the issue of Jung’s relationship to Christianity. In my research into the works of others, I have been watchful for approaches that represent an attempt to bridge the two, Jung’s psychology and Christianity, both in terms of theology and spirituality. I have mentioned several writers in chapter one who attempt to bridge the two in various ways, including Kelsey. Chapman (1988) addresses the notion of Jung’s own theories of religious experience more completely than any other source I have found. It is through Chapman’s work that we consider here
what religious experience was for Jung.

Chapman (1988, pp. 6-7) proposes that Jung did not have one, but three theories of religious experience. Further, he traces evidence of all three in Jung's work throughout his career. Together they represent a rich tapestry of interest on Jung's part in religious experience. Chapman (1988, p. 157) asserts that the three cannot be seen in a sequential, developmental way, or be synthesised, but must be appreciated together in order to understand Jung's attitude toward religious experience.

Chapman (1988, p. 3) identifies the three theories as: 1) the scientific-psychological, 2) the phenomenological-mythological, and 3) the metaphysical-theological. As theories, each attempts to explain something about religious experience, and each theory includes an empirical and a theoretical dimension. In the scientific-psychological theory, the empirical aspect is observational and the theoretical is a scientific hypothesis. In terms of the phenomenological-mythological theory, the empirical is the experiential and the theoretical is a myth. In the metaphysical-theological theory, the empirical is existential and the theoretical is a metaphysical or ontological theory (Chapman, 1988, p. 4).

Chapman (1988, pp. 3-4) explains the three theories by identifying several characteristics of each. In terms of the scientific-psychological theory, the goal is a knowledge of nature, and the activity involves critical inquiry.
and investigation. Chapman identifies the attitude of this first theory as objective and self-eliminating, the intent of the subject as observational, an intellectual inquirer, and the object as the god-image. In the phenomenological-mythological theory, the goal involves the process of becoming an individual or a whole person, the activity is a careful consideration of the numinous, and dialogue with the presented other. In this second theory the intentional attitude is subjective and self-involving, the subject is the totally engaged "becomer," and the object is the archetype of the self or the imago dei. In the third theory, the metaphysical-theological theory, the goal involves an understanding and relatedness to the Infinite and the activity is ontological reflection and "confession." In this theory Chapman describes the attitude as trans-subjective and abandoning, the subject as the realizer-confessor and the object as God, the Ultimate.

Chapman (1988, pp. 4-5) further explains his theories by showing the shift in meaning of two key terms, archetype and consciousness. In the scientific-psychological theory an archetype is an unobserved, unexperienced and unexperienceable theoretical entity and consciousness is a noetic act. In the phenomenological-mythological theory, the archetype is a dynamic form-meaning which presents in an image and is able to be experienced through the image. It is also a dynamic reality that has intentionality, therefore it is experienced as personal. Consciousness is an ethical act. In the metaphysical-theological theory, the archetype is
an attribute of the Creator or the metaphysical ultimate, and consciousness is a metaphysical attribute. Finally, Chapman (1988, p. 5) delineates between the three theories and the meaning of "psyche" for each. In the scientific-psychological theory, psyche refers to a stream of vital energy. In the phenomenological-mythological theory the psyche is seen as a quest for wholeness, and in the metaphysical-theological theory, the psyche is seen as a creature or splinter of the infinite deity. Of the three theories, the second and the third are the more relevant to my reflections.

In reference to the second theory, Chapman asserts that the three elements that are essential to Jung's phenomenological theory of religious experience are 1) symbolic imagery, 2) the individuation process and 3) numinosity. "Religious experience is identical with numinous experience, and numinous experience is connected both to symbols and with the individuation process" (Chapman, 1988, p. 86). The task here is to determine what, if any, is the place of active imagination in the phenomenological-mythological religious experience. The three essential elements again are: symbolic imagery, the individuation process, and numinosity.

The first, symbolic imagery, is, for Jung, the core expression of active imagination. It is an intra-psychic undertaking, that is, it takes place within the psyche of the individual, and the contents are not to be interpreted literally. The images that appear, and with whom we
interact, are symbolic images of unconscious contents, both from the personal and collective levels of the unconscious.

The second of the three essential elements of the phenomenological theory is the individuation process. Chapman (1988, p. 75) asserts that Jung saw the individuation process as the central concept of his psychology. The activity of the phenomenological-mythological theory includes dialogue with the presented other. This dialogue is a key factor in the individuation process. Individuation as a process is characterised by the dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. The dialogue with the presented other is also the essential task of active imagination as explained in chapter two. Hannah (1953, p. 46), implies that active imagination is the core activity of the individuation process. Active imagination dialogue is, in fact, how the individuation process happens, whether it be written interaction, dance, art, song or another creative expression or reflective process. In the second theory as described by Chapman, I would amend Chapman's wording by replacing "dialogue with presented other," with "active imagination." I believe this reflects more clearly the place of active imagination in Jung's work.

The third essential element is the numinous. In defining Christian religious experience in the previous chapter, I included the notion of the numinous based on Otto. Chapman shows that Jung depends on Otto for his understanding of the numinous, but that he shifts its focus. For Otto
the numinous is the quality of the creator, the transcendent God. For Jung
the quality of the numinous is carried by the archetypes. As Chapman
(1988, p. 90) summarises: “Jung makes immanent what for Otto is
transcendent.” Chapman asserts that this is a metaphysical point of
importance. Jung could not accept Otto’s framework here, but restructures
it from a metaphysical model into an intra-psychic framework. Chapman
implies that the two, Jung and Otto, are working with parallel processes in
different frameworks. For Otto the numinous is in the experience of the
transcendent God, for Jung the numinous is in the intra-psychic
experience of the archetypes of the unconscious. Engagement with the
images that emerge in active imagination involves the participant with
the numinous. Again, active imagination ties directly to the essential
elements of the phenomenological-mythological theory of religious
experience. In reviewing the three essential elements that Chapman
identifies, it is clear that each is related to the practice of active
imagination. It is appropriate to assert then, that within the structures of
his own psychological work, Jung saw active imagination as a religious
experience. Indeed, it is not overstated to say that he saw it as an essential
religious experience and central to the religious task of the individuation
process.

In reference to the phenomenological-mythological theory of religious
experience, the focus of the experience is intra-psychic. The numinous
experience is carried by the archetypal symbols of the unconscious.
Religious experience here does not address transcendent realities, but engages immanent symbolic experiences, which Jung saw as being generated from the unconscious. There is no metaphysical dimension to the divine imagery in this second theory. In the context of this second theory Jung would have seen the metaphysical claims of believers as projections of the unconscious out into the cosmos, which were then engaged as Other. In terms of Christian religious experience, the second theory provides a picture of the process of active imagination as a religious experience, but in a psychological context. For the Christian there is a connection that is not made, except by the effort of the individual, between Jung’s method and Christian religious experience.

Chapman (1988, p. 123) claims in his third theory, the metaphysical-theological theory, that it is possible in Jung’s work to see a connection between the numinous archetype of the self or God image, and God, the metaphysical ultimate. “This means that in the experience of numinosity [...] one is encountering directly, even if mediately, ‘the transcendent being’ or ‘Being itself.’” Chapman admits that his evidence for this third theory is more circumstantial than that for the first two theories, but he asserts that the evidence makes it clear that Jung did cross over from the stance of an empirical scientist to a metaphysical theologian. Chapman (1988, p. 124) acknowledges Jung’s insistence that he was operating from the position of an empirical scientist, and that he could not say anything about the metaphysical realm, and is sure that Jung would have trouble owning
this third theory that is found in his work. Heisig (1979, p. 121) also
acknowledges Jung’s desire to have his work seen as scientific and asserts
that he went so far in this as to be anti-metaphysical. Yet he also
acknowledges that Jung eventually gave up concern for the distinction
between the God images of psychology and the God of metaphysics and
theology (Heisig, 1979, p. 126). This would leave room for Chapman’s
claim that Jung, perhaps unconsciously, crossed over the line from
empirical scientist to metaphysician. Dourley (1992, p. 34) affirms that
Jung’s work includes a “latent metaphysic” about which Jung might have
been more open and honest. Chapman and Dourley both identify the
possibility of a metaphysical dimension to Jung’s work. Chapman
identifies this as Jung’s third theory of religious experience.

Chapman’s work of identifying three theories of religious experience in
Jung’s psychology provides us with a way in which we can see active
imagination as a religious experience. It is important to affirm here again
that, for Jung (1958/1980, para. 1637), religion was not a matter of creeds,
dogmas and institutional organisation. It centred on subjective, personal
experience as the core of religion. Chapman shows that the God images of
this subjective, personal experience might be interpreted three different
ways according to the three theories: as god image, as numinous
archetypal image, or as God the ultimate. Chapman’s work raises for me a
central issue concerning active imagination in the context of Christian
religious experience which I intend to address now before moving on to a
consideration of some of the differences between active imagination and Christian religious experience.

A central issue

In our consideration of active imagination and Christian religious experience, an important issue raised by Chapman's third theory is the relationship in the active imagination work between the images of God and Christ and the metaphysical ultimate, God. Stated in question form: is the God or Christ of my active imagination only an intra-psychic symbolic energy that has manifested out of my unconscious, or does the symbolic image participate in the metaphysical reality of God or Christ? Chapman's second theory makes it clear that, in Jung's framework of religion, active imagination is an essential religious experience, but the experience is contained on a psychological level of interpretation. The third theory raises the stakes for the Christian. Is the psychological image connected to the metaphysical reality? Is the Christ of my personal, intra-psychic experience connected to the Christ of my religious tradition? Who is the Jesus of Campbell's experience, or the Christ of Tim's or Lottie's experiences, or my own experience?

In my training many years ago I learned that a simple distinction between a sign and a symbol is that a symbol participates in the reality that it symbolises. This is a key to understanding the sacramental theology of the
Catholic, liturgical traditions of Christianity. Jung holds a parallel notion of the archetypal images of the unconscious, they participate in the archetypal reality they represent, indeed we only know archetypal reality through its images. This participation is what generates the quality of the numinous in the experience, the symbolic images represent a dynamic Other reality behind the image itself, which cannot be known except through the images. Within a Christian framework, working with this understanding of symbol, and connecting it to what Chapman asserts is Jung’s third theory of religious experience, it becomes possible to affirm that the symbolic images of deity in the active imagination work of individuals participate in the metaphysical realities of God and Christ as known in the Christian religious tradition.

An important aspect of this connection is the faith of those who assert it to be true. Connecting intra-psychic images to metaphysical realities is an act of faith for the Christian. I use faith here to denote a process of postulating or asserting this connection on the basis of one’s experience of the numinous images in active imagination and on the basis of a predisposed

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24. The catechetical statement about sacraments is that they are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In this instance the connection is between the spiritual reality and a physical vehicle. For example, bread and wine carry and convey the real presence of Christ’s body and blood.

25. I want to note by way of passing that I did not find this issue to be raised by Sparrow (1995), whose work is entirely about appearances of Jesus. Nor did I find it in Kelsey’s written work. I raised the issue in the first interview with Kelsey, and posed it as a question: “Does the Christ who appears in an active imagination exercise participate in the Christ reality that the Christian community has worshipped and has theologically declared from the beginning? And I would say, ‘Yes.’” Kelsey responded that he, too, would answer “Yes” (Kelsey, tape 1:1).
framework of reality, that is, the metaphysical reality of God. Faith, as I use it, is based on experience and includes trust, commitment and intellectual assent. To state the faith process personally: my faith accepts the Christian world view and the God of this story. My experiences of the God and Christ images in active imagination resonate with the Christian images of God and Christ. Therefore, by faith, I conclude that these are connected. Based on the resonances between the two, I affirm, by faith, that the God and Christ of my active imagination work participate in the metaphysical realities of the God and Christ of the Christian tradition.

Chapman’s third theory opens the possibility of affirming, by faith, that these Christ and God images are both the intra-psychic images of our own unconscious process, and aspects of the Christ and God realities of the Christian tradition and proclamation, the metaphysical ultimate of Chapman’s third theory, and the Unlimited Divine Creator of Kelsey’s world view (Kelsey, 1997, p. 72). For Christians, this has importance for seeing active imagination as a form of Christian religious experience, and has significant importance as well for what Dourley (1992, p. 28) terms “private revelation” within the Christian tradition. I will comment later on Dourley’s notion of private revelation.

26. For all of Jung’s criticism of faith and his insistence that experience is the appropriate ground for religion, I suggest that he makes his own acts of faith in developing the theories of his psychological framework. Two examples are his affirmation of the existence of archetypes and of the collective unconscious. Storr (1996, p. 198) asserts that, even though Jung claimed to be applying methods of science in seeking answers to life’s questions, he was actually promoting a belief system that has many similarities to religious faith constructs.
This issue presents substantial challenges when we encounter images that take us beyond our conventional understanding of the Christ or God images. Over the years I have encountered startling images of Christ and God in active imagination work. I include here two examples from active imagination dialogues shared with me which illustrate this issue.

Graham’s experience

The first is the experience of Graham who had this experience in his early forties. Graham was in a time of serious distress, and was finding his religion to be of little help to him. He felt drawn to have a show down with Jesus. Graham has provided two typewritten texts of this active imagination. The first has no date, and the second is dated 24.12.1995. I will use the first text which is the longer and more complete. Graham provides the description of some of the characters, early in the text. While retaining Graham’s language, I have removed it from the text and placed it here at the beginning. The guidelines for reproducing case material offered at the beginning of chapter two also apply here. In this copy of the text I have underlined the sections that appear in larger and bold type in the original.

"Fighting with Jesus"

1. The characters of the dialogue

Olaf: a Viking who likes sex, enjoys exercise and sleeping. A warrior and proud of it! His shadow is vulnerable and unsure of himself.

Elrik: A Viking shaman, a man deeply connected to nature, a mystic,
fearless in the spirit of the bull. His shadow analyses everything to death, undermining his belief in himself and the world around him.

Zendor: a Female Dragon. A powerful mystical creature. She is my feminine, my creative force. In searching for a name for her Zen came to mind because of the style of poetry she writes and Condor, the great bird, powerful and free. So I joined Zen with Condor and came up with Zendor! Her shadow is if she is ingored, there is hell to pay!

Mogor: a Male Dragon. I have tried to hide the source of his name even from myself. Gog and Magog were the names given to two evil beasts in the book of revelations, Mogor came from these. He is determined and focused with a wicked sense of humour. His shadow is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Graham
Jesus
Samson
Elijah
Male and female lion beasts

2. The text

"Myself, Olaf and his sword, Elrik (wearing bulls head cape), Mogor (breathing fire) and Zendor dark with rage coming up at the rear, walked to the mountain top.

[Here Graham gives the description of the characters given above.]

I looked at [the] tree of life and nodded, he nodded in return. Standing on the pathway by the lake, I waited. Olaf, Elrik, Mogor and Zendor behind me.

Jesus followed by Samson (carrying a huge sword), Elijah (the prophet of God) and a male and female lion beasts with huge eagles wings, walk towards us.

I start screaming at Christ, you fucking arse hole, Fuck You Cunt, Cunt, Cunt, I’ll tear your Fucking Heart Out, Fuck You, You call Yourself a Fucking God, Where The Fuck Have You Been, Having a Fucking Sleep, Cunt!

I was screaming at Jesus, pounding my fist hard into my hand. Olaf moved over to one end of a large log at the edge of the lake, sword held at the ready. It was Odin’s sword, a magical beast of enormous power, it throbbed, hungry for the taste of flesh.
Samson raised the sword of God, a huge blade that shone like the sun itself, one swipe could cleave a horse in half. He walked, arrogant and proud over to the other end of the log and waited.

Mogor and Zendor flew to the far end of the lake hissing and breathing fire. The mighty beasts of God flew to the opposite bank, roaring and tearing at the ground. The air was thick with violence, the water birds had long taken to flight in terror, their winged panic blanketing out the sun.

In a blind fury I lunged forward screaming at Jesus

Pay Back Time You Fuck Head
I’m Going To Fucking Kill You

screaming in his face

AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH

I saw a blur of movement in my peripheral vision and turned my head as I swayed back, but I was a moment too slow and too late. An explosion went off inside my head as Jesus fist connected with my jaw. I felt like a drunk man falling in slow motion as my knees buckled, I turned, putting out my hands to try to cushion my fall, my eyes couldn’t focus, I misjudged the distance grasped at thin air and crashed hard into the ground as my arms crumpled like matches. Another explosion went off in my head as my face thumped into the ground, but it felt strangely distant as like a man on an operating table counting down the anaesthetic, vague images came and went as blackness drew down her dark veil.

Olaf screaming “Odin” charged along the log as Samson, almost at the same instant, Samson screaming “El Shaddai” raised his widow maker and charged along the log at Olaf. The sound of steel upon steel, sparking as blow upon blow fell, echoed across mountain tops. No quarter asked, none given. It was the kind of battle that legends are born from.

The roars of the four mystical beasts rose to the heavens as the lion beasts and dragons charged into the shallow waters at each other, meeting with such impact that the ground shook.

The female beast grabbed Zendor, flinging her down and holding her head under water, fool Zendor is a dragon, she cannot drown. Zendor coiled her tail around her opponents neck and flung the beast of God high into the air.

Mogor and the male lion beast stood on hind legs belting each other with huge powerful blows, but both their tails whipped back and forth in delight. Neither had had such a good scrap in aeons.
Zen and her opponent charged each other again and again, rolling over and over, clasped in life and death struggle, neither gaining any advantage over the other, water, mud, wings and tails flying everywhere.

As I slowly regained consciousness Jesus bent over me, grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and yelled, "I am sick of your childish shit! Of you blaming me for every fucking thing that goes wrong in you[r] life. You come crying to me like a baby when things don't work out, when I fix them, you forget me! If I don't sort things out and leave it to you, you carry on like a baby and refuse to speak to me for ages until you decide you need me again. Well, I'm sick of it you hear me! He flung me back and stood up.

I slowly came to my feet, ashamed and annoyed. More annoyed than ashamed. My ego was hurt that he got the drop on me! I turned and walked to the tree staggering as I went.

Next thing I knew Jesus grabbed my left arm and put it around his neck and put his right arm around my waist to support me.

I looked at him and said, "you got me a beauty, you next to took my head off!"

He replied "If you hadn't seen it coming I would have!"

We both laughed and walked together to the tree of life, who embraced us both saying, "It's about time my boys had it out!"

We had a group hug.

Olaf and Samson stood laughing at each other in exhaustion, grabbed each others shoulders and fell into the lake to cool off.

Mogor and the beast he was fighting rose from the lake grasping each others throats, paused, looked over at Zen and her opponent, then started throwing mud at them.

Zendor and her lion beast stopped in stunned surprise as lumps of mud hit them, but their surprise turned into a full on charge at there mockers, barrelling them over amidst howl[s] of laughter from all four of them.

Elrik and Elijah both slept soundly. They long since tired of playing cosmic one upmanship. The novelty of seeing who could light the biggest bonfire out of wet timber had worn off centuries ago, they were too old for this nonsense. So they both wandered off together to find a shady tree under which to enter the world of dreams."
As I pointed out in the previous chapter, in the section, "A broad spectrum," James (1902/1985, p. 335) asserts that when a new insight comes it usually is seen as "heretical sort of innovation" for a time. In terms of Graham's experience, what are we to make of it? Is it heresy to imagine that Jesus the Christ would enter into a fist fight with Graham to make a point or to move his life along? There is one biblical story that parallels this dialogue. It is the story of Jacob wrestling with a man (Genesis 32:24-32). The man is usually interpreted as an angel of God.

In the section on discernment I concluded that the biblical teaching about deciding on the basis of the fruit borne by an experience is our sure guide in the Christian framework. For Graham this encounter bore solid fruit. It allowed him to express his anger at God in Jesus, it allowed him to cope with Jesus' complaint against him for his whinging ways, and it shifted the relationship to a deeper level of trust. I assert that it was helpful for Jesus to speak Graham's "language." He was from a violent and abusive background, and he understood a Jesus figure who would "speak" to him in this way. I shared this example with Kelsey, and he was most uncomfortable with it. For him, this "language" of violence from the Christ would have been devastating. I admit that I, too, would have had trouble with such an experience, since that "language" is not part of my experience. Graham knew this "language." This encounter ended in a group hug, and a deeper sense of trust for Jesus. While the Jesus/Christ symbol behaves in ways outside the boundaries of the conventional,
traditional image, the experience bore appropriate, life-giving fruit in Graham's life. I conclude that this Christ figure is not only an intra-psychic product of the unconscious, it also is connected to, or participates in, the eternal, metaphysical Christ of God. It is noteworthy that Graham simply assumed this connection.

William's experience

William's experience is very different from Graham's, but raises the same point. William has provided eighty-two pages of single spaced, typewritten material. It includes nineteen active imagination dialogues among journal reflections. They date from 1984, when William was experiencing a very difficult time. He was in his forties at the time of this work. He is also an ordained Episcopal priest. His dialogues include conversations with Jesus and with God. The God imagery is our focus here and I will give short excerpts from longer dialogues as illustration.

In dialogue five, William is speaking with Jesus and Child about the pain of his childhood.

Wm: Oh God. (The whirlwind comes forward.)
God: You called?
Wm: This is like a Mel Brooks comedy.
God: I made him too.
Wm: Well, at least you gave him a sense of humour that made him some money. I haven't earned a thing from my pain and aloneness.
God: Correction; you did earn your priesthood and your counseling license from your pain and aloneness.
Wm: Ok, I stand corrected again. Always. Shit.
God: You want me to shit?
Wm: No, just a figure of speech.
God: I am good at figures.
Wm: Oh, hell, [...] I can't say anything without some image getting stirred.
[God responds with an insight into meaningful images.]

Wm: [...] but thank you God for directing me and for teaching me that you have a rye [sic] sense of humor.

God: Yours to be sure. (William, 5:41-42)

In dialogue seven God interjects with humour as the image Feeling is making a point.

God: And I have it all, tra la. (whoosh); is it a bird, is it a plane, no, it is Supertwirl, otherwise known as the I am that I am. And I am. ahem, get the pun? Hon?

Feel: Oh, don't be pulling that vaudeville routine now, God, when I am trying to make a point. (William, 7:48)

In dialogue eight William is meeting with Bitch, Anger and Victim for the first time and deciding where to seat them in his Council circle. Bitch has arrived like a witch on a broomstick, but hers has “jet-like engine controls.” Anger is speaking as Victim enters. God then enters to help Victim.

(God whirls in and puts on an oxygen mask for him, patting him on the back and seating him between Child and Abandoned.)

God: Suck it up, victim, suck it up, just like they do at 30,000 feet when the cabin pressure goes off, gulp, gulp, gulp. (Whoosh, “Oh, what a beautiful morning, oh what a beautiful day.”)

Angr: As I was saying before God interrupted us again; although he does provide comic relief to this heavy task of yours; ...

[At the end, as Bitch is helped to her place, she is told she has to give up her jet-propelled ways.]

God: I'll step in now. I've always wanted to whirl around on a "Whirlski." (God takes the propelled machine and whirls around on it.) Another toy, oh joy, oh joy, oh joy.

(And God jets off into the sky around us for a time. We are laughing hysterically at God the clown who comes down to balance us just when we need it. I lean my head on beautiful Jesus' shoulder, I hold Feeling in my arms. I am tired again, but here I feel safe and secure. And I think for the first time in my entire life in these moments, I sense what it is to be grounded, at peace, Whole.) (William, 8:57-58)
In dialogue ten, William is speaking with several inner characters. The lusty one, Ever Ready, admits to being horney, saying, "God, I'm horney."

God: You called?
Er: In a manner of speaking.
God: What is this about horney? I want a horn for my whirlski, so I can go beep beep when I wroom, wroom. Horns for the creator, horns for the creator. Let em rip!
Wm: God, are you ever serious?
God: Just look at the last 45 years. Got any questions about that?
Wm: No, you've been terribly serious in my life, for all of it. I enjoy your cutting up. But I realized Saturday morning that I need a wise and holy man, a sage, to help me at times. Infinite wisdom.
God: That, too, I can be. But you get deadly serious mixed up with infinite wisdom. They aren't the same. Wisdom has life. Seriousness has a kind of judgement. [...] You don't need that now. Let's lighten up, and I'll be wise, and at times the clown. I enjoy both. (William, 10: p. 61)

Previous to these dialogues, God, for William, had been seen as a harsh and judging figure. He realised that he had not claimed personally the healing nature of the Christian story, even though he understood it theologically and intellectually. His operative God image was an image that offered little that was life-giving for William. In these dialogues God often takes the clown role, interrupting at what seems to be inappropriate places with inappropriate behaviour. Yet as time goes along, God also takes a serious teaching role, offering the wisdom God promised in dialogue ten. William's overall response to this symbol came one day in our conversations when he said, "This is a God I'd like to get to know."

The encounters stand up to the test of fruits, as set forth in the Gospel of Matthew as part of the teaching of Jesus, and upheld by James, (1902/1985) Kelsey (Interview, tape 2:1) and Sparrow (1995). Shortly after these
dialogues ended, William chose to face his alcohol abuse issue and chose to become sober. William realised that the courage to face this issue arose out of the new understanding of God and Christ that emerged through these dialogues. William comments in a recent reflection inserted after dialogue fifteen:

These meditations were in fact the first three steps [of the Twelve Step program in Alcoholics Anonymous]. At times steps 4-9; this was the most religious event of my life; I was in the process of discovering God for the first time; in a sense a baptism of the Spirit was evolving (William, p. 74).

While the image of God in William’s work seems not as radical a departure from conventional imagery as was Graham’s, it is important to realise that, for William, it was a significant and dramatic shift in his God imagery. It is also noteworthy that, like Graham, William simply assumes that the God of his active imagination work participates in the reality of the metaphysical God of the Christian tradition. As he says in his reflection above, “I was in the process of discovering God for the first time” (William, p. 74).

I have asserted that, in the Christian framework, the symbol participates in the reality it symbolises. Based on Jung’s third theory of religious experience, as identified by Chapman, it is possible to affirm, by faith, that this is true of the Christ and God images in active imagination. The test of “fruits,” as previously explained, provides a method for testing the possible truth. In the case of the experiences of Graham and William we
see that the images in the active imagination material take us well beyond the conventional images of the tradition. But in each instance the experiences provide life-giving and healing encounters with the Jesus and God figures. Discerning by the fruits of these experiences, I affirm that both Graham and William encountered the metaphysical God and Jesus of their religious tradition through the symbolic images that emerged from the unconscious. Both these experiences demonstrate how important it is to give consideration to Dourley’s (1992, p. 28) assertion that we must reflect again on the place of private revelation in the Christian community.

Distinctions: Kelsey’s point of view

Having considered this issue of the symbol participating in the reality it symbolises, I intend now to highlight some distinctions between active imagination and Christian religious experience. I intend to present Kelsey’s reflections from our interviews, and the distinctions made by the four research participants.

The morning after my first interview with Kelsey, I woke at five in the morning and soon got up and wrote out the thoughts I was having about the first day. I was attempting to clarify the distinction I had heard Kelsey making between the Jungian stance on active imagination and his own. I had asked him about this specifically because I noted that he often did not use the term, “active imagination,” in his own published works to label
the process he was describing. At the beginning of our second interview, I read to Kelsey the reflection I had composed early that same morning. He responded, "Well stated," and indicated that it captured accurately what he was trying to say. I enter the statement here as I wrote it that morning, amended only with appropriate references, and set it apart in quotation marks.

"While Kelsey is indebted to Jung's work for introducing him to the method of imaginal dialogues, he does not use active imagination in the form and practice proposed by Jung and Jungians.

"Kelsey is critical of the Jungian approach. He asserts that it opens people up to the depths of the unconscious reality, including the deepest and most destructive aspects of evil, but the method, as presented by Jung, does not provide safeguards against what might come forward. Kelsey comments that the Jungian method is good at opening up or dismantling the present, often wounded psychic structures, but not good at helping to rebuild a new sense of self, or offering protection against the darkest, evil aspects of the unconscious. Here the Jungian psychological understanding of the psyche is theologically flawed. Kelsey would suggest that, ironically, Jungians in general tend to be naive about these deepest, most evil aspects of the psyche.

"So, Kelsey's own work with the imaginal process is actually an original
modification of the Jungian experience of active imagination. It includes
the Jungian commitment to be open to whatever emerges from the
unconscious, but tempers this with an option at any moment to introduce
the salvific figure of the Christ from the Christian tradition to save the
individual from the possibility of an overwhelming encounter with evil,
which Kelsey sees as universally present in the psyches of each of us.
Kelsey sees the lack of awareness of this evil reality on the part of Jungians
as naive and potentially dangerous, in that people may open themselves
to images of the unconscious against which they have no defence or
power to cope. To trust the psychological process itself to resolve the crisis
and to provide resolution is, for Kelsey, misplaced trust, and again, naive
in his experience.

"His own original adaptation might better be identified as 'Christian image
meditation' rather than active imagination as presented by Jung and
subsequent Jungians, including Hannah (1981) and Johnson (1986). It
springs from Kelsey's own understanding of psychic reality and the nature
of psychic experience. Kelsey's diagram (1997, p. 72), in his recently
updated work, The Other Side of Silence, includes the reality of evil
impinging upon both the psychic process of the individual and the
physical world (see Appendix one). This 'wild card' in the psyche is ever
present and makes essential the saving figure of the Christ at every
instance to protect the individual against this destructive force. Whether
experiences of this darker reality can be transformative is another matter
to which Kelsey might well answer, 'Yes, sometimes.' But the important function of the Christ is to provide a way out of this encounter when the encounter is not transformative, but overwhelming.

"One of the few things that upsets Kelsey in an ongoing way is the fact that some do not take seriously the depth of the pain, agony and suffering that humans face, both personally and collectively, at the hands of evil. He would include here the 'Jungian school' which seems generally not to take seriously the depth of destruction possible by evil energies welling up from within, in spite of the general awareness of the concept of the shadow. Most deal with this reality simply by denial of its presence and influence. In his own experiences of Jungian analysis, Kelsey is clear that he was led to the reality of his own soul in all its darkness, but offered no help in dealing with what he found there. This help he found in the Christian image of the Christ and the symbolic process of death and resurrection as known through the risen Christ reality.

"This raises questions of an important distinction between Christian religious experience and Jung's active imagination. Is it wise simply to trust the psychic process (the guidance of the self) and lay oneself open to whatever will emerge? Is it potentially dangerous action to take? Do active imagination and Christian religious experience differ precisely at the point of the understanding of the reality of evil and the process by which to respond to its presence?
"From Kelsey's perspective there is a significant difference. He would see the Jungian model as naive about the reality of evil and too trusting of the dynamic dialogic process itself to heal and restore without intervention of a saving energy. The Jungian approach seems to be that the process will heal by its own nature. Kelsey rejects this trust, and while he accepts the healing power of imaginal story, he counsels us to be ready at any time to introduce the saving Christ to protect us from the destructive and evil energies that lie present in the human psyche. The distinction hinges on the understanding of evil in human experience, and indeed, in the cosmic structure of things. It is a metaphysical issue" (Coronado, California, USA, 20 January, 1998).

Kelsey's opinion raises two major distinctions between active imagination and Christian religious experience. The first has to do with the framework for the experience, and the second has to do with the healing nature of the process. In her earlier work on active imagination, mentioned previously, Hannah (1953), makes it clear that this first distinction is what distinguishes active imagination from various imaginal meditation forms of the religious traditions. This distinguishing factor is that these practices in religious traditions take place within the dogmatic framework and tradition of the religion. As she states in her remarks contrasting active imagination with yoga: "We attempt in active imagination to allow the unconscious to express itself freely" (Hannah, 1953, p. 39). Along with
yoga, Hannah also lists other eastern texts, the alchemical tradition, and, from the Christian tradition, the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and aspects of the practice of prayer. Again, the distinction is that, in active imagination, the participant enters the process without any dogmatic framework that would limit the behaviours or points of view of the images or the outcome of the process. Kelsey is willing to support the notion of dealing with what emerges, but only with the understanding that one can call on the saving figure of the Christ if the process becomes overwhelming. He later comments in the interview tapes that he does in fact see what he practices as active imagination (Kelsey tapes, 3:2).

The second distinguishing factor has to do with the healing nature of the process itself. While the process of active imagination may be seen as a natural activity of the individuation process in the psyche, Kelsey is not prepared to trust the psyche to heal on its own. He sees this as naive at best. For Kelsey the transformative energy in the active imagination process is the Christ and the reality of the resurrection. It is his opinion that Jung does not understand or deeply appreciate either the Christ or the resurrection. In one moment of passion he says of the transformative process: "It just doesn't emerge!" (Kelsey tapes, 3:1). I will say more about Kelsey's perspectives later in this chapter.

Distinctions: the research participants' points of view

In the process of explaining the heuristic model of research in chapter one,
I affirmed the value of subjective experience and its possible contribution to a wider understanding of human experience. In this heuristic spirit of research, I asked each of the four research participants to reflect on what are, for them, some distinctions between active imagination and religious experience. Their responses are summarised here.

Campbell

Conversation with Campbell concerning the relationship between active imagination and religious experience covered several points of distinction. First, he sees that the essential frameworks for the two experiences are different. Campbell sees that his Christian religious experience stands on a much broader foundation.

With the gospels and the Christian revelation or traditional stories, there's something outside myself that ... there's the church, there's all that have gone before, all building on Jesus himself I guess, which gives it a sense of awe, and gives me a sense of gratitude, of belonging to this cloud of witnesses, being part of this tremendous story, this tremendous community of people. (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

Campbell asserts that this much broader foundation gives his religious experiences a sense of greater depth, or a sense of a more encompassing reality.

Well, the difference, I guess, is that, for me, when I'm ... I guess I am ... when I'm in the Christian religious experience I am not, uh, I feel as though I ... I am part of a much greater process, that I am in the presence of infinite, you almost could say, infinitely more majesty and gratitude, and there's the reality of Jesus there, the great life, the great love, the cross, the mystery of the resurrection. You know, there's this actual pivot of history there. Then there's, you see, to me, it's
the depth, the reality, the surrender to that, the being part of something so profoundly ... the very pivot of all history, of the planet. To me there is a depth, not so much a depth, but a kind of reality there which is far more encompassing, and I go into it with a sense of great joy. Whereas the active imagination is more bounded for my own development, for my own sanity, for my own sense of journey, for the cycle when I need to go in to get an awareness of the processes that are going on in my own life, for healing. The story I tell, I’m a very large part of that, although I do recognise that there are other parts which I’m the ego [...] and they come unbidden. But, for me, they don’t have nearly the same religious joy and communion. (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

Campbell wrestles with the possibility that in active imagination he is still “making it up and in control to some extent” (Campbell, tape, 3:2). He is further concerned that “in active imagination I have the feeling I’m responding to something that is me, or part of me, or in me” (Campbell, tape, 3:2). He see this particularly in reference to the Jesus image in his active imagination.

You see, for instance, when Jesus would come into the active imagination, I still get the feeling that it has some of the characteristics of Jesus I might have read in the gospels and I’ve accommodated the figure of Jesus, the Christ image you might say, but none of the numinousity or the wonder or none of the surrender to this which is greater than myself. (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

On the other hand Campbell recognises that he felt no control over the Boy Campbell figure when he emerged. Yet overall there is a feeling of control present in his active imagination experience, and that marks a difference from his religious experience. Part of this confusion seems to do with the sense of “Other.” In his active imagination experience, Campbell is concerned that the “Other” is still a part of him that he creates
and actually controls. In active imagination Campbell sees himself as acting to assign patterns of words and actions to images in a way that he doesn’t in prayer.

In his reflection Campbell struggles to articulate a perspective of difference on the use of images in the two experiences. In the active imagination work the images are a central focus, “but when I am in prayer, I leave that aside, because I just know that they’re images, just approximations ... they’re totally inadequate, and then I surrender because the reality is far more than the image, so you’re relating to a person” (Campbell, tape, 3:2). At the same time Campbell does acknowledge an ambivalence as to whether or not the images come from him and his control, or from some deeper place within himself. “Some of that, maybe a lot of that, doesn’t come from me, I’m open to that, seems to me a lot of it does, but I’m open to that fact that a lot of it comes from a deeper place than my control and my writing” (Campbell, tape, 3:2).

Several times Campbell reflects on the distinction between active imagination and religious experience as a matter of surrender. “I think they are different processes of surrender, of letting God be who God is” (Campbell, tape, 3:2).

When he begins to focus on the similarities between the two experiences, Campbell comes to conclude that he is of two minds theologically. One
part of him focuses on God's grace, salvation, the forgiven sinner, what he sees as the more evangelical side of his thinking. The other part focuses on the immanent God, God in creation, in himself. He asserts that evangelicals "aren't very good at that" (Campbell, tape, 3:2). Campbell then realises that

when I'm speaking of my religious experience, I'm really speaking of the experience I had as an evangelical, so they are more in the line of the Reformation. They are less in the line of the other great tradition in Christianity, Christendom, which is the immanent God. There's a connection, of course, but the God who comes to us in dream, in sacrament, all that sort of stuff...how shall I say it? I've been profoundly changed by paying attention to my dreams and part of that is the active imagination. And it's been so helpful, because now you recognise that, at least recognise what I knew in the evangelical tradition, and in the charismatic tradition, 'cause the charismatic tradition preaches it, you're getting into the dream, the vision, in the charismatic sense, and it leads you almost into sacramental and the Catholic sense of the presence of God, the immanence of God in the sacraments and the sacramental life.

How shall I say? The dream's nice, because when you pray to God about it, you're aware that God is working in me in ways that I don't even know. While I go about my everyday life, God is working in me the new creation, God is building up the new creation. God's love is growing in me. Where else is it growing but in the unconscious?" (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

In two comments Campbell makes an attempt at bridging the two experiences of active imagination and religious experience. In the first he begins by affirming his basic affection for the dream and active imagination experiences.

I find the dreams and active imagination so lovely! Because if you just have the Christian religious experience, maybe in the evangelical sense, and I had that, well, it's wonderful and you have it, and then you go back to your normal life and it's
gone. But if you have the dream and the active imagination to some extent you... there's a window into a way that my own body and mind and psyche and the unconscious is now bridging into, in a funny way, bridging into this great feeling of gratitude and awe and wonder that I get in prayer and in the community. And it's healthy, it's helpful because I recognise that it's a new thing. (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

The second reflection is part of a response to a quotation from John Dourley's, *Strategy for a Loss of Faith*. Dourley (1992, p. 28) asserts that “we now realize that conscious dialogue with the unconscious in whatever form, but especially in the form of the dream, is functionally a dialogue with divinity.” In this comment, Campbell bridges the active imagination experience to the cross and resurrection of Christian theology.

The great hope, I think, is to what we don't know, the unconscious, is to include what comes up in the dream, what comes up in the active imagination, with the great historic reality of the cross. And then somehow, if you can bridge those, you get the immanence of God, or the new creation working in us unknown, and then filtering out, making a difference in consciousness and the world. And then the central image of the resurrection becomes very powerful there. So, there's something there but I don't know what it is. (Campbell, tape, 3:2)

Helen

In reflecting briefly on active imagination and religious experience, Helen concludes that the source of active imagination, and dreams and synchronicity as well, is the same as the source for religious experience. This energy source gives the story, the images, and the courage to go in and do the work of active imagination, “the courage to take the leap” (Helen, tape, 2:2). In response to the direct question, “Is active imagination
a religious experience?", Helen replied, "I'd say it's part of the whole ... part of the whole ... all of which put together includes ... for want of a better term ... a religious experience. It's something to do with honouring whatever that light, that source is day by day. It's something to do with living with that all the time" (Helen, tape, 2:2).

In reflecting on how these experiences are different, Helen notes that they are different in intensity. They differ more in quantity than in quality; they are from the same energy, but active imagination is less intense. "It's a smaller experience, but it's the same ... energy, it feels as if it's the same energy" (Helen, tape, 2:2). She also notes that active imagination requires effort. She asserts that she must "invest some of myself, be prepared to meet that source [...] be prepared to bring myself to it, to do the work" (Helen, tape, 2:2). For Helen the religious experience is grace, the unexpected, the unplanned, surprise, in which one is totally overtaken. In active imagination she is "more aware of being conscious" (Helen, tape, 2:2).

Tim

Tim also is brief in his reflections on active imagination and religious experience. He comments that "these are things not so much to analyse but to experience and to savour" (Tim, tape, 2:2). Active imagination and religious experience share common ground in terms of their integrating function.
Things are put together again [...] it’s like a being made whole, like the pieces are brought together and bound together and that’s how they are, that’s where they’re supposed to be and it’s done in a sense in the presence of God. All of that’s done, and may be overseen, by God, or nudged along by God, or performed by God, in fact probably all of them simultaneously. (Tim, tape, 2:2).

These two experiences also share the qualities of wonder and amazement. Beyond this Tim only comments that “they are things I want to feel, savour, taste, to mull over, sit with, be with, all of these kinds of things” (Tim, tape, 2:2).

In terms of differences between the two, Tim notes that active imagination is more protracted, more drawn out. Religious experience may be minutes or hours, but active imagination can last over a period of weeks or months. He also notes that active imagination is not as intense, whereas one-off religious experiences can be extraordinarily intense. Tim sees active imagination somewhat like a guided meditation, like a form of prayer. “I’d say it is a form of prayer” (Tim, tape, 2:2). As noted earlier, Tim classifies most of his active imagination work as religious experience.

Lottie

Lottie, too, is brief in her reflections on the distinctions and similarities between active imagination and religious experience. The two experiences are similar in that “the image meditation, which I’ll call active imagination, very often produces exactly the same state of awe, peace ...
appreciating that ... the works that I [...] are neither good or bad, it just is” (Lottie, tape, 2:2).

Lottie makes two distinctions between the two experiences. First, “Where it’s different is that my religious experience is a surprise. I don’t plan it, I don’t sit down to meditate in order to have it. It comes out of ... the blue. Religious experience for Lottie is largely a spontaneous experience. Her active imagination experiences involve planning and effort. “I go through a ceremonial process [...] I sit down because I want to work at something, work through something, yes. [...] There are surprises, but the surprises are part of the planned setting” (Lottie, tape, 2:2).

The second distinction involves people. As quoted earlier in regard to religious experience, Lottie says, “The religious experience for me always comes in a natural environment setting or relates to natural things. It’s quite devoid of people” (Lottie, tape, 2:2). By contrast her “active imagination involves a lot of people” (Lottie tape, 2:2).

Summary of distinctions by the four participants
It is interesting to note that three of the four research participants, Helen, Tim and Lottie, spoke only briefly about these distinctions and similarities. Campbell spoke more extensively, and for this reason his interviews ran to three hours. Helen, Tim and Lottie each expressed some tiredness from the process, and, in each case, it seemed that we had completed the
Despite the brevity of the remarks overall, the research participants do make some distinctions which are worth noting. In terms of differences, Campbell notes a difference in framework and depth. His religious experience stands in a broader and deeper framework than his active imagination. Also, he continues to feel that to some extent he is in control in the active imagination process in a way that he is not in his religious experience. Further, images are used differently in the two experiences, and they each evoke a different process of surrender.

Helen notes that there is a difference in intensity, but it is like the difference of quality and quantity. Both Helen and Lottie see differences around effort and surprise. Active imagination is characterised by effort and planning, while religious experience is largely characterised by surprise. Tim notes that the two often differ in relation to time and duration. Active imagination is more drawn out and may last over a period of several months, whereas religious experience is usually quite a brief experience. Here he is talking about active imagination in a series framework, and religious experience as a one-off event. Lottie makes a distinction in terms of people in her experiences. They are central to active imagination and missing from religious experience.

In terms of similarities, Campbell, in his attempts to bridge the two
experiences, implies that they connect to the same energy source. Helen makes this explicit in her reflections. Lottie touches the same theme by asserting that they produce the same states of awe, peace and acceptance of things as they are. Tim does the same by affirming that both experiences produce wonder and amazement, and that both have an integrating function for the individual.

Differences and similarities: a summarising reflection
Having identified some distinctions and similarities made by Kelsey and the research participants, I intend to reflect on the differences and similarities between active imagination and Christian religious experience. I do so both in light of the various resources I have used in this study, and of my own experience. Rather than setting out precise and tidy conclusions, I reflect in the heuristic spirit of discovery. I remember in my theological training wondering at the entire exercise of systematic theology. I could not imagine how anyone could believe that it was possible to capture the reality and experience of God, and the human enterprise, in several volumes of organised thought. Tidy theological systems, for me, have always been a cause for suspicion. I have this suspicion in mind as I review the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience.

I begin by commenting on Kelsey’s adaptation of active imagination. On one hand I agree with Kelsey that the experiences he records, and the
process he teaches, are within the family of active imagination. On the other hand, I believe the two distinctions he raises are important. Again, these are, first, that it is important that people know they can call on the saving figure of Christ to help them if they are overwhelmed or threatened. Second, it is naïve to assume that the psyche will heal itself. To highlight the importance of these distinctions, it seems appropriate to label Kelsey's imaginal work as Christian image meditation, within the larger family of active imagination experiences.

Concerning the first point, in my own experience of active imagination, I have found it very important to assure people that there is a way out if the process becomes overwhelming. In reflecting on this I remember several times I called for the Christ when suddenly confronted by some dark and menacing image (Dog, 11:4 and 13:3). Campbell (2:4) called on Jesus to validate the entire process in which he found himself. Tim (1:1) would not begin his journey without Christ as his guide. Lottie's first series (3:4) begins with the Christ figure who shows her around the inner landscape. Thomas, who refused to participate in this study, likewise would not climb down the ladder into his own underworld without Christ for a companion.

I agree with Kelsey that it is appropriate and necessary to allow for a salvific figure to assure the participant. What is often encountered in the depths of the imaginal world can terrify us, and without the assurance of
the saving figure, many of us would not make the journey at all. I subscribe to the notion of an evil reality which can be aggressive and destructive. It seems to me naive to risk facing this reality on one’s own. This safeguard need not affect the value of the experience. Even with the assuring presence of a saving companion as part of one’s framework, it is possible to encounter spontaneously the images of the unconscious as they emerge. The saving figure need not inhibit the openness to the unconscious agenda. I too, like Kelsey, accept this variation, and still place my work within the larger family of active imagination experiences.

Further to this point, I wonder if Hannah (1953) really subscribed to the notion that it was possible to enter the imaginal world without a framework of some sort. Pure objectivity of that sort seems impossible to achieve. I agree that it is desirable to enter active imagination as openly as possible, and to allow the inner figures free expression, but I also affirm that we each enter the process from some frame of reference which might, but need not, inhibit the experience. Conceptually, active imagination as a process or method can be neutral, but the experience of the individual is value laden and culturally influenced by its very nature. We enter our experiences from some framework.

Concerning the second point, the notion that the human psyche naturally heals itself, as implied in the second theory of religious experience that Chapman identifies, is problematic from a Christian perspective. As I
stated earlier, Kelsey would call it naive. The very function of the Christ is a response to the fact that humans ultimately cannot save, or heal, themselves. The traditional Christian perspective on the Other as transcendent, and separate from, humanity is an essential part of understanding the healing process through Christ. The Other as intra-psychic only is not adequate for the Christian point of view.

At one point in our interviews, Kelsey exclaimed that Jung is "unincorporateable" into a Christian framework (Kelsey tapes, 3:1). Relying on Chapman's assertion that Jung's work does contain a metaphysical-theological theory of religious experience, I conclude that it is possible to see a bridge between Jung's work and Christianity through Chapman's third theory. There are two aspects to the bridge. The first is the recognition that the notion of the Other within, the God immanent, as an intra-psychic experience, need not exclude the notion of the Other as separate, the metaphysical, transcendent God reality. As I have shown, they are connected in Christian theology, and they are connected through our understanding of the nature of a symbol. In Jung's work, the double nature of the self archetype implies such a connection as well. The second aspect has to do with the introduction of a saving figure in times of distress in the active imagination process. I conclude from the work I have experienced and observed, that it is possible to introduce a saving figure without undermining the benefits of the active imagination experience. The presence of a metaphysical figure, like the Christ, need
not constrict the free flowing nature of the intra-psychic experience.

There are several other distinctions between active imagination and Christian religious experience to be made. Campbell touches on one in his concern for the overall framework of the experience. (Campbell, tape 3:2). Campbell notes that Christian religious experience is placed within the historical framework of almost 2,000 years of the Christian movement. This includes a heritage of religious experience that is broad and varied, and that involves an enormous variety of historical persons, saints and others. It is a rich tapestry of human experience that stands behind or around the individual Christian who is surprised by God's appearing, or who enlists devotional practices to be open to the divine presence. Even if the experience is intimate, and the divine energy is immanent in character, the entire experience stands in a framework that is transcendent to the participant.

The experience of active imagination stands in the broad framework of the unconscious, including the archetypal realities of the collective unconscious. For Jung, this is an intra-psychic framework. In spite of Chapman's assertion of the third theory of religious experience in Jung's work, by and large Jung seemed unwilling to affirm a larger, transcendent reality for the psyche. I assert that the breadth and depth of the framework for active imagination is not on the same scale as that which surrounds the individual Christian in a moment of religious experience. The only
exception I see is when the individual places the active imagination experience within her/his religious framework. Tim's approach is an example of this placement (Tim, tape 2:2), but again, it is the very framework which Hannah (1953, pp. 38ff) contends the individual needs to set aside to enter active imagination. From her perspective, this allows the participant to encounter the images freely, unencumbered by the dogmas, creeds, and preconceived notions of such a tradition as that which influences the believing Christian. As I have stated earlier, I am of the opinion that we all come from some framework, and yet can still engage the images of the unconscious with openness. There is a difference in the framework of Christian religious experience and active imagination.

The focus of the two is also different. The divine presence is the implicit or explicit reality for the Christian religious experience. Regardless of the character of the specific experience, God is the supportive framework, or container, for it all. In active imagination the focus is on the individual images that emerge. These often do not include or imply any representation of the God image. In active imagination, the content of a specific experience may excite a certain affect that conveys the sense of the sacred, but this is not necessary for a beneficial active imagination encounter.

The dynamic of the processes in active imagination and Christian religious experience also differ. As I mentioned in the Introduction, and
have identified in chapter two, Jung (1916b/1969) and Johnson (1986) both make it clear that a fundamental characteristic of the dynamic in active imagination is that it is a dialogue between equals. The ego must assume a standpoint that is equal to the images of the unconscious. The experience is meant to be characterised by mutuality and negotiation. It is very much a two way process. This is what distinguishes active imagination from other forms of imaginal process.

In contrast, the Christian religious experience is not characterised ordinarily by a sense of equality between the parties. It may be dialogic, as in Abraham’s discussion with God over the fate of Sodom (Genesis 18:22ff), it may be intimate, intensely close, affirming, but not between equals. A key characteristic of the biblical notion of covenant is that it is mutually binding on both parties, even though they are not equals. This key characteristic of the covenant relationship enhances the notion of God’s love and commitment to the people. God is bound to the people, in covenant, even though they are not equal to God. For the Christian, the person of Jesus the Christ is the essential sign of this love and covenantal commitment.

The notion of inequality is an essential characteristic of Christian religious experience. Even if the God figure is bound by the encounter in covenant, even if the God figure relents and changes, as God did with Abraham, the dialogue is not between equals. Christian religious experience often is
characterised by a "one-way" quality in which the individual receives an experience from God. Often there is a sense of being surprised, "grasped by" something or someone larger than one's self, even in those instances wherein the individual enters the experience through planned devotional practice.

This distinction concerning the dynamic of equality raises again the issue of the nature of the God image or Christ image in active imagination. Is the image an intra-psychic product of the unconscious, a psychological image, or is the image an aspect of the divine, the transcendent Other? For the Christian, if the image is only an intra-psychic, psychological product, then it is possible to imagine a relationship of equality. If the Christian accepts that the image is also an aspect of the transcendent Other, of God, then it would be difficult to imagine a relationship of equals.

If the experience is dialogic in the sense of active imagination, that is, a dialogue between equals, then active imagination as a religious experience in the Christian tradition, represents a departure from what Christians previously have held to be true. The notion of the individual being equal to the divine figure in dialogue has no precedent in Christian religious experience or theology, to the best of my knowledge. The issue for the Christian, then, is whether there can be mutual and open dialogue between parties who are not equals. Is it possible to bridge active imagination with Christian religious experience concerning this issue?
As I reflect on the dialogues with Christ in my own active imagination experiences, I have no sense of equality between us. The dialogues have a sense of complete openness, intimacy, friendship, mutuality and negotiation. While there are moments of imperative in terms of insight and understanding, there is no sense of being forced or overpowered. Even when the voice of the Other is strong and passionate I have no sense of being demeaned, overpowered, or bullied into submission to the opinions of the Other.

In terms of the issue of equality or inequality, then, my experience leads me to conclude that active imagination can be a religious experience for the Christian. It can be open, honest, dialogic, but not carry the sense of equality that Jung saw as essential to active imagination. Here is another instance in which it might be more accurate to term the experience "Christian image meditation," in order to acknowledge this distinction from Jung's essential characteristics. On the other hand, it is possible to affirm again that active imagination, as a category, includes a family of diverse experiences, and in some instances the participant may not feel the equal of the images that emerge. This may not deter the benefit of the dialogic experience. I accept a distinction between active imagination and Christian religious experience concerning the equality of the parties in dialogue. I continue to see my dialogic experiences as active imagination, characterised by dialogue, mutuality and openness, and yet not
characterised by equality with the God and Christ images.

It is interesting to note that in the section, "A central issue," in this chapter, the connection between the psychological Image, the symbol, and the transcendent Other makes a case for seeing active imagination as a religious experience. Here the combination of the two raises the issue of equality which makes a case for the distinction between the two.

Another distinction between the two experiences is that of duration. Personal, solitary religious experiences may sometimes take place over a substantial period of time. In my own experience I have, on occasion, prayed or meditated for an hour or more, and have known others, far more adept than I, who are able to do this regularly. Active imagination, on the other hand, is usually a shorter experience. As mentioned earlier, von Franz (1974/1980) asserted that the experience lasted for only about ten minutes. Beyond that time, the individual was likely to fall into passive, imaginal fantasy. It is interesting to note that Tim saw religious experience as shorter in duration and active imagination as lasting over weeks or months. (Tim, tape, 2:2). In this instance he is referring to a series of active imagination experiences, rather than a single dialogue experience. My own individual dialogues of active imagination rarely have run over ten minutes. If they are longer it is usually because there is a good deal of descriptive action or narrative along with the dialogic material. The one important exception was a dialogue with a human
image of my back in the "Old Nun" series. This experience lasted close to one hour, and left me very tired.

This distinction concerning duration leads to another concerning effort. Active imagination is characterised by effort; there is a sense of work in the experience. It requires some sense of preparation to enter the dialogic process, and often the participant must work strenuously to maintain a sense of equilibrium in the presence of the images that emerge. While there is a certain sense of spontaneity in the dialogic process on the part of the images that emerge, we, from our consciousness, are co-creating the experience as it unfolds. It is because of the demanding nature of the experience that I usually recommend to people that they do only one, or sometimes two, dialogues each week. I find that dialogues tend to slip into a more passive character if done too often. I have mentioned earlier my own experience in the "Solitude" series. I did these daily for the duration of the series, and now question the wisdom of this approach. I finished the series feeling quite worn out, and have yet to return to the material to reflect on it in terms of assimilating the insights. I would not do this again.

Christian religious experience, on the other hand, seems to have a different character. A key to this distinction may again be the issue of inequality/equality. In Christian religious experience, while we may struggle with entering the experience and with remaining focussed, there
is a sense in which it is carried by something other than our own efforts. It is as if we are invited into an experience rather than co-creating it. Often the experiences can begin unexpectedly, even when we prepare for them, and in some instances there is a sense of surprise, as was noted by the research participants. Once in the midst of such an experience, while we may expend effort in attending to it, most often the experience carries us along in a way that seems sustained by grace. I have found my own experience to be characterised by an effortless grace, particularly times of mental prayer and imaginal forms of meditation. I remember being coached in my youth to realise that a key to religious experience was surrender, not effort. While a few techniques would help, the experience overall was sustained by other than my efforts. I was counselled to understand that the harder I tried, the less would happen. My task was simply to make myself available to God.

There is another distinction between active imagination and Christian religious experience to consider before reflecting on some similarities between the two. The distinction has to do with exclusivity. Hannah (1953) makes it clear that Jung felt strongly that not everyone should engage in active imagination. She also notes that he felt that, in most instances, the experience was more appropriate to the second half of life. (Jung, cited in Hannah, 1953, p. 42). This reinforces the contention that Jung saw active imagination as a religious experience in his own understanding of religion. He asserts in one place that the function of the
second half of life is found in religion (Jung, 1931b/1969, para. 786ff).

Jung’s primary concern in stating that not everyone should engage in active imagination was to protect those with a weakened ego structure. Those whose egos have been weakened in the life process run the risk of being overwhelmed by the images of the unconscious. It would be difficult for such people to maintain the stance of equality with the images. If the ego is overwhelmed by the unconscious energies and collapses under their power, there is a serious risk that mental illness will result. From a theological-metaphysical point of view, this is not unlike Kelsey’s own concern. Beginning with his own experience, and then extending this to others, this concern is what led Kelsey to encourage people to call on the Christ, or on God, if they felt at all threatened in the experience.

In terms of Christian religious experience, the notion of exclusivity would seem irrelevant. Most would assume that anyone can “have” a Christian religious experience. In comparing the two in this instance, I am not addressing those who are experiencing episodes of mental illness or psychological instability. This involves a more clinical consideration that is beyond the scope of this study. Assuming the basic mental health of people, even people in crisis, Christian religious experience does not carry the concern, or warning, that applies to active imagination. Most people will benefit from the wide variety of planned prayer and meditation
experiences that are part of the Christian tradition. Part of the issue may be finding the style that matches the personality of the individual. It is interesting to note that several writers have applied Jung's theory of type to the Christian spiritual tradition. It is more a matter of finding what works best for people than worrying about people being overwhelmed or endangered spiritually in the exercises.

Having set out several distinctions, I intend now to reflect on some similarities between active imagination and Christian religious experience as considered in this study. I intend to do this around the same three qualities that I identified for Christian religious experience, "Other," "meaning" and "well being."

First, it is clear in this study that both Christian religious experience and active imagination are grounded in a sense of the Other. This is a fundamental similarity between the two. In terms of Christian religious experience, the Other is the transcendent, metaphysical Other, usually God. In terms of active imagination, the Other is manifest through the intra-psychic, archetypal images, including the God image. As I have noted earlier in this chapter, Chapman and Dourley suggest that there is a metaphysical dimension in Jung's own work concerning the unconscious energies, one to which Jung himself did not admit.

In both active imagination and Christian religious experience the Other often is experienced as numinous. In defining Christian religious experience in chapter five, I have aligned myself with James, Otto and Kelsey and included the quality of the numinous as part of the nature of the Other. The numinous is that irreducible core of the experience which evokes in us strong emotions of awe, love, joy, wonder, fear, terror, and a sense of creatureliness. Whether the religious experience comes in the context of prayer or meditation, when we are grasped by the beauty of the sunset or natural landscape, or when we are moved deeply by the character of another human being, it is the sense of the numinous that gives the compelling depth to the experience.

In active imagination, Jung maintained that the archetypes carried the sense of the numinous in the experience. It has been my own experience that this is so. In the “Dog” series there was a sense of awe around the various characters who emerged in those visits to the world at the bottom of the stairs. This is true not only of the powerful and dynamic characters like the Christ, Power and Anger, but also of the infant I found behind the small door at the end of the passage, and of the little gardener who tended one tomato plant. Each carried a sense of mystery and Other; each inspired a sense of awe and wonder at who they were. When speaking with John once about his experiences of the “Warming of the Heart” series of active imagination dialogues, I was interested to note that he could only shake
his head in wonder at the experience and the characters. The numinous awe of the entire experience still lingered, and this partly contributed to his refusal to submit his experience to close scrutiny in this study. Tom Bombadil and Boy Campbell carried this same energy for Campbell in his experiences. William wrote of the same sense of awe and wonder as he reflected on his review of his material after some years. The numinous energy is present in the active imagination experience and contributes to the sense of authority these experience have in the lives of the participants.

In both active imagination and Christian religious experience, it is the numinosity of the Other that maintains the sense of liveliness in these experiences long after the fact of their occurrence. The numinosity of the Other is the raw energy in these experiences that causes us to revere them, to attribute to them authority, and to draw from them insight and guidance for living.

Another dimension of the Other in Christian religious experience and active imagination is that both carry a sense of revelation about them. The sense of Other results in a quality of revelation being attached to the material that emerges in the experiences. What emerges is somehow given, it is not created by the participant. This is what I believe Dourley (1992, p. 28) means by private revelation. These experiences carry personal insight that is compelling and meaningful for the recipient. The
experiences carry a kind of authority and the insights become part of the individual's personal Christian interpretive framework. Both active imagination and Christian religious experience are characterised by a sense of Other.

Second, both active imagination and Christian religious experience contribute to a sense of meaning in the individual life. Both of these experiences can be vehicles of new images, new insights, and new understandings. In the sense that the new is perceived as given to the participant, these experiences carry the sense of revelation mentioned above. In terms of active imagination, serving as a vehicle of the new is a primary function of the experience. Since most people employ active imagination when they are consciously in crisis or stuck in some way, the function of the experience is to address this crisis state and present a new way forward. Most often this will happen through new images, but the way forward also can occur through new insights and points of view expressed by the images that emerge from the unconscious.

While the motivations and functions of Christian religious experiences are more varied, an essential function is to challenge the conscious mind of the participant with new ideas and new ways of seeing. This is fundamental if there is to be any growth or maturation in the Christian religious life. Tim's list of religious experiences contains several which serve to call him forward to new considerations, including his call to
ordained life. My own experiences have also functioned in this way.

The character of the new differs. Often what is experienced as new by an individual may be commonly held, even a traditional notion, within a community. It simply may be new to the conscious perspective of the individual who has the experience. These experiences help us to claim as our own wisdom and truth from the religious and cultural life around us. In less frequent experiences the new may take us beyond the conventional boundaries of our tradition, and challenge us to expand our borders of what is acceptable imagery or thought. The active imagination experiences shared by Graham and William are examples of this point. A most notable experience for me was reading Mollenkott's book, The divine feminine, and interpreting my feeling response as a call to explore further the feminine and maternal imagery of God. I have found James' (1902/1985, p. 335) observation that the new is often experienced as heresy for a time, until it becomes more familiar, to be most helpful in continuing to interpret and position active imagination in relationship to religious experience. Both active imagination and religious experience function to assist us in embracing the new, in imagery, thought and insight and understanding.

It is the sense of meaning in active imagination and Christian religious experience that contributes to their being intensely personal and personally authoritative. Both tend to “speak” to the individual in
imagery that carries personal significance and meaning. Further, it is imagery that can be interpreted with meaning in the context of the individual's personal life. Each of the research participants experienced this in both active imagination and religious experiences. Lottie's active imagination experiences around the Hitler image were certainly intensely personal to her life, and significant to her personal history. Tim's characters even carried names that tied them personally to his personal issues and story. Helen's most significant religious experience was intensely related to her trauma in childbirth. My own religious experiences of speaking in tongues, and of the imagery of God as Father, were specifically tailored to my needs and personal history. Using a Jungian notion, there is a sense in which both Christian religious experience and active imagination appear to be motivated by a compensatory energy in the psyche, that seeks to balance things that are out of balance in the individual.

The authoritative nature of the experiences is addressed by James in relationship to mystical religious experience. I have mentioned these in the section, "A broad spectrum," in chapter five. James (1902/1985, p. 422) asserts that such experiences "usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come." It is my experience that this is true of both active imagination and Christian religious experience. Both become authoritative in the individual's life. The truths or insights conveyed carry a sense of imperative, and over
time, form a sense of individual truth for the person. The truths that are learned through such experiences are often part of the commonly held body of truth, but the personal experiences have a way of allowing the person to claim such truths or insights as part of a personal body of truth for the guiding of one's own life. In my experiences of active imagination in the "Dog" series, this certainly was the case; various truths of the community became part of my truth.

James (1902/1985, p. 423) also makes the point that such experiences tend to relativise the authority of rational consciousness and rational methods in the formulation of truth. Both active imagination and religious experience can challenge the rational approach to truth and the authority of rational consciousness. Christian religious experience, centred in the experience of God, by its very nature precedes rational reflection and formulation. It involves the individual in an encounter with God, the godly or the demonic, and grasps us, engages us, and touches us, before we can think it through. While later reflection is critical, in the assimilation of the experience, the experience carries its own authority that further thought and reflection can rarely diminish. The same is true of active imagination. It is a pre-rational experience of archetypal images and stories that carry a weight and authority for the individual, that further reflection can only build on, but not discount. Both testify to the authority of personal experience. It has become my conviction that one of the functions of both active imagination and Christian religious experience is
to contribute to the building of a substantial sense of self in the individual life. This allows the individual to come to trust an authoritative centre of truth within, so that life may be lived from a self-referential perspective. Both Christian religious experience and active imagination contribute to a sense of meaning.

The third similarity between active imagination and Christian religious experience is that both contribute to a sense of well being. This includes what James terms personal unification, or transformation and change. Tim notes that they both have an integrating function (Tim, tape 2:2). Whether active imagination is categorised as a psychological, spiritual or religious experience, it is an experience that contributes to change in the individual. In the section "Composite depiction of the active imagination experiences," in chapter four, I identify change and transformation as the first of the common qualities of active imagination for myself and for the research participants. Several of us had the common experience of reading back through material that was more than a few years old and wondering who that person was. The changes had primarily to do with our sense of self, but they also were manifest in our outer lives. In terms of inner change, the primary characteristic I notice is the development of a stronger sense of self. This is parallel to the sense of substantial self that I mentioned previously in reference to the authority of the experience.

It is my experience that the nature of transformation through active
imagination is gradual. In fact, the changes often do not manifest themselves to the participant until some months later. This has certainly been my own experience and represents what I have observed in many who have engaged in active imagination. The experience overall has a less intense and dramatic quality, even though there can be dramatic moments in the encounters, and the numinous quality is still present. The nature of change in active imagination seems clearly grounded in the process of the experience.

In Christian religious experience, the nature of change also can be gradual, but the experiences themselves often are more dramatic. The quality of being surprised, the dramatic sense of being grasped, contribute to a more dramatic sense of transformation. I would tend to affirm that the dramatic moments do not effect change or transformation as much as announce its beginning. The process image of change, I believe, applies to Christian religious experience as much as to active imagination. Regardless of these distinctions within the nature of change, both share the experience of change and transformation as primary qualities.

As I have reviewed this material it has become clear that active imagination does fulfill the three characteristics I have set out for Christian religious experience: “Other,” “meaning” and “well being.” As a psychological experience, then, active imagination can parallel Christian religious experience. It is possible to include active imagination into the
broad spectrum of Christian religious experience. This is possible whether or not the individual is actively involved in an organised form of religious practice. It is also possible even if the images encountered in the experience challenge the boundaries of previous understanding and belief. On the other hand, there are active imagination experiences that carry a parallel dynamic to the religious experience but need not be interpreted as religious experiences. Just as James (1902/1985, p. 189) notes that there are conversions that are not religious, so there can be dialogues with the unconscious energies that need not be included under the specific umbrella of religious experience. At the end it does depend on the framework in which an individual chooses to interpret his or her experiences.

In this chapter I have considered again the original research questions, and have focussed on the last of the questions, which concerns the nature of the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience. I have considered Chapman’s work identifying three religious theories in Jung’s psychology, reflected on the nature of the symbol, explored variations on active imagination by Kelsey, outlined distinctions and similarities as noted by the research participants, and have identified differences and similarities between active imagination and Christian religious experience. Having completed these reflections, I will now turn to some concluding thoughts.
Figure 10. You founded the world: Psalm 89:11 (pastel) 1998
CONCLUSION

In this research project it has been my intention to explore the relationship between active imagination and Christian religious experience. In the first chapter I have considered Jung's relationship with Christianity, and set out the research method. My research work has been guided primarily by the heuristic method of qualitative research as developed by Moustakas. In the second chapter I reviewed the practice of Jung's method of active imagination. This included a definition of the process, an explanation of how it may be used, the values and benefits of the process, and some practical matters concerning its use. In chapter three I introduced the four research participants, commented on those who declined to participate, and explained the method of working with the participants.

Chapter four contains the summaries and the depictions of my own active imagination experience and of the active imagination experiences of the four research participants. The summaries are constructed from the original, confidential material presented by the participants, and the depictions are constructed from the taped interviews. Both the text of the summary and the depiction was approved by each research participant. In chapter five I considered the broad area of Christian religious experience. This included some distinctions between spiritual and religious, a consideration of the notion of discernment, and a definition of Christian
religious experience for this study. In chapter six I have identified differences and similarities between active imagination and Christian religious experience, after having considered the contribution of Chapman, and a variation on the experience of active imagination by Kelsey.

Early in the course of this research study I was introduced to a book by Trenoweth (1995), entitled The future of God. Trenoweth interviews thirteen world figures about the future of God and religion. The last interview is with Matthew Fox. The thrust of his reflections is that we must re-invent our religion in a global perspective in order to speak to future generations. This re-invented religion is to be mystical in character, and grounded in personal experience. (Fox, cited in Trenoweth, 1995, p. 258) Fox's attitude is reminiscent of Jung's opinion that, from time to time, myths of truth must be given a new interpretation to adapt them to the spirit of the times, and to prevent them from becoming moribund (Jung, 1958/1980, para. 1665). After having read Mollenkott's (1984) work, The divine feminine, mentioned earlier, I became convinced that such a reinterpretation or reinvention is essential to the future of Christianity.

In my study I have been concerned with what bridges might be found between Christian religious experience and Jung's practice of active imagination. I have asserted in chapter six that, while there are important distinctions to be made, it is possible for a Christian to incorporate the
experience of active imagination into a Christian spirituality and religious practice. To do so involves taking the unconscious seriously as a positive resource for religious experience and for the encounter with God. In this endeavour we engage with courage and respect the images that emerge from the unconscious, even those which lead us out beyond the boundaries of our present belief. In this courageous adventure we may engage God in images as startling as those which enlivened the woman who met "She" instead of "He" in the depths of her being. We may encounter a Christ as far from our present understanding of the divine as did Graham in his fist fight with Jesus, and as did William in his humourous and challenging dialogues with God. In this way the practice of active imagination has a role to play in the reinvention or reinterpretation of Christianity.

If we are to include active imagination among the practices of Christian religious experience, at least two issues need to be addressed. I mention them here in this conclusion because I see them as possible opportunities for further study, though they have been beyond the scope of my present task. The first is Dourley's (1992, p, 28) notion of private revelation. I have mentioned this notion previously in the course of my reflections. Dourley claims that, as we engage the unconscious in Jung's framework, we must become more at home with the notion of private revelation. While he sees the dream as the primary medium of this revelation experience, I expand this to include active imagination. Also I prefer to
adapt this term to “personal revelation.” Years ago I heard Alan Jones ask at a conference we were leading together if, for the Christian, anything could be seen as private. I was deeply impressed with the notion of human solidarity behind this question, and have tended to not use the word “private” since, in terms of Christian spiritual-religious practice.

The idea that we might encourage people to rely on their own personal revelations as a primary source for understanding God and their own lives, challenges radically the authority of the creedal and dogmatic forms of Christianity. The notion of having access to a truth emerging from within, that not only is trustworthy, but also carries the imperative of personal loyalty and obedience, places the individual in a self-referential posture in the midst of a community which has tended in the past to know what is best for the faithful. Such a practice clearly calls for a mature understanding, and use, of discernment, on which I touched in chapter five. It also raises the ongoing issue of how to incorporate the new with that which has been the tradition. The place of God the Mother next to, or within, the Trinitarian model is a case in point. It also underscores Jung’s own belief that personal, subjective religious experience is the primary concern of, and resource for, the religious way. Recently, in discussion with a colleague priest friend of mine, I asked, “What would it be like if people really followed their personal revelations?” She replied without hesitation, “It would be wonderful!” Certainly it would lead to a reinvention of Christianity. Picking up Dourley’s assertion and taking it
further in research with people would be an important and challenging work.

Out of this another implication is the nature of revelation itself. In a creedal and dogmatic setting, revelation tends to become static. An experientially based religious practice opens the way for an understanding of revelation that is more organic. What we come to realise again is that we are dealing with a living tradition, and living images and symbols of a living God. As times and concerns change so will the revelations change, in emphasis at least, if not completely in character. I remember the line of a hymn I enjoyed singing in my youth: “time makes ancient good uncouth.” At the heart of the notion that revelation is an organic, ongoing, living and changing experience, is the simple reminder that humanity can never capture fully the reality of the divine life. Active imagination can be seen, in the context of Christian religious experience, as a resource of ongoing revelation in this organic sense. This is the nature of Sanford’s (1994, p. 8) assertion wherein he proposes that the Gospel of John may well have sprung out of active imagination dialogues between the risen Christ and the author. In this context, active imagination can play a central role in the reinvention of Christianity. In affirming the ongoing nature of revelation, we may come to realise Christianity can continue to reinvent itself largely through the active imagination dialogues of its people.
AFTERWORD

This study has been of great value to me. In the course of my work and reflections over the last three years, I have been able to clarify my own thinking in some instances and open other doors of interest for me. I confess to being greatly interested now in the notion of personal revelation. I am more convinced than ever of the value of active imagination. I now see that it can be used in a non-religious, perhaps a psycho-spiritual framework, but it can also be incorporated into a Christian religious practice. Having considered the parallels between the psychological process and religious experience has helped me understand why I felt a connection that, previously, I could not articulate clearly. Through this study I have gained the confidence of my own position, and am more clearly interested in pursuing the notion of bridging Jung and Christianity. Recognising how Jung used the word 'religious,' I am more convinced than ever that Jung's entire psychological work is profoundly religious in character. In a way, he is an early contributor to the process of the reinvention of Christianity about which Fox speaks. My hope has been that this particular study will foster the bridging of Jung with the Christian tradition, and thereby make a contribution to the reinvention of the Christian way.
REFERENCES

NOTE: Dates in the listing of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung below list first the date of the original writing or the date of the substantial revision by Jung. The second date refers to the second edition of the Collected Works in which writings were consulted for this research project. In-text references to the Collected Works of C. G. Jung show paragraph numbers rather than page numbers. This is the common manner used in referencing the Collected Works.


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The diagram which is reproduced here appears both on pages 72 and 214 in Morton T. Kelsey's, The other side of silence (1995). Kelsey's explanation is found on pages 213ff. In the diagram Kelsey identifies three levels of
reality. 1) The infinite parabola, represented by the dark line, represents the Unlimited Divine Creator, God. 2) The triangle represents the human soul and 3) the circle represents spiritual reality or the limited spiritual realm. The square within the circle represents the Space-Time-Energy-Mass Universe. Basic components of the soul include ego consciousness, and the personal unconscious and the personal dimension of the collective unconscious. The spiritual realm includes the objective collective unconscious, ambivalent archetypes, numinous evil and deceased human beings. In the diagram there are nine numbers. These refer to levels of dream and meditation experience within the psyche.
Appendix 2
Letter and Release agreement Form
for Research Participants
(on personal letterhead)

Date:_____________________

Dear:

Thank you for your interest in my research on the experience of active imagination. I value the contribution you can make to my study and am pleased at the possibility of your participation in it. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things that we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the attached participation-release form.

The research model I am using is a qualitative one through which I am seeking comprehensive descriptions of experience. In this way I hope to address the questions at the heart of this research project.

My central task is to explore the nature, meaning and essence of the experience of active imagination, and to consider its relationship to Christian religious experience. Through your participation as a research participant, I hope to understand the essence of active imagination as it reveals itself in your experience. I am seeking vivid, accurate and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you.

The phase of my research work that includes you has several steps. They are as follows:
1. After reviewing this process you will need to sign the attached Participation-Release Agreement. I will sign it also and return a copy to you for your records.
2. I will then need to collect from you the written active imagination material you have to share. I need 10-15 dialogues, preferably in sequence. You may also wish to share other material relevant to the dialogues such as poems or artwork.
3. I will then review your material and prepare a brief, anonymous "case" description of you, and a written summary description of your material. I will share this with you for comment, amendment and approval.
4. We will then arrange time to meet for our tape recorded interview(s). These will be up to three hours in total time.
5. I will ask you, after the interview, to submit a brief written reflection of your experience of no more than 2-3 pages.
6. Meanwhile I will be writing up a reflection on the essence of your experience of active imagination as I have thus far understood it.

7. I will ask you to comment on my reflection and we will compare it with your reflection.

8. Out of our collaboration, I will prepare an amended reflection of your experience of active imagination. Later, this will be combined with the amended reflections on the experiences of others, so as to produce a collective reflection on the essence of the active imagination experience.

I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy and effort. Thank you also for trusting me with your personal material. If you have any questions before signing the release form, please let me know. I can be reached at the above number.

Sincerely yours,

George E. Trippe
PARTICIPATION-RELEASE AGREEMENT

I agree to participate in the research study of George E. Trippe of active imagination and Christian religious experience as described in the attached letter. I understand the purpose and nature of this study, and am participating voluntarily. I understand that my participation includes sharing my personal active imagination material, and other material I deem relevant to my experience. I understand further that I will be invited to share in tape recorded interviews of up to a total of three hours in length.

I grant permission for the above mentioned data to be used by George E. Trippe in the process of completing a PhD degree at Edith Cowan University, including a thesis document, and for any other publications or oral presentations. I understand that my name and other identifying information will not be used. I agree to meet at mutually agreed times for the interviews, and grant permission for the audio-tape recording of these interviews.

Research Participant

Name printed: _____________________________
Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
My preferred pseudonym: ____________________________

Researcher:

Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Appendix 3
Interview Guide for Research Participants

1. begin with simple background material:
   - age, gender, cultural background, religious background
   - present religious affiliation and/or practice

2. the active imagination experience:
   - How did you come to use this method? What was the starting point?
   - Can you describe the actual process as you used it?
   - How "old" is this material?
   - What has it been like for you to re-read your own material?
   - What was the original experience like for you?
   - What are some of the essential qualities of the experience for you?
   - Are there particular aspects, events, characters of the experience that stand out as significant?
   - How has this experience contributed to your life?

3. religious experience in general
   - Have you had what you would call religious experiences?
     - What were they like?
     - What qualities stand out about these experiences?
     - How is the active imagination experience like those religious experiences? How is it different?

4. general comments and conclusion
   - Is active imagination like any other experience you have had?
   - Is there anything else you would like to add concerning your experiences of active imagination or religious experience?
Appendix 4 - The art work

As I was beginning this research project I found myself drawn to a more abstracted form of artistic expression. I had been moving in this direction for some time, and realised that it could provide a balance to all the precise, word oriented work I was going to be doing over the next few years. I also realised that this was an opportunity to explore my artistic expression in terms of active imagination. I began to wonder what the soul might "look like" if I were to attempt a visual image. The image of the circle came into mind and has been a constant theme in my work throughout the last four years. The circle represents the soul or the image of God within, or perhaps the divine life. Sometimes it represents both. I tend not to push for a precise interpretation of the circle in any instance.

The connection of the soul with the garden led to the "Soul Garden" series in 1996 and into 1997. I also began to create mandalas in this time that were less precise than the traditional forms, but which were constructed around the number four. I built many of these pastel pieces up in four layers since four is a number of completeness in a Jungian framework. The first layer is wet pastel, the second is collage, the third is ink splashed across the composition, and the fourth is dry pastel. Most of the collage work is a combination of cut and torn pieces to represent the balance of precise and imprecise boundaries in our experience.

In terms of this artistic process as a form of active imagination, I work most of these compositions in a spontaneous manner. The exception is with those which intimate landscape. Usually in these instances I have an idea of what I want to compose. In most other instances I simply begin with the circle and add colours and shapes almost as if I am responding to an urging from a source other than my consciousness. It is a variant on the experience of the Other. Sometimes I almost sense a dialogue as I plan
the next colour or shape in the design. When I work in layers, I let the composition change direction as it chooses. Often the finished product looks very little like I would have expected after the first or second layers. More recently I have been working in a single layer of wet pastel with little collage work. These pieces continue to centre round the circle and express my overall reflection on the experience of the soul.

I have also noticed that there are times when I feel almost driven to work at the easel. There have been some instances when the impulse expresses itself as a discomfort in my gut. It's as if I am a vehicle for something that wants to be expressed. When I respond to this and work up a piece in wet pastel, I notice that I actually feel a sense of relief when I finish. I am aware at other times that I need to work with a circle in order to maintain a sense of balance within myself. In these instances the very working of the circle begins the release of an energy of well being. I have intuited throughout this process that my work has functioned to maintain a sense of well being in me. As much as I enjoy sharing my work, I recognise that I produce most it for myself.

The meaning of the work is not always precisely clear to me, but when asked I have explained that my art work is a form of theological reflection. It is about God and our relationship with God. While my 1996 and 1997 exhibitions were presented in the parish hall of St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Subiaco, the last two exhibitions have been within worship spaces. My 1998 exhibition took place in Ascension Anglican Church, Midland, and the 1999 exhibition was in St. Columba's Anglican Church, Scarborough. These locations are all in Western Australia. My own hope is to see my work hanging in worship spaces and being used as focus points for meditation.

The works reproduced in this thesis are listed in the Table of Figures.