

THE STORY OF THE SELF: A GROUNDED THEORY PERSPECTIVE

by

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SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to examine the nature of the western self, using a grounded theory approach. The life narratives of a group of mid-life women were analysed utilising the method outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and the data provided fertile ground for the development of a substantive theory of the self. In the past, midlife was considered a part of old age. Changes in western society have meant that midlife has become a significant life period. An examination of the nature of selfhood in historical periods as well as in Prehistory constituted the literature review. Modern and Postmodern approaches to the self were also examined.

For the participants, the self occupied the area between identity and soul. The participants considered the soul to be the core of the individual. Identity was described in terms of gender, physical appearance as well as date and place of birth. Closely allied to the soul is said to be the individual value system. The participants regarded the self as having certain features including cognitive, affective, spiritual and physical components as well as unconscious elements. Moreover, the self is dynamic and has an inherent directorial capacity based particularly on individual thinking and feeling components.

The substantive theory of the self suggests that the self constitutes a sense of existence resulting from conscious awareness of inherent personal capacity and awareness of the immediate present, personal past and projected future. The purpose of the self is to promote the survival of the individual. The core of the self is represented by the need to survive and is experienced as a feeling of continuity contained within the personal narrative. Survival is furthered by purposeful activity and the creation and development of meaning structures. The self rests on inter-related physical, cognitive, emotional-affective pillars, and responds to environmental currents. Thus the self is essentially a process and is given the feeling of form through the narrative capacity inherent in the individual. The self is situated in a self-space created by the interrelationship of the physical, cognitive and affective components in relation to the environment. Today, mainly through technological developments, the self-space has increased in size, and greater demands are placed on the individual self.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om aan die hand van die gegronde teoretiese benadering die aard van die westerse self te ondersoek. Die lewensverhale van 'n groep middeljarige vroue is ontleed deur gebruik te maak van Strauss en Corbin (1990). Dit het geblyk dat die data met vrug gebruik kon word om 'n substantiewe teorie van die self te konstrueer. Die middeljare is in die verlede as 'n deel van oudwees beskou, maar veranderinge in die westerse samelewing het te weeg gebring dat die middeljare nou as 'n belangrike lewensperiode beskou word. Die literatuuroorsig het bestaan uit 'n eksaminering van die aard van die self in verskeie historiese periodes. Moderne en postmoderne benaderings tot die self is ook onder die loep geneem.

Die self het vir die deelnemers die area tussen die identiteit en die siel beslaan. Die deelnemers het die siel as die kern van 'n individu beskou. Identiteit is in terme van geslag, fisieke voorkoms, sowel as die tyd en plek van geboorte beskryf. Dit het geblyk dat die individuele waardesisteme nou verwant is aan die siel. Volgens die deelnemers word die self beslaan uit kognitiewe, affektiewe, spirituele en fisieke komponente sowel as onbewustelike elemente. Die self word verder as dinamies beskou met 'n inherente rigtinggewende kapasiteit.

Die substantiewe teorie van die self suggereer dat die self 'n sin van "bestaan" of "wees" konstitueer wat die resultaat is van 'n bewus wees van inherente persoonlike kapasiteit en 'n bewus wees van die onmiddellike hede, persoonlike verlede en geprojekteerde toekoms. Die doel van die self is om die oorlewing van die individu te promoveer. Die kern van die self word verteenwoordig deur die drang tot oorlewing en word ervaar as 'n gevoel van kontinuïteit met betrekking tot die persoonlike narratief. Oorlewing word meegehelp deur doelgerigte aktiwiteit en die skepping en ontwikkeling van betekenisstrukture. Die self rus op interverwante fisieke, kognitiewe en affektiewe pilare en reël op omgewings stimuli. Hiervolgens is die self dus essensieel 'n proses wat vorm aanneem deur die narratiewe kapasiteit wat inherent aan die individu is. Die self is gesitueerd in 'n self-ruimte wat deur die interverwantskappe van die fisieke, kognitiewe, en emosionele komponente in verhouding tot die omgewing geskep word. Die self-ruimte van die hedendaagse self

het hoofsaaklik weens tegnologiese ontwikkelings toegneem in grootte en groter eise word aan die individuele self gestel.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background	2
1.3	Aims of the Research	3
1.4	Examining the Title	3
1.5	Chapter Review	3
2	CHAPTER TWO. LET THE PLAY BEGIN: EARLY HUMANS AND THE INNER BLUEPRINT OF THE SELF	5
2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	Charles Darwin	5
2.3	The Early Story	7
2.4	Prehistory and the Self	12
2.5	Summary	21
2.6	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Two	22
3	CHAPTER THREE. THE AFTERLIFE AS DIRECTOR: ANCIENT EGYPT	24
3.1	Introduction	24
3.2	Early Egypt and the Sense of Self	25
3.3	Summary	30
3.4	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Three	31
4	CHAPTER FOUR. WILL THE REAL DIRECTOR PLEASE STAND UP: THE CLASSICAL GREEKS	32
4.1	Introduction	32
4.2	The Classical Greeks and the Concept of Selfhood	33
4.2.1	Cosmos	34
4.2.2	Self-knowledge	35
4.2.3	Human Potential	39
4.2.4	Choice	40
4.2.5	Development of Character	40
4.2.6	Personal Care	42
4.2.7	Soul	44
4.2.8	Reason	47
4.3	Summary	48

4.4	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Four	50
5	CHAPTER FIVE. GOD AS DIRECTOR: EARLY CHRISTIANITY	52
5.1	Introduction	52
5.2	Eastern Thought	52
5.3	Christian Thought and the Self	55
5.4	Summary	62
5.5	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Five	63
6	CHAPTER SIX. PERHAPS THE SELF CAN BE THE DIRECTOR: THE RENAISSANCE	64
6.1	Introduction	64
6.2	The Self and the Renaissance	65
6.3	Summary	71
6.4	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Six	72
7	CHAPTER SEVEN. REASON AS DIRECTOR: THE ENLIGHTENMENT	74
7.1	Introduction	74
7.2	Thinkers of the Time and the Impact on the Sense of Self	75
7.2.1	Descartes	76
7.2.2	Locke	79
7.2.3	Kant	81
7.3	Hallmarks of the Enlightenment and the Self	82
7.3.1	Belief in the Human Capacity for Reason	82
7.3.2	The Importance of Consciousness	83
7.3.3	The Relationship between Subject and Object	84
7.3.4	Inner sense of Location	85
7.3.5	Ownership of the Self	85
7.3.6	Self as a Project	85
7.3.7	Self Interest	86
7.3.8	Inward Turn	87
7.4	Summary	87
7.5	Critical Appraisal of Chapter Seven	88
8	CHAPTER EIGHT. THE DARK DIRECTOR: ROMANTICISM	90
8.1	Introduction	90
8.2	Romanticism and the Self	92

8.2.1	Imagination	92
8.2.2	Interplay of Opposites	92
8.2.3	Symbols	93
8.2.4	Effects of Industrialisation	93
8.2.5	Contradiction	94
8.2.6	Cult of the Symbolic Hero	94
8.2.7	The Importance of the Unconscious	95
8.2.8	The Notion of Depth	95
8.3	Summary of Chapter Eight	96
8.4	Critical appraisal of Chapter Eight	96
9	CHAPTER NINE. THE PSYCHOLOGISED DIRECTOR	98
9.1	Introduction	98
9.1.1	The Self in a Disciplinary Context	99
9.2	Mid-life	128
9.3	Summary of Chapter Nine	130
9.4	Critical Evaluation of Chapter Nine	131
9.5	The Literature Review in relation to the Direction of the Study	131
9.5.1	The Urge to Survive	132
9.5.2	Action and Meaning	132
9.5.3	Evolutionary History	132
9.5.4	The Rise of Psychology	133
9.5.5	Affirmation of ordinary Life	135
9.5.6	Women and the Self	135
9.5.7	Narrative	136
9.5.8	A Gateway to the Individual	137
10	CHAPTER TEN. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	138
10.1	Pilot Study	138
10.1.1	Aim	138
10.1.2	Method	138
10.1.3	Results of the Pilot Study	139
10.1.4	Conclusions Drawn from the Pilot Study	139
10.2	Problem Statement	140
10.3	Research Paradigm	141
10.4	Research Design	143

10.5	Researcher's Position	144
10.6	Main Study	145
10.6.1	Aims of the Main Study	145
10.6.2	Research Procedure	145
10.6.3	Assessment of the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research	175
10.6.4	Ethics	181
10.7	Summary of the Research Methodology	183
10.8	Evaluation of the Research Process	184
11	CHAPTER ELEVEN. DISCUSSION	185
11.1	Discussion of Data Analysis	185
11.2	Discussion of the Participants' Model the Self	189
11.3	Outline of the Nature of the Participants' Model of the Self	191
11.3.1	Narrative	191
11.3.2	Environment	197
11.3.3	Identity	206
11.3.4	Self	206
11.4	Summary of the Discussion of the Participants' Model	225
11.5	Discussion of the Question of Generativity	226
11.6	Discussion of the Issues of Self esteem and Self-worth	228
11.7	Discussion of the Notion of Healing	230
11.8	The Participants' General Position	231
11.9	Limitations and Strengths of the Study	232
11.9.1	Limitations	232
11.9.2	Strengths	233
11.10	Summary of Discussion of Research Findings	235
12	CHAPTER TWELVE. A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF THE SELF: THE DIALOGICAL DIRECTOR	237
12.1	The Substantive Dialogical Theory of the Self	237
12.1.1	Theoretical Structure of the Self	237
12.1.2	The Widened Self Space	240
12.1.3	Historical Changes and the Widening Self-Space	242
12.2	Summary of the Theory of the Self	244
12.3	An Adventure Story: The Participants and the Theory	246
12.4	Conclusion	248

List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page No.
1	Pattern of human evolution	8
2	The emerging sense of self in Classical Greece	33
3	Paradigm format	165
4	The conditional matrix	172
5	Participants' model of the self	190
6	Life events and connecting paths	192
7	Undifferentiated meaning in a narrative assembly	193
8	Differentiated meaning cluster within the narrative assembly	194
9	The narrative shift after a change in milieu	203
10	Representation of the components of the self	207
11	The configuration of the self	238
12	Changes in the configuration of the self	239
13	Representation of the widening of the self-space over time	242
14	Representation of the theory of the western self	244

List of Tables

Table No.	Title	Page No.
1	Evolutionary Timeline	11
2	The Empirical Life of the Self	101
3	Summary of Participants' Contextual Data	147
4	Summary of Participant B's Data as listed in the Central Tabulation Grid	149
5	Steps in Open Coding	151
6	Concepts	154
7	Categories and Subcategories	161
8	Categories, Subcategories, Properties and Dimensions	163
9	Axial Coded Categories derived from Open Coded Categories	167
10	Steps in Selective Coding	168
11	Summary of Steps and Coding sequences	174
12	Summary of the Research Phases	175
13	Summary of the Participants' Model of the Self	191
14	Accommodating Change Through Narrative	195
15	Situating the Self within the Narrative	196
16	Influences on the Development of a Personal Value System	210
17	Generativity	226

1 CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Western individuals generally believe they have a self. Kitzing (1992) pointed out that the self is a twentieth century construct and even though individuals believe they have a self they are unable to articulate what a self actually is. Lewis (2003) has noted that there is a resurgence of interest in the nature of the self and in research and practice. Kitzing (1992) also observed that we all talk about our sense of self with the same ease that earlier generations talked about the soul. Katzko (2003) maintained that the difficulty in researching the question of the self lies in the fact that the terminology used is far too imprecise. It should be remembered, however, that the question of selfhood is shared by different disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, history and literary studies so the issue of terminology is likely to remain a thorny problem. The literature sometimes appears diffuse and highly contradictory not only because of the terminology but also because, as Ashmore and Jussim (1997) noted, the issues related to the question of selfhood are certainly complex. Fishman (1999) asserted that one way to gain a fundamental understanding of the self is through the study of historical context, which can then provide a valuable empirical database. Thus to understand the nature of the western self at a fundamental level, it is important to go back to the past, even to Prehistory. The evolutionary stance of this research predicated that the literature review for the study was essentially a journey into the past noting some of the salient markers that shaped the self over time. The historical review of the influences on the sense of self has been integrated into the psychological framework of the research through the examination of modern and postmodern psychological theories.

Stoczkowski (2002, p. 198) reviewed works on human origins, claiming that historical as well as empirical investigations are necessary and his words apply equally well to

research on the question of selfhood. Stoczkowski pointed out that researchers do not have to choose between exploring the past and exploring empirical reality. “They have to conduct the two operations simultaneously...It is not a question of some liberation from the past but rather of learning to make good use of it.”

1.2 Background

The impetus for this study arose out of the implications of a situation that developed in a counselling facility. The facility was experiencing a sizable increase in the number of mid-life clients. The mid-life group was not presenting with common specific difficulties but the clients were describing episodes woven into the fabric of the life story. There seemed to be a need for the mid-life individuals to situate themselves within their own personal story, which revolved around issues of selfhood. The counsellors believed that a broader understanding of those at mid-life would be of value so that as counsellors, they could be of better service. The mid-life individuals who contacted the counselling facility included both men and women of all races. Mid-life participants are good research partners in narrative investigations because they have lived long enough to embody a strong storyline. At the same time, in a developed environment, those at mid-life are usually healthy and also do not have the neurological deficits and memory loss associated with old age. Initially both men and women of all groups were to be included in the study of selfhood. Preliminary interviews revealed that a significant difficulty lay in the issue of language. Translators assisted but the process was very clumsy. It soon became clear that a deeper understanding of relevant cultural factors was necessary because information was misinterpreted and much detail was missed. It was decided that mid-life, white English speaking women would be investigated because of logistics and because of the importance of the interpretation of language. Findings could then be compared with those of other researchers using a similar approach but different research groups.

1.3 Aims of the Research

The general aim of the research, as indicated, was to explore the nature of western selfhood. The specific aim was to examine the nature of the self by analysing the life narratives of a group of mid-life women using grounded theory methodology outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and to develop a substantive theory of the self grounded in the research data.

1.4 Examining the Title

The title of this study is “The Story of the Self: A Grounded Theory Perspective.” The title implies not only a focus on the self but also on the centrality of the story. The literature review is a story of the emerging sense of self in historical terms while the participants’ stories provided data for the grounded theory analysis of their underlying sense of self. A substantive theory was developed and is presented in Chapter 12. It is essentially woven into the story of the western self as it appears at present.

According to Maier (2000, p. 809) periodization represents the claim as to what constellations of events should be accorded major significance. Periods stipulate “the extension across time of developments that seem to have some relationship to each other and as a group contrast with earlier or later sequences.” What is also important, however, is the issue of consolidation. Periods have thus been chosen for review in this study, which highlight shifts, contrasts and consolidations with regard to aspects of the self over time. Titles were chosen for the chapters, highlighting the main influence of the contextual period.

1.5 Chapter Review

The emergence of the sense of self within the realm of prehistory is outlined in Chapter Two. Signs of the early beginnings of the self are evident even at that early stage. Moving through time, Chapter Three examines the nature of the Early Egyptian concepts of the afterlife and indications of the associated sense of self. The

diversity of thought initiated by the Early Greeks and the implications for selfhood are then addressed in Chapter Four. The emergence of Christianity and its important influence on the individual western sense of self is the subject of Chapter Five. In this chapter, eastern spiritual views and their different conception of selfhood are also included. Chapter Six covers the Renaissance with the rebirth of learning, exploration, and new scientific discoveries. With the Enlightenment, reason became a dominant force and Chapter Seven highlights just how significant this was for the development of the western sense of self. But the irrational side of the individual could not be suppressed as Chapter Eight attests, and Romanticism brought feeling to the fore as central to the sense of selfhood. Psychology began to develop in the late eighteenth hundreds and had a significant impact on how self was to be viewed in the west. Chapter Nine captures some of the important elements of this phenomenon. Chapter Ten examines the sense of self in a group of mid-life participants through the use of qualitative, grounded theory. Midlife women were chosen as the target group because it was the understanding of issues related to this group in the counselling facility, which gave impetus to the study. The analysis of the participants' narratives is outlined according to the grounded approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Findings of the narrative analysis are discussed and the pertinent literature examined in Chapter Eleven. The substantive theory of the self is presented in Chapter Twelve and situates the western sense of self today, specifically in relation to those at mid-life.

There is no better place to start than at the beginning and the following chapter looks at Prehistory and the beginning of the human story.

2 CHAPTER TWO. LET THE PLAY BEGIN: EARLY HUMANS AND THE INNER BLUEPRINT OF THE SELF

2.1 Introduction

It is important to consider Prehistory when examining the issue of the self because Prehistory constitutes a substantial chapter of the human story. The nature and accomplishments of humankind are indeed foreshadowed by early history. The individual of today is generally shaped by the physical and behavioural characteristics hard-wired in the brain during the long period of evolution. Through the study of early humans it is possible to better understand the fundamental underpinnings of selfhood. Jung (1970, CW 10) recognized the impact of such a background contending that all humans, no matter how civilized they are, or how high their conscious development, have inherent archaic remnants at the deeper levels of the psyche. Human evolution is part of the evolution of life on earth, and the theory of evolution is based on the ideas of Charles Darwin.

This chapter briefly examines the work of Charles Darwin and the evolutionary pattern outlined by anthropologists. The main basic human need is the need to survive and this can be achieved to a great extent through control of the environment, through action and also through the creation of a personal meaning system. Action and the creation of a meaning system are often closely interwoven.

2.2 Charles Darwin

Darwin (1998; 2004) wrote *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1871. During his travels at sea on the Beagle, Darwin visited various habitats collecting specimens and recording his findings in his travel diary. Darwin noted that there was a large discrepancy between potential and actual reproduction rates in plants and animals. If all the offspring of a plant or animal could not survive to maturity, then there had to be biological reasons favouring the survival of those that do so. This

idea was the essence of natural selection, and constituted the underpinning of biological change over time. Darwin's theory of evolution holds that, because of population and environmental pressures, the young born to any species have to compete for survival. Of the young who do survive to reproduce a significant proportion embody favourable natural variations that give them an advantage. These advantaged members of each generation will be better able to adapt themselves to changing environmental conditions such as changes in food supply, predators and even climate. This gradual and continuous process of adaptation, also called "survival of the fittest", constitutes the very source of the evolution of all species of life. Thus, struggle is a fact of biological life. Darwin (1998, p. 66) maintained that:

It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving, and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand of time has marked the long lapse of ages, and then so imperfect is our view into long past geological ages, that we only see that the forms of life are now different from what they formerly were.

Darwin's theory was far reaching because it challenged the thinking of the time. Organisms were previously seen as "Designer" creations, kept constant by the will of God. Darwin drew attention to the immensity of deep evolutionary time and so challenged the theory of origins as set out in the Christian faith. He drew attention to the incredible interdependence of all organisms and ecosystems, and did not divorce humans from the natural world. By implication Darwin highlighted the need for living organisms to try to survive. *The Descent of Man* contradicted human's so called anatomical singularity, and there was fear that this bestial heritage would cause loss of faith in the Anglican Church. Darwin believed change for the good was possible and could be found in human intelligence (Darwin, 2004).

2.3 The Early Story

Exploring the human story reveals the intricate pattern of development that forms the substrate of the modern human individual. These early patterns could not have simply disappeared but vestiges remain, no matter how advanced we consider ourselves to be. Archaeologists and anthropologists have opened up vistas of past human experience despite the fact that fossilization leaves only a fragmented record and other relics left by early man are few and incomplete. Anthropology has a worldwide historical scope, is holistic and multifaceted and so offers a broad perspective of the development of early humans (Ember, Ember & Peregrine, 2002). Archaeologists and palaeoanthropologists mainly use three sources of evidence about the past, namely artefacts, ecofacts and fossils. Through the availability of a wide range of dating techniques, finds can be placed in chronological context.

Humans have a very long evolutionary history. It is believed that the earth came into existence roughly 4600 million years ago. Early life forms slowly developed, and eventually humans evolved from mammals. Humans are the ultimate mammals. The earliest known mammals were the Morganucodontids, which were very small shrew-like creatures that lived at the time of the dinosaurs, about 210 million years ago. All mammals living today, including humans, are said to have descended from this first line of mammal. Recently there has been excitement about the discovery in China of a mouse-like creature, *Hadrocodium*, that existed 195 million years ago, which has traits in common with present humans, including large brain cases and middle ear bones that are detached from the jaw (Gore, 2003). The highly successful dinosaurs dominated the world for millions of years, and mammals were almost insignificant by comparison. When, however, a large meteorite impact about 95 million years ago wiped out the dinosaurs, mammals were given a chance to exploit the planet's resources and evolve into the dominant position they hold today.

It is generally believed that humankind's early evolution took place in Africa, and it has been established that humans share a common ancestor with African apes. Unfortunately, due to a gap in the African fossil record between 13.5 and 5 million years ago, we can only estimate that the common ancestor of hominids and chimpanzees lived around 5 to 6 million years ago, and that of hominids and gorillas some time earlier (Ember et al., 2002). Important fossil sites have been discovered in

many parts of Africa. In South Africa, Sterkfontein (Clarke & Kuman, 2000) and Taung (Haywood, 1995, Leakey, 2000) have yielded valuable finds. The Olduvai Gorge in East Africa (Ember et al., 2002; Leakey, 2000), the Hadar region of Ethiopia (Haywood, 1995), and Lake Turkana in Kenya (Leakey, 2000) have been equally important in providing evidence of the early days of humankind.

One interpretation of the pattern of evolution that emerged from these finds is given in Figure 1.

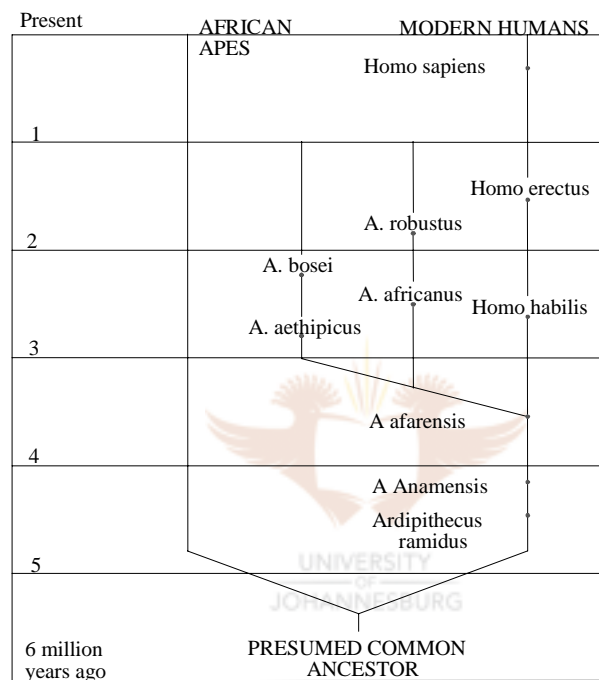


Figure 1 Pattern of human evolution

Source: Leakey, M & Tattersall, I. in Ember, Ember & Peregrine, (2002, p. 100)

Note: The abbreviation A... stands for Australopithecus, or Southern Ape

This figure indicates that our common ancestor with the African apes lived some 5 million years ago, and that we separated from the Australopithecines about 1.5 million years after this. The Australopithecines, or Southern Apes also continued to evolve in parallel until they seem to have died out some one million years ago. The separation happened after the first species of Homo developed a truly bipedal method of locomotion, while Australopithecus remained more ape-like (Ember et al, 2002; Haywood, 1995; Jurmain, Kilgore, Trevathan & Nelson, 2003; Leakey, 2000). Early

Bipedal apes had small brains, large cheek teeth and protruding jaws, and also followed an ape-like subsistence strategy, at least until the appearance of Homo. At some stage before 2.5 million years ago, the first large brained human species evolved, and Homo habilis, believed to be the first toolmaker, existed around this time.

There were shifts in childhood patterns as the human species evolved. One of the most significant features of human infants is that they are born essentially helpless, and have a comparatively long childhood and adolescence. Apes, in contrast, progress quickly from infancy to adulthood. This long childhood phase in humans evolved through biological necessity. Human infants as compared with infants of other species come into the world very early because of the greater brain size and the configuration of the human female pelvis. The pelvic opening increased in size during evolution to accommodate the increase in brain size but the limit was reached when the newborn's brain reached about 385 cubic centimetres, which it is today. The helplessness of the newborn human requires constant care from its parents and other relatives (Leakey, 2000; Tummon, 1990). Moreover, in human society, education and culture play a significant role in the lives of developing children. The importance of a supportive social milieu had already begun to develop with Homo erectus 1.7 million years ago (Leakey, 2000), and this feature was to become very important in the development of the human sense of self.

Although not depicted in figure 1, The Neanderthals are also relatives of humankind. It is not known exactly how they fit into the family tree, but anthropologists have found signs of Neanderthals dating from roughly 200,000 years ago and these were located in an area stretching from West Europe through the Near East to Asia. Europe was their exclusive domain until Homo sapiens moved westward from the Middle East. The Middle East has long been a cultural crossroads, and was simultaneously populated by Neanderthals and by Homo sapiens. For unknown reasons the Neanderthals disappeared from the record around 34,000 years ago. They may have been out-competed by Homo sapiens, killed by him or even, according to a controversial theory, assimilated by him (Jurmain et. al., 2003; Leakey, 2000).

The above has been a very truncated and simplified version of the story of human evolution. Before going on to consider early humans in relation to the development of

the self it may be useful to summarise the story as concisely as possible. Table 1, shows the relevant geological and archaeological periods and the stages of hominid evolution, as well as key milestones in the development of the species.



Table 1 Evolutionary Timeline

TIMESCALE	GEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE		ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS	HOMINID EVOLUTION		ART, SYMBOLISM & USE OF SIGNS	INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE, MEDICINE & TECHNOLOGY
3000 BC	Q		HISTORICAL CIVILISATIONS				Dentist's drill (Denmark) Acupuncture (Italy)
3500 BC					H		Earliest stone buildings (Gozo)
4000 BC					O		
4500 BC	U				M		
5000 BC		HOLOCENE	NEOLITHIC		O		Skull surgery (France)
5500 BC							
6000 BC	A						
6500 BC					S		Mirrors, (Turkey) Oriental rugs
7000 BC			(MESOLITHIC)		A		
7500 BC	T				P		
10000 BC					I		Copper (Turkey) Metallurgy
15000 BC					E	Numerical (Western devices Europe)	Pottery (Japan, Siberia)
20000 BC	E				N		
25000 BC			UPPER		S	Lunar (Europe, Africa,	Ceramic & fibre technology (Czech Republic)
30000 BC			PALAEOLITHIC	N		Calendars Asia, Australia)	
35000 BC	R			E		Cave art (Europe) and portable art (Asia)	
40000 BC		UPPER		A	S		
50000 BC		PLEISTOCENE		N	A		Amputation,
60000 BC	N			D	P		Use of medicinal plants
70000 BC				E	I		(Iraq)
80000 BC			MIDDLE	R	E		
90000 BC	A		PALAEOLITHIC	T	N		
100000 BC				A	S	Burial (Israel)	
150000 BC				L			
200000 BC	R	MIDDLE		S			
250000 BC		PLEISTOCENE			ARCHAIC HOMO SAPIENS	Intentionally marked bones (Germany)	
500000 BC			LOWER	AUSTRALOPTHECUS	HOMO ERECTUS	Figurines (Israel)	Wooden spears (Germany)
1 million BC	Y	LOWER	PALAEOLITHIC		HOMO	Ochre use (Africa)	Rafts (?) (Indonesia)
2 million BC	TERTIARY	PLEISTOCENE			HABILIS		Earliest stone tools (Ethiopia)
3 million BC						Makapansgat pebble (S Africa)	
4 million BC		PLIOCENE					
5 million BC							

Rudgley (2000)

As shown in column 3 of this table, archaeological practice is to divide the early cultural time span into distinctive periods. The term Palaeolithic refers to the Stone Age of more than about 2 million years ago, and this is further divided into the lower, middle and upper Palaeolithic periods. The term Mesolithic refers to the more recent, Middle Stone Age, and Neolithic is the New Stone Age. The Iron Age and Bronze Age followed the Stone Age. The Upper Palaeolithic period is often also called the Ice Age because glacial conditions prevailed at this time. It was, however, not unrelentingly cold for the full 30,000 years of the upper Palaeolithic period, and there were intermittent warmer periods.

2.4 Prehistory and the Self

The nature of the fossil record means that there is no comprehensive description of the nature of early people. The record we have so far uncovered does offer certain information, which can be pieced together to fill in the puzzle to some extent. In order to survive, early people certainly needed to have some control over their environments. Life for early humans would have been an exercise in trying to survive in a challenging environment with the main issue being “eat or be eaten.” Humans do not exist within a vacuum but live within a surrounding environmental framework. The macro environment of geology and climate, and the microenvironment of the immediate milieu both impact on the individual and the group. Climate and terrain determine the type and quantity of available food, and the nature of the group composition largely shapes roles and activities. For early humans the main means of controlling the environment and surviving would have been through the use of a strong, healthy body. Humans are anchored in their bodies, and early people would have been particularly reliant on physical capability. Stevens (2001, p. 395) described the body as a mobile conveyance on which our experience and personal sense of self is loaded:

The body is the vehicle that carries us (and our genes) through life. The body is also our abode, a citadel in which – for the course of tenancy until our lease runs out – we preserve our most precious treasure.

In early times tenancy was short, particularly because of accident and illness. Anthropologists have discovered that early people suffered birth trauma, spina bifida, arthritis, viral diseases, parasitic and bacterial infection, tooth decay as well as sudden death through violence. Thus pain and decay have always been the lot of human experience, and are an inevitable part of human reality. Physical pain would have instituted a push to find ways of alleviating physical suffering. For example, Neolithic skulls show evidence of trepanation, which involved removal of part of the skull and would have been carried out to relieve excessive head pain. Anthropologists have found that in many cases healing did indeed take place after the procedure (Renfrew & Bahn, 1991). It is likely that illness and injury fostered the development of empathy in that physical suffering would have been clearly witnessed, stimulating a willingness to be of help. At the Shanidar cave, in a remote area of Northern Iraq, for example, the skeleton of forty-year-old male was discovered together with the remains of other Neanderthals. The individual was nicknamed Nandy. Analysis revealed that the right side of Nandy's body was withered and under-developed. It was likely that this condition had existed since birth. Moreover his right arm had been amputated above the elbow and he suffered from arthritis. He had also suffered traumatic injury to the head and was blind in one eye. Renfrew and Bahn (1991) pointed out that, despite all this, Nandy lived to around forty years of age, which was old for a Neanderthal. Keeping Nandy alive and helping him survive must have been a major medical and apparently empathic undertaking.

Life is richly experienced through the medium of the subjective sensation of consciousness or self-awareness. Tummon (1990) maintained that the Palaeolithic self would have emerged out of dependent childhood where the infant remained close to the mother for most of its young life. The infant would be nurtured, cared for, and later socialised. The psyche of an adult 10,000 years ago, according to Tummon, would have been a complex system of inter-related capacities. Humans would have had a detailed inner map of the natural environment. The adult would have had an inner working model of himself particularly in relation to others and to the nature of the environment. The increasing size, complexity and differentiation of the human brain necessitated increasing inputs from the cultural sphere to operationalise these newly acquired capacities (Tummon, 1990). Individuals would have experienced

existence as embedded in an intricate network of relations with both nature and others.

The discovery of fire was indeed a crucial step in human evolution. Some evidence puts the controlled and purposeful use of fire around 500,000 years ago even though it can be argued that the opportunistic use of fire, by *Homo erectus*, started long before this. What is significant is that fire certainly had great bearing on the morphology of the human skull in that cooked food is softer than raw food to chew, which would then affect the configuration of the face and head (Tummon, 1990). This in turn would have affected brain space. Brains are metabolically very demanding organs. For example in modern humans the brain constitutes only 2% of total body weight and yet consumes 20% of the energy budget. Large brains are an expensive luxury in that they require a large blood and energy supply so diverting the body's resources away from the muscles (Haywood, 1995). Early *Homo* would also have needed a diet that was nutritionally rich. As meat contains calories, proteins and fat it is believed that it became an important dietary component. In turn hunting would have demanded thinking about some sort of tracking strategy. Henshilwood (2004) has suggested that early people living in coastal areas would have had a nutritional advantage through having access to fresh fish, which is now considered good brain food. The brain certainly developed significantly over the long period of prehistory. Once consciousness and memory emerged, together with the ability to remember the past, live in the present and anticipate the future, the individual sense of self was born. According to Pinker (1997, p. 191) our ancestors had four traits that facilitated causal reasoning. The first, he maintained, is the fact that primates are visual animals. Depth and colour perception together have pushed the primate brain into splitting the flow of visual information system into a “what” stream, to identify objects and their shapes and a “where” stream for location and movement. Thus individuals could successfully live in three-dimensional space, be immersed in the complexity of the environment and use their developing reasoning ability to better understand the world. The second factor promoting causal reasoning was group living. Groups offer more eyes and ears, greater foraging capacity and the opportunity for co-operative hunting. At the same time, social animals risk treachery such as theft, cannibalism, cuckoldry, infanticide and extortion (Pinker, 1997). Thus there arises the urgent need to develop

social smartness, a fruitful application of reasoning. The third factor for developing a sense of causal reasoning is the nature of the hand. Hands are levers of influence on the world. An upright body posture frees the hands from use in locomotion. This means that tools can be assembled from materials found in different locations and used where they are needed, a challenging creative process. The fourth usher of intelligence, Pinker noted, was hunting. Meat, being a good source of protein would have been highly beneficial to man's physical development. In addition, hunting would demand much of the individual in terms of planning and manoeuvring skills as well as in the creation of good hunting tools to exercise control over the environment. A basic form of control is aggression. Pinker (2002, p. 306) pointed to archaeological records, buried in the ground and hidden in caves, that give testament to a bloody prehistory. Early people certainly bashed and butchered one another, "suggesting that violence and cannibalism go back at least 800,000 years." Pinker stressed that by not examining early history, the belief arises that violence itself is an aberration.

The use of tools enables individuals to gain specific control of the environment. Cognitive development in early humans can be well examined through the study of stone tools, and the history of the tool industry reveals a somewhat sporadically increasing degree of sophisticated refinement. The earliest stone tools were simple choppers and flakes. The Oldawan industry from Olduvai Gorge provides a good example of this level of workmanship. The Acheulian hand axe evolved into a symmetrical shape over hundreds of thousands of years, sporting sharpened edges achieved by using a bone hammer. These teardrop shaped implements were named after the site of St Acheul in northern France where these tools, in later versions, were first discovered (Leakey, 2000). The Levallois technique was introduced roughly 100,000 years ago and involved the careful preparation of a tortoise-shaped core so that one useable flake could be struck from it. In Upper Palaeolithic times, by using a punch and hammer stone, numerous parallel-sided blades could be removed from a single core. These blades were later retouched to form specialised tools such as burins and scrapers (Renfrew & Bahn, 1991).

Jerison (1991) contended that brains have a species-specific view of reality. Essentially the world perceived by individuals is self-constructed, albeit influenced by experience and governed by sensory channels. These sensory channels differ between

species. Dogs, for example, have a better sense of smell than humans. As Hominid brains enlarged over evolutionary time more channels of sensory information could be processed. The greater the number of channels the more information that could be managed and integrated. Mental models of the “out there” reality could more closely resemble the “in here” reality, but with inevitable information gaps. Jerison argued that communication through language is then a further means by which an individual's mental reality could be honed.

The evolution of language differentiated Homo sapiens from all other creatures. Apes have a dozen phonemes while humans have fifty. The phonemes can be arranged to produce hundreds and thousands of words giving humans the ability for rapid communication and a richness of thought. One approach to assessing the speech ability of early man, according to anthropologists, is to reconstruct the vocal tract in the throat (Jurmain, Kilgore, Trevathan & Nelson, 2003). In so doing researchers have found that, in Australopithecines, the base of the skull was flat and the pharynx small, suggesting they could vocalize more than apes but could not manage vowels. In skulls of Homo erectus from three to one and a half million years ago, the skull base shows signs of becoming curved, indicating that the larynx was probably descending so facilitating the speech function. Language would have marked a significant shift in human understanding. Dennett (2004) pointed out that language, when installed in the brain, brings with it the construction of a whole new cognitive architecture. Archaeologists are now extending the concept of language.

Henshilwood (2004) has maintained that recent studies have suggested that the Koisan, a southern African language characterised by many clicks, could be 100,000 years old. At the same time, it can be argued, said Henshilwood (2004), that language is not necessarily only verbal and that objects, such as beads, are also a means of communicating meaning.

Tummon (1990) pointed out that the development of the human brain beyond a certain size was a requirement for it to have the capacity for symbolic experience. The use of images and symbols are significant indicators of cognitive development. The ability to carry an image in mind is an important facet of consciousness and of intelligence. At Makapansgat in South Africa, a manuport, or naturally occurring object transported by man, was discovered in some strata and was dated some time between 2 and 3 million years ago. The depressions on the surface of the pebble were

caused by weathering and resulted in the pebble looking like a face. The pebble comes from a type of stone not naturally occurring in the area in which it was found, and there is no evidence of workmanship on the stone itself. It seems the pebble was not used for any practical purpose and it appears that Australopithecines possibly recognized the resemblance between the markings and depressions on the pebble and their own faces (Rudgley, 2000). Was this manuport evidence of the emergence of an early phase of awareness of an individual sense of self, or is the evidence being pushed too far?

The production of art and jewellery is considered to be evidence of symbolic thinking. Early humans began to adorn their bodies with beads and pendants about 40,000 years ago, certainly in Europe. Archaeologists excavating the Blombos Cave site on the east coast of South Africa have discovered small, perforated snail shells, all with holes and wear marks in similar positions. The shells appear to have been worn roughly 75,000 years ago, so making them 30,000 years older than any other identified personal ornaments (Henshilwood, 2004). The significance of beads in relation to symbolic thought is currently receiving much attention. At an anthropological conference in Johannesburg in March 2003, Vanhaeren (2003) outlined fourteen different roles of beads, and indicated related avenues of research thereby opening new frontiers of the human story.

Social intelligence is also a fairly recent avenue of investigation. Not only did early humans need to develop technological skill to survive but they also needed to develop social intelligence to survive in larger groups. Around 8,000 to 10,000 years ago the Neolithic lifestyle of settled community living developed. At Catalhoyuk in Turkey a Neolithic mud bricked town was discovered where the houses were packed tightly together. The houses had no doors in the outside walls, and entry into each house was through an opening in the roof. This is evidence of a type of social intelligence because in order for so many people to live together in such close proximity, there must have been social laws and agreements. Without the ability to follow such social codes the entire community would have collapsed and anarchy would have prevailed (Rudgley, 2000).

Ritual is one way of externalising meaning. At some point humans came to realise that life and death were two different states. Anthropologists have uncovered

evidence that Neanderthals recognized the non-living state and buried their dead. The burial process was characterised by a type of ritual. For example the Shanidar flower burial is the 60,000-year-old burial site of a man whose grave reveals signs of different kinds of flowering plants (Haywood, 1995). Burials show not only the concern of the living but also concern for the deceased. A significant Neanderthal burial of a boy of twelve was found in a cave in Uzbekistan. A series of interlocking goat horns lying next to the skeleton suggests they were part of a funeral rite. The relatively recent discovery of graves at the Qafzeh and Skhul Caves in Israel now suggest that Homo sapiens buried their dead as early as 120,000 years ago (Rudgley, 2000). Those burying their dead would have to have had some symbolic understanding of what they were doing.

Establishing categories of belief provides a meaning framework. Smith (2001) noted that the belief in a life force appears to have been a central organizing construct for early people. This life force was said to take such forms as smoke, liveliness, cloud, shadow and image but the most common form was the breath. Two versions of life force were apparent. One was free of the body and occurred in sleep, fainting and ecstasy. This life force was thought to be immortal and consequently was said to change to another form after death. The second version of the life force was evident in the waking state, was active, and usually linked to the breath. This version of the life force was thought to be associated with thinking, feeling and perceiving, and can be termed body power. Both free power and body power referred to a soul. Direct experience of the forces of nature such as lightning, thunder, phases of the moon, birth, death, illness, floods and droughts had a forceful and often life-threatening impact. In order to make sense of such experiences human attributes were projected onto nature in the form of the belief that spirits were in everything (Smith, 2001).

Mythological thinking also offers a way of structuring meaning and so gaining some control of the unknown through a connecting narrative. Mythology is said to be coeval with mankind (Campbell, 1972). Campbell studied the myths of different cultures around the world and contended that all myths and epics have a common origin in the need of the human psyche as it tries to relate to cosmological as well as spiritual reality, and gain some control over the unknown by giving particular meaning to existence. Mythological concerns were already shaping the arts as well as

the world of early Homo sapiens. Campbell (1972) asserted that it is the recognition of mortality and the desire to transcend it that is the first great impulse to mythology. The second impetus to mythology is the recognition of the need of all individuals to adapt to the community and group into which they were born. The third influencing factor contributing to mythological thinking is the recognition by individuals of the nature of the spectacle and power of the natural world in relation to their personal existence. Myths, said Campbell, tell stories about essential fundamental life principles thereby helping to sustain the individual and the group.

According to Campbell the first tangible evidence of mythological thinking is apparent in the time of Neanderthal man. A number of “chapels” in high mountain caves have been found where cave bear skulls have been ceremonially deposited in symbolic settings. From early times there was an artistic and spiritual need in the human psyche to reach beyond the mundane and connect with deeper forces and this could be achieved through a form of narrative. According to Campbell (1972) themes such as fire, theft, deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth and the resurrected hero have a world wide distribution, appearing everywhere in new combinations. Symbolic and artistic expression in various forms served as a unifying narrative, so giving meaning to individuals and groups.

Spiritual sensibility facilitates meaning in terms of connection to a higher order of being. It appears that early humans displayed a spiritual sensibility particularly in their sculpture and painting. The Upper Palaeolithic period begins with the Aurignacian period from 34,000 to 30,000 years ago. There are some examples of cave paintings from this time but more prolific are the small ivory human and animal figures and small ivory beads. The first clay human and animal figurines were found in excavations of sites representative of the Gravettian period roughly 30,000 to 22,000 years ago. The most famous of these figurines are the female forms made of clay, ivory or calcite called Venuses. These figurines generally lack facial features and the lower part of the legs. The Upper Palaeolithic Solutrean period yields examples of large bass reliefs cut into the rock. The final period of the Palaeolithic age was the Magdalenian, from 18,000 to 11,000 years ago, marking the era of deep cave painting (Ember et. al., 2002; Jurmain et. al., 2003). According to Rudgley (2000) deep cave interiors would have been very dark and stale for long-term habitation. Upper Palaeolithic man went into these deep caves not to sleep but to find

a sacred space in which to express ideas. These journeys into the earth were spiritual quests into naturally formed cathedrals using lighted torches. Torches enabled individuals to freely move and clearly see the environment inside the dark cave interiors. Perhaps the most famous cave paintings are those at Lascaux in France. The location of the paintings and engravings in the caves are said to show that there was a clear division between art that was supposed to be viewed by all and that which was more secretive in nature. The painted caves, it seems, provided centres for meetings. It is suggested, from a study of the Salon at Niaux in France, that the underground journey to reach the cave was as important as the decorated chamber itself. Along the trail there are abstract signs marking off sections of the cave. These signs are found in the galleries, and the more realistically depicted animals, painted in black, are found in the chambers. Cave walls were not passive, flat canvases but were irregular and pitted. The artistic expression reveals a dialogue following the underlying ethos of the rock formations of the cave walls. Thus the artist was a co-creator with nature because the artist conjures a narrative of the underlying spirits dormant in the rock, so making them visible and personally meaningful (Rudgley, 2000).

Entopic phenomena (Bednarik, 1990; Dronfield, 1996) have become a highly debated topic of art in Prehistory. Entopics are visual sensations resulting from the structure of the optic system, and can be caused by pressure on the eyeball. The visual phenomena take various forms such as zigzags and dots, spirals and curves, moving and rotating. It also is believed that some Upper Paleolithic art is the result of altered states of consciousness such as trance states (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989). Trance states were important to the shamans. One means of achieving control and ensuring survival on the part of early people was through the agency of meaning interpretation offered by shamans. Shamans were able to enter the trance state naturally, by hyperventilation or through the use of hallucinogenic plants, and so they recognised different levels of consciousness. The Siberian Inuit are often said to have been the first shamanistic healers (Kharatidi, 1996). Shamans journeyed to the spirit world to neutralize the harm inflicted on individuals by the spirits and they used rituals, sound and specialised symbolic objects in the quest for meaning. The shamans' experience of the other world was then expressed in metaphor through art, and early artwork has pointed to the complex nature of meaning. For example, in

Southern Africa, the image of an eland can be associated with hunting, puberty rites and marriage. Thus the symbol can resonate with multiple meanings (Mitchell, 2002). At a time when much of the natural world seemed inexplicable, multiplicity of meaning, generated through symbolic objects, offered flexible explanations. Ember et al. (2003) have pointed out that it is significant that four categories used by shamans in the healing process and are also used by doctors and healers, even today. The categories include the naming process, the personality of the doctor, the patients' expectations, and a method or technique for curing.

According to Storr (1996) the unknown creates a yearning for certainty. There is always a "lingering hope that somewhere there is someone who *knows* persists in the recesses of the minds of most of us, which manifests itself more obviously when people are distressed or ill" (Storr, 1996, p. 221). Thus the "other" is sanctioned to become the agent of meaning. The question, which can be posed about each historical period, is which "other" is accepted as a medium for or agent of meaning.

It would appear that, roughly within the last 2.5 million years, consciousness was born as the hominid brain size tripled and its overall organization changed. With this, greater self-awareness developed, and humans were able to begin to transform the world to their own ends. The body evolved, and the brain developed and memory and consciousness emerged, together with the ability to remember the past, live in the present and anticipate the future. Such developments gave individuals the cognitive capacity to solve a variety of problems and remain contained within an individual mythological and ritualistic narrative. The ground plan for a sense of self was in place.

2.5 Summary

Humans have a long evolutionary history. The early human story, however, is marked by gaps in the fossil records but archaeologists have gathered much fossil evidence pertaining to early human development. Darwin's theory of evolution held that population and environmental pressures result in the young of any species having to compete for survival. Of the young that do survive and reproduce many will

embody favourable natural variations, which give them an advantage. So “evolution” is part of life.

The dinosaurs dominated the world for millions of years but a meteorite impact 95 million years ago is said to have wiped them out, and mammals had a chance to take centre stage. It is believed that early humans evolved in Africa and that the common ancestor of hominids and chimpanzees lived some 5-6 million years ago. A developmental separation took place with regard to Homo and Australopithecines and a species of Homo developed bipedal locomotion. Around 2.5 million years ago, the first human species, Homo habilis, evolved.

Darwin’s research suggested that the urge to survive is central to existence. Early humans bolstered the urge to survive by developing strategies for control. Early people learnt to build shelters, hunt, develop hunting tools, use fire, develop rudimentary medical techniques, and even use some form of language. Control could also be effected in less direct ways. For example, early humans developed meaning-making systems to interpret the unknown. These included mythological interpretation, ritual and the services of shamans.

To have a sense of self at all, the individual needed a physical body, cognitive and affective capacity, conscious awareness and memory together with the ability to behave in such a way as to exert some control over the environment.

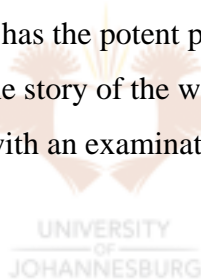
2.6 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Two

The criticism usually levelled at delving into Prehistory in psychological research is that the area remains far too speculative. This is true on one level but on another level, with new dating techniques at their disposal, anthropologists and archaeologists are uncovering more and more information about human evolution, and so are widening fields of knowledge. Psychology is one of the beneficiaries. Even some introductory psychology texts address issues related to human evolution.

Evolutionary psychology is a relatively new and crystallizing field, and offers a powerful metatheoretical framework to psychology grounded in modern evolutionary biology. Evolutionary psychology differs from earlier psychobiological models in

identifying the construct of psychological mechanisms at a fundamental level of analysis (Kirkpatrick, 1999). Pinker (1997) stressed that there is a misconception that at some point, biological evolution ceased and cultural evolution took its place. Culture, however, cannot be understood without reference to the evolved psychology of the people who constructed it in the first place. Evolutionary psychology is expanding parameters and stimulating research, looking for connections and evolutionary trends (Bailey, Gaulin, Agyei & Gladue, 1994; Boorstein, 2000; Burnstein, Crandall & Kitayama, 1994; Buss, 1988; Buss, Gomes, Higgins & Lauterbach, 1987; Kenrick, Groth, Trost & Sadalla, 1993; Singh, 1993). As Dennett (2004) has pointed out, we can only marvel that four and a half billion years ago the planet Earth was formed, and was without life. There is an amazing story to be told. Today the planet teems with thinking, feeling, acting, communicating, human individuals, many of who are capable of a high degree of cognitive complexity and who possess potent creative ability as well as the power of self-reflection.

What is the history of this self that has the potent power of self-reflection? What are some of the important aspects of the story of the western self? This is the subject of the following chapters beginning with an examination of the time of the Ancient Egyptians.



3 CHAPTER THREE. THE AFTERLIFE AS DIRECTOR: ANCIENT EGYPT

3.1 Introduction

The change in role from hunter-gatherers to farmers marked a significant shift in the nature of the sense of self. The very roots of human civilisation can be traced to the beginning of agriculture. Some communities began to establish permanent settlements, and from there emerged urban civilisations roughly 5,000 years ago, not so long ago in view of the time span associated with prehistory. The emergence of civilisation is one of the major events of human history, and one that has great bearing on the individual. Civilization implies that citizens live in a state, which has stable social, political and legal structures. When the glaciers began to melt around 12,000 years ago large quantities of water were released, rainfall increased and vegetation flourished. Farming seems to have developed quickly in the near east. The region from the Levant, across the Euphrates and Tigris rivers to the Zagros Mountains, was very fertile and farming became highly productive. Similar developments took place in the Indus valley and in the region of the Yellow river (Fletcher, 2003).

Why choose Early Egypt as significant in the development of the western self? Early Egypt displayed remarkable characteristics. Civilization emerged in Egypt after a relatively short period of transition from a Neolithic farming life-style and the Nile valley was well settled by 4000 BC as farmers were forced out of the eastern Sahara when the climate became drier. It would seem that the increased complexity in the Egyptian society came about because of population pressure in the narrow confines of the Nile valley. The various chiefdoms had little room to expand and soon amalgamated into two separate kingdoms: the Upper kingdom of southern Egypt and the Lower kingdom of northern Egypt (Carpiceci, 2003). Thus, in a relatively short space of time the Early Egyptians moved from large village complexes to a nation state that was unified by a common culture, and they developed a fairly stable cohesive way of life. In fact McIntosh and Twist (2003) noted that Ancient Egypt was one of the world's first superpowers. Furthermore, the civilisation of Ancient Egypt influenced Classical Greek and Roman thinking and such views have had a marked influence down the ages.

The associated characteristics of civilization have been identified and have essentially been divided into primary and secondary features. Primary features include settlement in cities, full time specialization of labour, concentration of surpluses, a class structure and state organization. Secondary features include monumental public works, long distance trade, standardised monumental artwork, writing as well as forms of arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. The primary characteristics are all aspects of social organization. The secondary characteristics, on the other hand, are aspects of material culture revealed by archaeological remains, and which, in turn indicate the existence of some or all of the primary features. A civilized society is said to display most of the fore-mentioned characteristics (Haywood, 1995). The sense of self, as displayed by individuals living in very early times and those living in a civilised society is bound to differ in terms of scope and complexity. The civilisation of Ancient Egypt is important from the point of view of the developing western sense of self in that, through their artefacts and writings, we witness the consolidation of the important human capacity for symbolic thinking and meaning making.



3.2 Early Egypt and the Sense of Self

The nature of the Early Egyptian cosmology provided an encompassing framework of meaning and encouraged a sense of supremacy as well as a strong collective sense of self. This cosmology rested on an all-embracing framework of myths, which gave three accounts of creation. All three were interconnected but each centred on a particular deity or group of deities. These included the nine gods of Heliopolis, the eight gods of Hermopolis and Ptah the God of Memphis (Fletcher 2003; Philip 2000). Stengel (2001) pointed out that Early Egyptian cosmology portrayed the world as being perfect at the moment it had been created by the gods. This perfection, or *maat*, had to be maintained and changes were not enthusiastically embraced. The concept of *maat*, promoted stability and paved the way for consolidation of the sense of self.

Myths are elevated narratives. They are stories about super human beings, and are a form of meaning making offering an avenue for control of the unknown. According to Carpiceci (2003) the basis of the entire system of thought and moral rectitude of the Ancient Egyptian people lay in the myth of Osiris. Osiris came after Shu, Ra and Geb

and his task was to instruct the people in the proper use of the river and the land, and also to set them on the road to self-awareness making them creators of their own lives. His treacherous brother, Seth, killed Osiris and his subsequent resurrection became central to the Ancient Egyptian belief system, and the theme of this myth, in different forms, has reverberated through the ages (Watterson, 2003). The Osiris myth heralded the emerging western sense of self through the articulation of the need for self-awareness and the responsibility of self-direction. Consolidation of the sense of self was achieved through the general flow of encompassing narrative. Early Egyptians were immersed in a flow of narrative. As Philip (2000) noted, stories are at the root of all cultures, and such narratives explain and justify the world and define the individual's role within creation. The story of the sun, for example, became the dominant narrative. Just as the sun descended and rose each day so the Early Egyptian consciousness was moulded by the belief in death followed by resurrection as the fundamental meaning of all creation. The narrative of the king's safe passage through death to the afterlife was of supreme importance and provided a valuable vessel for a sense of self-consolidation (Carpiceci, 2003). Furthermore, through their myths and cosmology and narrative fluidity the Early Egyptians began to expand their capacity for imaginative flexibility. Imaginative flexibility is a vital part of the human economy and leads to creativity, originality, inventiveness and enterprise

Environmental factors also have a bearing on the nature of the sense of self. The physical configuration of Ancient Egypt meant that it was relatively isolated from the rest of the world because of specific natural barriers. This isolation facilitated the feeling of unity in the Egyptian mind in terms of land, state, religion and culture. In addition, the Nile, with its relatively regular pattern of flooding gave a sense of optimism, continuity, and rhythm to the people (Johnson, 1999). The notion that Egypt was the centre, and that everything in it represented the right way of being was fostered, to a large extent, by the geographical isolation. Egypt did have contact with Libya, Nubia and Palestine but these countries were poor in comparison, and so Egypt's abundance simply confirmed the belief that it and its inhabitants were supreme. According to Fletcher (2003) the Egyptian landscape of fertile, habitable river margins bounded by vast inhospitable desert also fostered a sense of duality in the Egyptian psyche. The Egyptians recognised good and evil, day and night, order

and chaos or in other words, everything in the universe had an essential counterpart. The sense of self was acquiring significant levels of complexity.

It is interesting to note the significance of the interplay of factors shaping the notion of selfhood. Johnson (1999) suggested that the fact that bodies did not decompose quickly in the dry desert lands gave credence to the concept of life after death. The meaning and importance attributed to the afterlife by the Early Egyptians had a profound effect on the lives of all the inhabitants. The Ancient Egyptians constructed a positive view of “life” once the journey to the other world was completed. The walls of the Egyptian tombs reveal their concept of the afterlife with people in this realm depicted in their artwork as boating on the Nile, fowling in the marshes, picnicking by the river and drinking wine in the gardens. Heaven was viewed as earth at its best. The desire of all ancient Egyptians was to return to that paradisiacal perfection as evinced at the moment of creation (Johnson, 1999; Stengel, 2001).

Despite this optimistic view, according to Fletcher (2003), many Early Egyptians had a deep fear of death as shown by a body of pessimistic literature reflecting acute concern about what happens after death so highlighting the human fear of the unknown. In time the afterlife became the dominant motif with preparation for the after life of the king, as the central focus. With the focus on the king, the individual sense of selfhood was overshadowed. The King was regarded as Egypt’s supreme high priest, and the intermediary between humans and the gods. There were hundreds of temples and the king delegated authority to priests but ordinary people were not allowed to enter. Because of the underlying need to propitiate the gods to ensure safe personal passage to the after world as well as to have a sense of control over their own lives, individuals eventually also began to perform their own active, personal rituals. This underscores the move to a more individualised sense of self.

In Early Egyptian society meaning structures and actions were tightly interwoven. The kings prepared for their own deaths by building imposing pyramids or tombs. Pyramid building was complicated, and thus demanded a high degree of cognitive skill. The afterlife belief system in fact shaped the general activity in the country. To build the pyramids, architects had to cope with all the problems of structural design, mechanics, logistics and scheduling as well as labour management. Architects and builders continually set themselves increasingly ambitious targets despite the fact they

had only sledges, levers, rollers, and the strength of oxen and men at their disposal. The greater the size of the pyramid, the higher the quality of the workmanship required. Thousands of workers were involved in the construction work believing they were contributing to maat or order as a guarantee of their civilization (Johnson 1999). Coordinating the labour of thousands of workers would certainly take skill and organization. New knowledge and expertise eventually led to a shift in the sense of self of ordinary people as they mastered new skills.

Gradually there was a shift from collectivism to humanism. Ordinary people began to take account of personal death, and the need to organise their own lives in preparation for this important event. It was accepted that the king and the gods had the right to *ka*, or individual spirit, but what was significant was the fact that, in time, citizens also began to claim the very same right to an individual personality. The building of small, personal pyramids by individuals bears witness to this development. Ancient Egyptian eschatology also underwent a gradual change. With the rise of the individual sense of personhood the notion of a final personal judgement came to the fore (Johnson, 1999). In time there was a move to greater ethical sophistication, moral individualism and to a deeper sense of personal choice. The personal guidebooks or Pyramid Texts initially aimed to protect the king on the journey to the afterlife were later adapted for individual use (Fletcher, 2003).

Action was taken to manage the environment and was guided by innovation and the development of foresight. The fluctuation of the Nile was an inducement to organization and to the storage of grain with the river facilitating the transportation of goods. This operation demanded planning, organization and effort. Moreover, the nature of the river-course was an incentive to further development because the area lent itself to irrigation and extension. Above the flood-line, crops had to be irrigated throughout the year, and water was brought directly from the Nile by means of the shaduf, which lifted it from the river into canals. Working and maintaining the canal system involved hard labour, and highlighted the importance of cooperation, showing that selfhood was not an isolated enterprise but also involved the well being of others (Johnson, 1999).

Action was also taken to counter disease. A sense of self is tied to physicality. A huge diversity of parasites have been identified in Egyptian mummies, and it would

seem that many of these were caused by inadequate sanitation and ignorance about the nature and transmittance of disease. Analysis of the teeth of ancient Egyptians showed heavy wear and very bad decay (Renfrew & Bahn, 1991). The Ancient Egyptians devised a large pharmacopoeia of herbal mixtures to try to alleviate sickness but a large part of their medicine consisted of magic and spells. The body was cared for and celebrated as part of the essential being or *ba* (personality) of the individual. Mummification then preserved the life force, spirit or *ka* (Philip, 2000).

Weber has drawn attention to the fact that the sense of self is tied to the physical body. Weber (2000) pointed to the significance of the polished bronze mirrors of the Early Egyptians as a technology of the self. Their value was shown by the design lavished upon them and some even had carrying cases making self-appraisal portable. Weber noted that the invention of the mirror together with the use of cosmetics, took personal appearance and by implication, the physical sense of selfhood, to a new level of self-awareness.

The early Egyptians acquired a further instrument of control, namely writing. The first Egyptian writing or hieroglyphics was pictographic and seems to have developed from preliterate systems of record keeping (McIntosh & Twist, 2003). Not only does the practice of writing indicate the capacity for sustained fine eye-hand co-ordination and the ability to utilize symbols, it also gives form and concreteness to ideas. This is important because to find a place within the world, humans locate themselves within a system of ideas, which in turn confirms the sense of self. The Early Egyptians exerted control over their environment in other ways as well. For example, they were skilled at surveying and measuring and also devised the only workable calendar of antiquity. They were excellent empirical astronomers, and their night star clock became the basis of their twenty-four hour system, and Greek astronomers adopted this system, thereby later bringing it into universal usage (Johnson 1999). In time these instruments of control meant that the individual was no longer enveloped within the environment but became more finely delineated.

According to Tannahill (1989), Egyptian law conceded that men and women were virtually equal, and this gave women freedom that shocked the Greeks. This equality was essentially meaningless in a practical sense because only financial inheritance brought a degree of independence and this was only available to men. Women were

either wives or slaves, and evidence from skeletons suggests that lower class women were subject to heavy manual work. Also, if a woman's husband was convicted of a crime, the Early Egyptian penal system punished the wife and children (Tannahill, 1989). Thus a woman's, sense of self was linked to the nature and status of her husband.

3.3 Summary

The emergence of civilisation was a major event in human history and greatly influenced the developing sense of self. The Early Egyptian civilisation was important with regard to the evolution of selfhood because it remained relatively stable for a long period of time so facilitating the consolidation of the sense of self. Belief in the afterlife became the dominant theme in the Early Egyptian zeitgeist. The safe passage of the king to the after-life became the organizing principle of Egyptian life. Pyramids or tombs were built to house the king's body after death, and symbolised the pyramidal structure of Early Egyptian society. The Early Egyptians had a strong collective sense of self due, in part, to the isolation of the country. They exerted control over the environment through the development of irrigation using the shaduf, through hieroglyphic writing and by a body of medical knowledge. The Early Egyptians also directed control by developing a system of meaning through their cosmology, which helped them interpret events as the actions of the gods. The Osiris myth heralded the western sense of self through the articulation of the need for self-awareness and the responsibility of self-direction. Through the cult of Amun there developed the value of individual moral responsibility. In time there was a shift from a collective sense of self to a more personal sense as individuals began to follow their own rituals of worship and build their own small pyramids, indicating that they also believed that they held a place of significance. The Ancient Egyptians displayed an inherent narrative capacity, which served a containing function, and also helped to define the nature of personal existence and ultimately confirm the sense of self.

3.4 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Three

The main criticism which can be levelled at the examination of the Ancient Egyptian civilization as an avenue for exploring the self is that it is only one of a number of ancient civilizations which could have been explored. The Ancient Egyptians were selected, as they were the first people to create a nation state. The ancient Egyptian theocracy exhibited strength, assurance, and durability, which lasted for over 3,000 years, and influenced succeeding cultures. In view of its rich history, Ancient Egypt and its people form an important link in the developing chain of socio-historical information that in turn, provides some insights into the evolving sense of western selfhood.

According to Hunt (1994), King Psamtik I of Egypt, during the latter half of the seventh century BC, conducted history's first recorded psychological experiment. The Egyptians believed they were the most ancient race on earth and the King wished to prove this belief. His hypothesis was that, if children had no opportunity to learn language from those around them, they would naturally speak Egyptian. His methodology was to take two infants and give them to a herdsman to bring up in a remote area. They were to be well cared for but were never to hear anyone speak. The first word the children uttered sounded like the Phrygian word for bread and King Psamtik concluded, on hearing the sounds, that the Phrygians were an older race than the Egyptians. Hunt pointed out that even though the king's conclusions were erroneous he did have the original notion that thoughts arise in the mind through internal processes, which can be investigated. Before Psamtik's experiment it was generally believed that thoughts and emotions were the work of spirits and gods. The gradual acknowledgement of the existence of a personal, internal thinking process was, in time, to have a significant effect on the enlargement of the individual sense of self.

Egypt was conquered by the Persians in 525 BC, and then in 332 by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. The Greeks learnt much from the Early Egyptians, and it was they who were later to explore the mind in a more encompassing way, and so enlarge the sense of self (Hunt, 1994). We feel the impact of the Classical Greek influence on how we regard selfhood, even today. The Classical Greeks and their influence on the evolving sense of self, is the focus of the following chapter.

4 CHAPTER FOUR. WILL THE REAL DIRECTOR PLEASE STAND UP: THE CLASSICAL GREEKS

4.1 Introduction

In the pre-Socratic period (600-450 BC) the original Greek states were small and politically independent, yet economically dependent on each other. The Classical or Hellenic period (450-300 B. C.) was the time of the great Philosophers who were to have a major impact on western thinking. At the end of this period Alexander the Great had conquered most of the ancient world, and the Greek city-states lost their independence as they were subsumed into Alexander's Empire known as the Hellenistic world (300-100 B.C.).

Around 800 B.C. there emerged a renewal of Early Greek culture. The Early Greek world had suffered a decline after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilisation. The Early Greeks had founded many cities around the Mediterranean and as a result came into conflict with the Persian Empire. Combined Greek armies defeated the Persians at the battle of Plataea and the Persian threat came to an end. Greek confidence and power began to rise (McIntosh & Twist, 2003). Athens had led the defence of Greece, the Athenian economy was thriving and there was a cultural evanescence. The development of writing led to formal argument, universally decipherable messages, and to the unfolding of abstract imagination. As Clark (1994) noted, the gods that used to be resident in speech, and who gained power as their stories travelled from mouth to mouth, gave way to the more contained form of the written word.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are acclaimed philosophers of the Classical Greek world. Socrates left no writings of his own but his pupil Plato wrote dialogues outlining Socrates' views and actions. Plato's writings are sometimes framed through a narrator. They depict philosophical ideas advanced, discussed and criticised in the context of conversation or debate. Plato's works include 35 dialogues and 13 letters. Aristotle studied at Plato's academy and remained there as a teacher, writing a vast number of works on wide ranging topics. The Early Greek thinkers assembled a

significant corpus of thought through their speculations about the natural world and the human condition, so playing an important role in the development of the western self.

4.2 The Classical Greeks and the Concept of Selfhood

There were many voices all generating ideas, and the individual sense of self was framed within shifting perspectives. Over time a trend emerged and is outlined in figure 2. Figure 2 is a representation of aspects of the sense of self as it developed in Classical Greek times. Expanding Greek thought situated the individual within a wider vision than had occurred in earlier times. Self-knowledge became a significant aspect of the individual, and was keenly debated. The Classical Greeks recognized the importance of change, and the implication that individuals could reach beyond their existing levels of competence. There was the recognition that choice played an important role in an individual's life and that this contributed significantly to the development of character. There was also recognition of the need for personal self-nurturing. The notion of soul was considered to be very important together with reason, which was considered to be a pivotal human power.

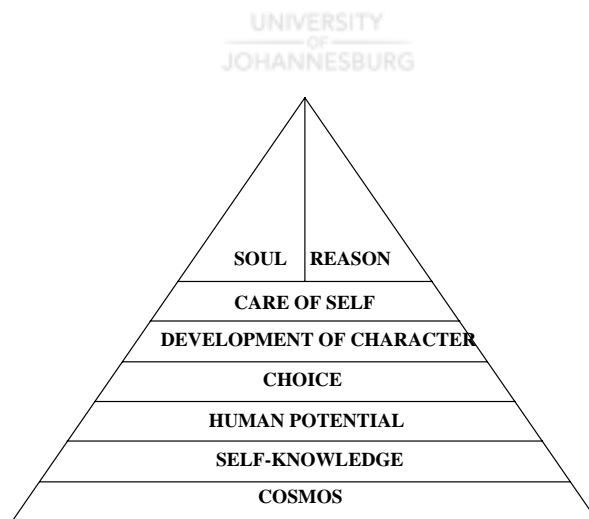


Figure 2 The emerging sense of self in Classical Greece

4.2.1 Cosmos

Early Greek philosophers asked penetrating questions about nature and the universe. For example, they asked why the world appeared the way it did. The essential nature of the world would affect the nature of those living in it. Thales developed his ideas around 585 B.C. and he speculated about the building blocks of the universe and decided that everything was essentially water. This conclusion was too general but it was an achievement of note to have conceived that a substance remains the same while having different states (Russell, 1945). Thales' approach represented an early example of the move from mythological to theoretical thinking because he emphasised natural explanations while, at the same time, minimizing supernatural interpretations. A host of questions and answers about nature arose in the minds of, among others, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus and Pythagoras (Magee, 2001). Heraclitus, for example, believed everything was in a state of change and flux. He framed an epistemological question that has persisted to this day by asking how something can be known if everything is constantly changing. Parmenides took the view that there was no such thing as change, while Empedocles contended that there existed four unchangeable elements, namely fire, air, water and earth. Democritus has been called the atomist because he maintained that matter was made up of small indivisible particles. Thus the human capacity for critical appraisal was coming to the fore and the view of the cosmos was widening (Oliver, 2000).

Socrates was not primarily interested in the philosophy of nature. In the *Apology* (380 B.C.), he stated this clearly to his accusers. Plato, on the other hand, was very interested in the questions of nature. In the *Timeaus*, Plato (360 B.C.) viewed the created cosmos as a single living organism, governed by its divine and intelligent soul. Earth, air, fire and water were not considered the basic ingredients of the universe. Rather the elements were said to be composed of planes, made of elementary triangular shapes. The physical world was seen as a good approximation of a perfect pattern inherent in the eternal objects. Thus Plato formally introduced the issue of appearance versus reality.

Aristotle not only used data provided by the senses but also deliberately reviewed the thinking of preceding philosophers. He believed that, if they had thought seriously about matters, and even if their ultimate conclusions were wrong, there had to be

some element of truth in their ideas. His process was thus to try to identify and resolve, so far as possible, the conflicts between the views of previous thinkers on a particular subject. His aim was to arrive at a broader truth. In *On the Heavens* (350 B.C.), for example, Aristotle specifically examined the ideas of the Pythagoreans, and seems to have accepted Empedocles' four unchangeable elements, earth, air, fire and water. Aristotle used these elements, and their assumed physical properties, to construct his own model of the Heavens and the Universe. It is interesting that he rejected Empedocles' idea that the world, by being whirled around, received a movement quick enough to overpower its own downward tendency. Empedocles' concept was effectively proved by Newton some 2000 years later, and is accepted as basically correct, even today.

The Aristotelian cosmology comprised a rotating, finite and spherical universe with a fixed, centrally located Earth. Everything in this central region was made up of the four basic elements. The properties of these elements, however, could not explain the endless and complex circular motion of the heavens, and Aristotle had to invent a fifth element, which he called *aither*, to explain this realm (*On the Heavens*, 350 B.C.) Aristotle's ideas on the structure of the heavens prevailed until Copernicus and Galileo provided more realistic alternatives. Even though Aristotle speculated about the nature of the cosmos he emphasised personal being as opposed to mystical speculation. Aristotle's cosmology put humans, as part of the earth, at the centre of the cosmos, and as Tarnas (1996) noted, this belief structure offered individuals a sense of place and purpose. The subsequent Hellenistic development of astrology led to the belief that human life was not ruled by capricious chance but rather by an ordered, knowable destiny defined by the movement of the planets. As more questions were asked about nature and the universe, so the individual was situated within a widening background of thought, and the sense of self was bound to shift.

4.2.2 Self-knowledge

Another question asked by the early thinkers was what do we know about ourselves? Socrates was intent on examining misplaced certainties. Plato in the *Apology* (380 B.C.) and *Phaedrus* (360 B.C.) highlighted some of Socrates' key ideas. Socrates focused attention on the nature of the individual and on the thinking process,

extending the sense of self by stressing the need for self-evaluation. Socrates claimed that only the examined life was worth living, and he was interested in ethical questions. In *Phaedrus*, for example, Socrates said that to make judgments about things while ignorant about one's self is ridiculous. In the *Apology* (Plato, 380 BC) Socrates indicated that self-knowledge involved guarding the mind, in the sense that others can take possession of one's mind through falsehoods. The generation of falsehood was said to be usually caused by envy and malice. This type of situation, Socrates asserted, is like fighting with shadows because the truth is not brought out. Socrates stressed his interest in ethics, saying that he was not really involved in physical speculations. He maintained that he was interested in wisdom, which could only be attained through effort. To gain wisdom Socrates held that it is better to know nothing than think you erroneously know something, and he concluded that there were many individuals of high repute who actually were most foolish.

Many wealthy people, who believed they were knowledgeable, debated with Socrates. Instead of admitting to their lack of knowledge and shortcomings they turned to blaming others. He said individuals should ask of themselves whether or not they are doing right or wrong, they should not simply think of reputation, honour and money. Their first care should be improvement of the soul. By doing harm to others, harm was done to the self. Socrates claimed he had self-knowledge in that he recognized he was a gadfly, arousing, reproaching and persuading everybody, but he knew this was his course in life. He argued that his genuineness was evident because he recognised he was eloquent, and yet did not only converse only with those who paid (Plato, *Apology*, 380 B.C).

It was through discussion and debate that Socrates deconstructed the views of reality held by others, and so initiated a turn to self-awareness, and invited a climate for theoretical investigation (Plato, *Apology* 380 BC). Socrates' emphasis on knowing oneself through personal inner examination focused attention on the individual's capacity for introspection. Socrates, however, cautioned Protagoras that self-knowledge cannot be taught but comes as a result of inner reflection and inner argument, which in turn must be to the point and not simply become an oration (Plato, *Apology* 380 B.C.).

The rulers of Athens put Socrates to death because he promoted individualism and was highly individualised himself. He was said to be subverting state-centred values. It should be remembered that, to the Early Greeks, the state was of the utmost importance, and individual happiness was not relevant. The good life was seen in the context of a political life as outlined by the state. Through philosophical questioning, however, the individual sense of self began to deepen.

Plato also asked what can we know of ourselves? Plato believed that the human senses are fundamentally unreliable, and that true knowledge had to come from somewhere and so must be pre-existent. This led him to postulate his view of Ideal Forms. *Phaedo* (360 B.C.) was the first dialogue in which Plato posited the existence of abstract objects or Forms. Plato argued that Forms were abstract entities having a universal existence, independent of place and time. Individual actions as well as objects of the everyday world were said to be of a timeless essence. Forms were standards against which things could be assessed for their value. The only true knowledge, therefore, involved grasping the forms themselves, and this required rational thought. Forms were considered to be a source of moral and religious inspiration, and had significance for a sense of self as their discovery marked a turning point in the life of the individual because of their transformative power. The Forms, however, could only be apprehended intellectually. For Plato, the Forms had real existence, independent of the working of the human mind or of the natural world. This quest for knowledge led to the discovery of the Form of the Good, and, in the *Republic*, (360 B.C) Plato contended that the Good is the greatest thing an individual can ever learn

In the *Republic*, Plato also dealt with morality, and how it affects one's life as a human being. Here the moral and metaphysical theory involving the Forms is developed. Plato examined whether it is in one's own best interest to be a just person, and he attempted to show that true justice was worth any sacrifice. Individuals interact and so threaten one another's integrity. By means of passion and intelligence, personal integrity can be maintained. Plato held that there were three kinds of motivation in people, the desire to satisfy one's instincts, the desire for the preservation of the sense of "I" and the desire for understanding and truth. The more the rational part of the mind is subordinate to the desirous part, the more the desirous part becomes the ruler. The solution, for Plato, was greater education so that the

individual did not feed the baser aspects of being. Difficulties could arise when there was conflict between the different parts of the mind. If the individual could make the rational aspect dominant, then true goodness could be perceived, and personal control of life could be achieved. At the same time the nature of society influences the nature of the individual. Plato, in the *Republic*, described a just and desirable community as having three classes, guardians, the auxiliaries and the workers. This exemplary community was supposed to be benevolent and enlightened but would essentially be a dictatorship. The structure of such a community would contribute to the community's unity and stability. This structure would not be considered appropriate from a modern perspective because it is now generally assumed that individuals are capable of self-determination.

Aristotle took a practical stance when asking what we can know of ourselves. In his *Metaphysics* (350 B.C.) Aristotle rejected Plato's theory of Forms. The real world, for Aristotle, was about matter and the here and now. Contrary to Plato's theory of ideas or Forms, Aristotle put forth his own doctrine of categories. In *Categories* (350 B.C.) Aristotle maintained that every uncombined term signifies something in one of ten categories; a substance, a quantity, a quality, a relative, a place, a time, a position, a having, a doing or a type of being affected. A dog, for example, is substantial yet the adjectives describing the dog are not. The substance, or dog itself, is real but the adjectives such as black or big, which describe the dog, are derivative ways of being. Aristotle was a systemiser, and argued that everything had a cause. In *Physics* (350 B.C.), Aristotle's logic offered a functional framework within which thought could be ordered. *Physics* examined features of natural phenomena such as cause, change, time, place, continuity and infinity. The doctrine of the four causes stated that the material cause of a house is the matter from which it is built, the efficient cause is the builder, and the formal cause is its plan while the final cause is its purpose. Aristotle thus developed conceptual tools, which could assist individuals in thinking about the world and their role and function in it.

The Greco-Hellenistic Stoics made a significant contribution to the emergence of the concept of selfhood. Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippos emphasized the importance of duty and character. The main effect of Stoicism was to place responsibility for living on the individual and not on society (Popkin & Stroll, 1993). Epictetus, who was to become one of the most influential of the Stoics, advocated that individuals must learn

to rid their lives of lamentation. The Stoics addressed thinking and emotion in a practical manner, cautioning that excessive emotion clouds thinking. The Sceptics held that no truth could be known, and advocated suspension of judgment in order to achieve some peace of mind, believing that Logos, or divine reason, permeated all things (Tarnas, 1996). Individuals could achieve happiness by aligning themselves with this divine will. The virtuous state of the soul was important, not the outer circumstances of life. The Epicureans taught that one must overcome belief in the anthropomorphic gods of the ancient tradition, with their vengeance and fickleness, and concentrate on the cultivation of a congenial existence in the world of friends and simple pleasures. The call to know oneself had wide repercussions, and became the clarion call of Western selfhood.

4.2.3 Human Potential

In asking where human power is located, early thinkers identified the existence of human potential. Potentiality implies that, within life, there exists a natural evolution towards fulfilling individual potential or nature. According to Aristotle in *Physics*, the universe is in a constant progression of being and becoming, much like the cycle of birth and death in the human condition. Implicit in Aristotle's approach was the view that individuals have the capacity to progress from one state to a higher state in accordance with their own potentiality. This view was to have significant implications with regard to selfhood because it meant individuals were capable of greater achievement (Tarnas, 1996).

Potential needed to be developed and the Sophists had practical answers. The Sophists were doubtful of the possibility of discovering anything that was really true, and taught their followers practical measures, such as rhetoric, in order to show them how to get on in the world. The Sophists were particularly important in relation to the question of self-image. After centuries of blind obedience to limited traditional attitudes, humans began to acquire a sense of freedom to follow a path of enlightened self-interest. The Sophists indirectly opened the way for the development of a heightened sense of self as the individual's status became more free and self-determining. Individuals began to develop a greater awareness of personal agency in creating reality through self-evaluation of their own personal needs. The Sophists

recognized that individuals had to function in the world of other people, and that language, speech and self-presentation were important elements of being. They offered an avenue through which inherent potential could be expressed and recognised (Clark, 1994; Ide, 1999; Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). Thus there was a developing recognition that the individual could change, and reach higher levels of achievement.

4.2.4 Choice

The question also arose as to how individuals assume their places in the world. Whereas previously there had been a sense of inevitability as the gods determined many of the events of life, the Classical Greek questioning raised the question of choice. Aristotle gave a clear answer in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.), where he dealt with conduct in terms of choice and action. The question Aristotle posed was how one became good? He answered this by claiming that to become good the individual has to become a chooser. In the virtuous, desire and judgement agree. This would be because the wise person would choose actions lying between extreme alternatives; the golden mean. Repetition could fix acts in such a way that they moved toward good or evil. Therefore the development of good character required choice, discipline and direction through the process of assimilation. Aristotle called for circumspection and adherence to the mean through not making extreme choices. He pointed out that to find the mean is not an easy matter just as it is not easy to find the centre of a circle. He continued, saying that it is not easy to know when to be angry or even give the right amount of money to the right person. To find the mean would take effort, judgment and experience.

4.2.5 Development of Character

The question was asked how do we have a good life? For the Classical Greeks character was part of the answer, and character could be developed in a number of ways. For example in *Laches* (380 B.C.), Plato examined virtue in terms of courage. In the debate between Nicias and Socrates, the former maintained that courage was noble and embodied confidence and endurance. Socrates countered this by saying

that foolish boldness was not courage. Rather, courage is the ability to face things, the fearful and hopeful, good and evil and look at the present, past and future.

Character was seen not only in terms of beliefs and actions but also in terms of the handling of emotion. Plato was hostile to the arts because he believed that an intelligent person should pierce the surface and plumb the depths of underlying reality. In the *Republic*, Plato argued that the arts were representational and made a play on the senses, glamorising affect and the transient things of this world. The arts gave rise to emotional attachment, and so held the individual back from the true calling of life, which was to soar above the fleeting things of this world.

Aristotle, on the other hand, did not believe that art was a weak imitation of reality but was actually a means to enhance reality and sensitise feeling. He believed that drama revealed individuals, both in their splendour and in their foolishness, and so had a therapeutic effect on the viewer. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle claimed that poetic tragedy gives insight into history and into our own characters and emotional natures. The emotional feeling gained from watching tragedy is that of catharsis, which is a cleansing through pity and terror. Poetry, Aristotle maintained, sprang from two causes, the instinct for imitation and the instinct for harmony and rhythm. In the arts character can be portrayed through the structure of the incidents. Also in *Poetics*, Aristotle encapsulated the nature of character. He did this by stressing that, in order to portray the virtue of character, the dramatist must paint someone who is good, who has true moral purpose, and who acts with propriety and consistency.

For the Stoics, character meant having command of the passions. The Stoics took a fatalistic stance in the face of events, believing the Divine governs all, and therefore emotion and feeling would be a pointless distraction. The Stoics stressed the importance of self-responsibility by emphasizing duty and character. Stoicism required individuals to assess what was really within their range and power through reason rather than by what they felt. This emphasis on duty and character later appealed to the upper class Roman citizens who turned Stoicism into a type of state ideology. Withdrawal from the world, as advocated by earlier Stoics, took a new form whereby a distinction was made between the internal and private, and the external and public. Stoics advocated the writing down of inner thoughts in private, and publicly performing societal duties. Thus there came about marked separation of

the inner and outer realms (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). Personal identity was beginning to refer to something external and visible whereas selfhood was emerging as that which pertained more to the inner being.

It appears that women were considered not to have character. Despite Plato's pronouncements that all humans were primarily spiritual, intellectual and political beings he, at times, tended to disparage women (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). The Epicureans, on the other hand, believed in the inter-relationship of all things and welcomed women into their midst. On the whole, however, women were not thought to be able to aspire to great heights of character, and this early view impacted down the centuries (Tannahill, 1989).

4.2.6 Personal Care

An important aspect of character development was the issue of personal care. Foucault (1988, p. 44) highlighted the Classical Greeks' injunction to take care of the self, and quoted Socrates as saying that it was important to take care of the self while still young because by fifty it was too late. On the other hand the Epicureans said it was never too early or too late to take care of the self, develop the self or transform the self. Care of the self was considered a privilege and a duty:

Time is not empty; it is filled with exercises, practical tasks, various activities. Taking care of oneself is not a rest cure. There is the care of the body to consider, health regimens, physical exercises without overexertion, the carefully measured satisfaction of needs. There are the meditations, the readings, the notes that one takes on books or on the conversations one has heard, notes that one reads again later, the recollection of truths that one knows already but that need to be more fully adapted to one's own life... There are also talks that one has with a confidant, with friends, with a guide or director... Here we touch on one of the most important aspects of this activity devoted to oneself: it constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice (Foucault, 1988, p. 51).

The body, especially the body in movement, was an intrinsic part of the Early Greek self. There was the recognition that thoughts and emotions were grounded in the

body, and could also be expressed in rhythmic movement, especially in dance. Rhythm was seen as the basis of existence. Dance, as heightened rhythm, was said to be an effort to make visible, through movement, those things of the spirit that lie beyond the material world (Ginner, 1960). To the Greek mind, dancing was an act of worship and a language of prayer, praise and dedication, and the body was central to a harmonious life of graceful balance. The idea of the “body beautiful” grew around the worship of Apollo. The human body was seen as the finest instrument that could be used in the service of god and state. This idea gave rise to the cult of athleticism and the games of contest. It was the Dorian era that produced the famous athletic festivals. The cultivation of athletics and dancing in the ancient Greek world also had the aim of beautifying the body as a worthy shell for the indwelling of the spirit (Ginner, 1960). Notwithstanding this emphasis, Tannahill (1989) cautioned that scholars have tried to make everything in the Athenian image appear noble and clean whereas artefacts of the time point to the reality that the body was also seen a source of pleasure, and selfhood was not seen only in terms of purity.

According to Foucault (1988), the early medical model had an important impact on the nature of the western sense of self because, through defining knowledge, it offered ways of living. The medical model outlined the personal relationship to food, wakefulness, to sleep and to the environment, making health practice a framework for everyday life. In a sense it made the body a fragile element of selfhood. The art of self-knowledge had to be practiced in such a way that the self could be developed and various methods for developing oneself were applied. For example, the Stoics believed in individuals testing themselves through privation so that they would not flinch when privation did in fact occur. The Epicureans had also developed a technique to mark the threshold where privation could start to make one suffer. Individuals were encouraged to gaze at a table of wonderful food and only permitted themselves a very tiny portion (Foucault, 1988). The self was beginning to be regarded as having to measure up to a certain standard.

4.2.7 Soul

One answer to the many questions raised by the early thinkers was recognition of the importance of the soul. The Early Greeks had many anthropomorphic deities who embodied, for example, anger, joy, and jealousy. The early religion consisted of two main sets of beliefs. One was the Olympian, which celebrated many powerful gods who ruled their subjects in an arbitrary and unpredictable manner, and such ideas were embraced by the upper classes. The second type was the Dionysian-Orphic, based on the legend of Dionysus, the god of fertility and his disciple, Orpheus. Dionysus represented pre-rational values, and offered comfort during a time of accelerated rational progress (Hergenhahn, 2001). The heart of the Dionysian-Orphic religion was the belief in the transmigration of the soul. At one time, the soul lived among the gods but, if it committed a sin, the ensuing punishment meant that it was locked into a physical body. The soul followed a succession of births but longed to return to its pure life with the gods (Hergenhahn 2001). The philosophers, however, looked for structures of meaning in the “soul.”

Socrates held that the existence of innate knowledge proved that individuals possessed an immortal soul. Soul was seen as mind but was said to be separable from the body and would not cease at death. In *Phaedo* (360 B.C.), Socrates contended that, while in the body, the soul could not have pure knowledge. Once the foolishness of the body is cleared away after death, there is clarity and the soul is able to converse with other pure souls. Socrates also held that it could be said that the soul returns from the other world, so the living come from the dead. In the *Apology*, Plato linked soul and behaviour, quoting Socrates' belief that no real harm could befall individuals as long as they preserved their integrity. Unfortunate fates could befall anyone because of the uncertainty inherent in the world but provided the soul remained untouched, misfortunes would be less significant. Real misfortune, however, involved corruption of the soul. During his trial, Socrates stressed that his accusers based their indictments on his non-belief in gods. Socrates stressed that what was far more important was concern for the soul, and maintained that the soul could be protected only by living an examined life. This was the greatest good an individual could achieve. The easiest and noblest way to protect the soul was therefore not by disabling others, but by improving oneself. Socrates was one of the first to formulate

the importance of personal integrity in terms of a person's duty to himself, and not simply in relation to the gods, or the law or to any other authority

Plato, in *Republic* (360 B.C.) drew attention to the immorality of the gods as depicted by poets. In *Timeaeus*, Plato (360 B.C.) described "god" as a divine craftsman or Demiurge who is responsible for bringing order to formlessness. The Demiurge is not an all-powerful creator but rather a divine agent who fashions chaotic matter into an orderly form. Moreover, the rationality that the Demiurge gives the universe is mathematical. In *Phaedo*, Plato (360 B.C.) argued that the soul leaves the body and lives in a more blissful realm after death. The Pythagoreans also held the notion of the immortality of the soul. They believed that the highest form of thought was reason, which was a function of the soul. Plato extended this view by saying that, before the soul was implanted in the body, it existed in pure and complete knowledge among the Forms. Thus the soul is reincarnated, and in the period between the death and rebirth, the soul has access to the realm of Forms. In *Meno* Plato (380 B.C.) posited that once the soul entered the body, however, information from the body's senses interfered with this pure knowledge. By ignoring sensory experience and by concentrating on thoughts, true knowledge could be accessed. Thus knowledge came from remembering the experiences of the soul before it entered the body. Plato maintained that all knowledge was innate, and could be reached only through introspection.

Hillman (1996) highlighted the fact that the concept of the individualized soul image has a long history and that its appearance in cultures is widespread around the world. The soul has been given various names and diverse descriptions, underscoring the fact that we do not clearly know what it is, but believe that it exists. In the myth of Er, which is mentioned at the end of *Republic*, Plato contended that the soul of each individual was given a unique daimon before the individual was born. The soul thus had an image or pattern that had to be lived out on earth. This soul companion or daimon was a guide and was the carrier of destiny. Hillman (1996) explored this widespread concept of the daimon. The Romans, for instance, called it the genius and the Christians referred to it as the guardian angel. The Neoplatonists referred to the daimon as an imaginal body, the ochema, or personal support, which carried the individual through life. In Egypt it was the Ba or Ka, with which the individual could converse. The daimon, life image or bearer of fate and fortune was, however, not the

individual conscience or moral tutor but rather a guide. Today there is talk of personal angels.

In *De Anima* or *On The Soul*, Aristotle (350 B.C.) argued that every living thing has a psyche, and it is this, which makes the entity alive. Plants have capabilities for nourishment and reproduction, and animals have capacities for sensation and movement. Moving up the scale, higher animals have memory while humans have the capacity to reason. Aristotle, in *On The Soul* stressed that all knowledge is to be honoured, but that the most important area of study should be that of the soul. Aristotle emphasised that to gain knowledge of the soul is extremely difficult. He asked, is the soul a substance, a quale or a quantum or is it not even an actuality? Do we look at the plurality of souls or the plurality of parts of one soul? He examined various theorists' views on the soul, and concluded that all souls have movement and sensation. Aristotle stressed that the soul is actuality and has life and is inseparable from the body. The soul, however, cannot be a body but only something relative to a body. The soul must be an integral part of the body, not a separate entity, and so the soul could not exist after death.

There was a crossover point between body and soul (Foucault, 1988). The body had to be rectified in order to attend to the soul. Thus testing procedures could serve as a vehicle for personal scrutiny. For example, tasks for the day had to be considered in the morning. The evening examination involved a review of the day to discover whether the soul would admonish or praise itself. Another procedure involved screening or examining the nature of one's personal images to assess the relationship of the inner self to the images. The common goal in these practices was to reform oneself, and this could be done if the inner images received attention. Then the self could provide a private harbour in the face of tempests, and at the same time provide a sense of delight. There were varied views as to the nature of the soul, but despite this, the soul remained the central focus and the sense of self was to become allied to a sense of soul.

4.2.8 Reason

The Classical Greek thinkers took selfhood out of the hands of capricious gods and, to a large extent, initiated a sense of self-direction by expanding reliance on reason.

Plato and Aristotle were important figures in advocating the exercising of reason.

There were, however, essential differences between them. Plato started with intellectual ideas whereas Aristotle started with observations of the natural world.

Plato considered reality as mathematical and to be deduced intellectually, while for Aristotle, understanding was based on perception, observation and investigation.

Plato believed that the objects of this world were reflections of a true reality.

Aristotle argued, on the other hand, that individual things themselves comprise the primary realities. These differing approaches had far reaching implications.

According to Tarnas (1996, p. 69) the Greeks left a legacy for the western mind of two sets of assumptions that would have a great bearing on the later development of the sense of the western self. The first set of assumptions is clear in the Platonic synthesis:

- a. The world is an ordered cosmos. The mind reflects this order, and thus a rational analysis of the empirical world is possible through using the mind.
- b. The cosmos reveals divine intelligence, purpose and design, which can be accessed through the focusing of human awareness.
- c. The visible world has a timeless order and deeper meaning, which is rational as well as mythic in character, emanating from an eternal dimension.
- d. Knowledge of the world's underlying structure is required, and demands the use of rational, empirical, intuitive, aesthetic, imaginative, mnemonic and moral cognitive faculties.
- e. Both the mind and soul derive deep satisfaction through the apprehension of the world's deeper reality. This direct apprehension offers the individual a redemptive vision of reality.

The Classical Greek view also held another set of influential assumptions that included, on the one hand, some of the Platonic syntheses and yet, on the other hand, contradicted them.

- a. Knowledge that is true can only be acquired through reason and empirical observation.
- b. The only truth that is valid is immanent rather than transcendent, and is grounded in the world of human experience.
- c. Supernatural and mythological explanations should be excluded as causal explanations because they are human projections. The causes of natural phenomena are physical and impersonal.
- d. Claims to theoretical understanding must be measured against empirical evidence. Human knowledge is both fallible and relative, and consequently must be revised when new evidence comes to light. Thus no system of thought is final.

The interplay of these two sets of principles established a tension within Greek thought, which provided the western mind with a creative, yet conflicted base. This unresolved split gave rise to an openness and complexity in Greek thought, which gave impetus to the desire for further investigation. The Classical Greeks saw the world as full of questions to be answered and they embarked on a quest to seek deeper truth. In so doing they established a tradition of critical thought. With the establishment of such a tradition and quest came the true birth of the western mind and the fabric of a western sense of self (Tarnas, 1996).

4.3 Summary

The relative prosperity of the Classical Greek world together with the spirit of confidence engendered by the defeat of the Persians contributed to the developing climate of enquiry evident in the thinkers of the time. Survival in terms of meaning and action was framed in more abstract terms. The Classical Greeks can be said to have laid the foundations for the concept of western selfhood through raising issues of cosmos, self-knowledge, human potential, choice, the development of character, personal care, the issue of the soul, and the importance of reason.

The Classical Greeks asked questions about nature at a time when the gods were thought to control affairs. Socrates, however, contended he was more interested in

ethics than in the material world. Plato saw the real world with regard to Truth, Beauty and Justice in terms of the Forms. Aristotle described the universe as having a fixed centrally located earth with humans at the centre of the cosmos. This expanding vision of nature situated the individual within a much wider context than that provided by capricious gods so the self was acquiring a broader foundation.

Self-knowledge also became an important aspect of selfhood. Socrates stressed that only the examined life was worth living. Plato held that the human senses were unreliable and yielded only a sense of appearances, and that the true world beyond the senses could be discovered through the intellect. The Stoics argued that Divine Reason permeated all things, and that self-knowledge could be acquired through aligning with the divine power. The Epicureans took a different approach, contending that the cultivation of a congenial existence was the path to self-realisation.

Inherent in the Classical Greek view was the notion of human potential with the implication that individuals could change and develop. Choice was allied to the notion of potential as well as to the development of character. Character was seen in terms of beliefs, actions and in the nature of the passions. Plato considered the arts to be undesirable because they did not represent true feeling and the Stoics believed passion should be eradicated. Aristotle, on the other hand, believed passion and the arts to be inherent in the human individual, arising from the instinct for imitation, and from the instinct for rhythm and harmony. Attention to personal care also became an important aspect of selfhood. Diet, exercise, meditation and medical assistance were all considered a duty.

The soul was seen as a highly significant element of the self. Socrates argued that no harm could come to the soul if individuals preserved their integrity. Plato believed that the soul left the body after death, and lived in a more blissful realm. For Aristotle, the soul was an integral part of the body, and could not exist after death.

Reason was central to the developing notion of selfhood. Plato saw reality in mathematical terms and considered that it could be deduced intellectually. Aristotle stressed that observation of the natural world showed that natural objects comprised the primary reality. These two sets of principles established a tension within Greek

thought and this impacted on the developing western sense of self, reflected in a level of uncertainty and ongoing debate as to the true nature of individual selfhood.

4.4 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Four

Chapter Four dealt with the Classical Greeks and their developing world-view in relation to the emergence of the concept of selfhood. There was an amazing proliferation of thought. It was during this time that the concept of the self was becoming more clearly discernible, and this idea later developed into an important construct, especially in psychology. The early philosophers wrestled with complex issues of soul, nature, duty and behaviour. A criticism of this chapter is that justice cannot be done to the complexity of the work of the early philosophers in such a limited form. However, for the purposes of this study, the investigation clearly reveals that these early thinkers had a significant impact on the developing individual sense of self, and that they opened up many areas for further deliberation. The systematic ordering of thought set the path for expanded thinking. The broadening of the concept of spirit meant that not only could gods be accommodated, but so could spirit. The recognition of the need for balance and harmony included the acceptance of the body as an instrument and avenue of expression. It is estimated that, in the Hellenic era, human knowledge increased forty fold in less than three centuries, and that the early Greeks launched the intellectual voyage into the world of mind and the universe within (Hunt, 1994).

There was a loss of stability in Greek life in the shadow of the Roman conquest. Interest in the natural world gave way to philosophies that offered guidelines for coping with the increasing insecurities of existence. The Sceptics, Cynics, Stoics and Epicureans were psychological products of social conditions (Hergenhahn, 2001). In the Hellenistic period many Eastern ideas came together in Alexandria. The Greek objectivity and concern for nature was confronted with the Indian concern with illusion, nirvana and the ineffable. Monotheism infiltrated from the Zoroastrian religion in Persia and from the Hebrew texts from Palestine. Different views from Carthage, Mesopotamia and China also added to the mix. After the death of Alexander there was great dissension between his generals, resulting in widespread

strife. By 146 BC control of Greece had passed to the Romans who ruled with an oppressive hand. The Hellenic Age had highlighted the desirability of taking care of oneself and contemplating the world but as conditions deteriorated in the outside world deliverance *in* the world came to be replaced by the vision of deliverance *from* the world (Tarnas, 1996.). This chapter highlighted the fact that the construction of meaning systems is extremely important in relation to the sense of self. This was particularly evident with regard to the discussion on the nature of the soul.

The Classical Greeks certainly broadened the understanding of the sense of self. The disruption and conflict resulting from the Roman take-over set the stage for the western sense of self to become linked to one God (Smith, 2001). The question of relationship thus became a significant element of selfhood. This transition will be the focus of the following chapter.



5 CHAPTER FIVE. GOD AS DIRECTOR: EARLY CHRISTIANITY

5.1 Introduction

A spiritual crisis was developing in the West, partly as a result of unsettled conditions. The Dark Ages, characterized by famine and violence, lasted from the late fifth century to the tenth century AD, while the Middle Ages roughly cover the period from the deposition of the last western Roman Emperor to the Italian Renaissance or in other words from around the tenth to the fifteenth century A.D. There grew a need to understand life's meaning against this backdrop of violence and hardship.

Christianity filled this need (Magee, 2001). It is important to consider the influence of Christianity on the evolving western sense of self because the ideas disseminated through the church fathers formed the bedrock of thinking on matters of selfhood in the west for many years. The Christian ideas have become so much part of the western tradition that their influence almost goes unnoticed. The Christian religion, when it was passed on to the barbarians by the Romans, consisted of three interlinked elements: First, philosophical beliefs originating from Plato, the Neo-Platonists and the Stoics; second, a conception of morals and history derived from Judaism; and third, theories of salvation linked to Orphism and some Eastern belief systems (Russell, 1945).

5.2 Eastern Thought

At this juncture it is important to consider some eastern thought, first, because in parallel with the early Greek thinkers in the west, eastern scholars were also assembling belief systems, and their approach reveals a different perspective with regard to the concept of the self. Second, it is important to consider the eastern view because eastern ideas have, to some extent, permeated western thinking, so influencing the modern view of the self.

Buddhism, as proclaimed by Siddhartha Gautama, evolved in India around the same time as the pre-Socratic philosophy appeared in Greece. Gautama was recognized as

the Buddha, or the enlightened one and his new doctrine opposed the old Vedic literature and tradition of India. The old Sanskrit texts, called the Veda, described the eternal battle between the cosmos and chaos. In this battle the victory of the gods was not guaranteed, and the gods needed man's help to maintain the cosmic order. This could be done through sacrifices and ritual (Thompson, 2002). The Veda consisted mainly of hymns while the Upanishads were largely arguments. The Upanishads were a comprehensive group of texts, which are said to resemble Plato's dialogues. Karma was a key concept in Indian philosophy and linked individual action to outcome. The cosmos was inherently just, and suffering was the result of human action. One of the main themes of the Upanishads was the dance of birth and death, and reincarnation was linked to moral behaviour. Some of the Upanishads contended that the self was a permanent substance, which could be distinguished from the "I" (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001).

Buddha's criticism of the Upanishads was based largely on his opposition to the belief in the self as a permanent substance. The Buddha believed that the world must be thought of in procedural terms, not as things or a substance. According to Nairn (1997, 1999), the self in Buddhism can be thought of in terms of a candle flame. If a candle is lit a flame burns. If one goes away and returns, the candle still burns, but it is not the same flame. A flame has no enduring or intrinsic "selfness" so there can be appearance without substance. Buddhism recognized the significance of impermanence and change and consequently saw selfhood as fluid (Brazier, 2001). The sense of fluidity, in part, was informed by the importance of the soul. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Evans-Wentz, 1960) showed that, for Buddhists, the movement of soul meant that the self was not fixed. At the same time the individual had a firm sense of individual agency in terms of the consequences of personal thoughts and behaviour. The aim of Zen Buddhism is for the individual to become open-minded and open hearted, and to escape from preconditioned feelings. Buddha nature or Buddhata is not something possessed by an individual but represents participation in the cosmos with the cosmos also participating in the individual. Buddhata is thus a self-transcending tendency rather than a self-actualising one (Brazier, 1995):

However, western psychology generally leans towards the idea of a self, soul or psyche which exists as an entity in its own right and which can make demands

and claims. This is all in accord with long-standing western tradition where, especially in America, a culture has been created around the idea of individual rights and needs. Buddhist psychology, however, recognizes no such entity (Brazier, 1995, p.34).

Confucius lived in China around the same time as Buddha, Thales and Pythagoras. The thrust of his teaching was adaptation to the world, not escaping from the world. He did not develop a system of philosophy but gave advice on human relations, showing that selfhood is not simply a matter of an inner belief system but also of relationship to the outside world. Confucius's teaching was pragmatic and his wisdom greatly influenced Chinese culture and society. Confucianism was a down-to-earth approach that was politically anchored, and selfhood was viewed in terms of tradition and the individual's place and role in society (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001).

Thompson (2002) pointed out that along with Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism comprises the third strand of Chinese spirituality. Taoism was characterised by mysticism and holistic thought associated with Lao Tzu. The *Tao Te Ching* was a compilation of many contributors and is one of the oldest texts in China. Lao Tzu's view of cosmic justice was similar to the views of early Greek philosophers. For example, it was held that when something was pushed to the extreme it reverted to its opposite. There were said to be natural limits, and when these limits were exceeded, a power intervened, so restoring the order that should be. The quest was for the justice of the middle way (Freke, 1995). Lao Tzu (1995) stressed that the Tao was the point of origin and of the return of being. Eastern spiritual tradition sought to provide the individual with a frame of reference that offered equilibrium amid the turmoil of the outer world. The goal of Taoism is the state of *Wu-Wei* whereby the individual ceases to obstruct the universal flow of Tao. Taoism is essentially about individual potential and finding one's true nature and direction (Thompson 2002). Eastern beliefs regard humans as capable of negative actions through misuse of energy but do not regard individuals as inherently sinful.

Brazier (1995) pointed out that there are, however, parallels in eastern and western thought especially in the growth of phenomenology since Husserl. According to Brazier, Husserl was trying to establish a firm basis for philosophy beyond the distortions created by personal preconceptions through the bracketing of received

ideas. This is what eastern thought, especially Zen Buddhism, refers to as the notion of no-mind, and is considered to be not a way of thinking but a way of being. Brazier (1995) also drew attention to the development in the west of transpersonal psychology, which has attempted to examine phenomena, which are an intrinsic part of the quest for wholeness and he cites Wilber and the stance that boundaries are illusions. Leaning towards the eastern view, Transpersonal Psychology attempts to find a place for humans as part of the universe rather occupying the position of exploiters.

5.3 Christian Thought and the Self

The Hebrews had a great influence on Christianity, and Russell (1945) pointed out that a number of important Judaic elements were absorbed into Christianity. These elements included first, a sacred history beginning with the Creation, which justified the ways of God to men, and second, the existence of a small section of humankind whom God specially loved. Third, there was a new conception of righteousness or virtuousness adopted from Jewish customs, for example, almsgiving and practical philanthropy. Fourth, Christianity attached the same feelings to their Creed as Jews attached to the Law, holding that doctrine and correct beliefs were as important as virtuous action. Fifth, the Christians adopted the idea of a Messiah. However, to the Jews the Messiah lay in the future. Both Christians and Jews conceived of the other world as the place where the virtuous would enjoy bliss and the wicked would suffer everlasting torment. Russell (1945) noted that this was essentially a revenge psychology, which people could understand because it was concrete.

In the early fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine had a vision, which led him to tolerate and then commit himself to Christianity. On his deathbed he converted to Christianity, and his acceptance did much to further its spread. By the end of the fourth century Christianity had become the official state religion of the Roman Empire. According to Skirbekk & Gilje (2001, p. 109):

Christianity appealed to nearly everyone. It proclaimed hope for everyone. In spite of political powerlessness and material suffering, in spite of evil and weakness of character, there is hope for everyone. Our lives are part of a

dramatic historical process at the end of which we can expect just compensation for the suffering and injustice of this life. Above all, there is a Heavenly Father who can extend mercy and salvation to sinners and the pious alike.

At such a time of upheaval, the need to survive would be uppermost, and Christianity could offer a system of meaning and action as well as solace and direction. Greek philosophers considered humans as creatures among others in the world, whereas the Christian view gave humans an elevated position in the world with a higher value than anything else in creation (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001).

St. Paul interpreted the human condition relative to God in such a way that sin became a pivotal factor, which has astounded some eastern thinkers (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998). St Paul was the first to claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah after the vision he experienced on the road to Damascus. With this vision Christianity was, in effect, officially born. Christianity held that there was one God who shaped the universe as well as the destiny of humans. Humans fell from a state of grace in the Garden of Eden, and ever since have been seeking atonement for this Original Sin. God sacrificed His only son to save sinners, and acceptance of Christ the Saviour was to be the only means of redemption for Christians (Ziesler, 1990). St. Paul said faith alone could provide personal salvation, so placing faith above reason. The individual was now divided into three parts, namely body, mind and spirit, and humans existed within a continual struggle between bodily urges and God's law. For St. Paul bodily urges were sinful (Dychtwald, 1977; Wood, 1962; Ziesler, 1990).

This view stands in contrast to the eastern approach where the body is considered part of an integrated human energy or chakra system. The chakras suggest a path along which individuals travel and encounter different demands on the journey, the first being survival needs and then sexual drives and issues of primary interpersonal relationships. Next, come raw emotion, power drives and social identification leading to the understanding of compassion, love and self-expression. Then there is the focus on thought, communication and self-identification, expanded mental powers and heightened self-awareness. Attention to the process of the journey, achieved through contemplation of the energy centres located in the body, ultimately leads on towards self-realization, culminating in transcendental experiences (Dytwald, 1977).

Augustine of Hippo became an eminent western figure in the history of Christianity, and his views did much to shape the future nature of western selfhood. He lived during the early Middle Ages, when Europe was experiencing tremendous upheaval, and was in the grip of famine, superstition and cruelty. Augustine combined Stoicism, Neo-Platonism and religious Hebrew concepts into a broader Christian worldview. It was possible to fuse the Platonic tradition with Christianity because Christianity was not in itself a philosophy, but a set of historical beliefs (Magee, 2001).

Augustine was a prolific writer, and his *Confessions* (Augustine, 1961) written in A.D. 397, are important with regard to the western sense of self. The *Confessions* describe his early life and conversion, and serve as a document on the nature of the self. The books constitute a narrative of the young Augustine's struggle to overcome his waywardness and achieve a life of spiritual grace. The first ten books relate the story of Augustine's childhood, youth and early manhood and the efforts of his mother to save him from self-destruction. This was achieved through his conversion to the Christian faith when he was 32 years of age. The last three books of the *Confessions* constitute an allegorical explanation of the Creation. The narrative is addressed to God, and is interspersed with prayers and meditations. The *Confessions* highlights important facets of the developing sense of western selfhood

Augustine, for example, in Book 8 (Augustine, 1907, p. 164), described how the self suffers inner division and how he retreated to a garden where "the tumult of my breast hurried me" and where he needed to engage with himself. He concluded that the human will is divided and individuals are in conflict with themselves. Self-examination could reveal the inner condition, and often gave rise to shame. Sin and evil were real for Augustine. For a number of years he followed the Manichee sect, which held that the universe is a result of a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil. After his conversion (Augustine, Book 7, 1907) Augustine contended that evil does not exist as such, but arises through human greed and lust, and God cannot be blamed for such evil.

In Book 10 of the *Confessions* Augustine raised the question of memory in relation to God. Memory is a key element of being because it presupposes a self or the unity of the individual. Augustine posited that the past and future do not exist because they

are always in the present. Thus, for Augustine, memory points to questions about the self, and hence to the question of time. Books 10 to 13 essentially bring the self into question through the process of knowing God. In book 10 Augustine pours out his confession to show the bounty of God's grace so others may benefit from the realisation of God's omnipotence (Augustine, 1961).

According to Foucault (1997) an important historical aspect of self-formation was the confessional of the Catholic Church. By 1215, an annual confession was demanded as a minimal universal requirement. Attention shifted from the overt actions of confessors to the deep intentions behind the actions. Individuals were held accountable for their overt conduct as well as for their inner wishes and hidden desires. Thus inner life was beginning to become an object of intensive self-study. Self was taking on a strong inner reality. There were signs of the emergence of the concept of sincerity in that one's visible actions and statements were meant to be in line with one's thoughts, feelings and intentions. Making sincerity into a virtue reflected the concern with the problem of inferring the hidden self from overt behaviour (Baumeister, 1987).

In the *Confessions*, Augustine reveals the self in process as it reflects on its travelled paths, and the possibilities that lie open in the future. Conversion implies a fundamental change in a whole person through which individuals become different and yet are said to be closer to their true selves. Conversion experiences are common to all cultures even though the form of the conversion may differ. Augustine was able to articulate, in the written word, the inherent desire in all individuals to communicate and order experience in some way. A self-narrative forms part of the process of achieving inner order and clarity. Augustine's life confession shows the self to have a narrative substrate as well as body, mind and memory. The self reveals itself as a process in which the individual is engaged in ongoing inner conflict leading to the need for choice. The individual's relationship with God gave rise to meaning through salvation, and active confession of sin to God then ensured survival through absolution.

Individuals were free to choose the way of the flesh or the way to God. With this free will to choose, the self took on the mantle of responsibility, but responsibility with a twist. If the individual chose incorrectly, God's punishment would ensue. Augustine

therefore gave God's authority an absolute foundation, which had not previously been emphasized in the work of Plato (Oliver, 2000). God was thus to be the director of the self. Philo, the Jewish Hellenistic philosopher, said that all knowledge came from God, and in order to acquire this knowledge the soul had to be purified by making the mind free of sensory distractions (Clark, 1994). Only God could impart knowledge through personal inner relationship with the individual. Philo advocated that:

We must not indeed reject any teaching that has grown grey with age...but when God causes the young shoots of self-inspired wisdom to spring up within the soul, the knowledge that comes from teaching must straightway (sic) be abolished and swept off. God's scholar, God's pupil, God's disciple, call him what you will, cannot any more suffer the guidance of mortals (Clark, 1994, p. 48).

True knowledge could therefore only be attained through a pure, yet passive mind, receptive to Divine Illumination. The markers of a Christian identity were devotion to God, service to others as well as humility in thought and action. High value was placed on the individual soul because each soul was, in effect, one of God's children. Selflessness was demanded because, only through the emptying of the self could the power of God's grace enter and transform the soul. Thus the Greek ideal of a self-determining individual was diminished.

Baumeister (1987) commented on the implication of Augustine's notion of predestination, which holds that only a few are destined for heaven. The Puritans indulged in intense self-scrutiny looking for signs of personal divine election. Self-scrutiny was already becoming a significant part of selfhood but intense self-scrutiny then raised the question of self-deception and the truth of personal piety. Knowledge of the self thus came to be considered tentative and uncertain but still very important. With the perspective of God's free essence, giving positive God-given autonomy to human nature, came the counter view that humans were said to possess an innate sinfulness making the independent human will ostensibly ineffective. In a sense, selfhood exhibited fundamental contradictions; individuals had personal sovereignty but were inherently impotent due to their innate evilness (Tarnas, 1996).

Furthermore, said Baumeister (1987) the medieval mentality was shaped by Augustine's explanation that God had assigned each person a fixed place in the

community, and the community was considered as a stable organic unit. Therefore there was no drive to assert individuality. There is no doubt that early philosophers and Christian scholars offered a very secure base for the unity of the human individual in the form of the immortal soul. The soul was viewed as indivisible and gave the individual a firm sense of existence in terms of a relationship to an extended reality. Souls came to be regarded as individually different, and it was believed that people would be judged as individuals depending on how morally good they had been in life. The notion of an inner, or hidden self then began to develop, but certainly did not happen overnight (Baumeister, 1997). In time, noted Danziger (1997), there was a shift from preoccupation with the soul to preoccupation with the self.

During the Dark Ages, scholarship was kept alive in the monasteries. Scholasticism was a medieval movement, which flourished between 1250 and 1500 and which put heavy emphasis on the justification of Christian belief by demonstrating the inherent rationality of Christian Theology (McGrath, 1988). When the Dark Ages lifted, the time was right for revival in every field of academic work. Towards the end of the ninth and tenth centuries a new type of scholarship emerged in Europe. John Du Scot, for example, challenged Augustine's view of the relationship between God's will and the free will of men. Augustine had argued that God preordained man's will but Du Scot countered this by holding that reason presided over religion (Oliver, 2000). Universities sprang up in Europe during the thirteenth century, and this expansion of scholarship began to create an atmosphere in which the received doctrines of the church, founded on the theology of Augustine, could be challenged.

Martin Luther rebelled against the degeneracy of the Roman Catholic Papacy's neglect of the original Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. McGrath (1988) raised the question of how Luther became such an important figure when he was engaged in an obscure academic debate at a minor university. At the heart of the Christian faith lies the belief that finite and frail humans can enter into a relationship with God. At the beginning of the 16th century there was the beginning of the awakening of the individual consciousness through the rise of humanism, and the question arose "what must I do to be saved?" (McGrath, 1988). The answer to that question shows the nature of selfhood at that time and the answer can be inferred from Luther's own words:

I was a good monk, and kept my order so strictly that I could say that if ever a monk could get to heaven through monastic discipline, I was that monk. All my companions at the monastery would confirm this. And yet my conscience would not give me certainty, but always I doubted and said, 'You didn't do that right. You weren't contrite enough. You left that out of your confession.' The more I tried to remedy an uncertain, weak and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more I daily found it more uncertain, weaker and more troubled. (McGrath, 1988, p. 72).

This is a very different sense of self from that espoused in the East where inherent self worth can be actively developed by individual action (Dalai Lama, 1999). The Christian belief was that considerable human effort was required to place God under obligation to reward the sinner with Grace. After long meditations Luther said he understood the righteousness of God. Luther's insight was that God graciously assists the sinner through Grace, which cannot be obtained alone. The individual had to establish a relationship with God, and the believer performed good works not merely through inner motivation but as an act of thankfulness to God for forgiveness. Thus the self was to be directed from outside.

In the late medieval period sin was regarded as a visible social concern, and had to be forgiven in a highly visible and social manner. Forgiveness was not a quiet, private matter but involved the individual, the Church and society. In 1215 the Catholic Church Council said all believers had to confess their sins in person to their priest and follow the penance imposed. Sin needed to be forgiven through a human representative on earth. But forgiveness came to be seen as purchasable, and actually became a major source of papal revenue. Luther's doctrine, however, cut the ground from under this edifice's feet in that forgiveness was seen to be between believer and God and no others were to be involved (McGrath, 1988; Magee, 2001).

The Christian emphasis on the human capacity for sin and the feelings of guilt and shame gave the western self a substrate of conflict, and guilt not evident in the east (Dalai Lama, 2000). With the Puritan's inner reflection came the questioning of inner truthfulness. The added belief in the importance of sincerity, and the associated need for congruence of the inner and outer self, put pressure on the individual to reach a continually high level of transparency. For Augustine there was a correlation between

human and divine justice in that human ideas themselves reflected the divine idea of justice. God bestowed justification on the sinner in such a way that it became part of that individual. Erikson (1968), in *Young Man Luther*, maintained that Luther went further than other thinkers of the time in challenging the bedrock of existing belief, because he stressed that through personal prayer and introspection, individuals could reach the heart of their conflicts. Power was in the hands of the individual not an intermediary. According to McGrath, Luther's concern with the individual and his stressing of subjective consciousness reflected the rise of a new emphasis on individualism, which came to be associated with the Renaissance.

5.4 Summary

Religion offers the individual latitudes and longitudes for the soul as well as guidelines for everyday living. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism were potent forces in the East offering spiritual as well as life direction. Eastern spiritual traditions posit the notion of selflessness rather than a reified self. In the west, Christianity grew out of the Platonic and Judaic traditions, and gained momentum particularly through the works of Paul, and Augustine.

The sense of self, emerging from the ideas of Augustine, came to pivot on faith and a personal, emotional union with God. Reason, which had been so important for the Greeks, became inferior to both faith and to human emotion, and reason was to be relegated to this inferior position for 1,000 years. The heavy emphasis on personal introspection transported the individual away from the empirical world.

The corruption associated with the confessional process, together with Luther's reworking of justification, led to a more individualised view of the person as well as to a rift in religious thinking. Augustine's *Confessions* highlighted the self as a process embedded in narrative. Augustine also showed the self in relation to the body, mind, memory and time, and emphasised that the individual was faced with ongoing inner conflict. The increasing call for self-scrutiny led to unease regarding the inner veracity of the self. The demand for sincerity was in turn a call for inner and outer congruence, and meant there was a continual demand for the individual to measure up to an ill-defined, abstract principle. Sin was said to be the part of the

individual equation, and this gave rise to feelings of guilt and shame. Salvation was possible through active confession, which also strengthened the development of a relationship with God. All knowledge was said to come from God, and could be received through a purified soul. At the same time, Luther's questioning meant that, after centuries of holding spiritual authority, the Roman Catholic Church was, with the Reformation, no longer mandatory for the individual's well being and it no longer defined the contours of selfhood.

5.5 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Five

The chapter has concentrated on the developing Christian vision and the implications for selfhood. Full analysis of the particular texts was not relevant to the nature of the enquiry. At the same time this means that important nuances may not have been articulated. For example, there were two streams within the Reformation, the Swiss Reformation (Zwingli) and the Wittenburg Reformation (Luther). There were differences between them based on the interpretation of humanism, and the interpretative tussles had bearing on how the individual would, in future, be viewed (McGrath, 1988). From the point of view of selfhood, Luther's stress on the literal meaning of scripture as the basis of knowledge of God's creation led to a tension between Biblical and scientific knowledge. Out of this tension emerged a western self that became the measure of all things, and truth became truth as experienced by the individual self.

Through the changes brought about by the Reformation human beings began to see themselves as individuals characterised by autonomy, action and creativity. These qualities define the changing sense of self during the Renaissance, and this story follows in the next chapter.

6 CHAPTER SIX. PERHAPS THE SELF CAN BE THE DIRECTOR: THE RENAISSANCE

6.1 Introduction

The Renaissance is often dated from 1450 to 1600 and is said to herald the rebirth of learning. During the Dark Ages there were great advances in Arabic culture and Arabic and Jewish scholars translated the works of the Greek philosophers. The scholastics attempted to integrate Aristotle's philosophy with Christian religion. Before St. Thomas Aquinas (Aquinas, 1964), faith was considered all that was needed to know God. Aquinas, however, made both reason and faith acceptable ways of knowing God, and this vision opened the way for a much broader conceptualisation of selfhood.

The synthesis of reason and faith is said to have indirectly created the climate that led to the Renaissance (Hergenbahn, 2001). The hallmarks of the Renaissance were willingness to engage challenge and initiate change. New ideas challenged the existing order, and there were a number of subtle changes in society. The modern outlook, in contrast to the medieval outlook, began in Italy. Initially, only a few people adopted this broader view of life but during the fifteenth century the Renaissance vision spread (Russell, 1945). With the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453, there was an influx of erudite people to the West who brought with them the knowledge of ancient Greek philosophy, which had earlier been taken from the west to the Arab world by fugitives from the Roman invasion. The Renaissance brought a fresh mental outlook as the authority of the church diminished. A number of factors provided the impetus for the resurgence of learning and injected energy into the prevailing thinking. These factors included the availability of concepts and theories from Greek philosophy, logical methods from the scholars of the Middle Ages, a new interest in the control of nature, the secularisation of questioning, a spirit of adventure and exploration as well as a spirit of literary enterprise (Russell, 1945). The Renaissance is no longer seen as a unitary phenomenon but rather as a threshold period characterised by the interweaving of new approaches (Delius et al., 2000).

By the time of the Renaissance there was increasing mercantile expansion and greater prosperity. London, for example, became a thriving port with an expanding population. The nobility lived well but life could still be very hard, with the poor suffering because of lack of food. In the cities disease was rife due to squalor and overcrowding. In order to survive, the general population began to engage in entrepreneurial ventures as traders, artisans or shopkeepers.

According to Abbs (1997), it was only in 1674 that the word “self” took on its modern meaning, referring to a subject experiencing successive, different states of consciousness. A number of self-compounds entered the English language roughly at the same time, and this indicates the widening contours of the individual sense of self. For example, some of the words included self-sufficient (1598), self-knowledge (1613), self-made (1615), self-seeker (1632), selfish (1640), self-examination (1647), selfhood (1649), self-interest (1649), self-knowing (1667), self-deception (1667), self-determination (1683) and self-conscious (1687). Abbs also noted that the word individual originally meant indivisible. There was also a move from what Abbs described as a sense of unconscious fusion with the world, towards a state of conscious individuation (Abbs, 1997).

6.2 The Self and the Renaissance

Bacon was important because he pushed the frontiers of selfhood, arguing that deduction was a purely scientific ideal, and he promoted the inductive method. He believed that, through inductive reasoning, the technological control of nature could be achieved (Magee, 2001). He contended that the traditional logic of Aristotle was unproductive because it revealed nothing new. He advocated a systematic, controlled procedure, involving the observing of facts, the recording of the observations, the collection of a body of reliable data by different people, the observation of regularities and patterns in the facts, and the attempt to understand causal connections. He also regarded negative instances as very important indicators in the process of investigation. Based on these observations, a hypothesis could be put forward and could then be confirmed by experiment (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). Bacon pointed out that such disciplined thinking could be derailed by what he termed false idols or notions, such as the tendency to allow judgments to be influenced by feelings and

wishes, the tendency to interpret information through a personal perspective as well as the tendency to be deceived by words, language and philosophical misconceptions. He brought attention to the individual's ability to manipulate the objects of the world, and he helped displace the focus from the after world and spiritual destiny, to the present world of the individual. Bacon believed that society had to be changed through attention to the present world, and thus the modern faith in progress and individual influence had begun (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001).

Another sacrosanct view that was challenged during the Renaissance was the idea of the geocentric system. Copernicus developed an astronomical model that had the sun at the centre of the planetary system; a heliocentric system. This system conflicted with the prevailing Ptolemaic system, which held that the earth was the centre of the universe. But it was the Ptolemaic view that had the sanction of the Church, and Copernicus' unwitting challenge to the existing system was to have wide repercussions (Silver, 1998). His approach required the ability to see the world and mankind from a new perspective of reflexive distancing. Humans were the subject, and had to view themselves and the world from a new vantage point. Previously, mankind regarded the human race as the dominant inhabitants of the universe. The heliocentric view was essentially a challenge to such an entrenched perspective. In turn, this encompassing challenge led the individual to a crisis of self-perception, which was inherently paradoxical. Humans were no longer in an exalted position in the universe, yet this new view gave them a positive self-awareness in that they realized that they had the power to explore the cosmos. This was a boost to the already developing secular and scientific faith in progress (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). Trust in Providence was, in future, to be replaced by the trust in progress, directed by individuals.

By means of careful telescopic observation Galileo was able to confirm this heliocentric model, and so exacerbated the conflict with the Church. Galileo effected the replacement of the Aristotelian universe and the hierarchical cosmos, by an open universe (Butts, 1999). The distinction of the world above the moon and that below the moon was eliminated and so, with the acceptance of Galileo's model, the whole medieval worldview finally collapsed. Galileo also believed that the essence of reality was mathematical and, through mathematics, human knowledge and God's knowledge could be united. Geometry and systematic thinking were to play a crucial

role in the founding of natural science, and individual selfhood would in future be strongly linked to the concept of development and progress.

The new science of optics covered the subject of light rays, refraction and lenses but without reference to the eye that sees (Delius et al., 2000). The eye became an object, which could also be clinically examined. The Seeing Eye and the person who sees now became the concern of epistemological philosophy. The earlier hierarchy of different forms of being, from inorganic things to plants, animals and humans became a dualism of subjects and objects. The human being became an object of study, yet was also the subject appraising the object. Moreover, as science developed so did the ability to control and predict outcomes. Humans became subjects with technical insight, who could control a universe of objects.

The Medieval Christian ideal in which selfhood was, to a great extent, absorbed in the collective Christian body of souls, changed. Gradually, the individual sense of self took on a more heroic mode with the individual as an adventurer, genius and rebel. A firm sense of self could be achieved through action and service, not only through saintly withdrawal. Scholarly and artistic activities, commercial enterprise and sociability were all encouraged. The Church gradually embraced activity in the world as well as contemplation, devotion to state, to family, to self as well as to God. Prosperity, as opposed to monastic poverty, was celebrated. There was also an expansive spirit in the Italian ruling classes that reached the inner realms of the Vatican, which in turn slowly achieved great worldliness. The Roman Catholic Church was at its height with great art works glorifying the majestic Catholic vision (Tarnas, 1996). Russell (1945) asserted that the individualism associated with the emancipation from the church resulted in a type of intellectual freedom verging on anarchy. The spirit of the times showed that there was a deepening sense of confidence in individual ability.

Luther (McGrath, 1988) had stressed the importance of the individuals' personal religious worship, which led to religious reality being internalised. With the internalisation of religious truth, truth was then experienced as part of the self. In addition, holy matrimony replaced the ideal of chastity. Domestic life, the raising of children, and the tasks of daily existence were considered areas through which the spirit could manifest and deepen. Thus selfhood could be realized individually

through everyday pursuits. There were the beginnings of assertive individualism together with the Protestant work ethic of hard work and loyalty. The western sense of self was emerging as characterized by the notion of self-awareness and, in addition, individuals were developing notable self-critical faculties (Hergenhahn, 2001; Robinson, 1995).

In early feudal times, the pervasive image of society was that of a biological organism whose parts or in other words, individuals, were significant only in relation to the whole (Kitzinger, 1992). Individuals were part of a system of pre-determined social positions and characteristics. With the new humanism, the rise of the merchant class and the gradual dissolution of the feudal system, individuals emerged out of their habitual communal ways. Notions of selfhood in the west, during the Middle Ages, had been highly collective (Baumeister, 1997). Moreover, there had been a fairly rigid dress code, which was dictated by rank in society, and the feudal system had kept people locked in place. The Black Death dramatically changed the structure of society as a third of the population of Europe died, and there was a shortage of workers and a greater availability of land. As a result poor people could move around and find new positions in work and society. The middle class was set on its way and the sense of selfhood would shift. The feudal system had been an enforced hierarchy where choices were few. The social changes meant that individuals experienced greater freedom, and could interact with different levels of society. People now had more opportunities to make their own choices and such changes in social structure were bound to broaden and extend the sense of selfhood (Baumeister, 1997).

Changes in the perception of work also highlighted changes in the sense of selfhood. The Reformation had made possible the growth of Calvinism. John Calvin lived in Switzerland, and became a Protestant church reformer (Bouwsma, 1999). The Calvinist approach resulted in the strengthening of the Protestant work ethic whereby work brought the individual closer to God, and poverty was regarded as punishment for laziness. Hard work, thrift and temperance became important because wealth was said to be the reward of dedicated, hard labour (Storr, 1988). The work domain was, in the future, to become an important area through which the individual sense of self could be recognized and expressed.

There were also significant changes in the family structure. The early, extended medieval family experienced little privacy, and limited scope for individuality. According to Baumeister (1987), before the end of the seventeenth century nobody was ever really left alone, and privacy was not considered important. Baumeister contended that it probably did not occur to people to want it. A highly individualized sense of self is not likely to develop under these conditions. Around 1550, with the rise of the merchant class, the family unit became smaller. Some ninety years later a new type of family developed, which was more emotionally stable, and characterized by a new individualism (Tannahill, 1989). The gradual shift in the nature of the individual sense of self is also well illustrated by the changing configuration of the home. Sampson (1988) pointed out, for example, that the introduction of the chair as replacement for the bench, the use of specialized eating utensils, and the trend towards the use of private rooms within the home all signalled a move towards a more self-contained individual.

Since antiquity the four elements earth, water, air and fire had been part of the western system of beliefs, and there was said to be a perpetual struggle, within the individual, between these elements (Silver, 1998). The Spanish philosopher, Vives, examined the nature of health and sickness. He tried to demystify the concept of the soul, and studied how the soul functioned. He concluded that the soul was the author, and moving force behind human functions, drawing its energy from within the body. Vives examined the soul in terms of the five senses, the general mental functions, and also in terms of affects. Thus there was a move to see selfhood in more practical terms (Stone, 1997). Paracelsus also tried to demystify selfhood by considering the mind and body as closely intertwined, and held that disturbances could be cured through medicine rather than vague abstractions. He denounced witch burning, and was the first to use the term “the unconscious” (Stone, 1997).

The treatment of women in society also sheds light on the accepted nature of selfhood. Renaissance Italy was essentially a man’s world. The middle ages had invented the knight, and now the Renaissance invented the gentleman (Tannahill, 1989). Tannahill noted that the period between the early twelfth and late sixteenth centuries witnessed important paradoxical shifts with regard to women. They were no better off legally, financially or physically as compared with earlier times but now there was a noticeable difference in their image. Courtly love was the theme of medieval

literature, and became a significant ideal in upper class medieval life. During the crusades many wives were left in charge of estates, and had to learn about taxes, tithes and politics. The Virgin Mary was an object of devotion and women were associated with the chastity, submissiveness, and the humility of Mary the Mother. In addition, ecclesiastical courts abhorred divorce, and husbands could not now divorce wives as easily as before. The veneration of the image of courtly attention, offered by ardent admirers, helped raise the status of women. The older housewives of the late medieval period, however, did not attain the respect afforded to the younger women, and many suffered the tortures of witch-hunts. In the Swiss canton of Vaud, for example, 3,371 witches were put to death between 1591 and 1680 (Tannahill, 1989). According to Barzun (2001), by the time of the Renaissance, there were many women of recognized talent. Barzun noted that the Vatican, under the Renaissance popes, was crowded with women politicians who were true decision makers. Wealth and position were the keys to office, but these women still had to be competent enough to remain in their seats of power. Yet, at the same time, as compared with men, women generally were deprived of education, offered few openings in which to exercise personal talent and were denied lateral mobility.

Evidence for the changing concepts of the self can also be seen in the contrast between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. In Greek tragedy, for example, circumstances are central while in Shakespearean drama the inner being is explored, and personality is essentially the cause of tragedy. The Miracle plays of medieval times were religious dramas based on the lives of saints while the Miracle plays of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance were a type of allegory in dramatic form showing the hero, who represented all mankind, surrounded by personifications of virtue, vice, angels, demons and death. The Mystery plays were based on Bible stories, and showed evidence of humour and more diversified characterization (Morner & Rausch, 1991). It is later in the Renaissance, however, that characters became more rounded and were considered responsible for their actions. Early drama also reveals recognition of the different aspects of the individual personality through the agency of the Fool. The Fool represented the capacity of discrimination as he could comment on the actions and moral nature of the characters (Williams, 1970). The Fool could also function as an alter ego, juxtaposing different points of view. Thus the self was emerging as more instrumental in the business of living through the

developing ability to compare and contrast different perspectives. Shakespeare presented for view the capacity for good and evil present in “everyman.” According to Baumeister (1997), it was in the sixteenth century that culture promoted and extended the conceptual planes of inner selfhood as shown by the theatrical plots where many characters pretended to be what they were not, so introducing the notion of alternative possible selves.

How was the sense of self affected by all the changes? Shakespeare provided a good summary in his plays. In the tragedies he showed selfhood to be a narrative process. In the soliloquies we witness the movement of inner thoughts, the weighing of events and ideas, and the dance between past, present and future time. The device of the play within a play, as in *Hamlet*, revealed the capacity for self-observation. We also witness the self as an active agent. In *Macbeth*, for example, Macbeth’s actions led to murder. Such action ultimately resulted in the dissolution of his sense of self-unity. Shakespeare also showed how the individual is always situated within a particular environment, and he highlighted the important interplay of the individual and the milieu. But Shakespeare encapsulated the Renaissance emphasis on individual autonomy, and showed that the self, to a great extent, is shaped through personal choice and consequent actions.



6.3 Summary

The Renaissance marked the rebirth of learning and also opened the way for an expanded sense of self with the emergence of a more adventurous spirit. A number of factors contributed to the Renaissance spirit. Aquinas achieved a synthesis of reason and faith so contributing to the emergence of a more balanced foundation to the sense of self. The fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453 resulted in the infiltration of Greek thought and philosophy into the west and logical methods of enquiry, which had been developed during the Middle Ages, became available. There was also a new interest in the use and control of nature, and there was a spirit of exploration and adventure, as well as a thirst for discovery as well as a secularisation of questioning. Bacon developed a systematic process of enquiry, and encouraged inductive reasoning. He pointed the way for individuals to manipulate objects in the world

rather than falling back on passive deliberation. At the same time Bacon introduced a mechanistic view of matter that was to have wide implications in the following years. Copernicus ushered in the heliocentric system, which was refined by Kepler, while Galileo helped erode the geocentric theory, and the dominant worldview began to collapse. With the new discoveries, so confidence in human ability grew.

With the rise of the merchant classes people became more individualised and self-compound words began to enter the English language. There were changes in the perception of work whereby hard work and loyalty became important factors. The family unit became smaller and more self-contained, and homes were less communal with individualised eating utensils and the introduction of private rooms. The four elements of the Early Greeks were still believed to control human health and nature but there was a focus on a more practical approach to healing sickness. Some wealthy women held important positions in the Church, but on the whole, women did not have high standing. Survival could be secured by working as a tradesman or artisan, and by adopting a meaning system that celebrated potential and achievement.

The term Humanism only became common terminology in the nineteenth century. However, there was a Renaissance Humanist movement dedicated to the study of cultural human artefacts as opposed to the divine creations of God (Oliver, 2000). Human life was now viewed as having great value. The value of individual life was, on the whole, now more generally appreciated because the Renaissance celebrated human ability and existential significance. Humans no longer appeared inconsequential relative to God, and Renaissance man achieved a dynamic, new status. There was a celebration of creativity and willingness to assert truth based on personal judgment. A distinctive western sense of self was beginning to emerge, marked by individualism, strength of will, innovation, secularism, creativity, multiplicity of interests and a willingness to defy limitation

6.4 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Six

This chapter did not expand, for instance, on the significance of the relationship of art to selfhood. In examining the nature of selfhood over time it is important, as far as possible, to follow many avenues of enquiry. There were significant changes in art

and architecture during the Renaissance that reflect changes in the nature of selfhood. In architecture, for example, during the Renaissance the horizontal line replaced the vertical line of the earlier Gothic period. Arches were rounded instead of pointed. The most important buildings became palaces, not churches, and firm unbroken lines and symmetrical proportions characterised the building style. Earlier architecture, with the tall spires reaching to God's kingdom, underscored man's vertical orientation to God and the world. Renaissance architecture with its horizontal lines, the use of domes and the importance of harmonious concordance of parts, reflected the changing nature of selfhood in that the personal sense of self had acquired a more horizontal configuration with the move towards a secular understanding of the world. Truth could be discerned inwardly, and an assertive individualism was becoming an inherent part of personal sense of self. With perspective in painting came a new genre of portraiture where the dignity and uniqueness of individuals was emphasised, signalling the break with the medieval community spirit (Delius et al., 2000).

This chapter has shown that the Renaissance represented a period of adventure, enquiry, and cognitive expansion, and was a time when the individual sense of self began to expand. Three things are said to have heralded the dawn of modernity, things that did not seem that important at the time, but which had great influence on the nature of selfhood. These included printing, the compass and gunpowder. Printing disseminated views of the Humanist scholarship, which portrayed the Renaissance ideal of a person with an all-round education, a sound moral foundation, and perfectly cultivated manners. The invention of the compass led to epoch-making geographical discoveries, contact with new people, and different ideas, while the introduction of firearms marked the end of chivalry and the beginning of a new individualized, more assertive orientation to the world (Delius et al., 2000).

The sense of self was emerging as individualistic and unique, with a greater degree of self-conscious awareness and confidence than had been evident earlier. These factors all helped to usher in the Age of Reason, which is the subject of the following chapter.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN. REASON AS DIRECTOR: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

7.1 Introduction

The scientific revolution had begun during the tremendous turmoil and destruction of the religious wars that followed the Reformation. The centre of culture and learning had been Italy but gradually the economic centre shifted to Holland, England and Northern France where traders and manufacturers had access to expanding sea routes. There were new inventions related to navigation, gunnery and pumping. At the same time scientists and experimental philosophers flourished, and political forces were gathering against the dogmatism of the Church. There had been a long connection between the hierarchical Christian world-view and the socio-political structures of feudal Europe comprising God, Pope and King. The Church, with its limited sensibility, came to be seen as antagonistic to human freedom. For centuries European culture was dominated by religious practices with human destiny in the hands of God. The emerging scientific discoveries, however, now challenged the religious orthodoxy by establishing laws of nature that did not originate in divinity (Oliver, 2000; Magee, 2001; Robinson, 1995).

Philosophy also took human destiny away from God, and placed it under the free will of man. At the same time, some philosophers were Christians who wanted to find a place for religion, and who did not wish to damage the moral authority of the Church (Oliver, 2000). Sometimes the impression is created that spiritual belief and religion suddenly disappeared as the Enlightenment appeared but this is not so. As Sheehan (2003) has pointed out, the definition of the Enlightenment as the emergence of rationalism, materialism and determinism is constraining. Religion in the west did not suddenly fade away. It is more productive to regard the Enlightenment, said Sheehan, as a new constellation of formal or technical practices and institutions including salons and reading circles as well as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, translations and book reviews. Thus the Enlightenment heralded a host of new media. The Renaissance study of nature, the perception of a not-so-closed cosmos, the ideas of consciousness, and the appreciation of human individuality were all expanded during

the Enlightenment. Tremendous self-confidence was generated by the new discoveries in science such as those of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton. These ideas coalesced, culminating in the fundamental belief and unshakeable faith in the power of reason. Isaac Newton, for example, greatly advanced the understanding of the physical world confirming belief in human ability (Thayer, 1999). He analysed the properties of light, invented calculus and explored the nature of motion. The laws of motion made prediction of the movement of physical systems, including the solar system, possible, so giving humans an unprecedented sense of mastery.

7.2 Thinkers of the Time and the Impact on the Sense of Self

The forerunners to the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century can be said to include, among others, Montaigne, the rationalists Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza, and the political philosophers Hobbes and Locke. The *Philosophes* represented a self-conscious movement in France, and they re-examined and questioned many received ideas making use of pamphlets, journals and anonymous tracts. They were considered to be journalists and propagandists, not true philosophers, but they nevertheless had a marked influence on other thinkers. In Paris, Diderot began the publication of the *Encyclopedie*, which was intended to be a compendium of all knowledge and a tool for attacking opponents' arguments (Barzun, 2001).

The Enlightenment was a cosmopolitan movement with representatives in Europe and America. As Hunt (1994) noted, psychology was slower than the physical sciences to move away from a theological-philosophical base but, for the first time in two millennia, the finest minds were formulating new answers to questions put forward by Classical Greek philosophers, and the individual sense of self would feel the impact. The writings of the Enlightenment thinkers constitute a vast compendium of thought. Beardsley (2002) noted that philosophers respond to social and political questions of the time and even though problems differ from age to age, basic issues such as morality and religion recur. Descartes, Locke and Kant will be discussed because their views have a significant bearing on the development of the western sense of self.

7.2.1 Descartes

Before Descartes' time, philosophy had been dominated by scholasticism, which was based on comparing and contrasting the views of recognized authorities. The rationalist movement in epistemology developed in the 17th and 18th centuries. Descartes, however, sought a direct road to truth using certitude as the path and scepticism as the method, firmly believing in the power of reason. Descartes wrote in French, not Latin, and his works include *Le Monde* (1632), *Discourse on Method* (1637), *Meditations* (1641), *Principles of Philosophy* (1644). Descartes was important with regard to the development of the western self because his beliefs had implications for the nature of the individual. He believed that knowledge of what exists could be obtained purely through the use of reason, and he argued that knowledge constitutes a single system, which could be deduced by logic. He also maintained that all individuals have the power of reason:

Good sense is of all things in the world the most equally distributed, for everybody thinks himself so abundantly provided with it, that even those most difficult to please in all other matters do not commonly desire more of it than they already possess. It is unlikely that this is an error on their part; it seems rather to be evidence in support of the view that the power of forming a good judgment and of distinguishing the true from the false, which is properly speaking what is called Good sense or Reason, is by nature equal in all men. Hence too, it will show that the diversity of our opinions does not proceed from some men being more relational than others, but solely from the fact that our thoughts pass through diverse channels and the same objects are not considered by all (Descartes, 2002, p. 5).

This way of thinking, according to Beardsley (2002), was instantly inspiring and highly contagious because reason could be employed by individuals in practical ways. Descartes, for example, introduced his idea of methodical doubt where he set out to question everything he had previously believed to be true. Descartes' method of doubting stated four precepts (Descartes, 1997). He maintained that only self-evident truths should be accepted, problems should be divided into smaller fragments, and thoughts should be ordered and checked to see that everything had been taken into account. He reasoned that, because our senses can deceive, nothing then is as it

appears. He decided to treat everything that came to his mind as an illusion, like a dream. The fact that he was sitting in a room near a stove may not actually have been true. Descartes noted that he may have been dreaming or hallucinating, or a demon may have tricked him. Descartes asserted that the only thing he could be sure about was the fact that he was thinking something:

I noticed that whilst I thus wished to think all things false, it was absolutely essential that the "I" who thought this should be somewhat, and remarking that this truth 'I think, therefore I am' was so certain and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions brought forward by the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I came to the conclusion that I could receive it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking (Descartes, 1997, p. 92).

Descartes maintained that the thinking entity came to know about the outside world through God. So God was still in the picture. In the *Third Meditation* Descartes (1997) attempted to prove the existence of God. He argued that it was not possible for him to have the idea of God in him if God did not exist. Descartes concluded that the light of God dazzled his mind, and that contemplation of God offered the greatest satisfaction of this life. In addition, Descartes argued that God must have created two kinds of substance, which then make up the whole of reality. Cartesian dualism posited that one kind of substance was a thinking substance or mind, and the other was an extended substance in the form of objects such as rocks or in other words body (Descartes, 1997). Oliver (2000) emphasized that Descartes thus defined the knowing subject as the original location of certainty. Human beings, said Descartes, have an inner core of unshakeable rationality together with the ability to turn attention inwards to the mind, to the soul or ego, and to investigate subjective experiences such as thinking, willing, perceiving, feeling and imagining. Individuals, according to Descartes, were said to have nativist tendencies, to be rational and also to be phenomenologists because they had intact conscious experience.

The body-mind question seems to have been a bit tricky to handle. According to Pert (1997), Descartes was forced to make a territorial deal with the Pope in order to obtain the human bodies he required for dissection. Descartes agreed he would not have anything to do with the soul, the mind or the emotions because these were in the prized domain of the Church. Therefore, as long as Descartes confirmed the

separation of mind and body, he could conduct his experiments on the cadavers without interference. Through dissection and theorizing Descartes contended that the cerebrospinal fluid consisted of “animal spirits” or a highly purified component of blood. This flow of animal spirits powered digestion, respiration, blood circulation and some psychological functions such as memory. Repeated experiences then made certain pores in the brain remain more open than others to allow the easier flow of these spirits (Hunt, 1994).

Descartes’ substance dualism envisioned a thinking mind and extended matter. He made the mind-body problem manifest. In the *Discourse On Method* Descartes maintained that humans consist of thinking entities and that their existence does not depend on location in space or any material thing. Thus the self or soul, he argued, is entirely distinct from the body, and would not cease to be even if there were no body. Animals, as opposed to humans, relied on instinct and simply responded to stimuli. Human emotions were associated with the amount of animal spirits within a response. Therefore the more animal spirits, the stronger the response. Emotions would be experienced consciously as passions (Descartes, 1997).

Descartes was important because his ideas helped contour modern western selfhood. Cartesian dualism helped separate idea from action, and the external world then came to be seen as inert and malleable while the human mind was central and valuable. But Cartesian dualism was not quite so clear-cut because Descartes actually offered a compromise in saying the location point between mind and body was in the pineal gland. This was said to be the seat of the mind and home of the soul. So the mind and the soul were indirectly still conflated. The western sense of self was to be negatively influenced by the downplaying of the body in that there was to be a tendency to compartmentalise the approach to the self. Taylor (1989) pointed out that in Descartes’ central idea of the disengagement of the subject, he was articulating one of the most important developments of the modern era. He prepared the way for the western model of self-mastery and personal instrumental control based on the view of the self as the outcome of unmediated self-reflection. This approach stood in sharp contrast to the eastern view whereby body and mind were considered a unity and the body was considered part of the soil of the mind (Brazier, 1995).

7.2.2 Locke

Locke (1964) as an empiricist, rejected Descartes' and the Rationalist's notion of innate ideas. Empiricists contended that everything known comes from sensory experiences and observations of the physical world. Locke stressed that the senses constitute the direct interface between individuals and external reality. Simple ideas, for Locke (1964), whether derived from sensation or reflection, could not be further reduced. On the other hand, complex ideas were an amalgam of simple ideas, and could be analysed into the components of simple ideas. Locke held that any aspect of a physical object that facilitated the production of an idea was a quality. Primary qualities corresponded to what existed in the physical world whereas secondary qualities of objects did not correspond to anything in the physical world. Locke's views marked an important milestone in western thought in that they heralded a call for individuals to think for themselves.

Taylor (1989) argued that the Enlightenment view of the subject, in terms of disengagement and rational control and the move to inwardness, reached full force with Locke. Taylor described this subject as the *punctual self*. The earlier, dominant world-view was of a cosmic order as the embodiment of Ideas. The modern *punctual self*, said Taylor, pushed disengagement further and induced the search for control, together with changing conceptions of knowledge. Locke saw knowledge in terms of procedural acts and a proper way of assembling and constructing thoughts. This was based on discerning patterns through careful attention, and rested on a mechanistic orientation to the world.

In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke (1964) stated his view of the sense of self, which is quoted verbatim below:

We must consider what a person stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it; being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive... Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions; and by this everyone is to himself that which he calls self; it not

being considered, in this case, whether the same self be continued in the same or divers substances (Locke 1964, p. 211).

Locke went on to state that the sense of self depends on consciousness:

For it is by the consciousness it has of its present thoughts and actions, that it is self to itself now, and so will be the same self as far as the same consciousness can extend to actions past or to come...(Locke, 1964, p. 213).

Locke (1964) believed that there were two basic feelings, those of pleasure and of pain, and that other emotions such as love, desire, hatred, joy, sorrow, anger and fear were all derived from these two basic feelings. Thus an important characteristic of a sense of self was that the individual sought pleasure but avoided pain. Locke's (1963) political approach highlighted the rights of the individual in terms of the right to life, liberty and prosperity. In his *Letter Concerning Toleration* (Locke, 1963, p. 101), which emphasised the right of religious toleration he argued "every man may enjoy the same rights that are granted to others." Thus all people also have the right to individual selfhood.

Locke (1964) was a Deist in that he believed in God, and in religious practices based on reason. Locke held that God's purposes could be deduced from the nature of his creation. For example, His creatures strive instinctively to preserve themselves, and, therefore, it could be concluded that God's intent is preservation. According to Taylor (1989), in making preservation the central point of God's will for humans, Locke followed the Protestant affirmation of ordinary life in that everyday activity and striving is given importance and dignity. In turn this obligated the individual to work. Service to God involved acting efficaciously to meet personal needs, but with an eye to the common good. Therefore service to self, and hence God, took a productive form. Locke acknowledged that humans deviate from service to God in that they have a penchant for egocentricity, and personal power, and tend towards laziness and pride. But God, said Locke, gave order to human life and humans could come to God through their own autonomous reason.

In Taylor's (1989) opinion Locke reified the mind to an extraordinary degree because he embraced an atomistic view in asserting that understanding of things is constructed out of the building blocks of simple ideas. Moreover these atoms of the mind are then accounted for in terms of a quasi-mechanistic process of association. Locke's view

stressed the importance of the reflexive self and self-responsibility by taking the control of thinking away from the passions, or from other authorities. Autonomy and control became important characteristics of the modern western sense of self.

7.2.3 Kant

Following Locke, Kant (2002) argued that whatever is apprehended is absorbed through the five senses, the brain and the central nervous system, that is, through the body. Thus humans can experience what the physical apparatus can manage. Before Kant, many thinkers believed that the limit of knowledge was set by what there is, out there, to discover. But for Kant, it was the physical apparatus that had limitations, and did not offer the means to detect everything. What we can know depends on what our faculties can apprehend. Therefore something may exist but, because of limited faculties, we may not know about it. Furthermore, what is delivered to the individual's consciousness is a representation of the external object, not the object itself. Thus, on the one hand, there are objects as they appear to the individual or the phenomenal world and, on the other hand, there are objects or things in themselves, or the noumenal world. Kant (2002) referred to the noumenal world as transcendental because, even though it exists, it cannot be registered in experience. In addition, humans conceive of objects in terms of forms of sensibility, namely space and time. Kant (2002) believed that we arrive at the idea of a special science, which can be entitled *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Reason, for Kant, was said to be the faculty, which supplies the principles of *a priori* knowledge.

Kant also claimed that only entities capable of understanding reasons for and against doing something could be said to be behaving morally, and a valid reason would have universal application. The Categorical imperative, as outlined by Kant, defined the fundamental rule of morality as being the maxim to act according to beliefs, which could stand as universal laws. In 1785, Kant, in his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, held that humans are subject to diverse influences so that it is important to have guidelines for actions:

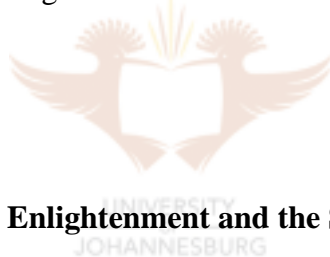
A metaphysic of morals is therefore indispensably necessary, not merely for speculative reasons, in order to investigate the sources of the practical

principles which are to be found a priori in our reasons, but also because morals themselves are liable to all sorts of corruption, as long as we are without that clue and supreme canon by which to estimate them correctly (Kant, 2001, p. 148).

Kant celebrated the power of reason, and reason came to be the dominant factor at play in the sense of self. In 1784 he wrote in the *Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?*

Enlightenment is man's exit from his self-incurred minority. Minority is the incapacity to use one's intelligence without the guidance of another. Such minority is self-incurred if it is not caused by lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination and courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another. Have the courage to use your own intelligence is therefore the motto of the enlightenment. (Kant, 2001, p. 135).

Thus the sense of self was moving more and more into the realm of individual control and personal appraisal.



7.3 Hallmarks of the Enlightenment and the Self

7.3.1 Belief in the Human Capacity for Reason

Newton is generally regarded as one of the foremost intellects of all time and, typical of his time, he had a wide range of interests including optics, mechanics, mathematics, chemistry, and theology. Among these he made the greatest impact in the science of mechanics and gravity, and also in optics. Newton differed from the early Greek thinkers, such as Aristotle, in that he believed in using experimentation and observation to support thinking and analysis:

This analysis consists in making experiments and observations, and in drawing general conclusions from them by induction, and admitting of no objections against the conclusions but such as are taken from experiment, or other certain truths (Newton, 1704, p. 178).

Newton was the first to be able to develop a theory, which could explain movement of the planets in particular, and objects in general. This was done very precisely, and by the application of a few, simple and elegant algebraic formulae. His work, together with that of contemporaries and successors in many fields of science and technology ultimately led to an intellectual arrogance. Lesser scientists came to believe that there was nothing that could not be understood or achieved by humankind. This attitude led to a reaction that, in part, later gave birth to the Romantic Movement and which attitude Buchdal (p. 34, 1961) described as follows:

On one side we have the great deterministic and materialist systems which leave no room for either God or man, yet never question the basis of their belief in the necessitarian (and to them so real) chains binding the parts of nature together.

In contrast, Newton himself was very aware of how much was not known, and he believed that only God could explain some things. Newton said he could explain how the planets moved, but not why they were there or “by what wisdom the celestial orbs have such an elegant arrangement, from what power the celestial bodies obtain their motions, and are placed at such great distances” (Newton, 1712, p. 362).

Newton demonstrated the heights that can be reached in human affairs through the judicious use of reason, and human history has shown what a hard won aspect of selfhood reason actually is.

7.3.2 The Importance of Consciousness

Conscious was recognised as a vital part of selfhood. Locke (1964) held that identity was based on the continuity of consciousness of self. He posited that consciousness always accompanied thinking, and so consciousness formed the underpinning of a personal self, and thereby distinguished one self from another. It was the individualized conscious self that made selfhood possible (Danziger, 1997). People were said to own their actions and experiences. The consequence of this process of self-objectification was the belief that self was composed of empirical phenomena that could be observed and analysed. In time, with scholarly discourse, terms pertaining to self were no longer rhetorical inventions but were thought to refer to real entities. It was Locke’s articulation of the terms self and consciousness that opened the way for

conceptualising and examining selfhood in the years to come. According to Danziger (1997), the watershed for the concept of the self was the second edition of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which described the nature of personal identity in secular terms, and the topic of personhood thus became a more widely debated issue. Danziger (1997) pointed out that Locke had obviously touched a nerve by treating the core of the human individual as an observable and natural phenomenon. Locke (1964) was essentially examining the question of the individual sense of self by asking how individuals established that they were the same persons from one year to the next. This was a meaningful question because, particularly in England, society was changing, and the social identity, conferred by birth, kinship or occupation was no longer immutable. Because the immortality of the soul and social identity by descent no longer offered stability, so the individual sense of self became an important phenomenon. Locke pointed out that the mind has a reflexive faculty through which it is able to examine its own contents. This reflexive faculty was constituted through what the senses offered. Reflection prevents understanding from being a purely photographic process, and Locke maintained that it was through reflection that human understanding could be said to be a psychological entity (Robinson, 1995).



7.3.3 The Relationship between Subject and Object

The relationship between subject and object was a point of issue. Taylor (1989) argued that the emergence of the subject as independent of the object reflected the emergence of an important new localization. The early view for example, saw melancholy as residing in black bile so the substance embodied the significance. The changing view localized nature so that too much black bile, for instance, would make the individual melancholy. The localisation was in the individual. Even into the nineteenth century people understood their emotional lives in terms of humours (Taylor, 1989). Changes were beginning to surface, particularly with regard to moral sentiment, which then had bearing on the later rise of Romanticism. Shaftesbury, noted Taylor was opposed to Lockean Deism and posited, among other things, the notion of natural affection and the idea of order, harmony and equilibrium as an ethic of benevolence. Certain inclinations were implanted in the subject, and could be

expressed towards the object. Thus there could be an inward turn to the sentiments to discover moral order so as to do good.

7.3.4 Inner sense of Location

A sense of location was also relevant in terms of the contours of spiritual life. Magic was thought of as a power inhabiting the thing, such as power in love potions, spell rituals or certain acts of speech. This had been a deeply entrenched way of understanding human life. Taylor (1989) asserted the new disengagement was carried by profound changes in spiritual outlook. One of the most important forces working against magic was the Protestant Reformation, which argued against thralldom or imprisonment of the self in uncanny, undefined powers. The new individual vision was in terms of control and self-possession. Previously individuals derived meaning and purpose from a cosmic orientation. Purpose and meaning now, however, had to be discovered within.



7.3.5 Ownership of the Self

The individual was now seen to own the self. Individual selfhood was viewed as a private possession, and a new vocabulary of self-evaluation came into being, which was very different from the religious vocabulary that had prevailed. The language of self-evaluation changed from questions of sin to questions of self-esteem. The self became objectified, and was a source of approval or disapproval both for the individual and for others. Preoccupation with self-worth meant that people were driven to better themselves, and think in “oughts” (Danziger, 1997). At the same time the empiricist approach made it possible to endow the self with positive value, which was inherently private and introspective. The self came to be seen as a worthy private possession.

7.3.6 Self as a Project

The self also became a focus of concentrated attention. The individual was coming to be seen as a project to be worked on because humans had reasoning ability and

potential, which needed to be exercised to promote self-development. Reason was emerging as a cherished ideal, and scientific thinking was highly prized. Religion was still important but science was becoming the new god with religion located, to a great extent, within the individual. The new science displayed a pronounced scepticism of religious dogma. The scientific explanation of phenomena meant that biblical explanations could no longer be accepted as unquestioningly as before. The newly emerging academic discipline of biblical textual scholarship also revealed that the scriptures indeed had a human, rather than a divine source. The Christian revelation had lost its potency, and western selfhood was becoming a very much more significant individual pursuit (Tarnas, 1996). There was a shift from a belief in a fallen humanity to a belief in the capacity of people to advance as masterful individuals.

7.3.7 Self Interest

Self-interest also came to the fore. The basic elements of the philosophy of the Enlightenment included the beliefs that man was good by nature, and that the goal of human life was well being in this world, not blessedness in the next (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). This goal could be achieved by individuals' gaining knowledge because the greatest obstacles to reaching this goal were ignorance, superstition and intolerance. Natural law, as opposed to privilege, was enough to secure the individual's rights. Enlightened self-interest meant that each individual needed to seek the best for himself, and that the fight for individual self-interest would result in everyone's well being. An ideal state would secure property rights and individual liberty, and encourage private capitalism and expansionism (Skirbekk & Gilje, 2001). These views are generally taken for granted in the west today, but their inception marked a whole new way of being in the world, and a new way of conceiving of the individual sense of self. The existence of a community was taken for granted before the seventeenth century, and the issue of the authority of the community was not formally contested, as the individual and the community, were, in effect, one. Later communities were seen in a more consensual way. The consent of the individual could create authority, and so the view of the community became less important. The

strengthening of the middle class and the notion of rights meant that society became the matrix within which a sense of self could develop (Taylor, 1989).

7.3.8 Inward Turn

The inward turn was now not necessarily to find God but to impart some order or meaning to individual lives; this form of exploration became central to western culture. Self-exploration and reflexivity, in terms of objectifying one's own nature and exploring who we are, are predicated on the assumption behind modern thinking that we do not know who we are (Taylor, 1989). It is interesting that Taylor used Montaigne as a watershed figure in terms of distinct changes in the Enlightenment sense of self. The old paradigm held that personal reflection served to promote a connection to one's inner, stable true nature. Instead, on reflection, Montaigne found instability and change in himself as well as in the outer world. This repudiated the heaven-directed standards supported by the moral tradition. Montaigne asserted that individuals are not looking for universal nature but for a sense of personal being. He found that the inward journey could follow the contours of changing reality and part of that reality was himself, as an individual living in flux. The inward search for self, as inaugurated by the personal reflections of Montaigne, has become an important theme in western culture.

7.4 Summary

Emerging scientific discoveries challenged religious thinking. For centuries European culture had been dominated by the belief that human destiny and the sense of self rested in the hands of God. Philosophy now placed human destiny under the free will of humans. The Renaissance had broadened individual vision through travel, art and science. As scientific discoveries gained momentum so did the belief in the power of human reasoning. Descartes stressed the importance of rationalism, and introduced a body-mind dualism. Descartes also believed that passion could be brought under the control of rational will. Locke highlighted the significance of consciousness in relation to the individual sense of self. He posited a form of Deism in that he contended that, through using reason, humans would be in service to God. Kant

investigated forms of knowledge and how humans come to “know,” and he exhorted people to think for themselves. The self came to be seen in terms of self-exploration and reflexivity. The self was also considered to be a private possession, and a project to be worked on because humans had potential through the power of reason.

7.5 Critical Appraisal of Chapter Seven

The period of the Enlightenment represents a very large body of work. The Enlightenment thinkers had a tremendous impact on the western sense of self. Pinker (2002) stressed that the extent of the influence of particularly Locke and Descartes, and later Rousseau, on western thinking is not yet fully appreciated. Their views have had a considerable influence on the conceptualising of individual selfhood, the separation of mind and body, and have contributed substantially to the western belief in the need for self-reliance.

In addition, attention has not been directed to the question of how the decline of the church systematically influenced the emergence of the western self. The Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, was highly conservative and did not respond to change, and therefore contributed to its own decline. The Protestant Churches, in turn, became more and more diversified and fragmented. The taint of Original Sin was no longer a dominant element in the light of scientific progress, and the human spirit was no longer located in a transcendent reality but within the individual. Tarnas (1996) pointed out that the most pervasive Judeo-Christian aspect retained in the modern world-view was the belief in humans’ linear progress and right towards ultimate fulfilment.

Gellner (1993) noted that the early vision of man presented the individual as having inner forces, which were opposed to the higher and purer elements of existence, and that the devil had a recognized place in the scheme of things. Therefore anyone who found darkness within had no need to feel surprised or fearful. According to Gellner, the twin currents of empiricism and materialism destroyed this vision, and replaced it with a unitary vision of humans and nature. Humans were now considered part of nature, could be known and could know themselves the same way as they knew

anything else, namely through their senses. Darkness, an irrational element, was coming to be seen as located within the individual.

It was Romanticism that explored the more irrational elements of the self, neglected by the rationalists, and is the subject of the following chapter.



8 CHAPTER EIGHT. THE DARK DIRECTOR: ROMANTICISM

8.1 Introduction

Romanticism began around the middle of the eighteenth century. This was a philosophical and intellectual movement, and a phenomenon that was not simply confined to the arts but constituted a climate of opinion based on ideas of individual freedom and self-expression (McLeish, 1994). According to Berlin (1999) the Prussian Johan Georg Hamman was the true originator of the Romantic process of revolt against the Enlightenment way of thinking. Hamman argued that scientific thinking would lead to a segmentation of the mind. The mind needed to soar and pave the way for inner expression, and this could not be done through reason because reason had a static quality (Berlin, 1999). Romanticism was not chronologically parallel in each country but, despite variations in time and place, it was mostly a reaction to the entrenched position of Enlightenment values (Barzun, 2001). According to Baumeister (1987) the main emphasis of Romantic thinkers was the focus on individual innate potential, and the uniqueness of individual destiny. Thus the desire to seek self-knowledge was strengthened.

Romanticists reacted to the basic principles of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment essentially rested on three main principles; the belief that all genuine questions could be answered; the belief that all answers were knowable and could be learnt as well as taught to others, and the belief that all answers had to be compatible with one another otherwise chaos would result. Answers could be discovered through the correct use of reason, both deductively as in the mathematical sciences, and inductively through natural science. Life was seen as a rational jigsaw puzzle, and all the pieces could be fitted together (Berlin, 1999).

The main attack on the Enlightenment came from Germany as German culture became provincialised. The Pietism movement grew in power (Berlin, 1999). Pietism was a branch of Lutheranism, which emphasized spiritual life and inner depth (Berlin, 1999). According to Taylor (1989) the move to the veneration of ordinary life initiated by the Reformation also contributed to the Romantic celebration of the

individual. Deism was yet another factor contributing to the Romantic turn. Deism incorporated the belief that God designed things for the human good, and the demand placed on the individual within a Deist framework was the proper fulfilment of one's own nature. Romanticists stressed that human happiness mattered in the universe, and they concentrated on the fulfilment of human aspiration. Thus personal sentiment and freedom were central to the Romantic vision. This freedom could be found in being true to personal individuality by opening oneself up to, and becoming part of, an all-pervading transcendental reality (McLeish, 1994). For the Romanticists, the ineffable was that with which the human soul could strive to unite. The Romantic vision sought truth, which was sublime and inwardly transfiguring, and would ultimately give a feeling of inner depth to the western sense of self.

Rousseau (2003) argued that science, in particular, had degraded man, and that science and virtue remained ultimately incompatible. He believed that primitive man had lived in organic unity with himself whereas modern man was cut off from himself through the influence of scientific thinking. Rousseau enlarged the scope of subjectivism and of the inner voice leading to a radical personal autonomy. The Cartesian model of self-awareness as the foundation of all knowledge turned into an essentialist position with Rousseau. People needed to discover the true nature of the self in terms of its enduring authentic character. So the self became central in its own right:

Common liberty results from the nature of man. His first law is to provide for his own preservation, his first cares are those to which he owes to himself; and, as soon as he reaches years of discretion, he is the sole judge of the proper means of preserving himself, and consequently becomes his own master (Rousseau, 2003, p. 322).

8.2 Romanticism and the Self

8.2.1 Imagination

Romanticism celebrated the imaginative aspect of selfhood. Poets, writers, artists and philosophers created an outlet for those aspects of human existence, which had been denied expression by a rationalistic approach (Oliver, 2000). The Romantic view held that the intellect could never be separated from the passions that embodied it. The individual, for example, was said to have a need to speak out, and there was a call to personal narrative. Imagination was said to connect the remote, reinterpret the familiar, and help in the discovery of hidden realities (Barzun, 2001). Even scientific hypotheses, for example, were said essentially to be products of the imagination. This view of imagination explains why, for the Romantics, the arts were not simply a refined pleasure of the senses but a form of deep, creative reflection (Barzun, 2001). The power of a creative, sympathetic imagination gave the human mind the ability to grasp things as a whole through feeling, intuition, illumination and inwardness. The poet Coleridge went so far as to say that deep thinking was only attainable through feeling. The feeling for nature became a passionate veneration inviting love and spirituality. The poet Wordsworth saw nature not simply as a procession of seasons but as the eye of truth, both natural and supernatural, into which the individual soul could look and observe the spirit that inhabited all things (Albert, 1971).

8.2.2 Interplay of Opposites

Romanticists were also aware of the interplay of opposites in the human psyche. The theme of being and non-being was explored. Keats (1988, p. 346), for example, in *Ode to a Nightingale* expressed the wish to be transported to the world unseen, to “dissolve, and quite forget.” It is interesting that this almost sentimental view had changed in his sonnet *When I have fears that I may cease to be*, written as he approached his own death. (Keats, 1988, p. 221). In contemplating his wasting body and impending death, Keats highlighted the need to survive. Without his corporeal

being he would no longer be able to enjoy meaningful activity such as writing and being able to love.

Jung took the notion of opposites as indispensable preconditions of all psychic life (Jung, 1963, CW 14). In Jung's theory, the concept of intrinsic duality was important. Jung's Romantic leanings were clear in his view that the individual was at the mercy of one and then the other of a pair of opposites. The conflict offers no rational solution. Rather a third symbol had to reconcile the two (Jung, 1966, CW 16).

8.2.3 Symbols

Symbols were important in the Romantic vision because they could connect with depth, and convey that which was very difficult to express. Depth, in turn, was the recognition of profundity. Profundity was the acknowledgement that, whatever description was given to an entity, it ultimately opened doors to something further (Berlin, 1999). Nature, for example, was often a metaphor for the sublime, and attempts were made to reach the sublime through empathic involvement with nature. Meaning could emerge through this creative quest for aesthetic rapture. Thus, for Romanticists, the spirit took on a heightened value characterized by ineffable depth and contradiction. The self was viewed as having great depth, inner contradiction and a high degree of inner turmoil, which could only be managed in a non-rational way.

8.2.4 Effects of Industrialisation

Fromm (1970) pointed to other important features of the time, which were to have a significant bearing on the conceptualisation of the individual sense of self. For example, with the rise of industry men went to work and women stayed at home. There was a strengthening of the patricentric society with courage and heroism seen as characteristics of men. The image of women, claimed Fromm, was to be framed in terms of sentimentality and weakness. He asserted that in the place of motherly love as extending to all beings, a bourgeois sentiment of possessiveness was injected into the mother image. Fromm also maintained that the rise of Protestantism and Calvinism, in which fulfilment of duty and success were major driving forces in life

and pleasure and happiness were secondary, led indirectly to the internalisation of the image of productivity, striving and success:

The growth of man's productive capacity made it possible, for the first time in history, to visualize the realization of a social order that previously had only found expression in fairy tales and myths, an order where all men would be provided with the material means necessary for their real happiness, with relatively little expenditure of individual effort in actual labour, where men's energies would be expended primarily in developing their human potential rather than in creating the economic goods that are absolutely necessary for the existence of civilization (Fromm, 1970, p. 133).

8.2.5 Contradiction

The Romantic era exhibited many contradictions. Baumeister (1987) noted, for example, that the Romantic era had, as a quest, the replacement of Christian salvation with viable secular images of human salvation on earth. Selfhood could be realized through creative work and passion in the context of a rich inner life. Victorian repressiveness, however, and the high moral standards demanded of individuals meant that they had to become self-deceptive. Therefore, Enlightenment and Romantic visions were inherently incompatible. According to Tarnas (1996) this incompatibility represented a disjunction between mind and soul as well as between the outer and inner man. The two sensibilities were present in differing proportions in all individuals as reflective of their environments and personalities, and according to Tarnas, the two sensibilities remain in uneasy alliance to this day.

8.2.6 Cult of the Symbolic Hero

Romanticism valorised the cult of the symbolic hero by recognizing the complexity and “grandeur” of the human individual. The mythic theme of the hero overcoming difficulties was particularly significant. Self was seen as set on the path of conscious personal achievement, depth and mastery. Nietzsche (2002) claimed that moralists downplayed assertive values, and this led to mediocrity. This meant that gifted

individuals were “unselfed.” He made the call for individuals to live their lives to the full, and dare to realize their full potential (Magee, 2001). A new cluster of virtues appeared with the Romantic vision. The greatest virtue of all was what the Romantics called sincerity, and what the existentialists later called authenticity. Inner feeling was considered the guiding principle of selfhood. Inner feeling and sincerity or authenticity were to become the pivots of the humanistic movement (Berlin, 1999).

8.2.7 The Importance of the Unconscious

The unconscious was recognized as an inherent part of the human individual. Stevens (1990) noted that, by the end of the nineteenth century, a number of general conclusions had already been drawn about the nature of the unconscious mind and its bearing on cognition. First, it was recognized that many perceptual and ideational processes occur beneath the threshold of consciousness. Second, it was said that memories could be stored in the unconscious. Third, skills acquired through conscious effort, such as riding a bicycle or learning a foreign language could become automatic and then proceed unconsciously. Fourth, the unconscious is creative and produces dreams, symbols, images and ideas. Fifth, the unconscious can give rise to pathological states such as hallucinations, delusions and hysteria. Sixth, beneath the threshold of consciousness, sub-personalities can develop and be split off from consciousness. Finally, the unconscious is dynamic, and possesses psychic energy, which can be inhibited, sublimated or transferred from one psychic component to the other.

8.2.8 The Notion of Depth

According to Berlin (1999) the notion of depth, so treasured by the Romantics, led however, to the phenomena of a form of obsessiveness and a form of paranoia. An obsessive nostalgia arose out of the feeling that the infinite cannot be attained, and because individuals seek the infinite, they will never be satisfied. In allegory there was a search for the “treasure hard to attain.” The paranoia was an offshoot of the Romantics’ belief that individuals should move forward and destroy all obstacles so that they could soar and rise to great heights of spirit. However, it was also thought

that there was something dark in the depths of the unconscious, which intervened. This “something” was an indifferent, or even hostile form of nature, with which it was almost impossible to come to terms. The concept of the hero overcoming all odds was a dominant image but it was the image of the hero pulled by dark inner forces (Barzun, 2001).

8.3 Summary of Chapter Eight

Romanticism was a philosophical and intellectual movement and constituted a climate of opinion based on a reaction to entrenched Enlightenment values. Selfhood was seen in terms of human potential, freedom, uniqueness and the need for self-knowledge. Romanticism celebrated particular aspects of selfhood. The power of creative imagination gave the human mind the ability to grasp things as a whole through intuition. Romanticists recognised the interplay of opposites in the human psyche. Symbols became important because they were associated with depth and profundity. The Romantic vision upheld the belief in sincerity and transcendence. There was a belief in the disjunction between the inner aspects of the individual and the unconscious with its associated dark side. The individual was understood as being torn by inner forces while seeking transcendence.

8.4 Critical appraisal of Chapter Eight

A form of Neo-Romanticism persists today, showing the long-term effect of the Romantic influence. The force of the Romantic Movement lasted for roughly one hundred and fifty years and touched many areas. The different facets of Romanticism bring the changing individual self into bold relief. For example there was discussion about the rights of women, the emancipation of slaves and the need for prison reform. The Romantic view was that each person possessed individual freedom, every human experience was said to be valid and each individual needed to be true to his or her individuality. The Romantic quest was the assertion of self, which opened the individual to transcendent reality. As a psychological theorist, perhaps Jung best embodies the texture of Romanticism. Jung at times made great leaps of faith in his theorising. In his concept of duality, for example, Jung did not attempt to verify or

discuss his theory of opposites; he just applied it. He also introduced his method of creative, active imagination to assist the individual in contouring a new reality (Jung, 1971, CW 6). Yet as a psychiatrist, he conducted scientific experiments that gave rise to his Association Test (Jung, 1972, CW 2ii). Thus an important hallmark of Romanticism was the willingness to embrace a creative sense of mystery and contradiction.

Around this time Psychology began to develop into an important discipline, and had great bearing on the future conceptualisation of selfhood in the west. It is to psychology and to the associated notions of selfhood we now turn.



9 CHAPTER NINE. THE PSYCHOLOGISED DIRECTOR

9.1 Introduction

Against this backdrop of an evolving sense of self, psychology developed. Psychology grew out of philosophy and physiology, and essentially is the story of humans trying to gain a better self-understanding (Weiten, 2001). It can be argued that Psychology as a discipline could not come into its own until the self had reached a certain level of differentiation. What was the nature of self-differentiation noticeable by the time of Psychology's official birth around 1890.

There was the recognition of the vital importance of conscious awareness. There was great confidence in the human capacity for reason as a result of scientific discoveries. There was recognition that humans as subjects stood separate from objects, not fused with them, resulting in the push to individuality and personal autonomy. With increased secularisation and the loosening of the hold of Divine Power on the individual, the self came to be considered the personal possession of each individual. Emphasis on individual potential, which began with the Early Greeks, reached new heights with the result that the self was seen as a project to be worked on. The Protestant Reformation countered reliance on superstitious beliefs and stressed the need for individual control and contributed to the turn to personal inner self-reflection, creativity and a multiplicity of interests. At the same time, the Romantic celebration of the individual and the preoccupation with the power of imagination, escapism, the interplay of opposites, symbols, darkness and the irrational, paradoxically fanned the early usually Christian emphasis on inner vulnerability. The self-differentiation achieved as the western self evolved also led to a degree of compartmentalisation. The mind, the body, the emotions and behaviour for instance, were largely segmented, and this meant that many psychologists were able to explore discrete aspects of the individual thereby developing schools of thought around core preoccupations.

9.1.1 The Self in a Disciplinary Context

9.1.1.1 The Modern Sense of Self

The modern sense of self can be said to be the sense of self as described by theorists prior to the nineteen fifties and which, broadly speaking, stressed the unity of the self. The self has had an unusual history in psychology in that it has been in and out of favour, and with the advent of behaviourism was denied an existence at all. **James** (1950), however, stimulated interest in the self. In 1890, James published his work *The Principles of Psychology*. The main distinction James (1963) made was between the “me” and the “I.” The “me” is the self as known, and is publicly recognized and objectively constituted. The “me” is then constructed by the subjectively based “I.” James (1963, p. 166) contended that the empirical self could be divided into three components, namely the material self, the social self and the spiritual self.

a. The Material Self

James posited that the body is the innermost part of the material Self, and includes additional factors such as clothes, family, home and property.

b. The Social Self

In terms of the individual, the social self, according to James (1963, p. 168) “is the recognition which he gets from his mates.” He emphasised that we are gregarious, and need to be recognised. According to James, individuals all have as many social selves as there are people who recognise them, and individuals show different sides of themselves to different groups. A person’s fame, honour or dishonour are just names for one of the social selves. Using Locke’s concept of societal opinion, James contended that this group view is one of the very strong forces in life.

c. The Spiritual Self

The Spiritual Self as known by the “me” is a person’s inner subjectivity or the individual’s psychic faculties or dispositions, not the principle of personal Unity. The Spiritual Self, according to James, comprises the inward-looking point of view

or the person's states of consciousness. Part of this Spiritual stream is identified by the individual as being intensely important and is felt as an innermost centre, a circle, of sanctuary (James, 1950). This central part of the Self or nucleus, is experienced as palpitating, inward life.

James (1950) described feelings of self-complacency and self-dissatisfaction saying that these two opposite classes seem to be intrinsic parts of human nature. At the same time there is an average base line of self-feeling which each of us carries about with us and which, to some extent, is independent of the objective validations we may have for satisfaction or discontent. However, self-feeling is largely dependent on our actual success or failure and position held in the world. James (1963, p. 175) thus saw self-esteem in terms of the relationship between successes and failures.

$$\textit{Self esteem} = \frac{\textit{Success}}{\textit{Pretensions}}$$

James noted that we know how the barometer of our self-esteem, and confidence rises and falls from one day to another through causes that seem to be visceral and organic rather than rational. Individuals or seekers of the truest self need to review their list of selves carefully and need to choose the self most relevant to personal wishes and goals. James insisted that human thought is incessantly deciding among many things, and so individuals can choose amongst different selves. Moreover, according to James (1950, p. 310), peoples' self-feeling in the world depends on what they regard themselves as being, determined by the ratio of actualities to supposed potentialities. People arrange their various selves hierarchically according to their worth. With the material, social and spiritual selves the individual distinguishes between the immediate and actual, and the remote and potential. James posited that the pursuit of an ideal social self is that which is worthy of approval by the highest possible judging companion, which could include God or the Absolute Mind. Also, individuals consider the "me" as precious, and believe it must not fail. This is the direct feeling of regard for personal existence. James (1950, p. 329) outlined the empirical life of the Self, and this is set out in Table 2.

Table 2. The Empirical Life of the Self

	Material	Social	Spiritual
Self-seeking	Bodily appetites and instincts Love of adornment. Foppery, acquisitiveness, constructiveness, love of home, etc.	Desire to please, be noticed, admired, etc. Sociability, emulation, envy, love, pursuit of honour, ambition, etc.	Intellectual, moral and religious aspiration, conscientiousness
Self-estimation	Personal vanity, modesty, etc. Pride of wealth, fear of property	Social and family pride, vainglory, snobbery, humility, shame, etc.	Sense of moral or mental superiority, purity, etc. Sense of inferiority or guilt.

James (1950, p. 229)

James contended that the central part of the “me” is the feeling of the body, and the nucleus of the “me” is the felt body existence. Changes in the self can include changes caused by alterations in memory as well as alterations in the body and spiritual selves (James, 1950). James emphasises that the “me” self was the self as known to the individual whereas the “I” self constituted the unity of the self as knower.

In 1890 Mary **Calkins** approached James for permission to attend his seminars at Harvard. In time she began to dislike mainstream experimental psychology, believing it to be too impersonal in nature, and she began to focus on self-psychology. Calkins argued that, in the attempt to cleanse itself of metaphysical speculation, psychology deemed the concept of self to be unnecessary, and she continued to explore self-psychology even when behaviourism was at its height (Hergenhahn, 2001).

For Behaviourists the paradigm of the self was not really entertained at all. Behaviourism became the ruling view of psychologist from the 1920’s, especially in the United States. Hunt (1994) pointed out that this was mainly because it purported to be the first genuinely scientific psychology that was not tainted by nineteenth century philosophic speculation.

Against this background of rationality **Freud** opened up unexplored areas of the mind and changed the direction of modern psychology (Hergenhahn, 2001). For Freud, the sense of self was implied within, and was socialized in stages where desires needed to be kept in check by a censorious ego (Freud, 2003a). Freud's approach struck a responsive chord, and the dimensions of psychology were enlarged. In psychoanalytic theory the self differs from the ego in that it refers to subjects as they experience themselves. Ego refers to the personality as a structure and about which impersonal generalizations can be made. According to Freud infants lack any sense of self but acquire this sense by the introjection of parental objects. Brinich and Shelley (2002) pointed out that it was not until the "structural" phase of Freud's psychoanalytic theorizing, which lasted from the publication of *The Ego and the Id* in 1923 until his death in 1939, that he really began to pay attention to the question of a self, and to the personality structure. Brinich and Shelley stressed that Freud did not simply see his patients as collections of instinctual drives. His case histories demonstrate that he recognized that each patient brought to treatment a unique personality or self. It was, however, a conception of self that concentrated on aspects of self-deception and no heed was paid to the capacity for self-healing. Freud's negativism later led ego psychologists to turn to the constructive capacity of the ego (Roazen, 2000). Gellner (1993) stressed that the significant force of Freud's work lies in the fact that his system of ideas became a dominant idiom for general discussion of the human personality, so opening up the field of what constitutes a person, albeit it in a somewhat negative way.

Jung wrote to Freud in 1906 after reading his work on the interpretation of dream material (McGuire, 1991) and for some time collaborated with him. Later Jung decisively rejected Freud's view of libido as exclusively sexual energy, proposing that sexuality is but one form in which energy or libido can be channelled. Jung continued to develop his own model of the psyche. Unlike Freud, Jung held that it was not only the past which was responsible for neurotic conditions but also the present, together with the individual's goals and plans for the future (Jung, 1968, CW 9ii). Jung posited the existence of the ego-complex or the self. For Jung the ego represented how one sees oneself together with the conscious and unconscious feelings that form part of such a view. Ego seems to arise in the first place, said Jung, from the collision between the somatic factor and the environment, and once established as a subject, it

goes on developing as a result of further collisions between the outer world and inner world (Jung, 1968, CW 9 ii, p. 5). The Self, or the archetype of archetypes, is the organizing unifying system behind the whole personality. Gradually the ego develops a sense of independence from the Self while remaining related to it. The ego can repress memories into the personal unconscious but, buried even more deeply, is the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious is linked to Jung's theory of archetypes. Archetypes for Jung were patterns of psychic perception and understandings common to all human beings (Jung, 1960, CW 8, p. 137).

The idea of self was central to Jung's approach and is closely linked to his notion of individuation. According to Jung (1993, CW 18), the collective unconscious is an important source of psychic growth, and he believed in a viable relationship between the conscious and unconscious levels of existence. This Self, usually written in the upper case, is the archetype of wholeness, and is an image of the individual's fullest potential. The self in the lower case, in most texts, refers to the ego (Jung, 1971, CW 6 p. 460). Jung discovered symbols of the Self in most of the world's religions and he believed that the Self was a manifestation of a higher principle in the human psyche, which in turn, could be construed as the inner God-image (Jung, 1968, CW 9ii). The Self, according to Jung, has an integrative power while the psyche has a purposive power, and the two are related. The phenomenon of the Self, Jung felt, manifests in meaningful events, uncanny solutions, transformation of attitudes and synchronistic phenomena. At the same time Jung's Romantic leanings linked Self to the shadow:

Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it. Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modification. But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected, and is liable to burst forth suddenly in a moment of unawareness. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well meant intentions (Jung, 1958, CW 11, para. 131).

Adler (1921, 1929a, 1929b, 1932, 1938), like Jung, also broke away from Freud's circle, arguing against the heavy emphasis on sexuality, and he developed his own

views of selfhood. Adler laid great stress on lifestyle, which he said was not the same as the behavioural patterns of a person's life. Rather, behaviour springs from the individual's unique style of life. Thus a lifestyle is a cognitive construction of what a person is in the process of becoming (Adler, 1932). He stressed that people are not at the mercy of circumstances but can interpret the situations and use the information in a creative way. Individuals then can follow a personal path to reaching their goals:

No experience is a cause of success or failure. We do not suffer from the shock of our experiences – the so-called trauma – but we make out of them just what suits our purposes. We are self-determined by the meaning we give to our experiences; and there is probably something of a mistake always involved when we take particular experiences as the basis for our future life (Adler, 1932, p. 14).

Adler (1929a, p. 3) emphasised that “we cannot think, feel, will or act without the perception of some goal.” Thus we move towards a fictional finalism or we live our narrative. He also emphasised the unity of mind and body and the personality as a whole (Adler, 1932). Adler held that life problems impose tasks on the individual:

It is impossible to form a right estimate of an individual without knowledge of the structure of his life problems and the task they impose upon him. His essential nature is revealed to us only by his attitude towards them and by what takes place within him as the result of that attitude. We have to find out if he plays his part, hesitates, comes to a standstill, tries to evade his task, and seeks and invents excuses for this evasion; whether he finds a partial solution of his problem and outgrows it, or leaves it unsolved and follows courses that are injurious to the community in order to win the glory of a personal superiority (Adler, 1938, p. 42).

For Adler, the questions of life concerned three major problems namely communal-life, work and love. He maintained that to be a human being means that the individual is closely linked to others, that to be a human being means being linked to other human beings. Thus a sense of fellowship and social interest has to be developed emphasising that every human being “strives for significance; but people always make mistakes if they do not see that their whole significance must consist in their

contribution to the lives of others” (Adler, 1932, p. 8). In fact Adler viewed pathology as resulting from a lack of social interest, inefficient coping strategies, and an excessive preoccupation with one’s self. Adler proposed that the human being functions in a purposeful manner, and that the striving for superiority forms the primary goal. This desire for superiority can be expressed in various ways. The individual’s style of life acts as a reference point for attitudes, reflexive views of self and of others, the world and for personal behaviour. For Adler, it was very important to realise that individuals develop a guiding self-ideal based on a scheme that leads to a fictional final goal. Fictions essentially arise, said Adler, because individuals are born into a gendered world where there are hierarchical dynamics. The internalisation of these hierarchies becomes blended within a subjective sense of competency or inferiority in the individual, providing the base for a sense of selfhood.

Allport (1949, 1961, 1965) advocated that the qualitative study of the individual was an approach, which could do justice to complexity and uniqueness. He believed that, despite their complexity, individuals revealed a basic congruence or unity. Moreover, he asserted that people are more influenced by the present than by the past. Allport (1965) pointed out that the simplest way to characterise the positivist view of human beings was to say they are reactive. He argued that terms beginning with the prefix *re* connote passivity or being pushed or manoeuvred. Allport noted that far more *re* words are used in psychology such as regress, reaction or response than *pro* words such as promise, proactive or proceeding.

Allport embraced a large number of concepts in trying to understand individuals, including habit, attitude, trait, self and personality. He also believed that personality mediates between the individual, the physical, and the psychological environments. Allport was aware of the confusion that could result from use of the word self and leaned towards use of the word proprium. The proprium, said Allport, includes bodily sense, self-identity, self-esteem, self-extension, rational thinking, self-image, and the function of knowing. The proprium was said to develop over time and thus was not innate. Allport (1949) maintained that there are two levels of human functioning: opportunistic functioning, motivated by drives and needs, and propiuate functioning, which refers to things the individual considers personal and significant, together with the inclination and ability to act in accordance with personal choices and values.

These functions are at the core of the personality and are important because they organize personality and help provide unity from within. Thus accurate self-knowledge is vital. Propriate functions include a sense of bodily self, self-identity, a sense of self worth, self-extension, a self-image, rational coping skills and propiate striving. The first propiate function to develop is the experience of the body, and the sense of bodily self remains an anchor for self-awareness, even though the nature of this awareness changes. Possessions become incorporated into the self, and the adult focuses on extended aspects of the self and wants to achieve something in life. The sense of identity and self-worth facilitates differentiation into an image of personal attributes and their evaluation.

Allport identified three types of self-image: the image of yourself, as you are, the image of yourself as you should be, and the image of yourself as you would like to be. Self-image is formed through the opinions of others, and through direct personal experience. He maintained that, by six years of age, rational coping begins to be incorporated into the self-image. By adolescence great value is placed on personal rational solutions. Propiate striving begins to emerge in adolescence in terms of making long-term life plans, and in cherishing ideals for the future. He noted that propiate striving is linked to the formation of a value system, and the value system then influences other propiate functions. In his theorising, Allport considered motivation, values and goals but stressed the need for a concept of a core self, or propiate functioning.

Allport has been criticized for not considering the influence of the environment on the individual sense of self. In his evaluation of a mature person Allport (1949, p. 217-231) cited three attributes, namely the extension of the self in wide areas of living and being, personal insight and humour as well as a unifying philosophy of life. He also expressed the belief in the need for continual individual self-improvement. At the same time Allport (1961) emphasised that growing old is simply part of the life process, and ageing is not necessarily the same as maturing. He maintained that creativity also involved in the process of getting older. Selfhood is not a question of maturity versus immaturity because “there are many good things in life besides maturity of the personality” (Allport, 1961, p. 305).

Erikson (1950, 1958, 1968, 1997) directed attention to the question of personal identity. Erikson trained under Anna Freud, and his approach reflected Freud's later ideas, where Freud saw the ego fulfilling a larger role. Erikson (1950) stated that ego denotes the human capacity to unify experience and action in an adaptive manner. He believed that development was the result of two simultaneous influences, namely social and genetic factors. Certain characteristics then emerge, following the biological epigenetic principle, or an underlying ground plan. For Erikson, psychological factors develop sequentially just as the body develops sequentially. Erikson outlined eight stages of life development, and was one of the first, after Jung, to turn attention to development in later life. The psychological, and social involvement is newly extended in each stage of life allied to psychobiological growth that dictates the sequence, leading to the development of strengths necessary to cope with an ever increasing social radius (Erikson, Erikson & Kivnik, 1986). Erikson proposed two dispositions at each life stage, the syntonic and dystonic, which require life involvement for their balance. Roazen (2000) stressed that, essentially, Erikson was intent on emphasizing the concept of ego strength, and how contradictions and tensions could be successfully integrated by a healthy ego. Erikson was interested in how much conflict an individual could integrate, not only conflict that had been denied, and argued that society and religion could play a constructive role in ego development. It is clear from the tone of Erikson's writing that he retained a Freudian orientation in positing a conflicted self. Later Erikson (1986) broadened his view of the self, and saw individual identity also in terms of the soul.

Jacobi (1990) examined analytic approaches to the self. He pointed out that the terms ego and self had acquired subtle nuances, and he paid particular attention to the work of **Hartman, Neumann, Kohut, Mahler and Winnicott**. The issue of self was gaining momentum in analytic circles, and some lines of thought were becoming obscure because of varying points of departure and undifferentiated terminology. Hartman gave the ego more functional autonomy than Freud (Smith, 2001). Neumann (1990, p. 24) highlighted the focus of development of self and the relationship to the mother. He maintained that this primal relationship provides the child with four essential types of experience, namely relationship to the body, to the Self, to the "thou", and to the world. The self could not develop without these fundamental relationships. Mahler turned attention to child development and autism.

Brinich and Shelley (2002) noted that Mahler did not put the self at the forefront of development but her concepts of “hatching” and “psychological birth” imply a sense of a developing self. Kohut (1978) outlined a self-theory, and his construct of the self was tied to a “self object” or caregiver, usually the mother. In childhood, play produces a nuclear self around stories and other forms of pretending, and self is essentially the experience of one’s own self. The way people permanently structure their beliefs, feelings, and memories provide a sense of “me.” For Kohut, the notion of the self-object replaced Freud’s instinctive drives (Smith, 2001). In Britain, Winnicott set out a version of object-relations theory. Through the mother’s caring for the infant’s body, the infant learns about the mother as other, and learns to feel itself as a person. When the developing self feels threatened it splits into a true self, and a false self that complies with external demands (Smith, 2001).

Sullivan (1953, 1956) posited three components of identity: dynamism, personification and the self-system. Dynamism was said to be the smallest unit of behaviour that could be measured. Personification was the image people have of themselves or of others, and the self-system was said to be the dynamism that develops to protect the individual from anxiety through anxiety reduction. The self-system was said to represent the self-personification, or what the individual refers to as the unity of an “I” or “me.” The self-system can be a detrimental force in that it can prevent people from learning from experience or even from being exposed to new experiences. Sullivan (1980), like Erikson, also linked personality development to social determinants, and he noted that the transition phases between stages can be more important than the stages themselves. Sullivan positioned the individual in relation to the social context, highlighting that the self was not only a question of inner determinants. Fromm extended the notion self in relation to society.

Fromm (1970) emphasized that individuals struggle to retain self worth and freedom in the face of societal pressure to conform. Such societal pressure for conformity leads to alienation and isolation. Roazen (2000) pointed out that Fromm did not object to Freud’s view of drives, but to the biased world-view in which the theory was anchored. Fromm argued that certain needs arise from simply being human; these needs include the need for relatedness, the need for transcendence, the need for rootedness, the need for personal identity, and the need for a frame of reference.

Fromm distinguished between productive orientation and a non-productive orientation. Productive orientation is characterized by love, generosity, creativity, independence and rationality. Unproductive orientation involves the surrender of integrity through the demands of excessive personal needs or through the force of social demands. Such a non-productive orientation was characterized by narcissism, selfishness, conformity, dependence and irrationality.

Horney (1937, 1939, 1967) reviewed her position with regard to the self after moving to the United States, acknowledging that biological determinism was not appropriate to the Americans of the Depression. Horney (1937, p. viii) stressed that when “we realise the great import of cultural conditions on neuroses the biological and physiological conditions, which are considered by Freud to be their root, recede in the background.” Horney began to concentrate on the interaction of the persona and the environment rather than on the opposing forces within the personality, which was characteristic of the psychoanalytic school. She distinguished between the idealized self, the actual self as represented by how people act in daily life, and the real self. The real self, said Horney, is the self that emerges when the individual has let go of strategies for handling anxiety and conflict, and is free to move in the direction of growth.

Laing (1961, 1990) pointed to the fact that the conscious self has two components; awareness of oneself by oneself, and awareness of oneself as the object of another person’s observation. Laing (1961) examined the dissolution of self, and argued that it was far more possible than generally supposed to understand people who had been diagnosed as psychotic in terms of a feeling of inner self-division. Laing (1961) distinguished between the embodied and unembodied self. The embodied person has a sense of unity, a sense of being flesh and blood, and a sense of being alive and real. This individual has the sense of being in a body and so having continuity in time. The unembodied self views the body as detached, and such an individual becomes hyper conscious. Laing examined the nature of the self in the schizoid position with reference to the false self, saying that when the centre fails to hold neither self-experience or body experience can retain integrity or cohesiveness. Central to Laing’s view is that the child has to develop a sense of being the origin, or source from which his or her actions arise and this, essentially, is the foundation of the self. Laing (1961,

p. 117) pointed out that each individual acquires significance by holding a “position” in another person’s world. Individuals need to know they have a place of some significance. Thus a sense of self requires the other but, at the same time, the other may behave in such a way as to contaminate what is real and what is false. This can lead to self-confusion, loss of meaning and thus a sense of instability and disunity within the self.

One cognitive approach to the self is that of **Markus**. Markus (1977) examined self in regard to self-schemata and the processing of information about the self. Markus contended that self-schemata are cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience; these schemata organize and guide the processing of the self-related information contained within the individual’s social experience. Markus also posited possible selves or the people we would like to become. These possible selves then serve as motivators. Thus behaviour can be seen in terms of approach or avoidance of possible selves and the protection of a particular view of the self (Cavanaugh, 1997).

Carl **Rogers** (1942, 1980) was a prominent figure in the humanistic movement. Rogers (1942) believed that humans live in a continually changing world of experience with themselves at the centre. The field of experience is real for each individual, and the total perceptual field becomes differentiated as the self. Through evaluative interaction with others and with the environment the actual structure of the self emerges. The self, therefore, is a fluid yet organized conceptual pattern of perceptions related to the characteristics of an “I” or “me.” Any experience that is inconsistent with the organization of the self is seen as a threat and, as a result, the self-structure is organized in a rigid way to protect itself. Behaviour is goal directed in order to satisfy needs, and emotion facilitates goal directed behaviour. Rogers felt that once individuals recognized and accepted their self-structure, so replacing ideas based on distorted introjections, they become more understanding of others. The self-concept is the symbolic version of the organism’s experiential field. However, if the individual denies a large part of the symbolized world of experience, then incongruence and anxiety result. Rogers referred to two basic defence mechanisms, namely distortion and denial. With distortion the incongruent experience is distorted to fit the self-concept. With denial the experiences that are not congruent with the

self-concept are ignored. Rogers (1980, p. 43) stressed that if he could bring a climate of marked “genuineness, prizing and understanding” to the counselling relationship then clients could move away from rigidity and defensiveness towards flexibility, and could exhibit living proof of an actualising tendency. Through the valuing process individuals exhibit changes within the self and these changes highlight what constitutes the capacity of selfhood. Rogers noted that individuals, who were positively valued in therapy, moved away from facades, defensiveness and meeting the expectations of others. Instead the individuals came to value their own selves. According to Brazier (1995) phenomenology and humanism came together for western psychology in the work of Rogers, and he helped bridge the east-west divide. At the same time, said Brazier, little is written in the person-centred approach about death, disease, loss, guilt and tragedy, and all dilemmas individuals are prey to, which give rise to human suffering. The optimistic spirit together with a sense of omnipotence prevails and problems are not squarely addressed. This approach does not give sufficient weight to the fact that people are not omnipotent and are part of something greater than the self (Brazier, 1995).

Maslow (1965, 1968, 1970) is associated with the notion of self-actualisation, and is often said to be the first humanistic psychologist mainly because of his concept of the creative self. Maslow saw the creative self as a matter of creative choice. Through Maslow’s efforts, the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* was founded in 1961. Humanistic psychologists stress that humans are more than objects, and that psychologists need to understand those who are in the process of reaching their full potential. Maslow saw the individual in terms of needs. The lower the needs in the hierarchy the more similar they are to needs of other animals. The needs outlined by Maslow include (in ascending order) physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs and finally self-actualisation. According to Maslow (1970, p. 28) self actualising persons:

...have a feeling of belongingness and rootedness, they are satisfied in their love needs, have friends and feel loved and worthy, they have status and place in life and respect from other people, and they have a reasonable feeling of worth and self respect. If we phrase this negatively – in terms of frustration of these basic needs and in terms of pathology – then this is to say that self actualizing people

do not (for any length of time) – feel anxiety-ridden, rootless or isolated, nor do they have crippling feelings of inferiority or worthlessness.

Self-actualizers, said Maslow (1968, p. 87), have periodic mystic or peak experiences and in the “cognition of peak experiences the will does not interfere” but, rather, there is a sense of flow and acceptance. The will receives but does not demand in such experiences of awe and wonder. Maslow concluded that when individual basic needs are met, instead of being deficiency-motivated, people could become being-motivated, and then would be open to a wider range of experience. Physiological needs such as safety needs, belonging, and love needs and esteem needs all have to be met before self-actualisation can take place. Maslow (1970) posited that the introjection of B-values, or being values, means the self has enlarged to include aspects of the world, as well as the distinction between self and not self. Later in his life, Maslow pursued transpersonal psychology, replacing the third force of a humanistic psychology. He believed that a transpersonal psychology, or fourth force, could focus on the mystical and spiritual aspects of human existence because spiritual life is part of the human essence and represents a defining characteristic of human nature.

Maslow (1965) argued that psychology should be more humanistic, should turn to the study of philosophy, be less absorbed with means and methods, become more positive and look to health rather than to sickness and should become more creative. In addition psychologists should study the depths as well as the surfaces of human nature. “Most psychologists are content to work with a portion of the human being indeed making a virtue out of such limitation” (Maslow, 1965, p. 23). Rather, the framework for the sense of self should be more optimistic and structured in terms of potential and fulfilment.

For Baumeister, (1987) the present framework for the modern sense of self has been greatly influenced by the human potential movement, and is too heavily understood within this frame of potential and fulfilment. In terms of selfhood and potential, Baumeister noted that there are three types of problems. One concerns how to form a specific concept of one’s potential. The second is how to fulfil this potential, while

the third involves how to deal with the frustration if the potential is indeed not fulfilled. Perhaps Maslow answered this himself:

We must remember, too, that end-experiences need not be only the peak-experiences of life. We gain milder rewards in simple zest for living, in having fun, in all the activities that are done for their own sake. A healthy organism enjoys just being. Our over pragmatic psychology passes all this by (Maslow, 1965, p. 31).

Frankl (1978, 1984, 1986, 1988) addressed several issues including narrative, context, philosophy, meaning, and self. Frankl's narrative turn is noticeable in his story telling, and in the discussions with his students and patients where listening to the individual story is paramount (Frankl, 1988). Frankl (1986; 1988) stressed that humans reach out towards encounter with the world, and with others. Humans can effect self-transcendence through conscience, and through choice, "being human always means being directed, and pointing to something, or someone" other than self (Frankl, 1988, p. 26). Moreover, humans are "reaching out for, and actually reaching, finally attaining the world - a world, that is, which is replete with other beings to encounter and meanings to fulfil" (Frankl, 1988, p. 31). Frankl stressed that meaning is contextual, is highly individual and implies choice as well as responsibility. According to Frankl, we live in an age of crumbling traditions, and individuals need to refine the capacity to find their own unique meanings. The individual has to find meaning because meaning cannot be given. Meaning, said Frankl (1988), is related to values. There are three sets of values, creative, existential and attitudinal. Frankl maintained that creative values concern what is given to life in terms of creations, whereas experiential values concern what is taken from life in terms of encounters and experiences, and while attitudinal values refer to the stand the individual takes towards a predicament that cannot be changed. These values, said Frankl are the three principal ways humans can find meaning in life through self-transvaluation. The self is preserved through recognition of what is safely deposited in the past, and in turn, the past can be used to activate creative, experiential or attitudinal value potentialities. Earlier views held that the self was incorporated within the divine will of God. Early modern concepts of the true self were characterised by the Cartesian model of self-

awareness as the basis of all knowledge, and by Rousseau's concept of discovering the enduring, authentic nature of the self. With the Enlightenment came secularisation, rationalisation and the ideology of individualism. The dominant contemporary western humanistic belief became one whereby the true self lies within the individual and is the possession and responsibility of the person.

According to Shaffer (1978) an important impetus towards humanism arose out of the feeling of alienation especially in American society. There was said to be alienation from the body, from feelings, from one another and within society as expressed in lack of commitment and purpose. Urban culture was becoming fragmented, and people existed in isolated, small reference groups. Humanistic psychology became a potential source of vitalisation through the celebration of the individual sense of self because of the insistence on personal wholeness, the emphasis on conscious experience, the belief in human potential, and the insistence that human beings have choices and retain an essential freedom and autonomy. Openness to individual experience and the sharing of such experience led to acceptance of the inherent validity of the personal narrative. In turn the collapse of essentialism and the questioning of grand narratives led to a postmodern focus on the individual narrative.



9.1.1.2 Postmodernism and the Self

Postmodernist is the term usually given to the range of philosophical positions and aesthetic styles that emerged in the nineteen fifties and, which celebrated individual narratives and the notion of multiplicity (Lyon, 1994). Over time, the notion of Providence was replaced by the notion of progress. Modernism had flowered as a mixture of Enlightenment values and the desire for self-awareness. Great hopes were held for human liberation, social change and progress but these were dashed in the disillusionment of the Second World War. After the War, economies were rebuilt, inventions flourished, and there was a technological explosion. Increased prosperity led to consumer spending, increased travel and wider communication. Life became faster and more uncertain as change accelerated, and scientific discoveries questioned established truths. Modern physics called into question ideas about time, space, and matter and value and meaning became relativised (O'Donnell, 2003). Postmodernists

emphasized that human knowledge is limited to human discourse, and consequently humans cannot have access to outer knowledge. Grand narratives are said to overstate their claims and are partial, so limiting knowledge and preventing flexibility. Moreover, postmodernists are suspicious of all encapsulating truths that seek to justify rigid positions (Lyon, 1994). Postmodernism has influenced notions of the self especially through the interest in narratives; through the questioning of ideas, and meaning; and through scepticism about the stories that have been generally told to explain humans (Ward, 2003). Postmodernists believe that reality is socially constructed, constituted by language and created by the stories we tell about our world and ourselves, yet there are always alternative stories to be told about reality. Postmodernists do not believe that thoughts, desires, intentions, feelings, selves and consciousness are real phenomena that exist inside people but are social constructions. Thus being a person does not mean there is a continuous unitary self but multiplicity and surfaces of interaction. Social is given primacy over the individual, the mental is language and the self is fragmented and discontinuous (Vollmer, 2000).

Postmodernism can essentially be said to rest on the significance of language. Prehistory has shown just how important language acquisition was in the development of the human species. Language reflects thought and thought in turn is moulded by language. Language makes abstract thought and concepts possible, and an awareness of the problem of language goes back to the Early Greeks. But it was only in the 1960's that language really came to be studied in a systematic way. Linguistics is the study of language on all levels including grammar, sounds, meaning, social use and physical and psychological origin. The philosophy of language tends to examine how words relate to reality, truth and meaning. But language is also important in terms of understanding human experience. Indeed linguistics and the philosophy of language have impacted on psychologists' understanding of the individual. Psychologists therefore are in many ways indebted to those who have investigated aspects of language including names such as Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Kant, Brentano, Wittgenstein, Quine, Searle, Ogden and Bloomfield. Many psychologists are interested in the interface of language and the individual, and this interface is represented by narrative.

The self has always found expression through narrative. We continually tell others who we are and what we are doing; we share parts of ourselves with those with whom we come in contact. We tell chapters and episodes of our life stories. Giving oral expression to life events is so basic to human functioning that it has generally gone unnoticed. McLeod (1997) noted that, in academic circles, the term narrative is now preferred to story because it sounds more professional. McLeod pointed out that a narrative is simply a story-based account of happenings. For Berger (1997), narrative has different levels including stories or sequences of events, texts or the variations of stories, and fables or individual events. From early times, stories or narratives have revealed themselves as made up of interrelated elements, all of which contribute to the underlying aim of making sense of experience. According to Spence (1982, p. 33) narrative is “the representation of a process, of a self in conversation with itself and with its world over time.” Narratives are not records of facts but represent a meaning-making system that makes sense out of the mass of perceptions and experiences of a life.

9.1.1.2 Postmodernism: Narrative and Self in a Disciplinary Context

For postmodernists, being a person does not mean there is a continuous unitary self but only multiple surfaces of interaction (Vollmer, 2000). The developing focus on linguistics drew attention to the question of narrative in relation to the self. It is sometimes argued that James, Freud and Jung all had an early intuitive understanding of the narrative nature of selfhood. According to Barresi and Jukes (1997), even though James did not focus on the process of self-narrative, his concept of the “me” as an object of self-awareness provides a base for narrative self-construction, and therefore marks a very important point of departure in psychology. Some thinkers contend that Freud (2003a) was really the first to make use of the story in psychology by offering psychoanalytical interpretations of individual case studies. Freud was perhaps the first psychologist to use narrative to examine the structure and functions of consciousness as well as that of unconscious mental activities. Barresi and Jukes (1997) noted that, by focusing on biological instincts and structural dynamics outside of the narrative consciousness of the individual concerned, Freud’s formulations did little to assist in the understanding of the person as a narrative agent. There have been

subsequent developments in narrative methodology in psychoanalysis, with the focus on helping the patient to become involved in the process of generating a coherent narrative of his or her own life. Such narratives are far less concerned with postulating causal mechanisms associated with personal history than with finding a narrative truth that the patient finds meaningful (Barresi and Juckes, 1997). Jung made use of the story medium in psychology and he did so in diverse ways. Jung's approach always embraced narrative in constructing the clients' world through the use of the dream story, and through art, movement, and symbolic reconstruction. The analyst would assist with interpreting dreams, which were seen to stand in a compensatory relationship to the conscious world. Jung stressed that the dream story represented a personal narrative whose meaning was personal, but in some instances collective (Jung, 1960, CW 8). Postmodern theorising took a significant turn as can be seen especially in the works of French thinkers.

Derrida (1978, 1998) has been a prime figure in the postmodern movement. Derrida posited that reality exists only in texts, and thus the only reality is fictional. Meaning then emerges out of the ever-changing present and its context. Derrida's style of reading texts, called deconstruction, was based on his argument that western thought relies on the concept of a centre and this spawns binary opposition. This means that one side of the binary opposition is privileged and the other marginalized and so ignored. Deconstruction then brings to attention that which has been omitted. The spoken word is said to guarantee the existence of someone, or a self, doing the speaking, and Derrida called this the metaphysics of presence. The idea of being or presence is central to western philosophy. In binary opposition, presence is favoured over absence, and speech is favoured with presence, and this posits a centre from which all systems operate. At the core or centre of mental and emotional life is a self or an "I" centre. Western philosophy, said Derrida, has terms that serve as centres to systems; words such as truth, form, and consciousness. Such terms guarantee that all the parts of the system interrelate. For Derrida, the meaning of texts can be plural and unstable. Through deconstruction Derrida sought to expose how the language used in various fields created presence or existence, which then claimed truth status. In his use of the concept of difference, Derrida sought to highlight the movement within language itself and the elusiveness of meaning.

Foucault (1974a, 1974b, 1977, 1988) argued that the modern notion of the self is linked to the workings of social structures and institutions. Individuals cannot therefore stand apart from the exercise of power. Foucault also challenged the notion that language carried truth. He maintained that language determines what humans actually think. Language, Foucault stressed, is derived from the cultural power sources, and so power sources structure our lives. In *Discipline And Punish* (1977), for example, Foucault showed how cultural power shaped the individual sense of self. In the eighteenth century, with the Enlightenment, there was more systematic control over the individual in society, which resulted in a change from punishment that affected the body to reform and chastisement aimed at the soul. Other Post-modern thinkers of note include Wittgenstein, Lyotard, Ricoeur, Gadamer, Habermas, and Lacan. Postmodernists challenge the assumption of a subjective self, apart from a discourse community, because they argue that the knower merges with the known.

Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1968) as a phenomenologist, wanted to reverse the alienation between self and other and between body and world caused by the modernist accounts of selfhood founded on self-determination and self-grounding. Merleau-Ponty believed it was important to do away with the Cartesianism that suffuses western thought and adopt a dialogical world-view. For Merleau-Ponty, the self was an active, engaged agent and initiator, and not simply an effect of external power relations as many postmodernists have suggested. The self is intertwined with the world and involves dynamic process and cycles, growth, change, birth and death within a dialogical position.

Bakhtin's (1963) polyphonic of opposing voices introduced the notion of dialogue and spatialisation of the mind. At the centre of Bakhtin's thinking is a dynamic perception of language and concern with meaning. The dialogue and spatialisation allow a differentiation between the inner world of one and the same individual and the utterances of imaginal others. Discourse could be studied only as a responsive interaction between at least two social beings. The responsive interaction between speakers is an interchange in time and space, and enables language to produce new meaning. The polyphonic embraces crisis and turning points, depicting lives on the threshold. The dialogue is ongoing, and individuals remain internally unfinalised because in living they are essentially unfinalisable.

Lacan (1966, 1967, 1978) argued that the “I” self could not control or take the place of the unconscious because the “I” self is an illusion being a product of the unconscious. Like many French thinkers of the time, Lacan was influenced by the Surrealists who explored the boundaries between rationality and irrationality and between form and chaos. For Lacan, humans gain access to themselves and gain identity through language. The unconscious, for Lacan, is structured like a language. Wishes, desires and images are said to be signifiers, and these form a signifying chain. The unconscious is a circulating chain of signifiers with no anchor or, to use Derrida’s term, “centre.” For Lacan, becoming an adult “self” is the process of stabilizing the chain of signifiers so that stable meaning is achieved and an “I” becomes possible. Lacan maintained that the ego is formed in infancy by fixing on an image outside of itself, and this he called the mirror phase. The child is also influenced by the social world and by the stream of signifiers of language, and thus language predates the ego. Lacan posited that as infants we gain a deluded sense of identity through identification with images and reflections between the ages of six to eighteen months. The child then sees the image of itself as an independent being or self and then learns to identify with this image. In adult life the individual constantly looks for this inner unity, which was experienced in childhood reflection. According to Lacan the ideal ego is the original image formed in infancy, and the ego ideal is the image of self, formed by the wider social symbolic order. Lacan (1978, p. 297) asserted that the symbolic order allows absolute beginnings and creation because the “I” can be creatively carried forward by the entire discourse, which preceded it. The view that humans do not think their thoughts, and are but the bearers of discourses with selves being discursively constructed, has appealed to social constructionists.

Gergen (1971, 1996) asserted that the relationships between people are culturally and historically situated. The world is then understood through the nature of relationships, and knowledge is the product of communal relations. An account of the world is sustained, not through external validity, but through social process. Language is a pattern of words that, in turn, gain their significance and meaning within the context of relationships. Moral and ethical issues in constructionism are approached relative to a social context. Thus self, for constructionists, is an interpretative perspective. Gergen (1971) maintained that the individual’s specialized concept of self arises through the appraisal of others, by the labelling of personal dominant behaviour

patterns, by scanning the social environment, and through role playing. Gergen believed there is greater self-alienation in society now because society is more complex. The three main sources of self-alienation include being in situations where personal behaviour violates desired identity aspirations, having to behave in ways inconsistent with dominant self-belief, and behaving in a way that is unrelated to the person's most salient ways of viewing the self. Gergen pointed out that patterns of daily life are largely repetitive. The individual becomes identified with repetitive behaviour and so labels become reinforced. A paradox, however, said Gergen, lies in the fact that in a multiplex social environment, in order to relate successfully over a wide range of relationships, it is not productive to bind behaviour to a limited set of self-conceptions.

Murray (1965, 1990) investigated individual lives using primarily narratives in order to understand personality development. Murray was influenced by the work of Freud, and had also been analysed by Jung, thereby having some knowledge of the narrative orientation. Murray developed the Thematic Apperception Test, which relies on the individual's response in story form to a scene on a card (Pervin, 1996). Murray considered the individual's life history as very important, and so he was naturally attracted to a narrative methodology. He believed that psychologists needed to recognize the individual contextually, as situated in the past, present and future, in order to understand overt behaviour and mental states. Murray emphasised that narratives have the capacity to hold in tension different levels of being. He also published work on the life of Herman Melville, and highlighted the psycho-narrative's capacity to reveal depth (Barresi & Juckes, 1997).

Tomkins (1962, 1966, 1990) took a broad interest in the nature of the self, arguing that psychologists should not only focus on the causal mechanisms behind individual functioning but should also consider culture and ideology. Tomkins (1966, p. 73) used the word ideology in the sense of any organised set of ideas "about which human beings are at once most articulate and most passionate, and for which there is no evidence and about which they are least certain." Through empirical research he found that how individuals come to view themselves had wide repercussions. Tomkins maintained that how positively or negatively people view themselves and other human beings "determines their general posture toward the entire ideological

domain” (Tomkins, 1966, p. 97). Tomkins (1990) also took a narrative perspective, and developed his script theory from earlier work (1962) on affect as the amplifier of experience. The power of affect can magnify the urgency of some aspects of a situation, and so give direction to the particular situation or scene. Scenes become organized wholes, situated in place and time with a cast and characters. Scripts are then built out of the scenes (Barresi & Juckes, 1997). Tomkins’ interest in drama is certainly apparent in his theory. Tomkins asserted that, while affect remains the supreme motivator in life, scenes and scripts are the great organizers. There are various types of scripts including nuclear, commitment, ideological and affect management. Script theory is flexible in that what is important for one person may not be so for another. For example, two people may have equally intense traumatic experiences but they may have very different settings, a different cast of characters, and a different affect structure. Tomkins considered persons as playwrights who fashion their own personal dramas from the earliest weeks of life. The basic component of the drama is the scene or memory of a particular happening. Certain kinds of scenes appear frequently, and certain groupings of scenes can be discerned. Scripts outline the relationship between the various scenes and individuals organize the different scenes in their lives according to their personalized scripts. Barresi and Juckes (1997) illustrated how the idea of a nuclear script was used to understand the work of the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne’s personal nuclear script comes through clearly in his writing, and his work can be considered under the themes of: Who is my father? Where is my mother? Where do I live? Where do I belong? Tomkins (1962) highlighted the body-mind unity with his investigation of the affective system. He argued that natural selection could have favoured particular affective and behavioural characteristics in humans. Tomkins maintained that natural selection heightened, in humans, three distinct classes of affect namely affect for the preservation of life, affect for people and affect for novelty. Tomkins stressed that:

The human being is equipped with innate affective responses which bias him to want to remain alive and to resist death...If this is so, it is clear that his integration of these needs cannot be perfect, nor can he be more than imperfectly adapted to his changing environment (Tomkins, 1962, p. 27).

Script theory accommodates human imperfections, and offers a wide scope for the multiplicity inherent in the personal narrative.

White (1995) affirmed the power of the story medium by asserting that individuals are active in interpreting experiences as they live their lives. He believed that it is not possible to interpret experience without access to a frame of intelligibility by providing a context for experience, that makes the attribution of meaning possible. The acts of interpretation are significant achievements because the narrator has to stretch his or her meaning-making resources to make sense of all the contradictions and ambiguities. The horizon becomes broader as sub-stories have to be invoked, because the dominant stories cannot be easily interpreted. White (1995) maintained that the dominant story in our culture is one that emphasizes self-containment, self-possession, and self-actualisation. This is a specification of a preferred way of being that is limiting, and can give rise to problematic internalising conversations. Narrative and stories are externalising conversations, which can dis-empower these internal, problematic conversations. It is by reflecting on our history that unique outcomes or alternative stories can emerge through identifying preferred values and commitments in life. White underscored the fact that memory is structured by means of the narrative, or the personal story, and that through exploring narratives, there can be a restructuring of memory. He asserted that stories have dual landscapes; landscapes of action as well as landscapes of consciousness or meaning. With the landscape of action, experiences are linked through sequence in time, according to a particular plot. This is the basic structure of stories. There is, however, also a landscape of consciousness that involves interpretations that are made after reflecting on the events in the landscape of action. By embracing both landscapes through the personal narrative, space is opened, which accommodates clarification of both personal direction and relationship ecologies. Epston (1992) collaborated with White in exploring the nature of narrative and the use of narrative in therapy.

McAdams (1990, 1993, 1997, 2000) was interested in the individual's use of verbal narrative to organise an identity through the development of a personal myth beginning in late adolescence. This is further refined, developed or changed during the course of life. According to McAdams we choose, in the present, to remember the past, but to remember it in a certain way. He stressed that there is no objective

bedrock in the past on which the myth can actually be fashioned. At the same time he emphasized that the individual's story is not a fabrication but an attempt to build a realistic account of the past based on broad, general information considered to be fact. The individual continually tries to construct an identity that embodies a unified purpose and meaning. Much of McAdams' empirical work focused on the process of how the multiple characters, that are the aspects of the self, were integrated into the life story. He drew attention to the pioneering work of Murray who viewed the personality as a dynamic conglomerate of conflicting and overlapping forces. For McAdams, Murray successfully exemplified the interpersonal story approach in his emphasis on biography, fantasy, imagination, creativity, values, motivation and myth. McAdams also drew on the work of Erikson to construct a model of development that encompasses the life span, and was interested in identifying the personal myth that brings coherence to all the life stages. He paid particular attention to the emotional life that lies behind the actual story.

McAdams (1990, p. 405) contended that stories have four basic components namely an ideological setting, nuclear episodes, imagoes, and a generativity script. The ideological setting places the life story within a context of values and beliefs, and within a particular ideological time and place. He stressed that it is difficult to construct a meaningful life narrative until the setting of belief and value is well established. The second major component of life stories concerns nuclear episodes or major scenes. Nuclear episodes are concrete events within the narrative, which the narrator deems important and that are thus singled out as major scenes. They include high points, low points, and turning points, which can complicate the plot structure. Nuclear episodes can be of two general types, namely episodes of continuity, and episodes of change. An episode of continuity refers to an incident that the person believes affirms what he or she sees as a central personal truth. Episodes of change indicate turning points in the life story.

Imagoes, the third component of life stories, are semi autonomous agents whose actions and interactions give direction to the story. Imagoes are like stock characters in the life story, with each imago integrating a number of the roles played by the individual such as the teacher, the mother and the writer. A person's story can contain one or many imagoes, and McAdams offered a tentative classification scheme for

imagoes. The person's identity is not simply a single imago, but rather, the person's identity is the story itself. The fourth component of identity is the generativity script. The generativity script refers to the plot for the future through which the individual plans to leave a legacy of the self to future generations. Among others this legacy may be a child, or art or a financial donation. McAdams (2000) believed that a viable psychology of persons should address individuality on three levels, namely dispositional traits, character adaptations, and integrative life stories. Life stories, according to McAdams, are psycho-literary constructions that people develop to make sense of who they are. He believed that individual differences in life stories should be taken as seriously as are dispositional traits and characteristic adaptations.

Another approach has emerged which acknowledges the person as a storyteller, but which goes beyond McAdams. This is the theory of the dialogical self-that is associated with Hermans and Kempen (1993), and Herman, Kempen and van Loon, (1992). This theory of the dialogical self takes William James as a base, but views James through a narrative lens. Barresi and Jukes (1997) noted that McAdams' imagoes certainly capture the variety of James's emphasis on the different "me's," but his approach does not capture the elusive authorial "I." Hermans and Kempen (1993) suggested that there are distinct "I" positions to provide the authorial voice for each of the selves. In addition, there are often voices in the imagination such as a grandmother who is not even alive, but whose voice the individual still carries in the imagination. Each person is engaged in social relations of different kinds with a variety of others, social groups, and cultures either directly or through the imagination, and thus there is no definitive reality shared by all but, rather multiple realities. Each individual, group and culture has a stance, and enters into dialogue over what values are real and what facts are true.

Weber (2000) focused on older ways of understanding the world, and showed that evolutionary history, arts, crafts, storytelling, and the perception afforded by valuing the sacred were all ingredients that combined to give impetus to the modern creation of the self. Weber built on James's idea of unity and harmony with regard to how the various aspects of experience interlock. An individual thought is a unity but it can, however, be taken apart on reflection, so unity comes before multiplicity and analysis. Weber proposed a unity system, which he maintained is a sub-system of the self that

probably appeared with the first anatomically modern humans some one hundred thousand years ago. This trace, according to Weber, is found in the structure of the story, which is one of the oldest forms of knowing the self and the universe, together with the relationship between the two. Underlying the story is an architectural system that connects character and plot. There are six sub-components of this unity system. First is consistency, because we like all the facets of living to be concordant, otherwise mental energy is diverted in too many directions. Second, the components of the identity system need to be compatible with one another. Third, coherence refers to the fit of activities across time. Fourth, individuals seek completeness with regard to the integration of thought, feeling, action, body, persona and spirit. Fifth, the self has a need for compactness or organization in the interests of containment. Finally, individuals need connection with others, and need to reach out for nurturance.

Pert (1993, 1997) as a biologist, discovered peptide receptors in the brain and in the body, and highlighted the significance of the nature of chemicals that travel between the mind and the body in a type of molecular narrative. Pert said that as a scientist, for many years she concentrated on the neck up and then discovered that the endorphins and chemicals like them are found throughout the body in a psychosomatic chemical network. These messenger molecules, many of which are peptides, are important because they appear to mediate intercellular communication. According to Pert (1997), the neuropeptides and their receptors are the biochemical correlates of emotion. Pert stressed that the mind is not outside the body even though this view has been around in the west for a long time. Pert maintained that this view goes back to Descartes' arrangement with the Roman Catholic Church, which left the soul, the mind, emotions and consciousness in the realm of the church. Pert contended that it is incredible that the west followed this reductionist paradigm for so long. According to Pert, neuropeptides are direct energy, and the mind is in every cell of the body. The chemicals that mediate emotion are found in almost every cell and show the power of the mind and the emotions. The brain is obviously very important because it is essentially the window to the outside of the body through the functioning of the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. Emotions, said Pert, are the currency inter-converting mind and matter. Thus there is a cellular narrative at the very foundations of being.

The significance of narrative has been recognized in the field of neuroscience especially through the work of **Damasio** (2000). As a neuroscientist, Damasio studied the functioning and malfunctioning of the mind in many patients, and realized the importance of the razor-sharp transition between the fully conscious mind, and the mind he described as deprived of the sense of self. Damasio posited that the highly constrained ebb and flow of internal or organism states is innately controlled by the brain. It is also consciously signalled in the brain and constitutes, for the mind, the entity we designate as self. Damasio postulated layers of self. One such layer is the autobiographical self, which he maintained is based on autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory is constituted by implicit memories of various instances of human experience of the past and of the anticipated future. The particular aspects of individual's biography form the basis for autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory grows during the course of life but can be, to a large extent, remodelled to reflect new experience. Sets of memories, which describe identity, can be reactivated as a neural pattern and can be made explicit as images when required. Damasio (2000) noted that there was the belief of self as a spatially defined container or homunculus. This all-knowing little person would then do the knowing for the individual. But then came the question of who would do its knowing? The failure of the homunculus idea to provide a solution for how we know, said Damasio, resulted in the very idea of a self, coming into question. Based on many years of neurological research, Damasio proposed that there still remains a need to propose an agency as knower:

Moment by moment, the answer is being presented to the organism, as represented by the proto-self, placed before it in the form of a nonverbal narrative which can be subsequently translated into a language. The explanation is presented prior to any request for it.

The proto-self is a reference rather than a storehouse of knowledge or an intelligent perceiver. It participates in the process of knowing, waiting patiently for a most generous brain to explain what is happening by answering questions that were never posed: Who does? Who knows? When the answer first arrives, the sense of self emerges, and to us now, creatures endowed with rich knowledge and an autobiographical self, millions of years after the first

instances of primordial storytelling ever occurred, it does appear as if the question was posed, and that the self is a knower who knows (Damasio, 2000, p. 191).

Based on results from long-term research, Damasio suggested that a form of narrative actually takes place at a fundamental neurophysiological level of the human organism. Many neuroscientists are excited by the fact that, through the use of modern technology, we may be uncovering what could be said to be basic underpinnings of the self (Klein, Cosmides, Costabile & Mei, 2002).

Fishman (1999, p. 66) drew attention to the literary critic Kenneth Burks' cogent description of the narrative mode which he says has five elements namely Actor, Action, Goal, Scene, Instrument, and Trouble represented by an imbalance between any two or more of the five elements. Stories or narratives involve conflicts or struggles over time in order to reach goals. The narrative mode highlights the nature of personal experiences over time in a personal language and manner of action. Narrative is currently being approached in many different ways, and this is in part due to the postmodern celebration of the small rather than the grand narrative. McAdams (2000) pointed out that a growing number of scholars, in many different disciplines, are engaged in the narrative study of lives, and that this is a wide international effort aimed at interpreting life stories; the very stories we all live by, underscoring the fact that narrative forms a very basic substrate of each individual.

Psychology has become an important horizon today, to the point that some argue that the modern individual has a psychologized self. Critics such as Rose (1997) proposed the existence of the modern, not only psychologized self, but also of the pathologised self. Rose (1997, p. 224) maintained that all feelings, beliefs, and desires are suffused in a narrative with injunctions of those who claim to know more; the experts who are said to know what is good and right for others; he called these the specialists of "psy." These experts frame concepts related to birth, childhood, adolescence, relationships, midlife crises, old age, mourning, and even death. The anatomy of the psychological self, according to Rose, was essentially put together in the twentieth century by the use of a cluster of organizing terms such as intelligence, personality, and motivation. Attitudes could be measured and surveys implemented, and so attitude change could

then be engineered. Rose (1997, p. 234) also maintained that “language is one of the keys to our assembly as psychological beings.” Psychological descriptions of human beings hollow out a particular kind of self, located in zones of trauma, deprivation, repression or projection, according to which people are evaluated. “Psy” words then open a “psy” shaped space and all practices for the management of life take place in the “psy” space. The various “psy” approaches delineate ways of self-inspection and self-problematisation, and the self is approached within a therapeutic stance. Rose (1997, p. 246) emphasized that the issue of the self in the world today has wide implications and that “these new ethical forms have become central to the conduct in advanced liberal democracies, governing humans in the name of their freedom as psychological selves.” Perhaps Rose was somewhat over enthusiastic about his topic but the fact remains that the western self has to a significant extent been psychologized. Developmental psychology, for instance, is said to have tended to psychologize growth first focusing on the development of children, adolescents and young adults, and now has also begun to address the question of midlife and old age.



9.2 Mid-life

Mid-life is sometimes humorously described as a modern phenomenon characterised by the tendency for the individual’s broad mind and narrow waist to change places. It is sobering, as Revel and Ricard (1998) point out, that in 1830 life expectancy in France was twenty-five years, and that hardly any disease could be cured. In addition very few people had teeth left by the age of thirty if indeed they lived that long, and winter alone brought many deaths. Scientific discoveries and changes in living conditions have meant that many people are now living well into old age. As a result, mid-life has become a significant period in the life journey. Biological aging is influenced by heredity as well as environmental factors and life-style factors with the result that people age at different rates. A number of writers have contributed to the body of knowledge on aging (Bee, 1996; Cavannaugh, 1997; Hollis, 1993; Kaplan & Saddock, 1998; Lemme; 1995; Sheehy, 1996; Stein, 1983; Sternberg, 1999). There are various theories as to why we age. For example, there are numerous cellular theories of aging. In addition theories, which concern the rate of living, hold that

people are born with a limited amount of some substance or physiological capacity. If this is then used up quickly, the individual dies young but if used slowly the individual lives longer. Some scientists argue that aging is based on genetically programmed cell death or the innate ability to self-destruct.

Whatever the cause of aging, by mid-life, signs of aging are noticeable. There are changes in the muscular-skeletal system and women are especially susceptible to severe bone degeneration or osteoporosis. There are also changes in the cardiovascular system as well as changes in hearing, vision and reproductive capacity. Aspects of cognitive ability are said to decline (Gerdes, Louw, van Ede & Louw, 1998). Generally mid-life is characterised by a slowing down. Perhaps the mid-life symptoms that cause the most distress in the west include wrinkling and sagging of the skin as well as greying of the hair. Cultural stereotypes have a tremendous influence on the acceptance of age-related changes in appearance and hence on the view of selfhood. Some theorists have stressed that that mid-life is not necessarily all about decline. Sternberg (1999), for example, has drawn attention to the development of wisdom in adulthood and has found six factors believed to contribute to the development of wisdom. These factors include reasoning ability, shrewdness, learning from ideas and from the environment, judgement, expeditious use of information and keen insight.

A mixed collection of theories has emerged concerning mid-life. For Jung (1960, CW 8) mid-life was the time to turn inward and develop areas of the psyche that for one reason or another had been neglected during the earlier years. Some individuals do not want to do the necessary inner work, said Jung. He cautioned that those who try to carry over to the afternoon of life, the law of the morning, suffer damage to the soul. Some theorists, such as Erikson (1968) posited stages of psychosocial development. Erikson saw the psychosocial demands at mid-life in terms of generative action. Life transition theories such as those of Levinson (1977, 1985, 1986) and Valliant (1977) postulate periods of transition followed by periods of stability. Sheehy (1996) popularised this view with her books, which appealed to the general public. Theorists like McAdams (1993) take a narrative stance and see the self at mid-life in terms of the overall nature of the life story with its narrative tone, image, theme, ideological setting, nuclear episodes, character, and ending. Some say

it is all a question of dispositional traits (Costa & McCrae, 1988). If you were generally miserable as a youth, you will probably be similarly miserable at mid-life. Stein (1983) maintained that mid-life constitutes a crisis of the spirit where old selves are lost and new ones come into being. The individual experiences a period of psychological liminality and is, for a while at least, in suspended state. Certain tasks have to be completed such as separation from an earlier way of being, and the individual is said to have to pass through a stage of liminality on the way to reintegration. Mid-life is often presented quite dramatically as a crisis period or dark night of the soul. Some critics, on the other hand, maintain that there is no such thing as a mid-life crisis, just mid-life with some characteristic life problems. Hollis (1993) argued that the experience of distress or crisis at mid-life occurs not because of the collapse of the self but rather because of the collapse of assumptions.

9.3 Summary of Chapter Nine

Psychology can be said to be the story of humans trying to gain a better self-understanding. Psychology has become a salient part of western culture and has had a significant bearing on the evolving western sense of self. Psychological theories about the self can be broadly divided into modern and postmodern approaches. Modern approaches emphasised the unity of the self whereas postmodern approaches stressed multiplicity. Modern theorists who addressed matters of selfhood included James, Calkins, Freud, Jung, Adler, Allport, Erikson, Sullivan, From, Laing, Markus, Maslow and Rogers. The ego-oriented approaches to the self, adopted by Hartman, Neuman, Mahler, Kohut and Winnicott were also touched upon.

Postmodernists were influenced by the French philosophers including Derrida, Foucault and Merleau-Ponty. Postmodern philosophers were interested in the significance of language as a means of understanding. As a psychologist, Lacan gave a postmodern “linguistic” rendition of Freud’s approach to the individual. Postmodern thinkers turned to individual rather than to grand narratives. They viewed selfhood in terms of multiplicity, discourse and through the lens of the personal narrative. Many psychologists including Murray, Tomkins, White, McAdams and Weber found a resonance between the personal narrative and selfhood. Other

disciplines also contributed to the narrative understanding of the self. As a linguist and writer, Bakhtin, introduced the polyphonic of opposing voices within the narrative. Damasio, working as a neuro-scientist posited the existence of neurological underpinnings of the sense of self, while Pert, as a biologist, found what she called the molecular narrative as the substrate of the individual. Some critics argue that psychology has carved out a sense of self, situated within a therapeutic stance and is moving wider even into the areas of mid-life and old age. Mid-life has become a distinct period of the lifespan because western people are living longer mainly due to better nutrition and healthcare. Some theorists posit the existence of a period of crisis in mid-life while others maintain that mid-life is not necessarily a time of crisis and decline.

9.4 Critical Evaluation of Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine examined some psychological theories of the self as they have emerged within the discipline of psychology. The range and scope of the theories attests to the complexity of the issue of selfhood. Postmodernists reacted to the modernist theories of self, holding that the self to some extent arises through the unfolding in language, of the personal narrative. The chapter has shown that psychological theories pertaining to selfhood, are to some extent, reflections of the social context in which they are situated. Moreover, there are conflicting ideas about the nature of mid-life and such ideas point to the need for more research into this area of the life span. Chapter nine covered a wide range of theorists. In fact the literature review, as a whole, covered a wide range of periods and topics in general. It is therefore valuable to identify the key themes of the literature review.

9.5 The Literature Review in relation to the Direction of the Study

Certain facets derived from the investigation from prehistory to the present emerged as important with regard to the nature of the western self. These include, the urge to survive, action and meaning, evolutionary history, the rise of psychology, the

affirmation of ordinary life, the attitude to women, and narrative in relation to the gateway to the individual.

9.5.1 The Urge to Survive

Anthropology has shown that humans have had a long evolutionary history, and that the urge to survive is central to existence. Darwin maintained that the central struggle of life was the struggle to survive and reproduce. Life forms engage in activities with the aim of prolonging existence. If there were no inner need to live, life forms would certainly not be living forms for very long.

9.5.2 Action and Meaning

In order to survive early people engaged in specific activities and developed meaning structures. They built shelters, hunted, developed better tools, and initiated rudimentary medical care to maintain life. They also developed meaning making systems including mythology and ritual. Thus the creation of meaning is a survival tool with early beginnings and is vital even today.

9.5.3 Evolutionary History

Anthropologists have done much to unravel the human story in Prehistory. Roughly 2.5 million years ago, consciousness was born as the hominid brain size tripled and its general organisation changed. Bipedalism and the development of language helped foster the emergence of a sense of personal selfhood. There was a noticeable strengthening of the sense of self during the time of the Early Egyptians as individuals came to realise the power of personal choice. The Classical Greeks also stressed the importance of choice, as well as the development of character, the importance of the soul, and the vital use of reason. Early Christianity introduced the conflict model with the portrayal of a vengeful God, and of the individual torn by sin. Yet there was hope for the immortal soul. The self took on a patina of creativity, and the promise of potential during the Renaissance. This push to discovery flowered during the

Enlightenment when reason came to the fore. Romanticism certainly broadened the notion of selfhood by introducing ideas of freedom, uniqueness, intuition, feeling, sincerity and transcendence together with the acknowledgment of dark inner forces. In the west, the sense of self had developed to the point that there was a place for psychology to become established as a discipline, dedicated to finding ways to gain a practical understanding of people. Given this background it is clear that humans took a very long time to develop to the point at which they are now. The contours of the western sense of self changed over time particularly in response to shifts in environmental conditions. Change is a fact of existence and so the sense of self will continue to evolve in the future.

9.5.4 The Rise of Psychology

Psychology soon began to gain ground as an important discipline in the west. Modernist theories saw the self in terms of unity and as the inner possession of the individual. The individual was characterised as having the potential for a high degree of self-reliance. The modern age celebrated progress, optimism and rationality and there was an emphasis on gaining knowledge of the true self.

Stengel (2001) pointed out that psychological theories were enthusiastically embraced, particularly in North America and these ideas, especially those from North America, have influenced the western world. In the past in Europe, one inherited a sense of self, but in the new world it had to be invented. In the old world selfhood had limits, but in the new world selfhood became almost limitless. The new world became characterized by the drive for material gain, the belief in merit, the belief that destiny was in one's own hands, belief in inventiveness, and belief in the celebration of pragmatism. The loosening of class boundaries, a new sense of privacy, a lessening of social deference, the belief that God wanted the individual to be prosperous, together with a reformulation of the protestant work ethic in a venture capitalistic framework, all led to an expanded notion of self where ethics shifted from the absolute to the situational. The individual was seen in terms of being self-made, self-propelled, and self-contained.

Following the major changes in society and the even greater scientific discoveries Postmodernists became disenchanted with the portrayal of selfhood in the west. They challenged the grand narratives, and posited a more fluid view of selfhood.

Postmodernists expressed disillusionment with the idea of absolute knowledge and with the notion of a true self. They claimed to note irrationality and pessimism in the western zeitgeist. They questioned ideas about the nature of language, the concept of meaning, and the stories the west had told about human beings.

Some fringe Postmodernist thinkers have taken their ideas to the edge of absurdity in maintaining that humans are totally self-creating beings. Eagleton (1997) pointed out that humans are part of a social structure, and that a self-determining human subject is not one who just suddenly conjures him or herself up out of nothing:

There is then absolutely no reason for the postmodernists to persist with their tedious straw target of human autonomy as individualist, undetermined, monadic, paranoically totalised and the rest...all the ponderous chicken-and-egg arguments between “humanists” and “(post-) structuralists” about whether the subject or the structure came first, whether we fashion ourselves or have the job done for us, whether we are autonomous or determined, are finally beside the point. For the autonomy of the human subject simply means that it is determined in such a style as to be able to react back upon those determinations and make something new and unpredictable out of its encounter with them.

(Eagleton, 1997, p. 269).

In a similar vein Dawkins (2004) has drawn attention to the danger of obscurantist tendencies in some Postmodern writing, and has pointed to the website of the Postmodernism Generator, which can churn out high sounding, syntactically correct, but otherwise nonsensical papers. Thus care needs to be taken, when using Postmodern-terminology, that the issue of selfhood does not simply become an exercise in jargon generation.

But what the Postmodernists have certainly done is alert thinkers to the existence of massive changes in western society and what it means to be human in such a society. They have been sensitive to the shifting currents and even though they do not

represent a homogeneous body of thought they are alert to the need for a reappraisal of western selfhood.

9.5.5 Affirmation of ordinary Life

Taylor (1989) maintained that it was the affirmation of ordinary life that has become one of the most powerful ideas of civilization today. It should be remembered that attention has not always been paid to the views and feelings of individuals. Following the dethroning of the cosmic order, respect for everyday human life became the focus in the west and, today, respect for common order comes in the form of human rights. Emphasis is placed on autonomy, freedom, escaping from suffering and engaging in productive activity. The dethroning of a sense of cosmic order led to an individual search for meaning (Taylor, 1989). In earlier times, individuals lived within an unquestioned framework, and such a positioned framework provided a reference against which their lives could be judged. Today, there is no common framework as to what people should become, and so they are not easily able to reach a definitive formulation of belief. This gives rise to a sense of continual seeking, and the feeling that life is a quest. Individuals now have to develop their own frameworks, which incorporate a crucial set of qualitative distinctions, and this set of “values” provides a context within which the question of meaning has a place. The existential predicament of early cultures insinuated that, if the spiritual agenda was not met, the result was personal condemnation from a higher force. The modern individual, however, has no such spiritual contour, and thus a sense of self becomes a vital individual compass.

9.5.6 Women and the Self

It appears, that over time, women have generally had “selves” determined for them. With the Industrial Revolution, for example, there were far-reaching changes in patterns of work, lifestyle and roles. There was a rise in the size of the middle class, and emphasis was placed on unattainable ideals of purity, perfection, respectability and morality (Brinich and Shelley, 2002). A magazine of the time noted that woman was considered to be:

...given to man to be his better angel, to dissuade him from vice, to stimulate him to virtue, to make home delightful and life joyous...in the exercise of these gentle and holy charities, she fulfils her high vocation. (Rouse, 1989, p. 112).

De Beauvoir was one of the first critics to examine women and selfhood. De Beauvoir (1949) used existentialism to highlight the point that women can be free to choose who they want to be. De Beauvoir (1949, p. 723) stressed that women needed to escape the social construction, which positioned them as being essentially passive and selfless, and she claimed that the “free woman is just being born.” There have been many changes in the western world since De Beauvoir began writing about women and selfhood. The question then arises as to how women experience selfhood today.

9.5.7 Narrative

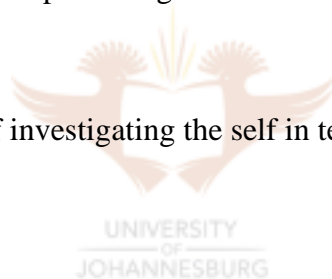
Humans have shown themselves to be embedded in narrative since very early times. Once language developed, it brought into existence the kind of mind that can transform itself (Dennett, 2004). Early cave paintings and artefacts have revealed that individuals and groups have always taken a narrative turn in interpreting experience. As Berger (1997) pointed out we spend our lives immersed in narratives, and swim in a sea of stories without even realising it. As the modern person has evolved so new stories have come into being, which did not have a place in early traditional cultures. Over time the personal narrative has been situated within different conventions. In the early traditional phase, the personal narrative was participatory and embedded in a religious, collective framework whereby narrative unity and coherence was sought at a community level. In the modern period there was a print culture, and narrative became localised in secularised everyday reality. Problems were conceptualised in more “scientific” terms, and narrative unity was seen at the individual level. Postmodernism recognised the shift to a globalised, everyday reality brought about largely through the television and Internet cultures. The societal acceptance of open disclosure of personal narratives and the acceptability of frank outpouring of problem-stories, have meant that the nature of selfhood has come into finer focus.

9.5.8 A Gateway to the Individual

Today western individuals are viewed in relation to one another and to society rather than in relation to the goings on of a panoply of remote gods or outer forces. As a result everyday thoughts and experiences are considered significant, and offer entry into the depths of the individual. The personal narrative provides a means of access to the individual's world.

Clients' narratives at a counselling facility suggested that new demands were being made of western selfhood. Questions began to be asked by the counsellors, especially questions such as what *is* the nature of the self and how do individuals today, especially those at mid-life, actually view the self? Individuals themselves are best suited to answer such questions, and research tools have been developed whereby complex questions such as those pertaining to the nature of the sense of self can be investigated in depth.

It is to the research project, of investigating the self in terms of women's own self-narratives, that we now turn.



10 CHAPTER TEN. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the scope of the research as suggested by a pilot study and then examines the main study in terms of the problem statement, research paradigm and methodology. The data analysis, based on the approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is given in detail.

10.1 Pilot Study

10.1.1 Aim

The aim of the pilot study was to clarify whether or not the personal narrative actually uncovered issues of selfhood, and if sexually abused women should be included in the participant group as requested by the counselling facility.

10.1.2 Method

Ten women, ranging from forty to sixty years of age, were interviewed over a period of four months. Three of the women had been clients in the counselling facility, and had experienced severe early sexual abuse. The remaining seven were not from the counselling facility, and had not suffered sexual abuse.

The women were interviewed every ten days for an hour using a life narrative interview approach. The participants talked about events in their daily lives and were free to chart the direction of their narratives. The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder and transcribed. There are different ways of analysing transcribed data. In collaboration with colleagues who had used different methods of data analysis, various approaches were examined including Berg, 1995; Charmaz, 1995; Flick, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse & Field, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990 and Tesch; 1994. After appraising the different methods of data analysis, Strauss and Corbin's approach was selected because it seemed to best fit the scope of the data.

10.1.3 Results of the Pilot Study

The life narrative interviews highlighted the following points.

First, the narrative capacity of the abused women was impaired, possibly by their early traumatic experiences. They were also unable to sustain a life narrative for any length of time. There was no evidence from tests conducted at the facility that the abused women were cognitively impaired. Their personal narratives, however, were accompanied by intense emotional outbursts. These findings suggested that participants who had experienced severe early sexual abuse had been traumatised, and should not be included in the participant group because this was not a project offering long term therapeutic support.

Second, the women who had not suffered early traumatic sexual abuse offered coherent life narratives, and were able to manage the feelings associated with sensitive life events.

Third, all the narratives pointed to the underlying relevance of the centrality of the notion of self. There was constant reference to a self, and the abused participants felt overwhelmed by what they described as a loss of self. No one, however, could easily describe what constituted a self.

In addition, after experimenting with, and then assessing different methods of data analysis, Strauss and Corbin's approach (1990) to data analysis was considered the probable method of choice.

10.1.4 Conclusions Drawn from the Pilot Study

As a result of these findings, it was decided that a longer narrative study should be undertaken to investigate the patterns and linkages within the life narratives themselves in order to obtain an understanding of the nature of western selfhood. A narrative study would offer insight into individuals through exploration of ordinary life events. This would mean that information about the self would be grounded in

the participants' daily lives. The narrative could provide richness and reveal the complexity as well as the nature of the self-process, particularly because of the sustained period of investigation that was envisaged. By examining lived experience in terms of the individual's personal and social worlds, the nature of personal meaning could be explored.

After discussions with colleagues, Straus and Corbin's method was selected for this study because of the systematic nature of their approach in handling a large volume of data. In addition, Strauss and Corbin's approach facilitates the generating of theory because their systematic method provides the compass points for theory building. It was also decided that the original participants, who had contributed to an earlier narrative study should be asked to take part in the research (Cameron-Smith, 2000). A good rapport had been built up with the original participants, and it was therefore likely that they would feel comfortable revealing life events in some depth.

10.2 Problem Statement

The unit of analysis in this study was the individual, and specifically western, mid-life women. The literature search revealed that the western sense of self had evolved over a considerable period of time. During the last fifty years there have been many changes in society and various theories with regard to the self have been put forward. According to counsellors at the facility, they had difficulty fitting current models of mid-life to individuals at the present time. The research problem thus concerned how western mid-life individuals experienced the sense of self.

The research question developed out of events occurring at a crisis counselling facility where mid-life individuals were clearly presenting with self-related issues offered in the form of a life narrative. There have been rapid changes in society in general over the last number of years. Many individuals are living longer with the result that the middle years have become a significant period of the lifespan. For economic and personal reasons, numerous people at midlife are now embarking on second careers. In addition, AIDS today does not affect individuals in the midlife range to the extent experienced by younger adults. As a result, the burden of care has fallen to the

midlife group. Many midlife adults have intellectual, experiential and personal resources, which can be of benefit to the community as a whole.

The research constituted an exploratory analytical study of the domain of selfhood as experienced by a group of mid-life women. From an epistemic perspective, the nature of the mid-life experience was to be discovered through the words of the participants themselves. Thus knowledge was said to arise from the understanding of symbols and meaning situated within data collected through the narrative interviews. Systematic data analysis and inductive reasoning would thus form the foundation of the enquiry. The ontological stance was that individuals play an active role in shaping their worlds and reality and that these worlds can be analysed and explained. The nature of individual experience is continually evolving and thus there is change and process. Meaning is then derived through the interpretations individuals give to their life worlds. This does not infer, however, that reality is totally a personal construction, as some postmodernist would have it. The reality is if I jump out of an aeroplane at a high altitude without a parachute I will not survive no matter how I personally choose to interpret the laws of physics. One of the tenets of postmodernism is that there is no one true way of looking at things but that multiple truths co-exist. The position taken here is that there are indeed multiple truths but set within a framework of a certain degree of realism. With this background, a qualitative paradigm was therefore the paradigm of choice. The difficulty lies in the fact, as Strauss and Corbin, (1990, p. 18) noted, that the term qualitative research often means different things to different people. Qualitative research is the research approach of choice when there is the need to understand the details of complex phenomena that are hard to elucidate with quantitative methods.

10.3 Research Paradigm

A qualitative paradigm was followed in this study because there was the need to uncover the detailed nature of individual experience of mid-life. There was also the need to have a fresh slant on the question of selfhood.

The assessment of the value and purpose of qualitative as opposed to quantitative research rests on views of the nature of science. Woolgar (1996) noted that the received view of science is based on four assumptions: First, objects in the natural world are real and objective, and they exist independently of humans. Thus human agency is incidental to the outer world. Second, the character of the outer world determines scientific knowledge. Third, science consists of a unitary set of methods and procedures about which there is consensus. Fourth, science is cognitive and individualistic. Woolgar also noted that there are those, however, who contest this view of science, questioning the veracity of a realist ontology of the objects in the natural world, and observing that scientific knowledge is determined by the social relations, beliefs, and value systems of different communities. Science does not consist of a unitary set of procedures or methods but is a social process, situated within language, and therefore is affected by the values, beliefs and expectations of the community. Hammersley (1996) maintained that this paradigm view of the relationship between quantitative and qualitative approaches is misleading in portraying the options open to researchers because it implies the existence of two homogeneous traditions. These, in turn, are founded on opposing philosophical views, which are supposed to be internally coherent. Moreover, research in the human sciences shows that much of it does not fall tidily into one or other of the quantitative or of the qualitative categories. Hammersley (1996, p.164) stressed that:

The difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches is not that clear cut as regards the use of particular kinds and sources of data. Rather, what we find is a range of methods being used by researchers in psychology and the social sciences, a diversity that cannot be reduced to a bare dichotomy without serious distortion. Furthermore, selection among these methods requires judgment according to situation and purpose, rather than judgment based on commitment to one or another philosophical view of the world and the nature of enquiry.

To summarise, qualitative research involves analysis that yields findings or hypotheses that are not arrived at by statistical methods. Qualitative research uses an inductive form of reasoning and develops concepts from patterns in the data. Concepts are in the form of themes, motifs and categories and data is presented in

words. In addition the unit of analysis is holistic with the focus on the relationship between elements (Schurinck, 1998).

10.4 Research Design

There are three general strategies of data analysis, which can be used in qualitative research namely constructing typologies, analytic induction and the grounded theory approach (Schurink, 1998). A grounded theory approach was followed because this approach suited the embedded nature of the research problem. “The grounded theory approach is a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area” (Glaser, 1992, p. 16). Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory methodology because they saw the need for a well formulated and systematic set of methods for collecting, coding and analysing data, meeting the two prime criteria of good scientific, inducted theory namely parsimony and scope. Grounded theory offers a systematic set of methods and indeed meets the criteria of parsimony and scope. A grounded theory researcher moves into an area of interest and asks of the material “what is going on?” An important facet of the enquiry is that there should be no preconceived answers. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 4) stressed that grounded theory is the discovery of theory from data and as such “grounded theory can help to forestall the opportunistic use of theories that have dubious fit and working capacity.” The authors suggested that the grounded theory approach enables researchers to generate theories for new areas as well as better theories in cases where existing theories are proving not to work.

Strauss, in collaboration with Corbin, published *Basics of Qualitative Research* in 1990, which spells out procedures and techniques in great detail. Strauss said this was necessary for both experienced and inexperienced qualitative researchers. Glaser (1992, p. 1) requested that the book be withdrawn arguing that the book “misconceives our conceptions on grounded theory to an extreme degree, even destructive degree.” Glaser’s main contention was that Strauss’s approach involved forcing, not discovering data. Glaser argued that grounded theory has several methods, which prevent forcing data such as constant comparison, saturation and core

relevance. Strauss, however, stood by his statements and would not withdraw the book. It seems that one way of addressing this impasse is for researchers to document in detail both their positive and negative research experiences in using the various qualitative methods, so that the information can be assembled and evaluated to discern what works under what conditions and why, so leading to greater understanding of the domain as a whole.

It is actually quite difficult to force grounded data. Well-grounded data has a voice of its own with its characteristic rhythm and pitch. Glaser seems to feel that by offering a clear-cut method the researcher will act like Procrustes who cut off travellers' arms and legs so they could fit into the beds at the inn. But truly grounded data is assertive in its own right, and will not get into the bed. The researcher is alerted that there is an element of forcing when connections within the data are over stretched leading to explanatory leaps.

The narrative interviews for this study took place over two years and generated much data. For this reason it was extremely valuable to use Strauss and Corbin's (1990) methodological guidelines because each stage provided a data counter check. Large data volumes and a wide domain certainly call for some sort of containment. This is not forcing data but systematically managing data.

10.5 Researcher's Position

Mouton (1996) pointed out that the researcher could become a source of error because of the nature of the researcher's characteristics and orientation. The researcher, could for instance, be associated with a specific organisation and consequently elicit biased responses. With regard to this study, there was researcher affiliation with an organisation but the research was carried out as an independent endeavour and the participants for the main study were not recruited through the organisation.

Furthermore, the researcher, it is argued, can be seen as an intruder. This certainly was a danger in the research because the researcher entered the private world of the participants. Therefore it was imperative that a sense of trust was developed and maintained. The distance between the researcher and the participants can also be a

problem if the participants believe the researcher occupies a higher or lower position than they do. This did not occur in the present research situation. There was the chance that I, as the researcher, being in the mid-life age group, could over identify with material being presented. This was monitored with the help of an analyst when necessary. Such assistance clarified my personal views so that I did not try to impose personal beliefs on the participants' material. On the positive side, I brought to the investigation a genuine, open interest in the participants' narratives.

10.6 Main Study

10.6.1 Aims of the Main Study

The aims of the main study were:

To examine the nature of the self by analysing the life narratives of a group of westernised mid-life women (40-60 years of age) using grounded theory methodology as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

To develop a substantive theory of the self grounded in the research data.

10.6.2 Research Procedure

10.6.2.1 Interviews and Participants

Seven participants were interviewed roughly every six weeks over a period of two years using a life narrative approach. The participants had taken part in the earlier research (Cameron-Smith, 2000), and had joined the original study through word of mouth. The ability to speak fluent English, and their being available for ongoing interviews, were the criteria for their inclusion in the study. During the course of the current research one of the participants died as a result of post surgical complications. No new participants were included and the remaining six continued until the end of

the study. Names and sensitive personal details have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

The interviews were conversational partnerships built on the relationship developed during the first research project. The interviews were held at either one main venue or at a venue of the participant's choice. The discussions lasted approximately two hours and covered current events unfolding in the participants' lives as well as past and anticipated future events. If there was need for clarification or if the participant wanted to add to what had been discussed this was done telephonically; alternatively another meeting was immediately arranged. The first and last interviews were recorded fully on a tape recorder, while all the other interviews were written up immediately after the conversational session. The participants were married with children but two of the participants were divorced. Most of them worked outside the home and had varying degrees of family support.



Table 3
Summary of Participants' Contextual Data

Participant	Early support	Marital status	Children	Present environmental support	Health status	Extended family relationships	Occupations
A	Good	Married	Daughter Son	Good	Good	Large supportive extended family	Never worked outside the home since marriage
B	Very little	Divorced	Daughter Son	Minimal	Fair to good	None	Working
C	Good	Married	2 Sons 2 Daughters	Good	Good	Supportive extended family	Working part time from home
D	Fair	Divorced	Daughter Son	Fair to Good	Good	Minimal	Working
E	Good	Married	2 Daughters	Good	Good	Extended family not in the country	Occasional relief work for former company
F	Fair	Divorced	2 Daughters 1 Son	Deceased	Deceased	Deceased	Deceased
G	Fair to good	Married	3 Daughters	Good	Good	Fairly large supportive extended family	Working

It is important to note that even though the participants were drawn from a particular fairly homogeneous group, their life experiences were very different. For example, their early support networks ranged from weak to good, their environmental support ranged from minimal to good, and the extended family relationships ranged from none to a large supportive family network.

10.6.2.2 Data analysis

Analysis in grounded theory consists of three major types of coding procedures. These are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open and axial coding lend themselves to the earlier part of the research but if necessary can also be used towards the end of the study if concepts need to be more fully developed. Different theorists have slightly different ways of analysing data. The fact remains that qualitative data analysis relies heavily on theoretical sensitivity. Strauss and Corbin (1990) pointed out that theoretical sensitivity refers to the researcher's ability to recognize important elements in the data, and give the data meaning. Theoretical sensitivity has a number of sources but two requirements must be satisfied if the qualitative research is to be productive. The first refers to the researcher being conversant with the appropriate technical literature and having some professional experience in the field. The second refers to the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher acquired during the research process itself.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) maintained that the way the interviews and field notes are handled depends very much on the nature of the study. There may or may not be the need, for instance, to transcribe all the material. The authors suggested that the first interviews or field notes should be entirely transcribed and analysed before going on to the next interviews. The authors highlighted the fact that transcription involves considerable time and energy but must always be systematically carried out in accordance with the demands of the research itself.

The research process and hence the data analysis in this study was divided into two phases. The first phase can be called the exploratory phase because this phase was concerned with opening up the emerging data as it appeared through the ongoing interviews. The second phase can be termed the clarification phase because it involved clarifying facets of selfhood identified in the participants' narratives.

i Phase One of the Data Analysis

The first interviews were all transcribed and analysed following the open coding and axial coding procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Coding procedures

are fully explained in this chapter in the section related to phase two of the data analysis. Subsequent interviews were written up after the interviews and also analysed, using open and axial coding. The aim was to open up the data to look for emerging elemental patterns and hence selective coding was not appropriate at this stage of the data analysis. The information from the analysis of all the participants' interviews, were recorded on a central tabulation grid. An example of an entry is provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of Participant B's Data as Listed in the Central Tabulation Grid

Participant	Date of Interview	Category	Sub-categories	Relevant axial coding	Expanded Notes
B	10-3-03	Family	Daughter	High degree of concern	Has found the teenage years extremely difficult. Questions her mothering ability
		Religion	Communication difficulties	Extensive	
			Change of churches	High degree of ambivalence	Continues to find comfort in the church community
			New minister	Likeability	
			Theoretical interpretation	Areas of disagreement	

Repeated patterns were noted and recorded. After many months of data collection a tentative pattern emerged, which included areas such as general life background, body and gender, cognition, affect, values, self, identity, spirituality, religion and ritual. Questions around these identified areas provided the format for the final interview. For example, the participants were asked questions such as “what are your ideas about identity.” The subject was then explored following the lead set by the participant. If the particular participant had specific things to say about the topic during the ongoing interviews, these were raised and further discussed. The areas covered included,

background, body, cognition, affect, religion, spirituality, ritual and the soul, identity, the sense of self and the nature of values.

The interviews were aimed at achieving clarification around the specific areas highlighted as significant during the ongoing interviews. The timing of the final interview was determined by the saturation of the data that emerged during the discussion sessions. Saturation is said to occur when the same elemental patterns repeatedly emerge in the interview material. The concepts derived from the elemental patterns in the interview material recorded on the tabulation grid were then used to guide the final interview. For example, issues surrounding family concerns, thinking, feeling, spirituality, physicality, identity, environment as well as issues related to self, and ritual repeatedly occurred. Consequently, in the final interview, the participants were asked to elaborate on their backgrounds, environmental factors, the way they thought, how they felt, what they understood about identity, and the nature of the self, the unconscious, religion and ritual. They were also asked to raise any points from the discussions that they considered relevant and important.

The final interviews were recorded on an audiotape and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were given to the participants for verification; one participant asked that two items on her transcript be changed. The final interview transcripts were then analysed line by line using the grounded theory approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) representing phase two of the data analysis. The three analytical procedures of open coding, axial coding and selective coding were utilised.

ii Phase Two of the Data Analysis

Phase two represented the full analysis of all the participants' final transcripts.

Stage One: Open Coding

Open coding involved a number of inter-related procedures, and these are listed in Table 5:

Table 5
Steps in Open Coding

Examining Documentation

Line by Line Analysis

Breaking Down and Examining Data

Identifying Concepts

Discovering Categories

Examining Categories & Sub-categories

Developing Categories in terms of Properties and Dimensions

Utilizing Coding Assistance

Examining Documentation

All the documentation relating to the study was examined including transcripts, audiotapes, memo notes and the research journal entries. Memo notes chart the dismantling of categories into components while Journal entries are the record of the researcher's personal observations and feelings with regard to the interview and the interview material.

Line-by-Line Analysis

Each transcript was carefully read and then analysed or coded line-by-line. Open coding is concerned with opening out the information by means of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorizing the data. Charmaz (1995) advocated line-by-line coding, asserting that this is important for several reasons. First, it facilitates an analytic stance to the text; second, it keeps analysis close to the data; third, it prevents flights of fancy, and fourth it helps the researcher gain some distance from the material being analysed. Finally, line-by-line coding facilitates the asking of salient questions such as what is going on, what are the people doing, what is the person actually saying, what do these actions and statements take for granted,

and how do structure and content serve to support, prevent or maintain change (Charmaz, 1995, p. 38). Thus open coding specifically involved breaking down and examining the data, identifying concepts, categorizing, identifying sub-categories, and then examining the properties and dimensions of the categories, and sub-categories.

Breaking Down and Examining the Data

Each transcript was analysed line by line by isolating the thrust of the sentence and noting it in the allocated margin of the transcript sheet itself. The core ideas embedded in the sentences were transferred to a separate sheet and closely examined, and noted. The new notes were then compared with the information on the original transcript sheet. After an interval of at least one day, in order to look afresh at the initial codes, the sheet notation was then compared with the original transcript and margin notes. Questions were asked of the data and the notes amended or enlarged if necessary. For example, it is important to ask if the notes correspond to what is being said, in what circumstances and to what extent. Each discrete incident, event or idea was given a name. A name denotes an object of thought and an object of thought is called a phenomenon. Each discrete idea, observation or event emerging from the reading of the transcripts, were then named as representing a phenomenon. Incidents and events were compared and some phenomena were similar and could be grouped as concepts. Mouton (1996) pointed out that concepts are the primary building blocks of science and are the carriers of meaning of words. As a result they facilitate the classification and categorising of phenomena in the social world. There is no grand formula for identifying phenomena and giving conceptual labels. It is a question of becoming immersed in the transcripts and flowing with the words. Pictures soon begin to emerge if the mind is given freedom. Provided that the items are double-checked against the material in the transcripts there is little danger of excessive flights of fancy.

The identified concepts derived from the participants' interviews are noted in Table 6 and the concepts are grouped in terms of background, body and gender, cognition, affect, values, self, identity, spirituality, religion, and ritual, which represented the central themes that emerged over the two years of discussion. It is useful to initially

identify as many phenomena and concepts as possible because such a strategy helps gain entry into the domain.



Table 6
Concepts

Groupings	Concepts
Background	<p>Born in large city</p> <p>Born in small town</p> <p>Mother was present, supportive, gave direction, care giver and role model</p> <p>Mother validated and was generous but set limits</p> <p>Father was absent, working, providing for family, not very supportive</p> <p>Mother was critical, not present, concerned with own career, undemonstrative</p> <p>Mother/father was creative in work field</p> <p>Alcoholism in family</p> <p>Father left home and abandoned family</p> <p>Sister/s good friends/rivals</p> <p>Brother/s some or no close bond</p> <p>Good atmosphere in home</p> <p>Not good atmosphere in the home</p> <p>Grandmother as a presence</p> <p>Grandfather as a presence</p> <p>Uncles and aunts</p> <p>Feeling of intimacy in childhood</p> <p>Feeling of abandonment in childhood</p> <p>Much antagonism in the home environment</p> <p>Friends</p> <p>Parents' friends</p> <p>School</p> <p>Boarding school</p> <p>School as fun and successful</p> <p>School as intimidating</p> <p>Nuns were like mothers</p> <p>Nuns were distant</p> <p>No exposure to broader world</p> <p>Narrow vision of life</p> <p>No supervision, too exposed to life</p> <p>Leaving school</p> <p>Training for job</p> <p>Leaving home</p> <p>Work world</p> <p>Sophisticated/unsophisticated</p> <p>Outgoing personality/sensitive and shy</p>

Groupings	Concepts
Background cont.	<p>Grew up feeling secure and supported</p> <p>Grew up feeling insecure and could not wait to leave home</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Husband</p> <p>Daughters</p> <p>Sons</p> <p>Children's marriages</p> <p>Grandparenthood</p> <p>Relationship to people, environments, work and animals</p>
Body and gender	<p>Not really body conscious as a child</p> <p>Environment affirmed femininity</p> <p>Environment did not say much about being female</p> <p>Father wanted a boy so encouraged to play male sports</p> <p>Environment influences how body is regarded</p> <p>The body is vitally important because you live in the body</p> <p>Don't really think of body until something goes wrong</p> <p>Today women are much more relaxed with regard to body and dress</p> <p>Women in better health today because of emphasis on healthy eating</p> <p>Emphasis on preservation and conservation e.g. diet and exercise</p> <p>Women today encouraged to be active e.g. gym and sport</p> <p>Body today still viewed in terms of aesthetic appearance</p> <p>Views of what is beautiful/ugly change with fashion</p> <p>Women are looked at and appraised for appearance</p> <p>Culture dictates you have to measure up to a standard</p> <p>Have to learn how to make the most of yourself</p> <p>Nostalgic when look at younger bodies</p> <p>Wishing they had appreciated the body in younger days</p> <p>Now getting stiff and less flexible</p> <p>Not as fast as when younger</p> <p>Accept changes because they are gradual</p> <p>The changes impose limits</p> <p>Need to accept idiosyncrasies</p> <p>Photographs show women at 50 today look younger than their mothers did at 50</p> <p>Energy is the key</p>
Cognition	<p>Thinking is an important facet of being alive</p> <p>The brain helps control thinking</p>

Groupings	Concepts
Cognition cont	<p>If you are brain dead you can't think</p> <p>Always aware of thinking</p> <p>Thinking is linked to consciousness</p> <p>Consciousness makes you aware of what is going on</p> <p>Think all the time</p> <p>Thinking is like an ongoing story</p> <p>Thinking involves observing, reflecting, analysing and evaluating</p> <p>Thinking is really a continual commentary of events</p> <p>Can't really easily think about thinking because you are in it</p> <p>Thoughts move like a grasshopper, all over the place</p> <p>Can direct thinking by focusing</p> <p>There are different levels of thinking e.g. deep thinking and surface thinking</p> <p>Always talking to self when thinking</p> <p>Embedded in stream of thinking</p> <p>Important to think in a positive way, easy to become negative</p> <p>Everyone thinks a lot</p>
Affect	<p>Feeling is linked to thinking</p> <p>Feeling is what lets you know you really are alive</p> <p>Not always easy to say which comes first, thinking or feeling</p> <p>It seems like feeling gives rise to thinking</p> <p>There are good and bad feelings</p> <p>There are good and bad effects from feelings</p> <p>There are a number of different feelings e.g. joy, anger</p> <p>Feeling is tied to the body</p> <p>Feeling linked to adrenalin</p> <p>Feel emotions e.g. in chest, head, neck, shoulders, breathing pattern</p> <p>Feeling is linked to instinct</p> <p>Feeling determines how you react to things</p> <p>As you grow up you have to control the expression of emotion</p> <p>Before, the stiff upper lip was encouraged</p> <p>Now let it all hang out, say what you like</p> <p>Emotional expression can go too far</p> <p>Fear is really felt in the body by the racing heart, shallow breathing muscles</p>
Values	<p>Values are linked to feeling</p> <p>We are guided by values</p> <p>Values are internalised beliefs</p> <p>There are different values such as trustworthiness, honesty, respect for others</p>

Groupings	Concepts
Values cont	<p>The Ten Commandments are very basic values</p> <p>The commandments guide behaviour</p> <p>Acquire values in childhood</p> <p>Also learn values from culture</p> <p>Values are individual and culturally orientated</p> <p>If you transgress a value you feel guilty</p> <p>Values help direct behaviour</p> <p>Different ages have had different values</p> <p>Different cultural periods also have different values</p> <p>Values become internalised over time</p> <p>Values are part of an interactive internal/external system</p> <p>Values help prick the conscience</p> <p>Parents' values have a great influence on the developing person</p> <p>Values need to be reassessed, some become limiting</p> <p>Some values are not negotiable</p> <p>Values involve standards</p> <p>Individually held values should not harm others</p> <p>Values become your rudder or guidebook</p> <p>Values should be life enhancing</p> <p>Values form part of the self</p>
Self	<p>The self is about me</p> <p>Self is a rather confusing thing to describe</p> <p>The self is extremely important</p> <p>We construct a self to some extent</p> <p>You are born into family at a time and place no choice about it</p> <p>Culture plays a big role in the development of the self</p> <p>The self has components, a body, thinking, feeling, spirit and soul</p> <p>The self is a continual project you can work on</p> <p>Should work to improve your self</p> <p>Selfhood involves realigning your point of view</p> <p>You can work on your appearance, attitudes and behaviour</p> <p>The soul is the centre of the self</p> <p>The self moves in response to the inner and outer environment</p> <p>The self is greatly shaped by others and by context</p> <p>The self is influenced by feeling</p> <p>Thinking modifies feeling in a reciprocal relationship</p> <p>The reciprocity of thinking and feeling influences the contours of the self</p> <p>Culture tells us not to be selfish but self-concern is still important</p>

Groupings	Concepts
Self cont.	<p>The self is not a visible entity</p> <p>The self is the space between identity and soul, filled in over time</p>
Identity	<p>Identity encapsulates self in that it is broader</p> <p>Identity can be seen</p> <p>Individual identity can be observed by others</p> <p>Identity is like the outer shell</p> <p>If you are an accident victim your identity is established by name</p> <p>Identity is concrete; name, when and where born, address, fingerprints, race appearance gender</p> <p>Culture can affect identity in terms of attributed status and trait evaluation</p>
Spirituality	<p>Spirituality means connection to something deeper</p> <p>Spirituality offers guidance</p> <p>Spirituality involves quietness to let the Presence enter</p> <p>Spirituality involves connection to things not of this world</p> <p>Spirituality is a state of being</p> <p>Spirituality implies a relationship to a higher power</p> <p>Spirituality is within the person</p> <p>Spirituality is the deep part of the self</p> <p>Spirituality grows from interpreting experience</p> <p>Spirituality offers regeneration and guidance</p> <p>Spirituality involves acknowledging mystery and connection to a higher power</p> <p>We learn a spiritual narrative through dogma</p> <p>Christian religion offers connection to the Holy Spirit through Christ's crucifixion</p>
Religion	<p>Many different religions</p> <p>Religion is taught but spirituality is inherent</p> <p>You are usually brought up within a religious faith</p> <p>Religious creed becomes a corrective force and anchor</p> <p>Religion offers a particular framework for living</p> <p>Some religious concepts can be confining</p> <p>Religious worship should be uplifting and make you a better person</p> <p>Religion involves ritual to enhance spiritual connection</p>
Ritual	<p>The purpose of ritual is to listen to the inner voice</p> <p>Ritual involves repetition</p> <p>Comforted by the ritual pattern</p> <p>Different rituals; going to church, prayer, communion, bible study, quiet time,</p>

Groupings	Concepts
Ritual cont	Follow Eastern meditation rituals Ritual promotes peacefulness Ritual helps in the search for guidance and direction Ritual assists in recharging the spirit Ritual helps weave spiritual observance into daily life Humans need something beyond this world Learn forgiveness, compassion guidance from ministers or lamas Meditation uses ritual breathing and mantras to reach bliss Rituals develop self- discipline Ritual promotes connection to this world, to others and to the beyond

Discovering Categories and Sub-Categories

Categories, in turn, are classifications of concepts. Concepts are grouped together under a higher order label, which is more abstract than the concepts grouped under it. This more abstract concept is then deemed a category, and sub-categories expand the main category. Open coding is concerned with the naming and categorizing of the data, and hence is an important step because it serves as a foundation for further analysis of the data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) highlighted the fact that two analytic procedures are central to the analytic process as a whole; the procedures involved are, making comparisons and asking questions in order to give the identified concepts precision and specificity. As a result, grounded theory is often called the constant comparison method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The categories are named by choosing the name that logically relates to the data it represents.

When, for instance, the participants were asked to talk about their backgrounds they mentioned personal experiences, and they revealed very different aspects and relationships. Participant G, for example, talked about early memories of living with her mother, aunt and uncle while her father was drafted in the army. She was four when her father returned, and she had never met him. His return meant relocation to another town, separation from an aunt, uncle and cousins, and the experiencing of conflict within her reconstituted family. Thus the concept can be named as the inter-relationship between the *nuclear environment*, *extended environment*, and *wider*

environment. Participant A's extended environment of aunt, uncle, and cousins became the nuclear environment. The father's return then heralded the recreation of a new nuclear environment. The conceptualisation can be summarized as:

Nuclear environment: mother, father, children

Extended environment: aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, teachers

Wider environment: country, economy, state of conflict

“In vivo” codes can be included. These are memorable names used in the text itself. Using well-known terms from the relevant technical literature as names for categories constitutes a risk in that the terms are already shrouded in analytic meaning, which can lead to bias. Sub-categories are elements related to the identified category. For example the category of the nuclear environment involved the home and the parents, and the participants' narratives revealed nuances in this area. There were variations in the transcripts with regard to whether or not the parents were together. If they were, were they at home and what was the nature of their modelling? The sub-categories open up the category. The identified categories and subcategories are listed in Table 7.

Table 7 Categories & Sub-Categories

Category	Subcategory
Nuclear Environment	Parents Parental presence Parental modelling Parental value transmission Parental abuse Sibling rivalry
Extended Environment	Family and friends Teachers or mentors Environmental support
Wider Environment	Country/state Town/city sophistication International affairs
Culture and body appearance	Appearance Physical condition Physical degeneration
Physical identity markers	Physical appearance Race Gender DNA and fingerprints
Locational identity markers	Birth place Birth time/historical and local Country of domicile Personal status
Relationship	Nuclear environment Extended environment Wider environment
Self	Self construction Self as a project Components of self
Thinking as a component of self	Brain as substrate of thinking self Thinking pattern Thinking process
Consciousness	Close
The unconscious	Unaware
Values as personal truth	Environment and value formation Value change Value transgression
Spirituality	Inner guidance
Religion	Outer guidance
Ritual	Meditation/prayer Going to place of worship Study

Developing Categories in Terms of Properties and Dimensions

Categories first need to be developed in terms of their properties, which are attributes or characteristics related to the particular category. These properties can then be dimensionalised, which refers to locating a property along a continuum. Properties and dimensions are important because they form the substrate on which the relationship between categories and subcategories can be identified. For this reason it is important to develop the properties and dimensions in a systematic manner. Properties are attributes of a category. Strauss and Corbin (1990) used the example of colour. Colour can vary in intensity from high to low and from darker to lighter. These are then the general properties of colour. It is possible to locate a category in the data along the dimensional continua. Each category will have several general properties, and each property will vary along the dimensional continua. So each occurrence of a category will have a separate dimensional profile, and will vary along the dimensional continuum. For example the category of the nuclear environment had six subcategories one of which was sibling rivalry. The intensity of the rivalry constituted the property and the dimension was represented by how high or low the level of the rivalry actually was.

Thus properties and dimensions provide specificity. Moreover, the properties and dimensions of categories facilitate the identifying of core categories and the development of a well-grounded theory. The properties and dimensions associated with the categories and subcategories identified in the transcripts are listed in Table 8.

Table 8 Categories, Subcategories, Properties & Dimensions

Categories	Subcategories	Properties	Dimensional range
Nuclear environment	Parents	Size	Large...Small
	Parents	Union	Together...Separated
	Parental presence	Relationship	Positive...Negative
	Parental modelling	Extent	Constantly...Never
	Parental Values	Degree	Good...Bad
	Parental abuse	Intensity	High...Low
	Sibling rivalry	Frequency	Always...Never
Extended environment	Family & friends	Intensity	High...Low
	Supportiveness	Influence	Positive...Negative
	Teachers/mentors		
Wider environment	Country	Extent	Extensive...Limited
	Town/city sophistication	Position	1st world...3rd world
	International affairs	Extent	High...Low
		Intensity	Peace...War
Culture and body appearance	Physical condition	Range	Beautiful...Ugly
	Physical degeneration	Degree	Well...Sick
		Pace	Fast...Slow
Physical identity markers	Gender	Extent	General...Particular
	Appearance	Division	Male...Female
	Race	Size	Big...Small
	DNA/fingerprints	Colour	Light...Dark
		Extent	Individual...Common
Locational identity markers	Birthplace	Degree	Fixed...Fluid
	Birth time	Location	N/S...E/W
	Country of domicile	Year	Old...Young
	Personal status	Time	Permanent...Transient
		Position	High...Low
Relationship	Nuclear environment	Degree	Positive Negative
	Extended environment	Degree	Positive Negative
	Wider environment	Degree	Positive Negative
Self	Components of self	Extent	Visible...Invisible
		Time	Long...Short
		Frequency	Ongoing...Never
		Form	Dynamic...Static
Thinking as a component of the self	Brain as substrate of thinking	Degree	Important...Unimportant
	Thinking pattern	Position	On...Off
	Thinking process	Movement	Backwards...Forwards
		Pace	Fast...Slow
Feeling as a component of the self	Types of feeling	Extent	Important...Unimportant
	Feeling management	Range	Positive...Negative
	Feeling sensation	Degree	Easy...Difficult
		Location	Mind...Body
Relation of thinking and feeling Values as personal truth	Environment and value acquisition	Extent	Reciprocal...Separate
	Value change	Degree	Strong...Weak
	Value transgression	Influence	Large...Small
		Intensity	Quickly...Slowly
		Consequences	Guilt...Innocence
Spirituality		Extent	Depth...Surface
Religion	Religious dogma	Number	Many...Few
	Religious orientation	Extent	Structured...Unstructured
		Direction	Western...Eastern..
Ritual	Prayer/meditation	Frequency	Always...Never
	Study	Extent	Regular...Intermittent
		Pattern	Regular...Intermittent

Coding Assistance

Strauss and Corbin (1990) outlined strategies that are useful for making comparisons during open coding. Comparisons help uncover specific dimensions and lead to the questioning of assumptions. These techniques were used at different points in the open coding process:

1. *The flip-flop technique* refers to turning the concept around, and examining its opposite. This technique was used to examine references to spirituality and religion as outlined by those participants who found their ideas difficult to articulate, and therefore some views were implied. The flip-flop technique opened areas in need of clarification, particularly questions in relation to dogma and ritual.
2. *The comparison technique* is useful when a category is steeped in common associations that lend the category a taken-for-granted feel. This occurred in relation to ideas of physicality and the body. It was productive to systematically compare ideas about the body at different ages and stages in the individual's life and in relation to culture. Strauss and Corbin (1990) referred to the technique of far out comparisons or using other words comparing the relationship of widely diverse categories to generate ideas in order to release an impasse or block. This technique was not used during the course of the data analysis, as the material was not tightly locked.
3. Another technique Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 91) advocated is what they designate *waving the red flag*. This refers to the researcher being alerted to assumptions through the respondents' use of words such as "always", or "everyone accepts that" The red flag was raised with regard to aspects of the question of values especially as far as the Ten Commandments were concerned. There was the assumption that the listed biblical commandments were universally formulated and accepted.

10.6.2.3 Step Two: Axial Coding

Axial coding refers to a set of procedures that follow open coding, facilitating connections between categories. This is done by the use of a paradigm outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

i Outline of Paradigm

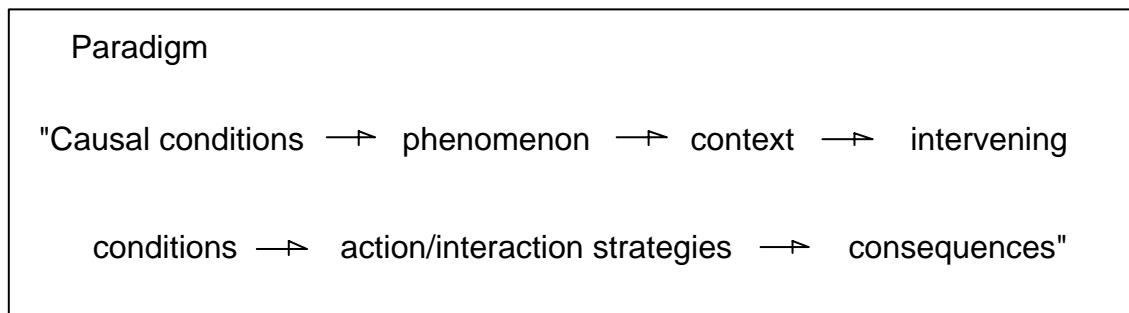


Figure 3 Paradigm format

Subcategories are connected with the associated category using the paradigm model. Causal conditions refer to the incidents or events that lead to the occurrence or actual development of a phenomenon. The phenomenon is the central idea, event or happening to which a set of actions or interactions is related. The context concerns the specific set of properties relating to a phenomenon, or in other words, the placement of incidents or events along a dimensional range. Context refers to the particular set of conditions within which the specific action/interaction strategies are executed, while intervening conditions refer to the broader structural context of a phenomenon. The intervening conditions influence the action /interaction strategies; these could include factors such as time, space, culture, economic status, career, history or personality. Consequences refer to results or outcomes of actions and interactions. It should be noted that the questions asked in axial coding pertain to a type of relationship in terms of the conceptual labels. For example, the question was asked: How did different nuclear, extended, and wider environments influence the sense of self? It was then necessary to examine the interview data to clarify whether or not particular incidents or events supported the questions. It is important to look for differences, and variations as well as process or movement so as to add density to

the developing model or theory. At the same time it is important to keep in mind the fact that the aim of a grounded theory is to capture, as far as possible, the inevitable complexity of the real world. The relevant relationships taken from the data were recorded in upper case letters on a memo sheet, and the examples of such a relationship were entered beneath in lower case letters. This method highlighted which examples (written in the lower case) supported the statement of relationship. Given below is an example taken from participant G's case notes.

Causal conditions constituted the existence of a very clever, obedient older brother who received much parental attention.

The *phenomenon* constituted deep resentment towards the parents and the brother.

Context involved resentment especially in relation to school performance.

Intervening Conditions involved the birth of a much younger sister who required her parents' attention.

Action/ Interaction strategies were developed in such a way that the participant became a rebel and received negative attention. Her main strategy was to annoy everyone by not doing her work at school.

Consequences meant that she did not obtain a university pass and could not go to university to study physiotherapy, which had been her secret dream. There are remnants of parental resentment to this day.

A summary of the axial coded categories derived from the open coded categories appears in Table 9.

Table 9 Axial Coded Categories Derived from Open Coded Categories

Open Coded Category and Sub Category	Identifiable Relationships	Axial Coded Category
The nuclear environment usually involves parents and a parental style. There is great variation in terms of parental nurturance, presence, modelling and values.	Age appropriate guidance helps the person feel nurtured and secure. Perceived lack of such containment leads to the adoption of various coping strategies such as denial, excessive independence, resentment etc	The vertical nature of the parent-child relationship means parents offer a sense of directionality.
Siblings	Depending on sex and age differences, siblings offer companionship but seldom directionality. There is usually some degree of competition for parental validation.	The horizontal nature of the sibling structure means that siblings seldom can offer authentic directionality.
The extended environment involves, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends and teachers who can offer guidance and support.	In some instances the extended environment substitutes for the nuclear environment	Inherent individual need for orientation and direction.
The wider environment of county, town/city of domicile has an indirect impact on the individual	The nature and sophistication of the wider environment has a bearing on how the individual learns to manage the world.	The acquisition of street smarts.
The health and physical appearance of the body has an impact on how the individual relates to the world.	The body is an integral part of existence and the person only realises this when something changes or goes wrong with the body.	Physical embodiment is central to being a person.
Gender as a physical marker	The culture and immediate environment has a subliminal influence on the concept of femininity.	The cultural and environment construction of the feminine.
Appearance, birth time and place and status offers others a clear indication of who you are.	Such factors combine to create a unique personal constellation.	Personal identity involves observable markers.
The structure of the brain facilitates thinking which in turn enables the individual to navigate existence in the world.	The ability to think means the person has an evaluative capacity.	The ability to evaluate provides the individual with the option of choice and contributes to a sense of direction.
Feelings of all kinds usually appear unbidden suggesting feeling has a deeply rooted base.	Feelings are related to instincts and occur quickly. Thinking comes into play to modify the immediate feeling.	There is reciprocal interaction between thinking and feeling which is expressed and held together through narrative linking.
An individual value system acquired through modelling and culture informs thinking and feeling	Values need to be assessed over time because some become limiting but many are not negotiable.	Values act as compass points.
Values represent an outward manifestation of individual soul centeredness. Soul represents the quick of life and so stands at the core of life.	Transgression of a personal value code leads to guilt and reassessment. The Ten Commandments represent the fundamental values of being, the moral worth of the human individual.	Values are prime navigational aids.
Spirituality connects the individual with the soul or the depths of being.	The inner acknowledgement at a very fundamental level that humans cannot control all in life leads to the apprehension of mystery	Spirituality is the conduit to mystery and the sense of the Divine.
Religion offers concrete expression to spirituality.	The repetitive nature of religious dogma and ritual observance promotes the sense of connection to a higher order of being.	A sanctioned belief system and associated rituals provide higher order directionality.
There is continual interaction between the physical individual, the thinking, feeling capacity, value system, soul/spirit dimension and the environment, leading to a sense of “active being” in the world.	The self cannot be seen in its’ totality but the components shift in response to changing inner and outer environmental conditions but at the same time are held together by the inherent narrative nature of human thought.	The self is an interpretive narrative agent.

10.6.2.4 Step Three: Selective Coding

Selective coding is the final step in the analytical procedure and involves integrating the collected information. Strauss and Corbin (1990) outlined certain steps through which integration can be achieved. It should be remembered that the steps are not necessarily sequential, and there is often considerable movement and backtracking between steps. By rereading memos, notes and tables and sorting them, categories come together by pointing to a theme or core category. From the general reading of the memos a descriptive story was written. Using the categories, the descriptive story was translated into an analytical one. By carefully following research procedures throughout the study, logic and order becomes apparent in the data. Research memos are important during the three types of coding because they represent an ongoing record of the analytic process. Sometimes diagrams are useful because they can be vivid representations of the relationships between concepts. Memos were very valuable in this study because they contained the products of coding and facilitated sensitisation to the nature of the underlying process as revealed by the narratives. Selective coding is the process of selecting the core category or categories by using the following steps outlined in Table 10.



Table 10 Steps in Selective Coding

Explicating the Story

Identifying the Storyline

Identifying & Corroborating the Core Categories

Relating the Sub-categories to the Core Categories using the Paradigm

Validation against the data using the Paradigm

Extending the Story by utilizing the Conditional Matrix

Explicating the Story and the Storyline

Explicating the story facilitated relating subcategories to the core category by means of the paradigm, and relating categories at the dimensional level. The identified relationships then need to be validated against the data by checking that there was indeed a relationship between the categories and all the collected information.

Identifying the Storyline

Grounded theory demands the dense development and integration of categories. In order to do this it is important to identify core categories, and then integrate them. The integration of categories was achieved by identifying the actual storyline within the participants' narratives.

Identified Core Categories

Through explication of the story and identifying the story line, core categories emerged, and were corroborated by two other researchers. Both colleagues had used narrative methodology in research and independently examined the research data. It was agreed that the story and storyline identified the core categories as being *Self* and *Narrative*. These categories pointed to the development of the self as an interpretive narrative agent, offering the individual orientation and direction, so pointing to meaning.

Relating the Sub Categories to the Core Category

The sub-categories were related to the core categories through the use of Strauss and Corbin's paradigm. In this study for example, the use of the paradigm delineated the following connections:

Causal Conditions: Individuals are born with a physical body into different environmental contexts. Physical appearance, time, and place of birth, and contextual factors give the individual identity. Continued existence in the world is achieved through adaptation to the environment. Existence in the world is confirmed by telling the story of family and the nature of origins.

Phenomenon: Through the construct of the self the individual is able to achieve a sense of being an active agent and making choices. The self, having a physical component, and the capacity to think and feel, promotes the individual's capability to have direction in life, and also facilitates successful adaptation to change.

Context: The nature of the constellation of people's nuclear, extended and wider environments vary, as do individual traits. This means the self has to develop as being flexible, interactive and responsive.

Intervening Conditions: Throughout life, conditions change both within the individual and in the outer environment. Thus there are continual shifts that need to be accommodated in the process of being in the world.

Action/Interaction Strategies: In order to respond to changing conditions in the inner, and outer environments, the individual's thinking, and feeling capacities have to be brought into reciprocal accord. This accord is achieved through the inherent narrative nature of the human mind which is able to link thinking, feeling, and acquired values in the service of interpreting events, and achieving a sense of meaning.

Consequences: A sense of self is built up in the individual psyche through the ongoing, interactive nature of the thinking and feeling processes within a narrative framework. The self is dynamic in that the contours change in adaptive response to the internal and external environments. The world is often confusing, but a profound form of spirit manifested as a sense of soul constitutes the core of the self, and serves as a link to the depths of being, as well as a conduit to the beyond. The self fills in the functional space between the concrete markers of identity and the inner domain of soul. The self attempts to achieve an evaluative stance within a continually shifting matrix of meaning. The purpose of the self as a narrative agent is to offer orientation and directionality to the individual living in the real world; to profess a containing narrative through which meaning can be assembled; to point to the longitudes and latitudes of the soul, and to guide behaviour through the recognition of values.

10.6.2.5 Validation Against the Data using the Paradigm

This step represents another level of checking. Validation against the data involved validating the theory against the data by closely examining the transcripts and the embedded views of the participants again using the paradigm. This may appear to be a redundant step at this stage but is important because it helps achieve greater focus and leads to clarity and refinement.

10.6.2.6 Extending the Story through the Conditional Matrix

Strauss and Corbin (1990) maintained that grounded theory is a transactional system in that it is a method of analysis allowing for the examination of the interactive nature of events. They stressed that action/interaction is pivotal to grounded theory, and that action/interaction is embedded in sets of conditions and leads to particular consequences. These consequences often become part of the conditions, which have a bearing on the following action/interaction sequence. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 160), using the matrix has certain benefits: First, the conditional matrix sensitises the researcher to the range of conditions, which may have bearing on the phenomenon being investigated. Second, it offers sensitisation to the potential range of consequences that may arise from action/interaction. Third, the matrix assists with systematic relating of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences to a phenomenon. The conditional matrix, together with its various levels is displayed in Figure 4.

The conditional matrix is portrayed as a set of concentric circles representing different aspects of the world (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.163)

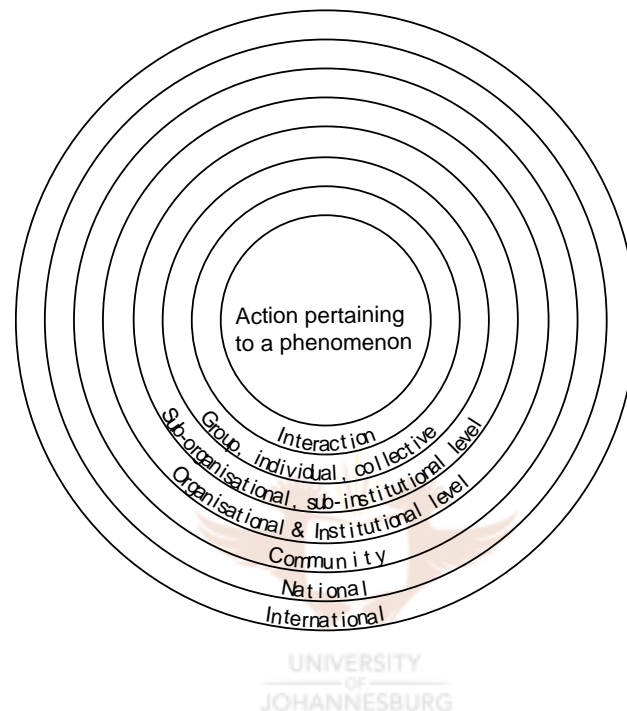


Figure 4 The conditional matrix.

The International Level is the outermost level and relates to such things as international politics, government, culture and cultural values, philosophies, economics, history, environmental issues, and international conflicts.

The National Level also relates to the same issues as those of the international level but at a narrower national level.

The Community Level includes all of the fore-mentioned issues but as they relate to the community. Each community has its own particular features that make it a unique entity.

The Organizational and Institutional Level refers to the history, structure, rules, and associated problems found in the studied organization or institution.

The Sub Organizational and Sub Institutional Level includes the features related to the area under study, which could perhaps be a department in an organization.

The Individual, Group or Collective Level includes the experiences, biographies, knowledge, or philosophies of persons, families or groups.

The Interaction Level refers to individuals doing things together, with regard to the phenomenon, as well as to the thought process, action, and speech that go with doing such things.

The Action Level refers to the actions or interactions carried out in order to manage or respond to a phenomenon.

The purpose of grounded theory methodology is essentially to develop a model or theory; therefore concepts need to be systematically related. Tracing conditional paths helps to systematically track an event or happening from the action/interaction level through the different conditional and consequential levels (or the other way around) in order to link them to a phenomenon, and then verify them through the data. All levels apply but are only brought in if relevant to the studied phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Table 11 summarises the research steps in terms of the coding procedures and Table 12 summarises the process and hence phases of the research.

Table 11 Summary of Steps and Coding Sequences

1. Preparation	2. Open Coding	3. Axial Coding	4. Selective Coding
Pilot study/decision to study the self in mid-life women	Examination of all data i.e. transcripts, memos, journal notes to open up the data	Axial coding refers to facilitating connections between the categories	Process of selecting the core category
Selection of participants	Final transcripts analysed line by line	Connections between the categories facilitated by means of the paradigm:	Explicate the story
Organisation; planning of interviews, storage of memo notes, journal notes and interview transcripts	Data broken down into discrete ideas	Causal conditions-phenomena-context-intervening conditions-action interaction strategies-consequences	Formulate the storyline
	Phenomena identified		Identify the core categories
	Concepts grouped around a phenomenon	Outline the categories derived from the axial coding	Relate sub categories to the core categories using the paradigm
	Categories named		Validated the depiction of the data against the original transcripts by means of the paradigm
	Categories developed by means of subcategories		
	Categories further developed in terms of properties and dimensions		Expand analysis using the conditional matrix to systematically highlight wider implications and trace the conditional path

Table 12 Summary of the Research Phases

Phase One/Exploration	Phase Two/Clarification
Participants first interview recorded, transcribed and analysed using open and axial coding	The categories identified during phase one of the study were used to direct the final interview.
Participants interviewed every six weeks and interviews written up in detail immediately after the sessions. Interviews were analysed using open and axial coding.	The interviews were recorded, fully transcribed and analysed line by line using open, axial and selective coding.
All codes were entered into a central tabulation grid.	Systematic coding yielded a view of the participants' view of selfhood.
Saturation of the data signalled the need for clarification of the identified categories.	A representative model of the participants' view of the self could be constructed.

10.6.3 Assessment of the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Quantitative research is represented in numbers, and strategies have been developed to assess the quality of the work in terms of validity and reliability. Validity refers to the confidence that can be placed in experimental manipulation, and can be evaluated in terms of face validity, content validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, and construct validity. Reliability refers to whether or not the findings can be repeated.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, differs from quantitative research in that data is usually in the form of textual narrative or transcribed interviews, written descriptions of observations or field notes, and a journal of personal ideas and reflections. Qualitative research also needs to be carefully evaluated, and different terminology, more pertinent to the qualitative approach, is needed. The inherent differences between quantitative and qualitative research mean that qualitative research requires alternative models of validity and reliability. To this end, Guba and Lincoln (1981) maintained that it is possible to identify standards that are appropriate to qualitative research in terms of trustworthiness. They called the criteria for judging adequacy parallel criteria because such criteria are intended to parallel the rigor of the criteria that have been used within the conventional paradigm including internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. According to Guba and Lincoln, their model remains conceptually close to the four conventional quantitative criteria,

yet is suited to the qualitative approach. Thus *trustworthiness* can be viewed in terms of *credibility, transferability, dependability* and *confirmability*.

10.6.3.1 Credibility

According to Guba and Lincoln the credibility criterion is parallel to internal validity, in that the idea of isomorphism, or similarity of form, between findings and objective reality is replaced by isomorphism between constructed realities of respondents, and the reconstructions attributed to them. Therefore a qualitative study is said to be reliable when the descriptions, interactions, or human experiences investigated are recognized and accepted as true by others who share the experience. Credibility can be obtained through strategies that include prolonged engagement; persistent observation; peer debriefing; negative case analysis; progressive subjectivity; and respondent checking. These are discussed in more detail below.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement involves spending sufficient time with each of the respondents to create a congenial and open working relationship. Prolonged engagement facilitates submersion in the research area promoting recognition and verification of pertinent information. Prolonged involvement also helps to overcome the effects of misinformation. Contact with participants in this study was maintained over two years, and indeed yielded “thick” data. Thus the requirement of prolonged engagement was met.

Persistent Observation

Persistent observation enables the evaluator to observe characteristics and elements in the situation that pertain to the subject under investigation. Persistent observation permits the continued focusing of attention on characteristics and details of the domain to add depth, and widen the scope of the investigation as a whole. The extended time period of the study meant that observations could be made and noted in detail, and such recorded observations, made over time, enriched the quality of the overall material collected.

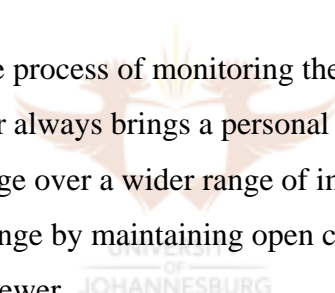
Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing involves consultation with someone who is in a position to understand and evaluate procedures. The disinterested peer has no contractual interest in the study, and therefore is in a good position to evaluate hypotheses, and conclusions. A colleague was available for discussion throughout the course of the research, and provided independent evaluation.

Negative Analysis

Negative analysis is the process of revising working hypotheses using hindsight with a view to refining and developing a given hypothesis in an attempt to reject rival hypotheses. The constructions were discussed with other researchers in an effort to achieve greater clarity with regard to possible alternative conceptualisations.

Progressive Subjectivity

Progressive subjectivity is the process of monitoring the researcher's own developing constructions. The researcher always brings a personal slant to an investigation but this must not be given privilege over a wider range of information. An effort was made to overcome this challenge by maintaining open communication, and collaboration with a peer reviewer. 

Respondent Checking

Respondent checking refers to follow up interviews with a selected number of research respondents for the purpose of clarification to ensure the data represents what the participant actually said. In this study the transcripts were given to each of the participants who then read and amended the transcript, if necessary. Participant B was the only participant who asked for corrections. She corrected a particular date recorded in the transcript as well as information with regard to her sister. Offering respondents the opportunity to read the transcript validates the recorded information, and the respondent is on record as having made the statements the researcher is using to develop theory.

10.6.3.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to generalisability, and is considered parallel to external validity. Transferability is relative, depending on the extent to which relevant conditions overlap. With qualitative research, it is argued that transferability is the responsibility of the person who wants to transfer the findings. It is therefore important that the original researcher presents sufficient material on which to base the comparisons. In making transferability judgments, all the working hypotheses for the particular study together with careful descriptions of time, place, context, and the culture in which those hypotheses were found to be relevant, need to be made available. The independent auditor confirmed that there was sufficient material with regard to procedures and findings for comparisons to be made.

10.6.3.3 Dependability

Dependability is parallel to the criteria of validity, and is concerned with the stability of the data over time. Guba and Lincoln (1981) pointed out that, with an emergent design in qualitative research, there are shifts, so methodological changes need to take place as constructions are refined. The shifts and changes should be well documented in order that they can be assessed through confirmability. The ongoing nature of the interviews captured the inevitable changes in circumstances as well as in thinking, feeling, and behaviour. The interviews were recorded or written up in detail so providing ample documentation for assessment purposes.

10.6.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is parallel to the conventional criterion of objectivity, and is concerned with confirming the data. Guba and Lincoln (1981) pointed out that confirmability ensures that the outcome of the enquiry is really embedded within the data itself, and that the researcher has not concocted a fantasy. In the conventional paradigm, objectivity is assured by the method. In qualitative research, integrity is rooted in the data, and its collection. Confirmability in qualitative research relies on the confirmability audit. The confirmability audit, and the dependability audit can be carried out together using the audit trail. An independent auditor carried these out to ensure confirmability. The audit trail must reveal whether or not the facts, figures and

constructions can be traced to the original sources. The audit trail must also reveal whether or not the process by which the facts, figures and constructions have been compressed and rearranged, make the conclusions credible. In this study an independent auditor checked that the facts, figures, and constructions were indeed derived from the original data. An independent coder confirmed that the process by which the facts, figures and constructions have been compressed and rearranged, support the conclusions.

10.6.3.5 The Narrative Interview

The narrative interview is a qualitative research tool, and is a way of discovering what others think and feel about their worlds. The information gained from narrative interviews can be collected to form explanations and theories that are grounded in the details and evidence from the interview itself. Thus the narrative interview is both an academic and a practical tool, and the explanations and theories derived from such investigation can be of both academic and practical value (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Narrative interviews are essentially used to elicit in-depth answers to questions regarding issues such as culture, meaning and process. The important point, however, is that narrative interviewers do not impose the direction of the answers or dictate the set of categories. Narrative interviews are aimed at understanding the respondents' perspectives. Narrative interviews are extended, modified conversations, but conversations with a difference.

People converse as part of everyday life and most people understand conversational rules such as reciprocity, turn taking, politeness, length of eye contact, safe and unsafe subjects as well as the length, pace, and pitch of the interchange. The narrative interview has to take place at a deeper level. The interviewer, therefore, has to listen far more acutely than would be the case in normal conversation. The interviewer has to listen with eyes as well as ears, and note the connection between what is said and the associated body language. The narrative interviewer has to think on various levels when conducting the interview. For instance, while talking and listening to the respondent the interviewer has to be alert to ideas, themes or issues that may be developing, and which can be explored later in the interview. Rubin and Rubin

(1995) stressed the fact that, even though the narrative interview involves conversation and the creation of a narrative partnership, the interview is essentially a variant of normal conversation. A normal conversation drifts with no clear goal whereas a narrative interview has the firm goal of eliciting information. In normal conversations people rarely answer questions in depth. In qualitative interviews, the interviewer is likely to expect a long answer to specific enquiries; this has to be sensitively handled otherwise the enterprise may seem like an interrogation. In ordinary conversations nobody keeps a record of what is said but record keeping is imperative during the narrative interview. Not only is this intrusive but there are always ethical issues to consider.

Respondents often become highly involved in the discussion, and the interviewer needs to move to a neutral topic and then initiate leave-taking so that the respondent does not feel dismissed (Schurink, 1998). A good rapport had already been built up with the participants in this study and the task then was to vigilantly maintain this rapport. Straus and Corbin (1990, p. 18) stressed that the requisite skills for doing qualitative research include the ability to:

...step back and critically analyze the situations, to recognize and avoid bias, to obtain valid and reliable data, and to think abstractly. To do these, a qualitative researcher requires theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytic distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, astute powers of observation, and good interaction skills

Certain questions can be asked to assess interviewer skill.

Was the interviewer:

Sufficiently prepared?

Comfortable with the topic?

Able to put participants at ease?

Able to build trust?

Able to guide the conversation effectively?

Able to manage shifting boundaries?

Able to handle expressed emotion?

Able to handle aggression?

Able to differentiate between normal conversation and a narrative interview?

Alasuutari (1997) notes that to be valid as autobiographical testimonies the collected life stories must not be greatly affected by the characteristics of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Perhaps the best approach in a life narrative interview is that depicted by Josselson (1995b) as the “empathic stance” where empathy becomes an attitude of attention so that the research becomes a process of overcoming rather than creating distance. “Empathy is recruited into understanding precisely because its continuity and receptivity allows for a clearer perception of others” (Josselson, 1995b, p. 31).

If the interviewer can be positively assessed on these issues, there is a good chance the interview material will have density and specificity. In this study the question was not of building trust, but of maintaining trust over quite a long period of time. There was only one suggestion of veiled aggression, and this occurred towards the end of the study when a participant, who had endured a very taxing series of life events, stated that the interviewer herself needed to be interviewed and her life story reviewed. The participant was told that this would be acceptable and she then settled down, continued the discussion, and did not later request such an interview. The incident did, however, highlight two things, first, that narrative interviewers need to be prepared to be somewhat unprepared and, second, that the study was nearing the end of its natural life span.

10.6.4 Ethics

Ethically, participants in a research study must be protected from harm. Strydom (1998, p.25) pointed out that emotional harm to subjects is:

More difficult to predict and determine than physical discomfort, but often has more far reaching consequences for respondents...

The responsibility to protect the respondents against harm reaches further than mere efforts to repair, or attempt to minimise such harm afterwards

Steps were taken in this study to protect the participants from harm as follows:

The participants were not manipulated into joining the study but joined by invitation and subsequent choice.

The nature of the investigation was fully explained. The subjects had taken part in the earlier research study and were familiar with the format, implications and procedures.

It was explained to the participants that this was an investigative process and so the length of the study could not be predetermined. Therefore the cut off date was not set in advance.

Informed consent was obtained from all the subjects and confirmed in an explanatory consent form.

The participants were told that they could leave the study at any time.

They were also informed that, if they felt the material elicited during the conversational partnership raised problematic issues, they would be offered the option of professional counselling.

Confidentiality was to be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the changing of personal details where necessary.

The participants read their transcripts and could change material if they so wished.

After analysing the data the participants were informed of the findings, asked to give their views and raise any issues resulting from the study they felt were relevant.

10.6.4.1 Theory Building

The ultimate aim of the qualitative grounded analysis of data is to build theory. The scientific tradition that underlies research is to build theory based on rigorous investigation. Formulating theoretical interpretations of data grounded in reality offers a potent avenue of understanding the world of experience.

According to Mouton (1996) there is a growing acceptance of explanatory theories in the social sciences. Explanatory theories explain through the construction of causal models and stories of phenomena. These stories are generally plausible in that they identify the relevant causal processes that produce certain situations or events. Depending on the nature of the investigation, they can vary in scope from local to general explanations. In addition, social theories usually explain phenomena in an open system and therefore prediction is not a central criterion in the theory building.



10.7 Summary of the Research Methodology

The aim of the research project was to examine the nature of the self by analysing the life narratives of a group of mid-life women using grounded theory methodology as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The participants were interviewed using the life narrative approach over a period of two years. The first and last interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. All other interviews were written up immediately after the interview session. The data was analysed according to the method advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The approach involves the use of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During open coding, concepts, categories and subcategories were identified, and the categories and subcategories analysed in terms of properties and dimensional range. Axial coding facilitated the identifying of connections between categories using the paradigm outlined by Strauss and Corbin. Selective coding involved the selection of the core categories, which emerged as narrative and the self. Selective coding concerns explicating the story and the storyline, identifying the core categories, relating the subcategories to the core categories by means of the paradigm and validation against the data, as well as

validation within the conditional matrix. Guba and Lincoln's (1981) method for judging the adequacy of the research in terms of trustworthiness was used. Trustworthiness was examined with regard to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The quality of the interview itself also plays a significant part in the trustworthiness of qualitative research. The aim of grounded theory research is to develop theory. The theory of the nature of the western self, developed out of this research, is outlined in chapter twelve.

10.8 Evaluation of the Research Process

Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach was chosen for the grounded analysis of the participants' narratives because it is systematic yet fluid, and effectively uncovers depth. During the research process the steps were followed systematically and in detail. The research was conducted over a sufficient length of time to ensure that the prolonged engagement and persistent observation criteria were met. An independent coder and independent auditor ensured that constructions were valid. Checks with the respondents during the course of the study as well as a check regarding the final interview material helped to ensure that the initial data was an accurate representation of what they had said. An interview was set up with Participant D with regard to her ideas on the nature of feeling in relation to thinking. It was not clear, when analysing her transcript, what she actually meant in terms of the relationship between thinking and feeling, and it seemed that her views represented a negative case that required further analysis. During the subsequent interview it emerged, however, that her views were in alignment with the other participants. The study has also been well documented to ensure transferability. Thus steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

The participants' model of the self is outlined and discussed in the following chapter.

11 CHAPTER ELEVEN DISCUSSION

The discussion will cover the following issues:

The question of data analysis

The conditional matrix as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990)

The participants' model of the self

Generativity

Self-worth/self-esteem

Healing



11.1 Discussion of Data Analysis

Glaser (1992) has a number of criticisms of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach to grounded theory analysis. With regard to open coding for example, Glaser contended that Strauss's method of labelling and then grouping is totally unnecessary and a complete waste of time. Glaser has argued that the constant comparative method cuts to the heart of the matter with ease and speed. Glaser especially criticised Strauss's method for over-working irrelevant incidents or words. He has been particularly critical of the paradigm model arguing that grounded theory does not force because in time, frameworks and models emerge. Glaser (1992, p. 123) stressed that "if you torture data enough, it will give up." But Strauss and Corbin's approach is hardly torturing data. There is no doubt that Strauss's method of analysis is highly systematic whereas Glaser seems to be postmodern in his whole approach. Glaser maintained that Strauss's outline of the basics of grounded analysis has shown that Strauss never understood grounded theory in the first place. It seems that their approaches have simply diverged and there is no need to make an international

incident out of it provided the researcher has read and understood the ramifications of the criticisms. With increasing interest in qualitative research there are a number of points of departure. What is important is that the method of data analysis should be selected only after various approaches have been evaluated. The approach selected must be appropriate to the nature of the study undertaken. It needs to be emphasised again that, in this instance, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach was effective in managing a large volume of data.

11.1.1.1 Tracing the Conditional Path

In this study the identified phenomenon was the nature of a sense of self within the individual. Strauss and Corbin stressed that the use of the conditional matrix increases theoretical sensitivity to the possible range of conditions and consequences relating to the phenomenon under investigation. The matrix also helps systematically relate conditions, actions/interactions and consequences, to the phenomenon. Based on Strauss and Corbin's model the conditional path in this study can be described as follows.

International Level

International events have a great bearing on the development of an individual's sense of self. The world has become smaller, especially through technological developments such as television, the Internet and global travel. Postmodernists have challenged the grand narratives or ideologies, which claimed privileged status. This has led to a general scepticism with regard to respect for authority and has contributed to a sense of loss of meaning, which is also under assault from the shifting tides of consumerism. Consumerism knows few boundaries, choice abounds, and truth becomes relativised. In a climate of shifting currents the construct of an agentic self offers a foothold and provides an evaluative space. The participants in this study revealed recognition of changes in the world order. They also all believe that they are healthier and look younger than their mothers at mid-life because of the change in emphasis in the west in the role of women, and because of new ideas about a healthy lifestyle, diet and the importance of exercise. They believe that the more relaxed way

of dressing available to women today contributes to their feeling younger. The participants highlighted the fact that people do not spend time referencing aspects of being as they live their lives moment by moment. For example, humans do not go around saying to themselves “now this feeling aspect of my being is coming into play, and then I shall access another part of myself because of the subtle influence of international events.” The influences may certainly be there but their meaningfulness is not assimilated until much later.

National Level

At the national level, in South Africa for example, there have been tremendous changes in the country since 1994. Change elicits feelings of uncertainty in most individuals, and often heralds a period of instability. There have been leadership changes, economic changes, and changes in cultural emphasis. The national psyche has been fractured, and there is a need to address polarities of order and chaos, love and hate, beauty and ugliness in a shared national narrative. The participants in the study were keenly aware of national changes but did not dwell on them, apparently because they felt they could not make significant direct contributions to change anything. There was also the recognition of problems related to the young in terms of drugs, homelessness, and lack of job opportunities. The participants did not know what they could do, in a personal capacity, to ameliorate the situation apart from working in charity organisations.

Community Level

At the community level, the different groups living in the country have been able to interact with each other more freely than before. This means that individuals need to situate themselves in relation to a much broader frame of society. This can be both liberating as well as threatening. Individuals have the task of redefining themselves in terms of a wider community. The participants in the study accepted redefinition of community space, and showed that life moves on, and demands a productive response on the part of all the players.

The Organizational and Institutional Level

Participants working outside the home recognized changes at the organizational and institutional level. The sense of self had to be defined within new changing contextual bases. Most of the participants were involved in outreach programmes with regard to youth and the elderly. There was frustration however because the encountered problems at times seemed insurmountable. This compromised the sense of self at the level of agency.

The Group, Individual and Collective Level

The changes in society have meant that there is interaction between different groups of people, and so the individual's frame of experience is enlarged. Individual values come under the spotlight because they are made visible through attitudes and actions. The participants showed some confusion with regard to self-definition, especially in relation to the societies' notion of personal freedom and the way this freedom was interpreted.



Interaction

With the opening of society, wider communication and the greater interaction between various groups of people, aspects of difference and commonality have been brought into bold relief. Assagioli (1993) pointed out that values and valuations are unavoidable. Differing value systems and cultural norms show themselves to be important elements of self-definition because they raise issues of relationship, unity, diversity, conflict, harmony, and power, underscoring the fact that the sense of self is to a large extent, embedded in community. The individual is not an isolated entity, and in fact cannot live in isolation. This interdependency has a considerable influence of the self-structure. As Participant G noted for example, humans cannot form a sense of self without reference to other people, as they need input from those they live with, and from the community at large. In order to evaluate and integrate information individuals rely on the thinking and feeling components to filter relevant internal and external material.

Action in Relation to the Self

The Information Age of today is characterized by rapid change, and the advent of cyberspace has led to a deeper questioning of reality. Analysis of the participants' narrative suggests that the construction of a self has become a link between the depths of inner being, or soul and the individual's personal embodied identity. Especially in times of change, the sense of self becomes agentic, giving direction and orientation through the reciprocal interaction of embodied thinking and feeling. Thinking has a narrative structure and the self, informed by thinking and feeling, is notably contained through narrative. The self gives direction to the individual by sorting the information emanating from the inner and outer environments, consolidating values, and guiding actions in the service of orientation and meaning.

11.2 Discussion of the Participants' Model the Self

Mouton (1996) distinguished between three types of conceptual frameworks, namely typologies, models and theories. A model, said Mouton offers a systematic representation of phenomena by identifying patterns and regularities among the variables. Models are partial representations of given phenomena. Analysis of the data yielded a model of the participants' view of the self. Their view is summarized in Figure 5.

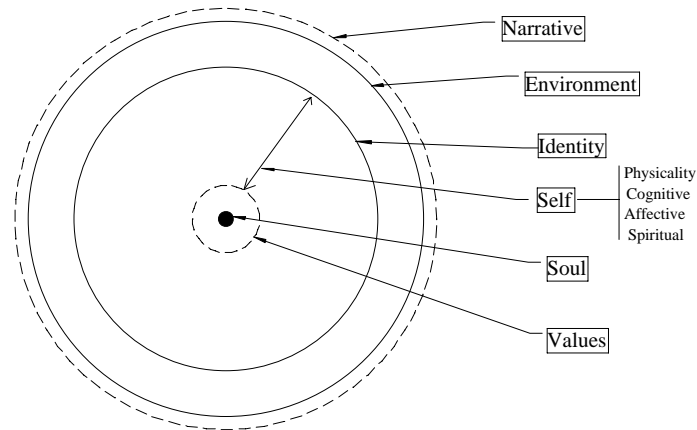


Figure 5 Participants' model of the self.

The participants' model of the self may be described as follows:

Humans are born into various familial and cultural contexts giving each person a physical and locational identity. Over time individuals develop their thinking/feeling abilities in order to adapt and shape their environments. From very young, humans display a narrative capacity, and through such ability events can be interpreted and choices made. A sense of personal being or selfhood is inherent in the organism because of human physical, neurological and molecular particularity. Paradoxically, the centre of a particular self is the non-physical soul, which offers anchorage and a sense of transcendence. Closely allied with the soul is the individual's value system, which provides the directional rudder to the self. The self has directional power through the interaction of the thinking, feeling, spiritual, and physical capacities of the individual. Thus the self involves the continual interaction of multiple layers of being. These include the body, thinking and feeling and, at a deeper level, a sense of spirit and soul as well as unconscious factors. The self fills the space between identity and soul and is expressed through an ongoing, inner narrative linking thoughts, feelings, and events within a story so allowing for the development of meaning.

The various facets of the model will now be discussed.

11.3 Outline of the Nature of the Participants' Model of the Self

Table 13 Summary of the Participants' Model of the Self

Narrative	Environment	Identity	Self
Narrative and meaning	Participants backgrounds	Gender, age, appearance, time and place of birth	Unconscious
Narrative and sequencing	Wider environment		Soul
Narrative assemblies and meaning clusters	Extended environment; relationships Work Financial security		Values (behaviour)
Narrative and change	Nuclear environment		Spirituality
Narrative and situating the self			Physicality
Meaning and metaphor			Affect
			Cognition



11.3.1 Narrative

11.3.1.1 Narrative and Meaning

Analysis of the participants' narratives suggested that narrative opens up the landscape of meaning. Meaning was highly individual. At times the participants displayed tension between what they considered meaningful on a personal level and what they felt they should consider meaningful. The findings suggest that narrative facilitates meaning through sequencing; highlighting narrative assemblies and meaning clusters; accommodating change, recognition of the situating of the self within the narrative as well as by means of metaphor.

11.3.1.2 Narrative and Sequencing

Over the period of two years all participants' narrations were a collection of many events, thoughts and feelings. Through the containing capacity of the narrative structure, personal life events and associated feelings were made meaningful through recognition of sequenced patterns and themes. Van den Broek and Thurlow (1991) drew attention to the importance of causal chains in the narrative structure. In this study it was found that there were linked sequences rather than causal chains. Participant E's narrative path will be used to outline narrative sequencing and is illustrated in Figure 6 below.

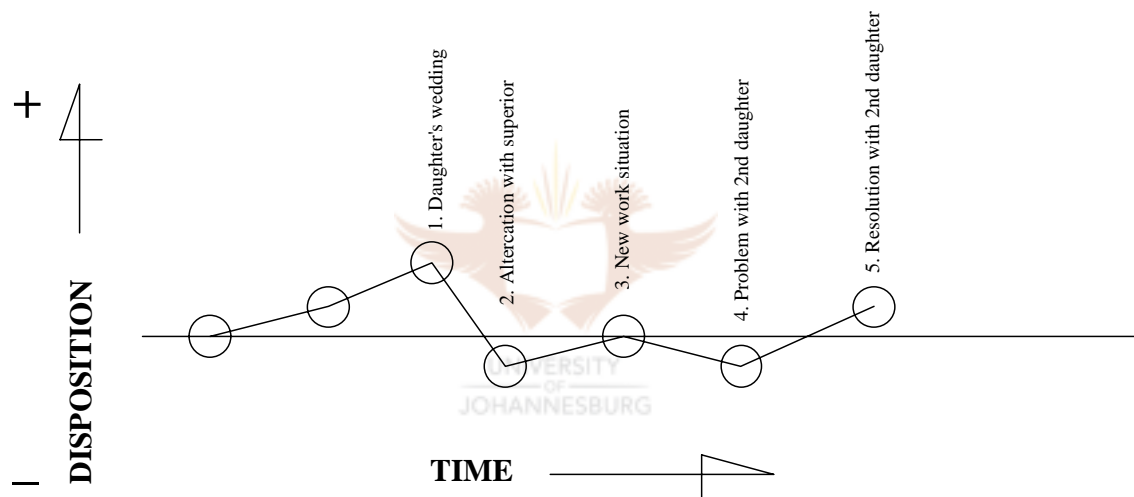


Figure 6 Life events and connecting paths.

The diagram of life events of Participant E is displayed against two axes, the horizontal axis representing time with regard to the past, and movement into the future, and the vertical, dispositional axis, relating to thinking, feeling, and the embodied aspects of the individual. The participant spent a relatively short time living in the past but often referred to the fact she had been treated with respect and that the culture in which she grew up laid great emphasis on manners and respect for others. These events depicted in Figure 6 were linked by periods of relatively uneventful daily living represented by the lines linking the circles. The one event did not directly cause the following event but there was an underlying leitmotif or theme

running through the narrative clusters, and that was the theme of being treated with respect. Through the sequencing and linking of happenings within a narrative structure, the participant was able to make sense of events through the emerging patterns. Thus the narrative facilitated a greater level of abstraction.

Participant E recognized the highly charged emotion allied to the theme of respect. The theme of respect seemed to have become what Jung (1973, CW 2, para. 733) referred to as a complex. Jung described the complex as a collection of images or ideas, clustered around the archetypal core, all having a common emotional tone. If the complex is not consciously recognized it can cause problems by interfering in daily life as highly charged emotional opinions. During the course of her life narrative interviews, Participant E was surprised to find how emotional she actually was around issues related to respect and began to examine her feelings and behaviour.

11.3.1.3 Narrative Assemblies and Meaning Clusters

Participants' narratives became noticeably more differentiated in terms of meaning clusters within the narrative assemblies. This is illustrated in Figures 7 and 8, which represent participant E's situation.

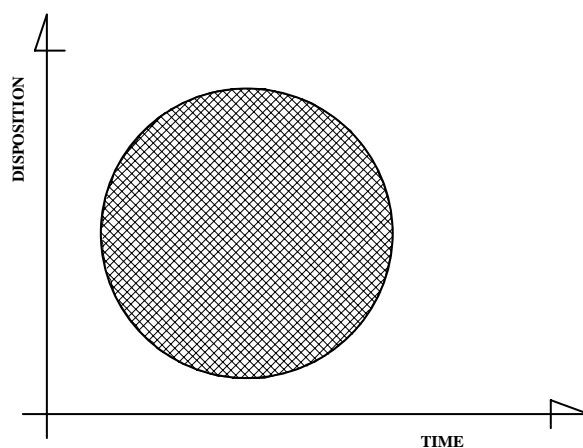


Figure 7 Undifferentiated meaning in a narrative assembly (Participant E).

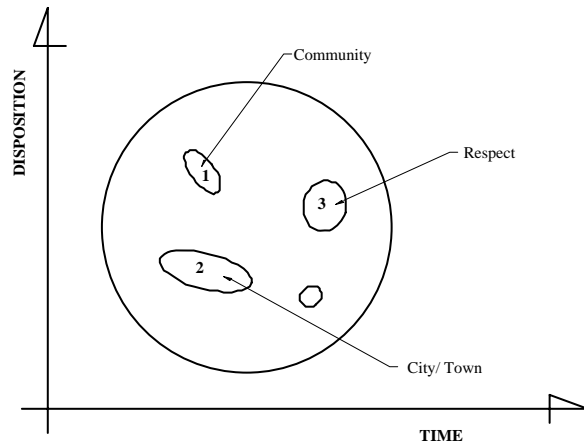


Figure 8 Differentiated meaning cluster within the narrative assembly (Participant E).

Figure 7 shows a blurred apprehension of events, feelings and actions. The narration of the life story enabled the participant to gain greater understanding of connections between feelings and actions. Figure 8 reveals the crystallization of meaning into differentiated meaning clusters within the narrative assembly where centres of meaning are contained within a narrative framework, and linked by narrative threads. For example, when reviewing her narrative, participant E identified three patterned meaning clusters. First, she had been brought up in a small, disciplined community where respect for self and others was important, and had to be supported by rituals of social nicety. Second, the world in a city is larger than in a small country town, and not everyone subscribes to the same observances as she does. Third, the issue of respect remains very important to her. Participant E now acknowledges she cannot always be treated with the respect and deference she enjoyed in a small community but will rather strive to be with people who hold similar values. The narrative provided an overall framework, and meaning was thematically crystallized through differentiation within the narrative pattern.

11.3.1.4 Narrative and Change

Narrative analysis revealed that the personal narrative also helps facilitate meaning through the accommodation of change. A truism is the fact that life involves change

at many junctures, and at different levels with the result that the management of change becomes an important part of living. Prochaska and Norcross (1999) maintained change unfolds over five stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. The process of accommodated change is illustrated in table 14, documenting Participant D's process.

Table 14 Accommodating Change through Narrative: (Participant D)

Stages of change	Situation	Leitmotif
Precontemplation	Vague feeling of general unhappiness	Recognition of bad choices in partners. Model of mother as a highly capable survivor. Leitmotif in the storyline became how she could also triumph over adversity
Contemplation	Aware of uneasiness about new partner	
Preparation	Made observations and collected information	
Action	Told him to leave	
Maintenance	Joined groups Took courses Fitness campaign Reconnected with friends	

Participant D had twinges of awareness and feelings of deep unhappiness. At this point she was not aware of why she was unhappy and anxious, maintaining that her very sense of survival seemed at stake. Through the unfolding of her personal narrative she realized that these feelings were connected with her current partner. She had the uneasy suspicion that her partner was not all he set himself up to be, and yet she wanted to be with him. She observed her partner's behaviour and collected information about his past and present dealings. Her unhappiness together with the collected information led to her decision to part. In trying to decide what to do she remembered how her mother had dealt with difficult situations. Her feelings and

actions were contained within a powerful leitmotif of triumph in the face of adversity as exemplified by her mother. The narrative structure held the tension between the past, present and projected future so providing space for the accommodation of change.

11.3.1.5 Narrative and Situating the Self

In this study it became clear that meaning was, in part, a function of how a participant situated herself within the story, and how the story was actually narrated. In other words, where did the participant place herself relative to the events? Was she active or passive, central or peripheral, cohesive or dispersed, positive or negative, voiced or unvoiced? How participants situated themselves in their stories during the course of their narrative interviews is presented below.

Table 15 The Situating of the Self within the Narrative

Property	Dimensional range	
Self placement relative to narrative events	Active	Passive
	Central	Peripheral
	Cohesive	Dispersed
	Positive	Negative
	Voiced	Unvoiced
	Anchored	Floating

The seriously abused participants in the pilot study presented a particular profile in relation to the narrative events. These participants were noticeably passive in that events were seen as simply happening. The participants were very much peripheral to the story itself, giving others central place as sources of joy and pain. The participants in the main study saw themselves as active and central to the story, but fluctuated in terms the degree to which parts of their narratives could find a voice. The participants

found it productive to take note of how they situated themselves in their stories as a clue to underlying personal dynamics.

11.3.1.6 Meaning and Metaphor

Modell (1997) highlighted the significance of metaphor as an emergent property of mind. Metaphor has an intrinsic play or flow. The term metaphor is derived from the Greek word *metaphora*, meaning to transport or transfer. In metaphor there is a transfer of meaning from one domain to another. Modell maintained that affects, metaphor and memory form a synergistic unified system. Because feelings often seem out of control, translating such feelings into metaphors provides a schema, which offers organization and a sense of control. According to Modell a foreclosed metaphor, where the correspondence between one domain and a dissimilar domain is unvarying, leads to repetition of the past. On the other hand, open or fluid metaphors promote the recontextualization of affects and the generation of new meaning. If the metaphoric correspondence between past and present is fluid and ambiguous, this allows for the play of imagination and transformation (Modell, 1997, p.111). Participant C revealed that a stoic attitude had been the hallmark of her family's attitude to life. During her son's cancer treatment she felt overwhelmed by her own pain and fear. By drawing on and expanding the stoic metaphor she was able to recontextualize her pain as the normal response to a life-threatening situation and channel her love into active caring rather than immobilizing concern.

11.3.2 Environment

Liberal individualism is said to have become the dominant position in western society today making the individual autonomous, self-sufficient, and essentially separate, so underplaying human connectedness (Frazer, 2000). Humans, however, are closely connected to their total environment. The environment was identified with regard to the nuclear environment, the extended environment, and the wider environment. The respective environments are not static or insular but are interconnected as can be seen in the review of participants' stories.

Participant A's early years were secure in the extended environment of mother, aunt, uncle and cousins:

I was a war time baby which I think is rather traumatic...I was brought up by my mum and my mother's sister, my beloved aunt Anne and her husband and I had an older cousin who was two years older than me and I had a boy cousin who was just a couple of months younger than me...I had an abundance of love. You know I therefore had two mothers and a daddy and a big sister.

This supportive environment has continued and her children and friends bring joy.

Participant A's husband also offers solid support:

I have tremendous support from my husband. He is amazingly supportive, even when I am at fault.

Participant A is financially secure and has not worked since she first married.

Discussion of changes in the wider world did not often surface in her narrative.

Participant A, however, does become disturbed by events that may affect the welfare of her family.

Participant B, on the other hand did not enjoy a very warm nuclear or extended environment:

My parents were very busy in their salon...very busy with themselves, partying at night so you grew up pretty much left to yourself. Had a sister and we were to be seen and not heard and the discipline was that you got a crack if you did something wrong and that was that. They were nice people but very wrapped up in themselves so they didn't really have time for any children. So we were kind of feeling very neglected and that resulted in me having a tremendous yearning to leave home as a little girl already.

Participant B was divorced several years ago and brought up her son and daughter.

They have now emigrated, and B is alone. At the same time she works in the competitive beauty industry where age and looks are important. As a result she feels insecure especially as she depends on her work as her only financial resource.

Participant D is also divorced though she works with her ex-husband in the successful business they built together. This arrangement is very stressful for her, however. Her son and daughter attend university but live at home with her, and she very much enjoys their support. When growing up D enjoyed the support of her mother:

I certainly had lot of help from my mother, I think when I look back because although I never had the perfect marriage, even before I had children, I never had a perfect marriage, I always had one where I was trying to field the frustrations and traumas and things that did not work out but I think I had a very good role model in my mother. She was a real support, she was a caregiver, and she supported my father, even though he wasn't very grateful for it most days of the week. She was also an incredible daughter to her father who lived with us. She was always there. I mean my father was never available. He was always busy, he always had business worries and things like that so he was never able to spend a lot of time with us and being almost I would say an alcoholic he gave us all a hard time...

Being in the business world, participant D is very aware of the wider environment and the impact of world affairs on the economy, and on the lives of individuals.

Participant C also remembers her mother as supportive but her father as distant:

He was one of those husbands who did not get too involved and he would play golf over the weekends. Then there was my mum. She was always there for us. She was always there when we got home from school and we could talk to her and tell her outrageous things and she never fell apart and said 'oh you horrible child' ...so we were able to talk to her. She was good and brought each of us up as individuals not as one, it was don't follow in your sisters' footsteps; be your own person.

Participant E did not really have a father as he deserted the family early in her life:

My mum and I were on our own. I was put in a convent at the age of four and a half, although she was in the same town, because she didn't want anybody to look after me, but only as a weekly boarder from Monday to Friday. What

helped me was the support I got from my mother and my mother's side of the family and I think probably the extreme discipline.

Her present nuclear environment offers support from her husband and children:

They are very supportive of me and encouraging and very appreciative when I do something for them. They've never been critical or anything negative.

Participant E has retired is financially secure and is aware of events in the wider environment especially if they impact on the safety of her children.

Participant G grew up in a financially secure nuclear environment but felt very neglected and almost invisible:

Well I resented my brother and my sister and I basically resented my mother. My brother and parents never went to any of my school do's. They never went to parent's day from grade one because they were probably afraid I would stand on my head and then my mother was too busy. I mean if I was in a play, they never went to see the play. I swam in galas, they never came to watch me swim but they'd go and watch my brother playing rugby and they'd watch all his plays and my sister, you know, they did everything...I resented it. I did resent it. I didn't really like my mother.

Today G enjoys the support of her husband and children saying if the chips were down they would all pull together. She often emphasised the importance of her animals and how they are always around her giving comfort and protection with the ultimate proof of this in her view being:

Well, my animals sleep in my bedroom

Participant G is not financially secure, and is starting another small business in the coming year. She returned to work two years ago when she discovered her husband had squandered all their life savings. She is highly aware of the local and international situation and the impact world events have on the country.

It is important to note that, even though all the participants can be described as white middle class midlife women who did not go hungry as children and did not suffer

direct neglect or abuse, they all experienced their environments through different relationship constellations and in different ways. The participants showed that they had to navigate a passage in the world, even from an early age. If fortunate, the nuclear environment provided people who could offer guidance, and give direction to their young lives. Again, if fortunate, some had good extended environments that provided a support network. The fact remains that humans are embedded within a social community that has a tremendous impact on each individual's sense of self.

11.3.2.1 Wider environment or country

The sense of self is greatly influenced by the wider environment (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). An important environmental change in recent years is globalisation. Axford (2000) noted that globalisation is the historical process, reconstituting the world as a single place with systemic properties where conventional borders are being made increasingly irrelevant by trans-national electronic networks. Fragmentation results because there are so many networks, which have nodes of interaction rather than larger centres. Such changes are bound to precipitate changes in consciousness, in the sense of self and in the notion of personal boundaries (Axford, 2000).

At the same time Craib (1994) pointed out that individuals interact with relatively few others on a daily basis. People do not have a close interactional relationship with the government or general governing bodies on an ongoing basis, yet such organizations have a vital role to play in the structuring and functioning of individual lives.

According to the historian Barbara Tuchman (1990), history has revealed that individuals suffer at the hands of those who misgovern. Tuchman stressed that misgovernment is of four kinds and the four elements can occur in combination. The four elements of mis-government include tyranny and oppression, excessive ambition, incompetence or decadence, and folly or perversity. The individual sense of self is likely to be negatively influenced in the face of government induced hardship, cruelty, national neglect or hunger. The participants who had witnessed or experienced violence were very aware of broader environmental issues. Participant D, for example, had been viciously attacked. She had become hyper vigilant, and

very observant of general national conditions. The wider environment is very important in terms of a sense of self, particularly if violence is prevalent.

11.3.2.2 Extended Environment

The factors, which emerged as significant in the extended environment, included relationships as well as work and financial security.

Relationships

Relationships were extremely important to the participants in the study. Relationships with family members formed the foundation of concern. Being mothers, children were the focus for all the participants. Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (2002) examined the social aspects of the self and found that individuals' sense of self is greatly affected by the groups to which they belong. The participants' moods and well being fluctuated according to the happiness and well being of their children. The participants also seemed to be looking for self-validation from their older children. This was not often forthcoming. Maynard (2000) pointed to the changing nature of the family in the west, characterised by higher divorce rates, single parent families, and greater independence as opposed to interdependence. Foucault (1988) maintained that the family now comes under a certain form of social control where expert knowledge, in effect, governs family living. This is then a powerful yet oblique relationship, and most people are not aware of the extent of the influence. The participants believed they had nowhere else to turn and psychologists were socially sanctioned experts. The participants said that there were few true guidelines for living today.

In the current study it was clear that the general relationship milieu was highly significant for all participants and that, with shifts in relationships came shifts in the narrative, and in the individual's sense of self. Shah (2003) highlighted the importance of the relationship milieu in terms of how representations of significant others can implicitly affect personal goal pursuit. Evidence suggests that goals may be primed by the individual's representation of a significant other, and that this priming is moderated by the closeness to the other person. Participant G's changed social milieu, for example, led to the repositioning of the self-narrative. The participant had a tendency to reveal narrative episodes, which were backward looking and negative. For some time Participant G had had to deal with numerous setbacks and had been in the service of others, especially the nuclear family. She changed churches and came in contact with a supportive group and a wise minister who became a close friend. Her narrative tone then shifted, becoming markedly more positive. Her sense of self, in terms of how she thought and felt about herself and her actions, became more realistic and buoyant. Participant G's narrative shift after a change in milieu is represented diagrammatically in Figure 9.

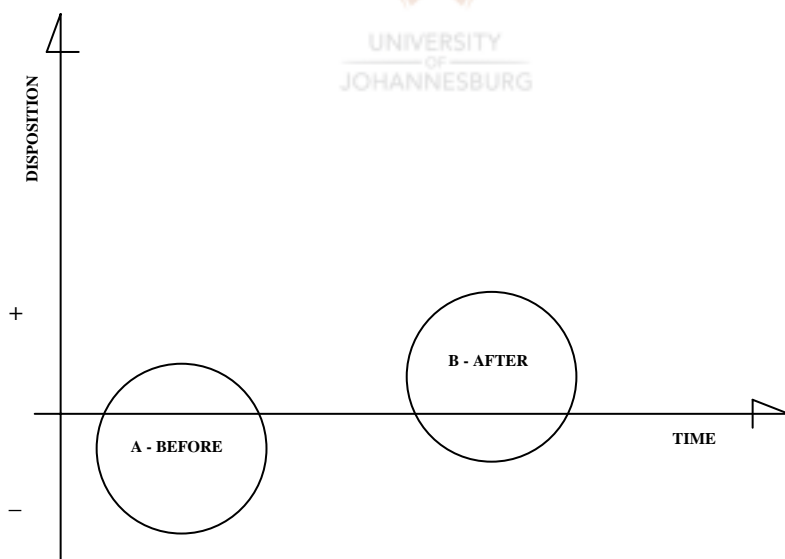


Figure 9 The narrative shift after a change in milieu (Participant G).

The individual milieu and the associated planes of interaction have a significant influence on the nature of the individual narrative and sense of self.

Work

When studying different age groups in relation to specific trends, it is extremely important to closely examine birth cohorts. Role expectations are not static and expectations for family and work behaviour have changed drastically over the years of the past half-century (Carr, 2002). The effect of work cum family strategies on self-acceptance depends on whether the individual abides by the role script deemed appropriate for one's gender and birth cohort. Thus the individual's sense of self is influenced by trends and relational scripts operating at the time. Today women have loftier career aspirations because of higher levels of educational attainment. Many women also have idealized expectations of how their work and family lives could co-exist (Carr, 2002).

The participants in the study had all remained home with their small children, and some took part-time work as the children were growing up. Only one participant never worked outside the home after marriage. Participant B returned to work full time after her divorce because she became the breadwinner. She felt that discipline had suffered as a result of her juggling work and home as a single parent. Participant G also had to return to work to supplement the family income when her children were relatively young. Her sense of self was compromised as a result of having to take positions that offered financial reward but which were not satisfactory because of poor working conditions and the fact that the work did not represent an intellectual challenge. The participants had children at a time when most mothers did not work, and some chose part-time work only when the children were well settled in school. Returning to the work world after a long period proved difficult with regard to skills, confidence and opportunities. None of the participants had found much satisfaction in their fields of work. They looked somewhat wistfully at the wider career choices open to young women today. It would appear that today, for women, work is not only about financial benefit, though this is very important, but it is also about the nature of the work in relation to the enhancement of the sense of self.

Financial Security

Work is related to independence and financial security. If women do not work after marriage they experience less financial security, compromised independence, and lowered self-esteem (Carr, 2002). This triad was evident in three of the participants' narratives. The participants seemed to develop a form of learned helplessness and, over time, attributed their feelings of low self worth to their own inner failings. These participants later found it difficult to return to the work place because of lack of work experience, and they became distressed, believing they were not competent. A sense of helplessness is enhanced if individuals believe the cause of their distress lies in internal factors (Ramirez, Maldondo & Martos, 1992). Three participants had indirectly kept in touch with their field of work, and found it relatively easy to return to the market place. They maintained that retaining contact, even in a relatively small way, gave them a sense of security and independence.

11.3.2.3 Nuclear Environment

It was clear from the narratives that that each participant was embedded within a nuclear environment of the immediate family. The participants' nuclear environments were highly individual and differently contoured. It also became very clear that daily living is characterized by a high degree of unpredictability of events. According to Gordon (2003), science has presented a world where phenomena have been seen in terms of being bent to human needs, and a sense of control has become a fundamental postulate of the western world-view. To a large extent, however, life events as depicted in the participants' narratives contradict this assumption. Instead of purely predictable stages to life events, most of the events were unpredictable, exhibiting tipping points whereby little causes had big effects (Gladwell, 2000). All the participants experienced periods of rapid change in their lives, for which they were not prepared. There was an underlying feeling that they should have been prepared and more in control. But even science is showing that uncertainty is part of the whole equation (Silver, 1998).

Csikszentmihalyi (1992) pointed out that, in a western environment, having food and shelter is taken for granted, and with affluence and power come escalating expectations. The need to further improve the quality of life may then become

unrealistic but the high expectations remain. Belief in predictability, upward mobility, linear progress, and the promise of heightened satisfaction is woven into the western psyche and any setback, which contradicts this view, is often causes the individual much distress. The participants in the current study were by and large embedded in this zeitgeist but, in midlife, they were beginning to question some of these assumptions and their ideas about the nature of control.

11.3.3 Identity

According to the participants, the environment determines identity with regard to parents, family and place and country of birth. The terms identity and self can become confusing because they are often used interchangeably, are sometimes hyphenated, and are often not clearly defined. The issues of selfhood and identity are complex and mean different things to different people. Giddens (1991, p. 53), for example, uses the term self-identity and Craib (1994) took issue with Giddens' descriptions of self-identity. In this study, the participants maintained that knowledge of their personal, concrete identity gave them a firm sense of being in the world as individuals

Participant G contended:

Identity is your name and I.D. number. It's more general than the self.

Participant B stressed that identity means something is visible:

Identity means that you physically exist. Being born in a particular place, particular time...you have got your own identity. Your thumbprints prove it. The fingerprints of a person are different in everyone and your DNA whatever

The participants pointed out that, while physical appearance may change over time or someone may pretend to be someone other, essentially basic identity does not change.

11.3.4 Self

The participants in this study did not see the self as a static entity. They saw the self as comprised of physical, cognitive, affective and spiritual elements, and considered

self to be that part of the individual, filling the space between the core or soul and identity. Participant C summed up the view by saying:

The self just is, it is made up of parts and moves and it is something that fills the whole person in.

The self is a dynamic entity, bounded by the soul and identity. The soul is seen as an anchor or the inner core of the self, and lying close to the soul is the personal value system, which the participants considered to be extremely important. The interplay between thinking, feeling, and values provides a source of directive energy to the individual sense of self, while the narrative provides the medium for the expression of selfhood. The components of the self, as described by the participants, are shown in figure 10.

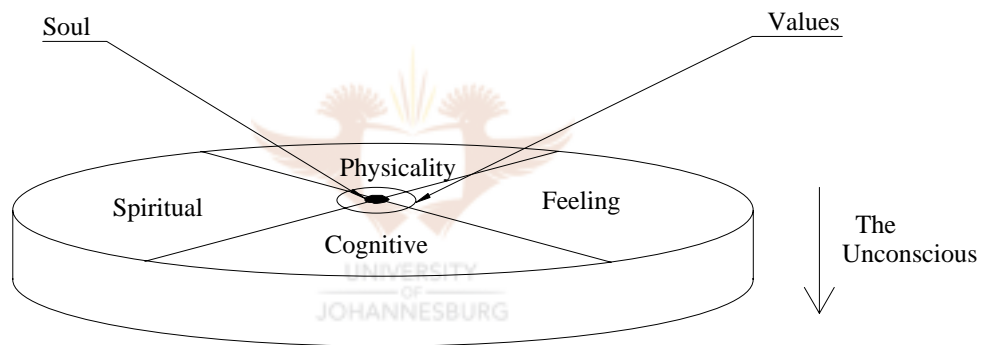


Figure 10 Representation of the components of the self.

The participants' descriptions of the self can be represented as comprising an assembly of physical, cognitive, affective and spiritual components with the soul and value system at the core of being. According to the participants the self also has conscious and unconscious aspects. It is of interest that these components were identifiable in early humans, showing that they are probably longstanding elements of human individuals.

11.3.4.1 Unconscious

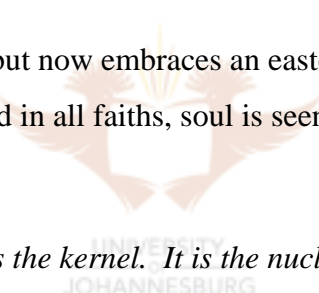
The participants all believed that there is such a thing as the unconscious. They claimed that they know it is there because not everything is in immediate awareness,

and yet events can be recalled when desired. In addition, the participants drew attention to the fact that they sometimes do things or get angry for no apparent reason, and they believe this must then be motivated by unconscious factors. The participants all expressed fascination with happenings such as thinking of a friend only to find the telephone rings with the friend on the line. They did not talk much about intuitive knowing or understanding stating that they did not know how the unconscious “actually worked” yet they knew it existed because they “felt it.”

11.3.4.2 Soul

For the participants in this study the soul offered a sense of stability and continuity. The participants said they liked to believe in some sort of afterlife, and the soul was an important part of the transition process drawing the individual to the future. The participants were mostly Christian, and their views reflect the Christian view of the soul.

Participant D was a Christian but now embraces an eastern spiritual perspective. She stressed that, in some form, and in all faiths, soul is seen as an important part of the individual:



Yes it is like the core, it's the kernel. It is the nucleus of whatever that person has been. You can feel the presence of the soul. Yes, you definitely feel the presence. When my mom died, I felt the soul go, it waited a little while and then left this world.

Participant G also believed in the existence of a soul as a core factor of being:

Your soul is what goes up once it leaves the body. It is for after.

Soul was not seen as a “thing” but as a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and self. The participants seemed to relate to the soul as an anchor point. Particularly in times of distress, this is the point with which they tried to connect. They turned to this centre in different ways. Two of the women connected to the soul by directly talking aloud to God, asking for guidance. Participant A at one stage had a health complaint, and believed she had received guidance for her problem through her soul and her “talking connection” to God. Participant D saw the soul as her inner being, and felt a

connection to this deep centre through daily, structured meditation. Participant E said that she was not religious, and really did not know what to “make of the afterlife, and souls, and things.” Two quiet periods a day, however, were important for her and she found that during these times she felt a deep connection to “something.”

All the participants mentioned soul in connection with death and the afterlife. Mortality is inevitable, and soul has usually been considered the link to the beyond. According to Dechesne et al. (2003) belief in the beyond and in an afterlife is linked to self-positivity, and serves as a means for coping with finitude. Weber (2000) pointed out that the idea of an afterself stretches from the time of the Neanderthals, and finds expression in modern New Age cryonics. According to Weber, the idea of immortality of the self exerts a powerful hold on humans and, despite evidence contradicting the idea of an after-life, people still construct endless stories about it. The outward manifestation of soul for the participants emerged as the individual core value system.

11.3.4.3 Values

Values refer to abstract ideas held by individuals or groups as to what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable. The participants’ narratives did not reveal high minded abstract philosophical debates. Their narratives suggested that personal values constitute a concrete system of beliefs that shape behaviour. In turn, these beliefs develop over time, and are affected by a number of factors. The analysis of the participants’ narratives, for example, suggested that their value systems were influenced in various ways, as illustrated in Table 16.

Table 16 Influences on the Development of a Personal Value System

Physiological Influences	Personal Influences	Environmental Influences	Events	Metaphysical Influences
Maturation	Gender	Culture	Personal Experiences	Cultural Belief System
Health	Intelligence	Geographical Environment	Technological Events	Religious Belief System
Constitution	Habits Needs Attitudes Decisions Goals	Family Friends Peers Work	Political & Social Changes	Personal Religious Affiliation

The individual may feel that values are personally constructed but there are many interacting factors, which shape the value systems. The health, intelligence, and personality of the individual determine the amount of energy available, and in turn attitude then influences where the energy is directed. The part of the world in which the individual lives can have an impact on what is considered important in life. The cultural and religious beliefs predominant in the immediate national environment also shape the individual's world-view to a considerable extent. Furthermore, political and social changes as well technological events can change priorities quite rapidly and influence what is valued.

Over the two years of interviews, it was of interest to note how values were privately challenged within the safety of the personal narrative. Beliefs were reframed over time, and integrated into the personal narrative. Values seemed to mediate between assumptions and principles. Assumptions are unchallenged ideas that often have unrecognised power and influence in the individual's life. Principles are values that have been reworked and refined, and that resonate with the individual's deepest sense of being. The participants showed evidence of material values and meta-values. Material values pertained to "getting and having", while meta-values functioned at more abstract level.

Participant E said she realised the importance of material values and material goods in terms of shelter, comfort and enjoyment; "you better have enough money because the

government certainly won't look after you." At the same time she was not ostentatious and took care of her finances. Love, friendship and harmony were important Meta values for her.

Each person participates in the world from a personal vantage point, and it is not a simple matter to clarify a personal value system because values are not established once and for all. Participant B began to question her own story and value system. She had been divorced for a number of years but had started a relationship with a man of another race. The relationship had progressed for some eighteen months despite the fact that his family disapproved and B knew that in his culture, marriage out of the clan was frowned upon. Despite these obvious serious restrictions, she continued the relationship, hoping for commitment. The relationship suddenly ended after her partner had visited her one weekend and then married someone from his clan the next, without telling her. There was tremendous heartache and subsequent depression. In time, some serious re-evaluation began. Participant B recognized that her narrative revealed implicit assumptions. The assumptions included an inherent view that, if she remained continually pleasant, all would be well. She also assumed that if she chose not to see something, in this case the restriction of a culture, then it did not exist. At the value level, she confronted the fact that her values were essentially undigested. In the private space opened by her personal narrative she was able to articulate her world-view in her own time. Participant B realized that she had a deeply held, personal philosophy of living but had never formulated this knowing systematically. Once the process was initiated she used her value system to mediate between her assumptions and the formulation of a principle, the principle that she would not continually devalue herself in regard to personal relationships. Change is perhaps the one certainty of life with the result that it is necessary to periodically reassess personal values in relation to recognition of change over time. This is what Hillman (1996) called soul work. The personal value system determines to a large extent the spirit within which individuals conduct their lives.

11.3.4.4 Spirituality

As the historical review in this study has shown, from early times spirituality has formed part of the human psyche and can be expressed in various ways. Analysis of the participants' narratives underscored the importance of the spiritual dimension.

Until recently psychologists have not paid much attention to spiritual matters. There is, however, a growing literature related to the spiritual aspect of the psyche. Gordon (2003) pointed out that uncertainty is embedded in the core of reality, and that uncertainty gives rise to a sense of existential anxiety; even more so in the modern world. Gordon noted that, until recently, science was able to assure us that the world was a model of constancy and deterministic order. Now science speaks of chaos, uncertainty and unpredictability. Yet we cling to the idea of fixity in the universe and in ourselves. Paradox lies in the fact that the one certainty we have is the inevitability of personal death, yet death is embedded in uncertainty, and spirituality is then born in the depths of unknowing.

Five of the participants were emphatic that to be spiritual one did not need to be religious. Lines (2002) defined religion in terms of the individual's adherence to a group or to ritualistic acts through perceived directives from a divine source. Spirituality, on the other hand, is that part of the inner being relating to a divine source but not dependent on ritualistic actions. According to Hill and Hood (1999) both spirituality and religion represent a search for experience of the sacred as defined by the individual. Participant D was a vocal example of the need for individual expression within a spiritual framework. Participant D had been through many upheavals and found a new spiritual connectivity:

Well I got divorced and the Mormon Church does not like that. That is what they basically say. They say that marriage is for all time and all eternity. If you get married in the church, then there is no way you can put that asunder even if you get divorced you will end up somewhere in the next world with that person and you have to sort out your problems. I thought I don't even want to go to the next world. How do I get out of going to the next world because there is no way I want to be with my ex in the next world. You know there is absolutely no way. It was the most ghastly mistake. I think the fundamental question that I just

couldn't, I mean I couldn't stand up there and say that I believe all that. I mean it was too confining for me. I am not going to, I can't go on like that. Buddhist meditation helped me enormously. I went to learn to meditate. It cost me an arm and a leg. I meditate out of pain, out of doing things wrong and just to get myself together. I prefer their belief system reincarnation makes sense to me.

Eastern ideas are finding greater acceptance in the west, and there are a number of theorists who point to the merit of alternative approaches to the western self.

Twemlow (2001) noted that western ideas of selfhood and therapy are systematic whereas Zen is a phenomenology of the present. Michalon (2001) examined the question of “selflessness”, concluding that Buddhists take a much broader perspective of human life than purely intrapsychic conflict.

Some researchers have called for systematic investigation of the nature of the spiritual component of selfhood (Assagioli, 1993; Kogo, 2002; Lines, 2002; MacDonald & Friedman; 2002; Piedmont, 1999; Vaughan, 2002). Kogo (2002) cautioned that if issues around spiritual growth are ignored or underestimated the results can be extremely negative, as has been found in Japanese society. Assagioli (1993, p. 193) maintained that the spiritual is as basic as the material part of human beings and, even though psychologists should not force a spiritual approach, they should attempt to “include within the study of psychological facts all those which may be related to the higher urges within man which tend to make him grow towards greater realizations of his spiritual essence.”

In view of renewed interest in spirituality and the psyche it is of note that Piedmont (1999) considered spirituality highly significant in the human psychic economy. He argued that Spiritual Transcendence represents a broad-based motivational domain similar to the constructs identified in the Five Factor Model. Piedmont believed that Spiritual Transcendence should be considered a potential sixth major dimension of personality. Most of the participants considered the spiritual dimension to be a type of intelligence, guiding life decisions, and this concept is supported by Vaughan (2002). Vaughan highlighted the fact that research into spiritual intelligence suggested that it represents one of several types of intelligence, and that it can be developed independently through questing, inquiry and practice. Vaughan maintained

that spiritual intelligence is concerned with the inner life of the mind and spirit, together with its relationship to being in the world.

The participants considered spirituality connected with ritual. Rituals are stylised patterns of behaviour, sometimes performed in a religious context (Ginner, 1960). Four of the participants considered going to church as an important ritual in connecting with a higher power and deriving inner strength. The rituals of the sacrament, regular church attendance, bible study and prayer all provided a sense of comfort and connectivity to the transcendent. Ritual is deeply embedded in the ancient past and was tied to magic in that, if actions were repeated symbolically, it was believed they could make the desired result happen. Rituals both assert and renew basic individual and social values. Even the participants who did not attend church had private rituals such as regular prayer, active meditation or what was described as daily quiet time in order to foster connection with the spirit.

11.3.4.5 Physicality

Analysis of the participants' narratives suggested that the physical dimension is viewed on four levels namely the body, diet and exercise, display and illness.

The body is the medium through which life is actively lived on this planet no matter how spiritual one wishes to be. Early humans were immersed in the senses rather than detached from them because the early environment presented immense and immediate life and death challenges. Sundararajan (2002) talked of the pre-logical logic of the body. The body is the mediator of the world and operates through rules of immediate meaning. The early sense of self would have been directly concerned with the body and its ability to react to environmental dangers (Tummon, 1990). The philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1968) stressed that humans are part of the world through the body and that the body is a theatre of meaning. The participants in this study did not seem to connect with their bodies at a fundamental level, despite Shilling's (2000) assertion that, currently, there is revived interest in the body.

The participants were certainly aware of the current emphasis on diet and exercise, maintaining that, judging by photographs, they look younger and are much healthier

than their mothers at the same age. Foucault (1988) pointed out that, from the time of the Early Greeks, the body has had an important impact on the nature of the self. Early medicine was not simply a technique of bodily intervention but a way of offering rules for living through the body. The medical model constituted a framework for the self by outlining the personal relationship to food, wakefulness, sleep and the optimal environment. To some extent this is true today. Crossley (2003) asked focus groups to describe what constituted a healthy person. Sociological research reveals that health has become a moral phenomenon in the sense that the emphasis on not smoking, eating less fat, and exercising have transformed physical issues into moral virtue, and a healthy lifestyle is seen against the backdrop of goodness. The participants in the current study were all well aware of the call to health and fitness. Despite the warnings, two participants continued to smoke and to eat a high fat diet. Crossley described this behaviour as a symbolic form of transgression in the interests of asserting self-independence and autonomy. The participants in this study did not pay much attention to advertising of new health products, saw health in terms of moderate consumption, and also saw health in terms of the capacity for enjoyment. These views are consistent with Crossley's (2003) findings.

Humans have always attired themselves in what is considered to be finery. The Early Egyptians, for example, had cosmetics, fine linens, and ornate gold jewellery. The body provides visual display, and is the concrete medium through which the sense of self is communicated. Some argue that, as a result of rampant consumerism, appearance and style have become restrictive signals of selfhood. Others agree that modern society is tolerant and flexible and, therefore, individuals can experiment with this aspect of the sense of self (Ward, 2003). The participants in this study were not slaves to fashion and trends but said they enjoyed the relaxed options of modern choices in clothing and style "so could look pretty reasonable without a lot of fuss."

Participant E was concerned with how revealing modern fashion has become. Objectification theory (Miner-Rubino, Twenge & Frederikson, 2002) recognized that the sexual objectification of women is pervasive in western culture. Women and girls, in western societies, live in a culture in which bodies are looked at and evaluated, and so are potentially objectified. This can dehumanise the human body leading to

negative experiences and mental health risks. Because many women know that they are constantly being physically evaluated they begin to measure self-worth and happiness by means of their physical appearance. Participant B showed heightened body preoccupation, recognizing that her body was observed. Perhaps this was because she is in the beauty industry, which is competitive and favours images of young women, so threatening her sense of job security. Her former employer had repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that she was older, and that younger employees were preferred. This led to anxiety, and a certain level of depression. Western culture celebrates youth and perfection. The media constantly churn out air brushed images of perfect forms, which are impossible to emulate in real life. Very few images of middle age women are presented in magazines and if they are, they are placed in the “how to improve your looks section.” It was particularly difficult for participant B to face the fact of her age because of reminders from the mirror, the beauty industry itself, from society and from her colleagues. The fact remains, however, that the mutual visibility of the physical body means that the body is constantly on display and the individual sense of self, to some degree, will always be linked to appearance.

The question of illness or deterioration arises with age. Howell and Beth (2002) used a focus group approach to try to understand the experiences of eleven women between forty to sixty years of age. Howell and Beth found that the women mourned the loss of their youthful bodies. They noticed changes such as aches, menopause, poor vision and a general slowing down. According to Howell and Beth the women in the study said they actually became aware of midlife through their bodies. The participants in the current study did not articulate this but certainly talked of physical changes with a mixture of humour and sadness. There is no doubt that the body deteriorates with age but the relevant question is, what deteriorates? Gerdes, Louw, van Ede and Louw (1998) clarified that by midlife there are a number of physical changes. For example, one is that muscle strength declines slowly but significantly because muscles lose elasticity and are replaced by fat. Western society emphasizes youth and a particular concept of beauty.

Participant B was not entirely happy with personal physical changes:

My health is so so. It is sometimes very bad but again I think again I need to watch my eating habits as well...I think I have a digestive problem...if I don't start exercising soon I'm not going to do fine. Sometimes there is a bit of arthritis here and there that is why I would like to get back in the water.

Participant C has noticed a change in the body that has reflected in her attitude:

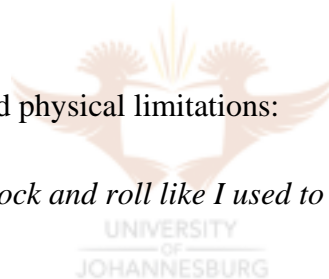
I don't have quite the same sort of fighting spirit I used to have, and I don't know I've got arthritis or what but my hips are not great. They really aren't. I don't sleep well at night and that makes you really tired.

Participant E felt she was slowing down:

I definitely think you slow down. I don't think you can go at the pace that you used to. Limitations you know, you are not just as energetic or even if you do feel energetic you cannot accomplish as much as you used to say ten or twenty years ago.

Participant G also experienced physical limitations:

Well obviously I can't rock and roll like I used to and now I am sitting with neck problems.



Participant A thought aging in general left much to be desired:

It is just a pest. Now I have a thyroid problem. The limitation is tiredness.

The participants gave clear evidence that body and mind are linked. For example when they were going through difficult periods there was invariably some associated physical component, be it not sleeping, wanting more food or less food as well as aches and pains. When participant B bought an apartment that stretched her limited resources she developed what appeared to be neurological disturbances. Tests showed no physical anomalies and it was only much later that she expressed her dire concern that she would not be able to pay for her new home, and so “would be out on the street.” Participant G seemed to invite body experience during times of vulnerability. For example, she would fall after putting herself in a precarious situation in the first place and her injury would require medical attention. The pattern

was too recurrent for chance. Theories of stress postulate that appraisal is a critical process linking life events and physiological responses. Strauman, Lemieux and Coe (1993) investigated the question of the sense of self in relation to immune function and demonstrated that negative self-evaluation, which is a predominant form of appraisal, can lead to immunological changes through the induction of negative affect.

Wyman-McGinty (1998) emphasized the importance of the mind-body connection. Using the body for focused attention enables individuals to access feelings associated at the level of the somatic aspect of the unconscious, because certain memories are stored kinaesthetically. Participant D, for example, found eastern meditation and chakra-balancing through yoga an effective medium by which to get in touch with her self through body-self connection. During the interviews a noticeable factor was the physical representation of thoughts. For example, one of the participants displayed a red flush beginning on her lower neck, which spread upward as she began describing sensitive events. She would describe the event in an even tone but the flushing belied her composure. Two of the participants tapped their feet when emotionally charged events surfaced.



11.3.4.6 The Affective Component of the Self

Emotion is an integral part of what it means to be alive. Pleasure, elation, euphoria, ecstasy, sadness, despondency, depression, fear, anxiety, anger, hostility, and calm plus many other emotions all colour human lives and contribute to the rich tapestry of experience. Without emotion we would be robotic. At the same time, emotion can be overwhelming and interfere with daily living (Iversen, Kupfermann & Kandel, 2000). Research now shows that the amygdala is a complex structure of nuclei, and has been found to be an important area for emotion. It is thought that the amygdala is involved in both pleasurable and fearful responses to stimuli, and that it mediates both the autonomic expression and the cognitive experience of emotion (Iversen et al., 2000). Zajonc (1980) asserted that affect does not require extensive cognitive processing to occur, maintaining that affect was the first link in the evolution of the complex adaptive functions that separated animals from plants. Pert (1997) emphasised that the body contains a multidirectional network linked by the information carriers or

neuropeptides. Pert stressed that the brain is integrated with the rest of the body at a molecular level, and the organism is engaged in a molecular narrative.

The participants in the current study believed that emotion is experienced in the body and that feeling comes before cognition. They stressed that it is not always so easy to identify feelings and interpret feelings in relation to self and others. All the participants noted that emotion has a strong bodily component.

Participant A summed up the general belief of the group saying:

Primal emotions like fear you experience in the body

In addition, the participants contended that feeling comes before thinking. Participant B reflected the idea:

Your feeling comes first. After that then comes reaction and thinking.

This view is supported by evolutionary theory where the organism would require quick responses. The nature of life was determined by the motto “eat or be eaten.” Inner feeling would act as a guiding force. The participants stressed that once the body is aroused it becomes difficult to differentiate cause and effect. The participants said that often emotion just took over. Le Doux (1999, p. 19) noted that we have little direct control over our emotional reactions and emotions “easily bump mundane events out of awareness.”

Participant E talked about the feeling of fear:

Fear is like not being in control. My head just races and I shake. I am really afraid of flying and even if I give myself a talking to it does not help and fear gets hold of me.

Participant G talked about the emotions associated with her son’s cancer:

When I am afraid I have a racing heart and loss of appetite. When my son phoned from the coast to get the number of the oncologist I did not sleep at all and my body ached.

Participant A mentioned a range of emotions and their physical manifestations:

Strong emotions I feel in my head and chest. Then I start to feel cold. Deep emotions take over my whole body.

Participant B pointed out that there are good emotions and bad emotions:

Good feelings make you warm inside. Sometimes I wish I did not have emotions because they overtake you. I feel emotion in my body, my head, my chest and my stomach. I know with me rejection causes a whole lot of things in my body, especially my shoulders and stomach.

Participant D recognized anger as her chief negative emotion:

I feel anger quickly in my body. I feel my head race and my face pulsates. Obviously physiologically a lot of blood has gone to the face. My eyes feel as though they get big and I seem to open them wider. I probably puff up like a bullfrog. If I am moved by something I always get a lump in my throat.

Participant G said that she has always been an emotional person:

I laugh and shout and cry a lot. But when I am angry or stressed I always get a spastic colon and sore shoulders. I just want to scream.

Cacioppo et al. (1992) suggested that emotions are uncompleted action tendencies that can be reactivated by repeated stimulation such as reappearance of the stressor or excessive rumination. Thus interventions, which allow an individual to safely complete the action sequence, may help resolve the emotion, and so have positive health consequences. The individual narrative with the emphasis on process and change indirectly allows for the completion of action sequences. Research on emotion shows the high degree of individual variability in reacting to events, and in the expression of emotion, suggesting that humans have to learn to decipher their own states and the cues of others. Cacioppo et al. (1992), in studying the relationship between facial expressiveness and sympathetic activation in emotion, found that emotional responses are a multi-system event and are much more complex than was originally thought. The findings from study also support this view.

The participants narrated many happy events during the course of the life narrative. In fact some events, which had initially been told in a negative way, were recast and with a more positive feel. This was particularly true of participant F, who had felt her parents paid her little attention when she was young, favouring her brother and sister. Through the life narrative she found a number of positive experience associated with her parents, which were recounted. On the whole, the personal narratives of the present study revealed a tendency, given time, to recast events within a broader, more positive frame of reference. These findings are in accordance with those of Pasupathi and Carstensen (2003) in that age is associated with increasing positive emotion during reminiscing about past experiences.

For the participants the recasting was a process, not an instantaneous event. With hindsight it was realized that something was learnt, and that the learning could then be incorporated into a personal body of knowledge. In this study, it appeared that the narrative format itself helped, not to discount but to recast events. This was particularly evident in the case of Participant D with regard to her divorce. Her anger had festered for many years with the result that she became physically ill. After telling and reviewing her story, participant D recognized her angry narrative tone and said she sounded “like a broken record.” She did not like the image and believed it was time for a change. She could not change the fact that she had little respect for her ex-husband based on his treatment of their children, and could not discount the nature and impact of his behaviour. She said she had the ability to change the characters and plot of what she termed her “soap opera style narrative.”

Not all issues were included in the participants’ shared narratives, and a number of events were side tracked or alluded to in passing. These events seemed to have something to do with shame. Kaufman (1993) pointed out that shame is the affect of inferiority, and no other affect is more central to the self, or more disturbing. To feel shame is to be seen in a diminished sense. The self feels exposed to itself and to anyone present. Hultberg (1988) maintained that there are two types of shame, one type serves social adaptation and the other protects the self. In western culture people rarely reveal their failings or inferiorities, and impression management is a common practice. This culture is said to be changing but is not the norm. The exposure of shame, according to Kaufman, can interrupt movement, bind speech, and make eye

contact intolerable. Participant B showed signs of shame concerning her sister who had committed suicide some years earlier. She made reference to the death but did not expand on the event. The contradictions in the transcripts and her call to read her final transcript plus the wish to change some references to the sister, suggested continued inner activity around the inner personal script. It became apparent from remarks and changing conceptions over time that the events were being reappraised within the framework of the inner personal narrative. Participant B was coming to terms with her own inner demons, in her own way, in her own time and within her own story.

A similar configuration became evident in participant E's narrative. Her father had left when she very young, and this had caused pain and hardship. The episode was described factually in her first narrative, and cast in a very positive light, with E stating that there was a wonderful extended family in his place. Her sudden rigid posture contradicted her words. Subsequent narratives revealed a sense of ambivalence and even anger as well as a reworking of a sense of abandonment. The matter resurfaced in the personal narrative many weeks later, and it appeared that disowned self-clusters were being recollected and privately reframed within the personal story. Again, after some time, there was further mention of the abandonment, but the theme of abandonment was characterised by a more peaceful acceptance.

11.3.4.7 The Cognitive Component of the Self

The participants in the study reported that they “think all the time” and that they are aware of their thinking process.

Participant A summed up her thinking process as follows:

It feels like a total mess, like a tumble drier. One thought comes into my head and then another...where is the dog, shall I phone Mary, what am I going to do for supper? I am always aware of this thinking process.

The participants pointed out that “round about thinking” often brings up negative emotions.

Participant A said that everybody thinks all the time:

Everybody thinks round in circles all the time otherwise they would be brain dead.

Cognitive performance is influenced by health, educational level, individual context and culture. Crystallized intelligence reflects the degree to which the individual has incorporated knowledge that has been accessed through education, training and acculturation. Fluid intelligence, on the other hand, refers to inborn aspects of intelligence and depends on neurological development. Crystallized intelligence is said not to decrease with age whereas fluid intelligence is said to peak at adolescence and decline with age as a result of neurological degeneration (Cavanaugh, 1997). There was much mirth around the question of cognitive functioning, “you ask about thinking and mind, what mind?” The participants had watched family members age and become forgetful. Underlying the jokes lay a deep concern about memory and cognition. According to Gerdes et al. (1998), working memory declines with age. Semantic memory, in terms of the ability of adults in early adulthood to identify words, does not differ to any great extent from that of adults in middle adulthood. Semantic memory enables individuals to acquire, retain and retrieve factual information and beliefs about the world. Vocabulary, as a reflection of semantic memory, is found to increase from early adulthood to middle age, and even beyond. Episodic memory tests utilize episodes or events similar to those in real life such as word lists reminiscent of shopping lists. Evidence suggests there is a decline in recall of word lists from early to middle adulthood but not in recognition memory. Recall can be improved, however, by teaching adults in early and middle adulthood how to apply memory strategies in relation to particular tasks (Gerdes et al., 1998). Implicit memory refers to the use of information that was acquired by the individual during previous situations, and which may have to be used in the future, even though the individuals are not aware they will have to do so. It appears that this type of memory remains relatively intact over the years.

Participant E reported actively using particular memory strategies in daily life. This she said prevented her from “forgetting or losing things.” The participants in this study were intelligent, judging by their achievements and their use of language. They were self-aware and were able to articulate their self-understanding. Labouvie-Vief, Chiodo, Goguen, Diehl and Orwoll (1995) examined age differences in self-representation in people ranging from eleven to eighty five years of age. The researchers found that the degree of differentiation in self-representation was related to the individual’s level of cognitive development, indicating that cognitive ability and a sense of self are indeed related. The participants in this study were very comfortable with the personal narrative format, being at home in language. Pennebaker and Stone (2003) examined language use over the life span by using disclosures of over three thousand research participants in three countries. The findings suggested that verbal ability remains stable into old age, and the use of big words actually increased with age. It would seem that a life narrative approach, which utilises patterns of language, offers an effective way for older adults to access and process personal thoughts and life events. The narrative format also seemed to facilitate the effective handling of emotionally charged issues.

The participants were able to present life events and emotionally charged issues in their own time, and could process them at their own speed. Bernsten and Rubin (2002) investigated the relationship between emotionally charged events and cognitive recall. A large number of respondents, between twenty and ninety three years of age, were asked about their happiest, saddest, most traumatic, most important and most recent involuntary memory. For older respondents there was a clear “bump” indicating the twenties as a source of the most important and happier memories while the saddest and most traumatic memories showed decreasing recall. The participants in this study did narrate happy memories from the twenties, but did not show decreasing recall of sad events as much as a reworking and recontextualization of such events.

Hill and Hood (1999) drew attention to the debate as to whether emotions and a general affective state are independent of cognition. Are cognition and emotion independent systems that are experienced at different levels of awareness; automatic as opposed to cognitively controlled? The findings of the present study are in accord

with Zajonc's (1980) view that affect does not require extensive cognitive processing to first occur. Zajonc pointed out that, in psychological circles, there is a strong belief that feelings come after cognition. Zajonc argued that, unlike cognitive judgments, emotion cannot be avoided, and humans can control the expression of emotion but not the emotion itself. Moreover, affect seems to be more easily recalled than thought. Zajonc maintained that there seem to be some physiological manifestations suggesting that there are separate affective/cognitive processing modes. The participants in this study highlighted the inherent tension between thinking and feeling, and that the management of these functions determines the finer contours of the sense of self.

11.4 Summary of the Discussion of the Participants' Model

The participants' view of the self was embedded within a *narrative* structure, which offered a framework for meaning. Meaning was clarified through the sequencing of events and through the recognition of narrative assemblies and meaning clusters. In addition, narrative accommodated changing patterns and so offered greater perspective as to where the individual sense of self is situated relative to events. The narrative structure also provides the opportunity for the use of metaphor through which meaning can emerge. The *environment* was seen in terms of the nuclear environment of the immediate family, the extended environment of work, family and friends or the external support system. The country as well as the events in the wider world formed the wider environment. The extended environment was considered in regard to relationships, work, and financial security. Relationship also played a large role in the nuclear environment. *Identity* was described as the concrete physical aspects of the individual such as gender, appearance and time and place of birth. The *self* was seen as having a number of components such as physical, cognitive, affective, spiritual, an unconscious as well as a soul and value system. The *body* was considered in relation to diet and exercise, display and illness. The participants saw the self as fluid, moving between identity and soul and embedded in the different levels of environment. The *value system* was considered as the outer manifestation of the *soul*, directed behaviour and mediated between the individual and the world. All

the participants considered the self an ongoing project on which they should continually work.

11.5 Discussion of the Question of Generativity

Erikson, Erikson and Kivnick (1986), in the epigenetic theory of ages and stages, described adulthood as the phase of generativity. The adaptive strength of this stage is generative caring as opposed to stagnation. The maladaptive tendency would be over-extension while the malignant tendency would be rejectivity. The representation of Erikson’s concept is presented in Table 17.

Table 17 Generativity

Maladaptive Tendency	Adaptive Strength	Malignant Tendency
(Over-extension)	Generativity CARE Stagnation	Rejectivity

Erikson, Erikson & Kivnick, 1986, p. 45

Erikson saw the adaptive strength of the later middle years as caring for the next generation. A negative aspect of caring would be the over extension of oneself in giving to others. A destructive tendency would be to reject the notion of giving to the younger community all together. Erikson et al. (1986, p. 44) described adulthood in the following terms:

In middle adulthood, love further matures to the care and caring-for that must guide what now, with those one loves, can be procreated, produced, or created- all of which depends on the maturation of generativity. Its dystonic counterpart is stagnation in one or all of these potential involvements. The maladaptation of this stage is an overextension of care to individuals and concerns beyond one’s capacity to include; the dominant malignancy now is a generalised rejectivity, which simply does not care to care - for any body.

The findings of this study showed that the participants were generative in terms of caring for others, especially with regard to the well being of their families, their children and their friends. In addition most of the participants were committed to work of some kind in service to the wider community. The findings of this study did support generativity in terms of McAdams, Diamond, Aubin and Mansfield's (1997) research, where generativity was examined in terms of a particular commitment story where the focus was on caring for the future generation. However, the findings of this study did not support Erikson's conclusions in terms of linear process in regard to generativity. The participants did not always feel caring and often did not even want to be caring of others. There were what could be described as many diverse narrative discursions (Niemeyer, 1994). The participants ventured, sometimes deeply, into spheres such as into questions of trust, purpose, competence and into the areas of love and wisdom, then back to caring. Sometimes the excursions into the different realms of being lasted a short time, or they could last for longer periods. The cycle depended to a large extent on the participant's state of health and personal pressures at the time. Josselson (1995b, p. 33) noted that when using narrative with the same participants over time, she found that "events that loomed large at one life stage may be underground at another, only to recur."

Howell and Beth (2002, p. 203) studied the life experience of midlife women using a focus group approach and concluded that their findings did not support Erikson's goal of generativity:

The women's processes were non linear. Women experienced various midlife changes at different times. For each of these changes, they went through three stages of midlife process. In some instances they went through stages more than once for a particular midlife change in circumstances. In addition, depending on what was important to them, the participants experienced varying levels of emotional distress with each of the specific changes in their lives...Rather than describing Erikson's (1978) goal of generativity, the women in this study focused on balancing their priorities, often withdrawing energy that had been "given back to society" and investing that energy in self-nurturing and in high quality relationships (Howell & Beth, 2002, p. 2003).

The current study also revealed that the participants showed the need for self-nurturance, and a desire for relationships that had depth and substance. Howell and Beth (2002) maintained that they found no evidence of a linear process but rather signs of circularity. Similarly, this study also highlighted the participants' processes as being non linear. The term "circularity" poses a problem, however, in that a circle returns to its point of origin. The typical process displayed by the participants in this study, exhibited a qualified circularity in that the pattern seldom, if ever, returned to the point of origin but was displaced, with the "return" point having shifted. Thus movement associated with the life narrative process exhibited modified circularity, and certainly not linearity.

These findings have implications for counselling individuals at midlife because Erikson's idea of generativity at midlife has penetrated modern cultural mythology. Erikson (1997) based his theory on the notion of epigenesis, which he borrowed from embryology, implying a step-wise process of development. When this stepped progression is applied to midlife it is too neat, tidy and constraining. Analysis of the participants' narratives revealed that issues of trust, autonomy, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom are not resolved once and for all at particular stages in life. They reappear at different points and claim attention. Their reappearance does not mean that the individuals have failed to resolve a relevant stage related "crisis" but rather that basic issues of life are inevitably reappearing in another guise. As Howell and Beth pointed out, there is a clear need for further study of the midlife stage of development. This is particularly relevant with regard to the notion of generativity, which needs to be situated within a broader frame of reference.

11.6 Discussion of the Issues of Self-esteem and Self-worth

Judging by the large volume of current literature on the question of self-esteem, it is considered an important aspect of selfhood. It would appear, however, that this is a culturally induced western view. Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, on first encountering western views, had problems with the whole concept of self-esteem saying that this concept did not arise in his culture, as people considered themselves

born inherently worthy (Dalai Lama, 1999, 2000). Michalon described the Dalai Lama's reaction on first hearing about low self-esteem:

The Dalai Lama did a double take when a Western psychologist spoke of low self-esteem. The phrase had to be translated several times for him into Tibetan, although his English is quite good. He just could not grasp the notion of low self-esteem, and when he finally understood what was being said he was visibly saddened to hear that so many people in America carry deep feelings of self-loathing and inadequacy (Michalon, 2001, p. 211).

Stengel (2001) maintained that the rise of capitalism, with its emphasis on impression management, gives the impetus to a particular vision of self, which has to be created and sustained, and this is not an easy task. Some people seem more resilient and impervious to self-image threats than others and the reason for this is not really clear (Steele, Spencer & Lynch, 1993). Culture, however, plays an important part in the question of whether or not self-esteem is an issue in society. Japanese culture, for example, does not encourage individuals to feel superior to peers (Van Boven, White, Kamada & Gilovich, 2003). According to the Dalai Lama, he has now come to better understand the western dilemma and believes that the best antidote to low self-esteem is fearless and honest self-appraisal (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998). Colvin, Block and Funder (1995) found that accurate self-appraisal is critical for psychological adjustment and that self-enhancement led to negative short and long term consequences.

The participants did not directly raise questions about self-esteem but seemed rather to be wrestling with the issue of self-worth, which has deeper implications. To appropriate Taylor's (1989) words, self-esteem is about *doing* and self-worth is about *being*. It would appear that, by midlife, a considerable body of events, thoughts, feelings, and actions have taken place and require reconsideration in order to answer questions such as "what kind of person have I been, am I now and want to be in the future?" The participants withdrew to the inner privacy of the personal narrative to face aspects of an undesired-self (Ogilvie, 1987). When people reach middle adulthood many have experienced personal setbacks and some sources of their self-worth are no longer available. Children are leaving the nest at this stage and the direct

validation of parenthood, as derived from everyday interaction, is reduced or lost. The participants in this study did not articulate losses of the sources of self-worth but indirectly pointed to them. For example, the loss of parents meant that those who could confirm and affirm their histories were gone. In addition, their physical strength and “attractiveness” were in decline. Thus a number of sources of self-worth were disappearing at the same time.

In the safety of their personal narratives the participants were able to uncover their past and present dilemmas, and privately face their issues. Things were not settled once and for all but themes reappeared in various guises, at different levels of complexity with the structure of the life narrative providing a frame for a re-conceptualisation of the sense of self. The fact that similar issues seemed to be continually reappearing in the participant’s narratives did not reveal the individuals as being chronically self-absorbed or neurotic, but as being alive and well and living in the real world. The self was doing its work in helping the individual to relate to the world and to others. The participants, in coming to terms with self-worth, were confronting their value systems. As Frankl (1988) argued, people may certainly be pushed by drives but they are also pulled by values. Values point to meaning, and meanings are unique and situational. Self-worth as indicated by the participants, had a strong relational aspect. They were examining their relationship with themselves and with others as part of a rich complex tapestry of interconnection.

11.7 Discussion of the Notion of Healing

The participants revealed that the personal narrative indeed provided a source of healing. Healing was revealed through signs of greater acceptance of the inevitable nature of a situation or recognition that a plan of action could be implemented. The participants claimed they felt less isolated when considering their lives within the narrative structure. Swatton and O’Callaghan (1999) described healing taking place by means of narrative as the evoked companion. They examined the nature of healing stories and also explored the subjective experience of participants’ healing stories. The research was designed following Strauss and Corbin’s grounded theory approach. Some open coding categories identified included feelings of inadequacy, experience

of struggle and turmoil, avoidance strategies and a need to be rescued, exploration and a growing awareness of the realities of life. Their research suggested that the experience of the story medium offered participants an insight into choices and possibilities through the relationship with the healing story as an evoked companion.

Brison (2002) expanded on the idea of the healing power of narrative. Brison was attacked, sexually assaulted and left for dead. As a professor of philosophy she believed her philosophical knowledge would be of help. But it was not; it was the retelling of her story that saved her:

Narrative, I now think, facilitates the ability to go on by opening up possibilities for the future through retelling the stories of the past. It does this not by re-establishing the illusion of coherence of the past, control over the present, and predictability of the future, but by making it possible to carry on without these illusions (Brison, 2002, p. 104).

The participants maintained that a sense of healing also emerged through the feeling of playfulness that narrative can offer. According to Abrams (1997) play is linked to spontaneity and flow through which emerges the recognition of self and the celebration of individual needs. The participants felt it was the freedom and the opportunity for spontaneity opened up by the narrative space that helped facilitate the sense of healing.

11.8 The Participants' General Position

The analysis of the participants' narratives suggested the nature of their general position. For example, the participants found themselves in expansive territory and lacked a sense of direction in an unfamiliar life landscape. For many of the participants there was a feeling of ongoing information overload from experts, television, radio and magazines. In addition, they wished to forge connection and tended to look to their children for affirmation. There was also a sense of self-insularity. Most of them helped in charitable work but seemed to lack a sense of connection to the enterprise as a wider social commitment. At some point in their narratives they all used psychological explanations to interpret situations especially

explanations that described present difficulties in terms of the influence of past events. As a result there was a general tendency to live backwards. Participants who lacked financial resources had a very deep fear that their very survival was at stake.

11.9 Limitations and Strengths of the Study

11.9.1 Limitations

As Baumeister (1987) stated, the danger of using historical evidence as background information, especially interdisciplinary evidence, lies in the fact that the conclusions are no more valid than the evidence surveyed. In this study, Prehistory, the Early Egyptians, Early Greeks, the Christian era, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the Romantic period were examined. Thus conclusions would have been guided by the historical period selected.

The main limitation of the study could be said to concern the size and nature of the sample. Seven white midlife women, living near a counselling facility, took part in the research. All the women had children, four of the participants were married and three were divorced. It can be argued that other population groups could have been included, as well as women with same sex partners, women without children and women who had never married.

It can also be argued that venturing into specialist domains such as Anthropology, History, Egyptology and Philosophy is unwise because a non-specialist will not be able to achieve a comprehensive grasp of the subject.

The use of a qualitative grounded approach is often criticised on the basis that it is extremely difficult to keep a balance between creativity and science. It is not a simple matter for a researcher to make creative use of personal knowledge and experience and at the same time hold on to the reality of phenomena.

11.9.2 Strengths

The pilot study gave clarity and direction to the research. The pilot study showed that narrative interviewing and grounded analysis demand a clear understanding of the language medium used. Initially various population groups were to be included in the research and an interpreter assisted with part of the earlier pilot study but this proved to be logistically difficult. Also, at a certain level of language, nuances and emotions proved difficult to grasp. Therefore participants were selected so that these difficulties did not arise.

Examining historical periods contextually from a psychological point of view was valuable. Connections and details were uncovered, which brought another dimension to the study of the self. The alternative of not venturing into historical periods is to lose touch with potentially valuable information and perspectives regarding the questions of selfhood.

The small, specific sample meant that research attention was clearly focused and allowed for the exploration of depth. Concentrating on a specific target group resulted in the collection of rich data, and the qualitative study of one group offers a firm base as means of comparison for researchers studying other groups using similar methodology.

In addition, the fact that the participants had taken part in the earlier study meant that a relationship of trust had developed between the researcher and the participants, which was of considerable benefit to the quality of the interviews. As a result, the interviews yielded very rich data. The data could, in turn, be analysed in detail so offering insight into the nature of the participants' experience that would not emerge in paper and pencil tests. The participants' trust meant they were willing to give of themselves and share their thoughts, feelings and experiences to an extraordinary degree, which was of great benefit to the research as a whole.

The researcher kept a balance between creativity and science by maintaining an attitude of scepticism, by stepping back to check whether or not the conclusions fitted the data, and by following systematic research procedures, which gave rigor to the study.

A further strength of this study is that it finds resonance with other similar research. For example the direction of the findings of this study is supported by Earley's (2002) research. Earley examined consciousness, which he described as the inner life of the individual built on thoughts, attitudes, emotions and motivations as well as on spiritual experience. According to Earley, over time there has been great development in reflexive consciousness, or the ability to reflect on experience, on oneself and on the world through the mediation of images and ideas. Participatory consciousness (feeling) has a ground quality because it has existed since very early times and, during the Upper Paleolithic Era, this form of consciousness prevailed. In the Neolithic Era, with the advent of agriculture, a more developed reflexive consciousness was needed. By 3000 BC there were more advances in reflexive consciousness but there was also a significant emergence from embeddedness and belonging. From 500 B.C. to 1500 A.D. reflexive consciousness grew to the stage where people could think rationally about the nature of reality, and what it meant to be human with regard to right and wrong and the consequences of actions. Consciousness emerged out of the mythic and traditional into the realm of conscious choice and this in turn promoted the growth of individuality. According to Earley, what he termed stage five consciousness was initiated in Greece and embraced the reality of the material world. It eventually devalued spiritual and artistic pursuits, and led to belief in progress and the detached individual. Earley maintained that detachment has gone beyond the individual level to the level of society resulting in a loss of groundedness and hence a loss of meaning. For Earley (2002) there is an urgent need, because of the lack of relation to the earth and to other people, to redress this situation through a dialectical process of the integration of reflexive (thinking) and participatory consciousness (feeling). Earley also found that it is important to understand humans with reference to recent developments as well with reference to past historical periods.

11.10 Summary of Discussion of Research Findings

The discussion addressed data analysis, the conditional matrix, the participants' model of the self, the issue of generativity, the question of self-esteem and the notion of healing. The strengths and weaknesses of the study were also evaluated.

It was concluded that despite Glaser's warnings about the forcing of data, Strauss and Corbin's model showed that it is in fact, difficult to force the data. By tracing the conditional path, the participants were situated against a wider backdrop and so increased the theoretical sensitivity of the study.

The participants' model of the self was discussed in detail under the headings of narrative, environment, identity and self. Narrative included meaning, sequencing, assemblies and meaning clusters, change, situating the self as well as narrative in terms of meaning and metaphor. The environment covered participants' backgrounds, the wider environment of national issues, the extended environment of family, friends, work and financial security. The question of identity covered gender, age, appearance, time and place of birth. The participants saw the self in terms of the conscious and the unconscious, the soul, values and behaviour, spirituality, physicality, affect and cognition.

The study did not find support for Erikson's notion of mid-life in terms of generativity. Issues of self-esteem were not of major importance but the question of inner self-worth was. The personal narrative proved to be a source of healing through the agency of an evoked inner companion, through the opening up of possibilities and through an induced sense of playfulness.

The limitations of the study were seen as lack of specialist knowledge in the areas of anthropology and history and the use of the grounded theory approach, which is criticised because it is said to be difficult to keep a balance between creativity and science. The study had a number of strengths. The pilot study, for instance, gave clarity and direction to the research. The examination of prehistory and historical periods from a psychological perspective brought a new dimension to the study of the self. The small specific sample and long time span of the study, allowed for the exploration of the inner life world. Moreover, the fact that the participants had taken

part in earlier qualitative the research meant that a relationship of trust had developed so yielding data of considerable depth.

Data, which has been systematically collected and analysed and which has depth and substance, provides rich material for the development of theory. The grounded theory of the western self, emerging from the research, is outlined in the following chapter.



12 CHAPTER TWELVE. A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF THE SELF: THE DIALOGICAL DIRECTOR

Strauss and Corbin's approach lends itself to the effective analysis of data as well as to the generation of theory because of its detailed systematic orientation. Theory building implies the interpretation of data. The data has to be conceptualised, and the concepts must be related to each other in order to provide a theoretical interpretation of reality. A grounded theory is inductively derived and discovered, and is developed through systematic data collection and analysis. If a theory has been carefully constructed, based on data from the everyday reality of a particular area, then it should fit that substantive area (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

12.1 The Substantive Dialogical Theory of the Self

12.1.1 Theoretical Structure of the Self

It is suggested that the individual self is the sense of existence, and it occupies a dynamic vantage point moving within the self-space. The self-space and the position of the self-boundary is determined by the relative strength of the components of the sense of self namely the elements of physicality, emotion/affect and cognition in relation to the environment. This is depicted in figure 11.

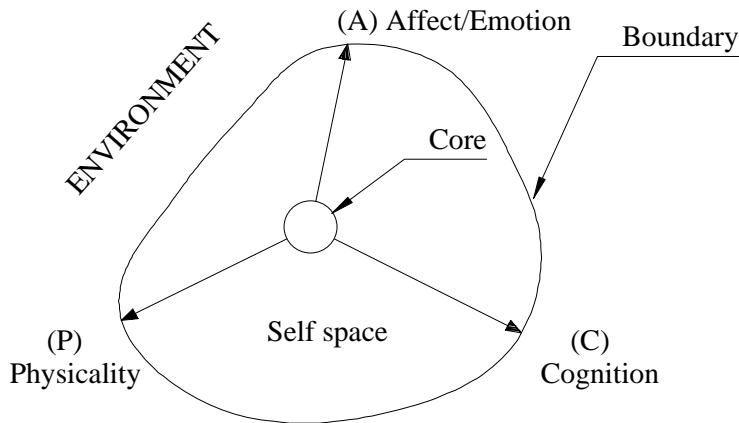


Fig 11. The configuration of the self

The core of the self is the need to survive, and over time this core has usually been interpreted as soul, or as a feeling of inner continuity. Around this nuclear core lies the self-space, which encloses the interplay of physical, cognitive, and emotional/affective elements. The divide between the self and the environment is represented by a notional boundary, created through the individual's narrative interpretation of his or her physical, cognitive and emotional/affective signals. The elements of the self are held in dynamic tension through the agency of the connective power of this inner narrative.



The analogy of the atom can be used to describe the nature of the boundary of the self. The boundary of an atom is a notional one, which defines the space within which the electrons move around the nucleus. Like the atom, the notional boundary of the self encases mostly empty space in which the contents are contained, and in which they are free to move. This boundary also permits interaction with the environment. In addition, the nature of the zeitgeist, which is a component of the environment, will influence the trajectory and the size of the self.

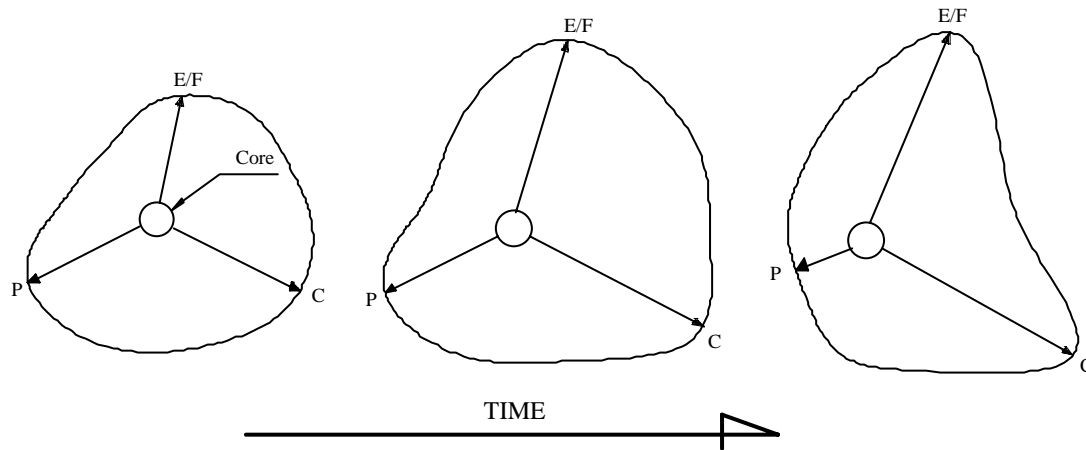


Figure 12 Changes in the configuration of the self

Figure 12 shows possible changes in the configuration of the self in an individual over a relatively short period of time. The core, or need to survive, and the pressure of the environment demand an interactive response from the physical, cognitive and emotional/affective elements of the self. A dynamic tension is thus created within the self, and this means that there is need for continuous dialogical movement and changing perspectives within the individual. Despite this ever-changing inner dynamic, individuals experience themselves as continuous and relatively stable through the sustained connectivity of their inner narrative.

The self relies on the existence of intact consciousness and memory. An individual with advanced Alzheimer's disease, for example, will have an identity but no current sense of self because the dialogical nature of the inner narrative has been compromised. Both Damasio (2000) and Pert (1997) have respectively found evidence of an inner dialogical narrative at the neurological and molecular levels of existence.

Humans exist in time and space; they remember the past, exist in the present, and anticipate the future. The future, however, is essentially unpredictable except for the undeniable fact that, at some time, personal death will eventually occur. The future represents the unknown, and the unknown threatens survival. This manifests as fear, resulting in the desire to have control. The individual can achieve some control through purposeful action as well as by the development of meaning structures.

Control in turn points to direction. Humans live in groups for the purposes of survival, and these groups' collective actions and meaning structures are reflected as the general culture.

The mid-life participants in the study showed signs that they found themselves in a very wide self-space. The current research highlighted the fact that it is meaning that fills this self-space, and keeps it buoyant. Meaning develops through the dialogue between the self-components and the environment. In one sense, the self is like an inflatable raft supporting the individual through life. If the inflatable space is not filled, the individual cannot be supported. The breath of meaning, contained within the personal narrative, fills the self-space. Action or behaviour is the offshoot of the dialogical interaction of the interrelated components of the self. Individuals promote their survival through purposeful action and through developing meaning structures. The participants' narratives suggested, particularly through their recurrent feelings of anxiety and their stress on the current lack of guidelines for living in the world, that there is an opening-up of the self-space in western society in general. Thus there is a growing need for individuals to develop their own lines of action and ongoing reappraisals of relevant meaning structures in order to move forward and experience a sense of well-being.



12.1.2 The Widened Self Space

The consolidation of the power of human cognition and imagination helped unleash the technological revolution. The last fifty years have been witness to enormous technological leaps and advances. Factors such as improved education, growing knowledge of the physical world, medical breakthroughs, the diversification of philosophical standpoints, enormous changes in communication technology and the general increase of information in the environment together with expanded cognitive horizons brought about by education, and improved physical status through better nutrition and healthcare, have all contributed to the increase in available self-space. This has resulted in a considerable enlargement of the boundary of the self.

Great demands have, relatively recently, been placed on the individual sense of self in terms of the need for increased speed of response to the outside world. Strategies for handling the flood of immediate, sometimes conflicting information are increasingly necessary. In the past there were firm social structures such as organized religion, and clear societal role definitions, with the result that decision options were more limited and more clearly delineated.

It would appear that the existence of increasing “rage” phenomena, such as so-called road rage, to give one example, are symptomatic of the increasing demands placed on the self-structure. It also appears that the fractured individual narratives, found in the west, especially unexamined narratives of blame and victimhood often centred in the past, cannot adequately fill the self-space with meaning, and are not easily able to sustain the individual in the face of life demands. This is mainly because survival demands learning from the past while still being effectively drawn into the future. The future is not clear-cut and self-guidance has become the hallmark of the western self but this is not an easy path to find or follow.



12.1.3 Historical Changes and the Widening Self-Space

There is support for the notion of a widening of the self-space through reference to history.

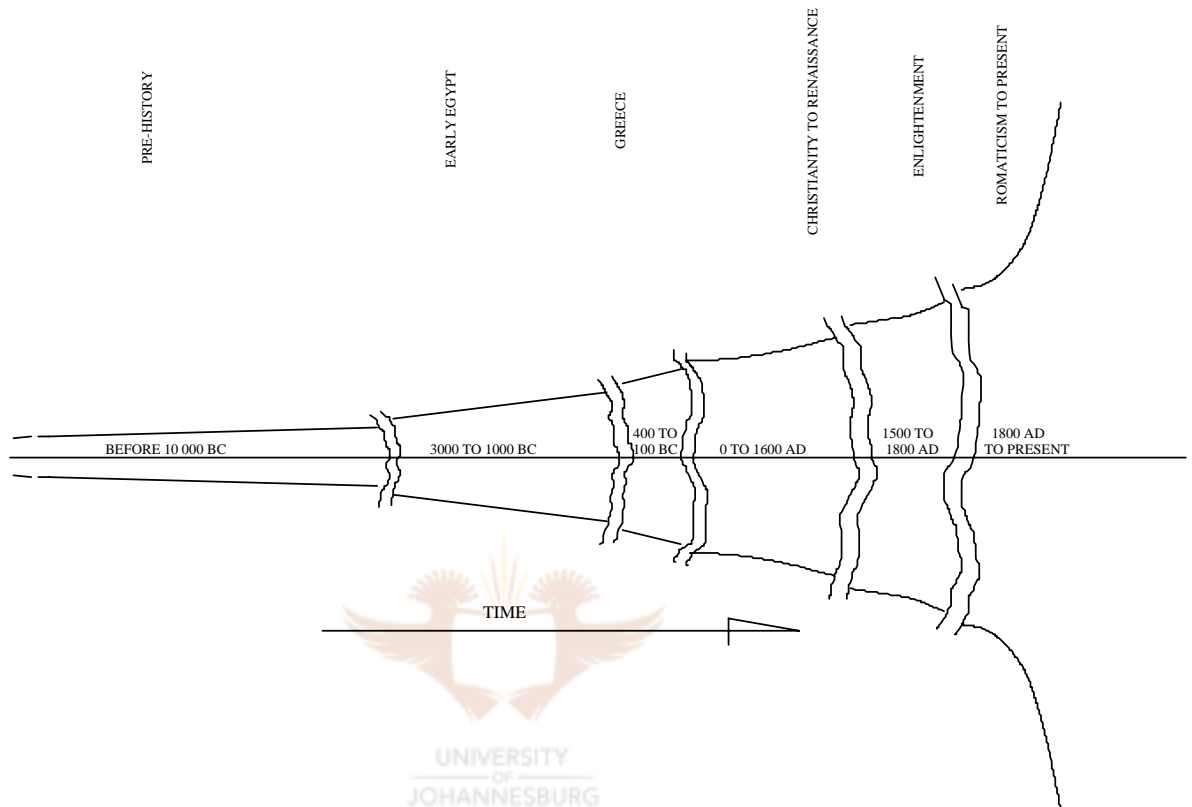


Figure 13 A pictorial representation of the widening of the self-space over time

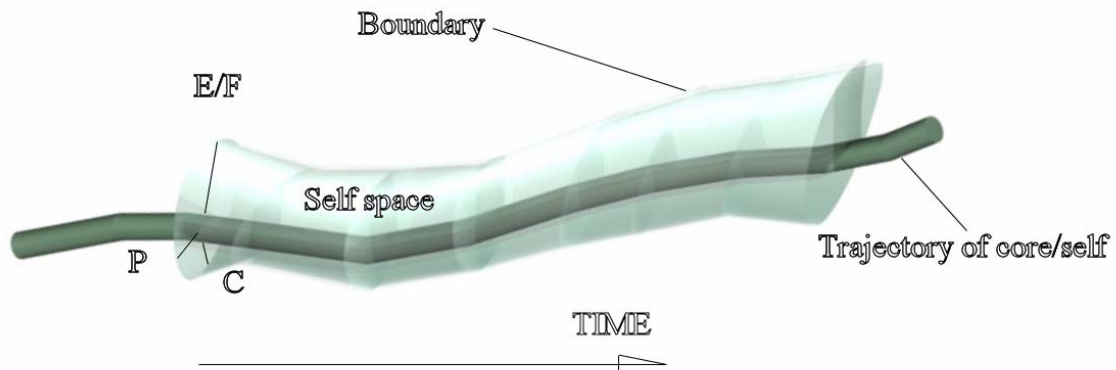
For the Early Egyptians the individual sense of self was subsumed within the collective effort of preparing the king for the journey to the afterlife. In Classical Greece attention turned to the nature of the inner individual. Stress was laid on self-knowledge, character, potential, reason, and the care of the soul. After the Roman conquest of Greece there was great instability, and the fate of the soul became highly significant. It was the Renaissance that raised awareness of individual possibility and accomplishment as formal education began to spread and scientific discoveries were made. Such discoveries highlighted the individual human capacity for reason, and this was accentuated during the Enlightenment. Romanticism expanded the sense of self in the direction of feeling with the recognition of irrationality in the human individual. The Industrial Revolution had a dramatic impact on the nature of the western self. There was to be greater competition between individuals, and the need

for autonomy, self-sufficiency, self-confidence as well as a sense of individuality were all required to deal with the changes in the industrialised world.

In the last fifty years in developed countries there has been a technological explosion, with resounding changes in communication, speed of travel, food production and health care. Audio, visual and communication technology has led to the instantaneous transmission of information, and boundaries between individuals and nations have been reconfigured. Cultures are no longer insular, and so cultural norms do not hold the guiding power they once had. The onus rests more and more on the individual to be able to evaluate situations and make choices.

There are numerous current signs of the widening of the self-space including the popularity of New Age thought and the proliferation of self-help literature. The New Age culture began as a popular movement in the 1960's when the influence of the new technology was becoming much stronger. Generally held values were no longer considered to be universally valid. Therefore a change of direction was required in the face of technology, materialism and fluctuating economic growth with the associated uncertainty. It appears that serious New Age thinkers recognise the rapid widening of the self-space that has been generated in the west by the new technologies. They seek to fill this vacuum with narratives that stress the meaning of communion of humans with the planet, and with each other. There is greater emphasis on matters concerning values, wisdom and spirituality (Thompson, 2002). This is not necessarily spirituality tied to religion, but is spirituality aligned with the sense of existence as a whole, so recognizing human experience as holistic, complex, personal as well as communal.

12.2 Summary of the Theory of the Self



P: Physicality C: Cognition E/F: Emotion/Feeling

Figure 14 A representation of the theory of the western self

The above figure depicts the dialogical movement inherent in the self.

The core of the sense of self is the need to survive, and is experienced as a feeling of continuity drawing the individual into the future. The purpose of the sense of self is to promote personal survival through specific actions and through the structuring of meaning. Meaning is the result of the dialogic give and take between inside and outside, between self and other. Thus the self is dynamic in that the contours change in adaptive response to the internal and external environments, and the self ensures individual survival through action strategies and meaning structures. The self rests lightly on the interconnected pillars of physicality, cognition and emotion/affect and oscillates in response to the interactive currents. The inherent human capacity for narrative serves to contain such movement. Conscious awareness and memory form the substrate of the sense of self. The sense of self is essentially a process of narrative interpretation so pointing to individual direction. Changes in society, especially technical advances, have meant that the available self has substantially increased in size. At the same time values have become situational and support networks are quite thin. As a result of the changes in western society ever-increasing demands are being

placed on the individual self, and perhaps this accounts for the resurgence of interest in the self in psychology today.

With these changes in society such as easier communication and increases in population in conjunction with changes such as the emphasis on individual rights and belief in personal ability and autonomy, individuals are more likely than ever before to psychologically “bump” into one another. More individuals with larger personal self-spaces created by the interplay of environmental elements and the inherent individual components of the sense of self, have reduced “psychological manoeuvrability” in a highly populated, technological world.

The dialogical self knows itself through the responses of real and imagined others, and through a contact dialogue with objects in the world. The dialogical view sees movement, change, consistency and inconsistency as dialogical partners in the process of meaning making. Such a dialogic narrative allows the individual to move within the wider self-space opened by the interplay of technology and the components of the self.

Religion seems to have lost the forceful power it once held for a great number of people in the west, and the spiritual dimension has been recast and subsumed within the realm of personal meaning structures. In other words, religion is no longer dogma given by authority, but rather individuals have, in a way, become their own spiritual authorities. This has perhaps contributed to the development of transpersonal psychology and in greater interest in eastern approaches. Sheik and Sheik (1989) maintained that:

Never before in human history have those of us in the West had such access to Eastern psychologies nor possessed the psychological tools for understanding them. And never before has the need for practicing and understanding them been so great (Sheikh & Sheikh, 1989, p. 553).

This is not to say that the eastern philosophies have all the answers, but there is certainly a need for a broader understanding of the nature of selfhood.

12.3 An Adventure Story: The Participants and the Theory

Adventure involves daring to engage with the unknown. The grounded research revealed that the purpose of the self is to enable the individual to ultimately engage in living. As Damasio pointed out, neurological deficits can mean that there may be a person sitting in front of you but that no self actually exists and such individuals cannot engage in the adventure of living. Events in life are not really predictable and so living constitutes an adventure into new territory.

Analysis of the participants' narratives revealed that *the need to survive constitutes the very core of the self*. In civilised western society, the physiological needs, at a very basic level, are usually ensured. Supermarkets, for instance, offer a variety of foods and so individuals do not have to go out and catch the day's meal. For the participants in this study, the question of survival was forcefully triggered through illness, accidents or by financial hardship. Participants A and F had personal health concerns while participants C and E faced health issues related to their children. Participant C, for example, was deeply shaken by her son's cancer, diagnosed when he was in his final year at school. Even though both she and her husband are in the medical field, the prospect of mortality was overwhelming. Participant A faced the prospect of finality after an incident on the highway when an overloaded passenger vehicle cut in front of her and caused a very serious accident. Here the predator did not have four feet and teeth but four wheels and high speed. Participants B and G realised their vulnerability in the modern world when they faced severe financial difficulties. All the participants mentioned the moment of shock at the realisation of discontinuity in the world. They all engaged in *actions* to deal with the threat and developed *meaning structures* to explain events. The participants' meaning structures embraced the concept of the soul, which represented continuity.

The threat to survival today is mostly experienced obliquely. Participant B, for example, was divorced and her children were working abroad. She was happy they had good career opportunities but she missed them. She had to support herself through her work where the remuneration was poor, and where her position was precarious because of her age. She had previously believed that her children would help her financially once they were earning well and she also believed that her

experience and skill would continue to be appreciated in the market place. The pattern she now encountered was very different from that which had been the norm when she grew up in Europe and represented only one of many changes with which she had to cope. Her sense of survival was compromised to such an extent that she became physically ill and complained of “not being herself.” The interrelated nature of the self-structure of namely, physicality, affect and cognition became clearly apparent in participant B’s life narrative at this stage. The financial crisis meant her home could be repossessed. She displayed what appeared to be a neurological problem, her emotions were in turmoil, and her thinking became illogical. It appeared as if the self-components physicality, affect and cognition would collapse inwards and that she had no space within which to manoeuvre. Threat to survival produces fear and the need to exert control through action and the creation of meaning. *Meaning* structures were vital for all the participants and were also highly individual.

As a result of the extension of the personal narrative begun in the interviews, participant B began to cognitively assess the situation and spoke to her bank manager. With regard to her physical condition, she consulted a specialist physician and started to use her gym contract to the full. As her body relaxed and as she became fitter, so her feelings became more manageable and her panic subsided. She developed her own meaning structure and began to describe her financial difficulties framed in terms of a test of her spiritual faith. She started to embrace the test through constructive activity to remedy the situation and so ensure survival.

Participant D structured personal meaning within a legalistic framework so drawing on her training as a lawyer. When her partner left after his duplicity was discovered, participant D felt bereft and for a while became aphasic. The narrative gradually began to draw her into the business of living and she compiled legal documents to bring the partner to account for money he owed. The cognitive exercise energised her and helped contain her volatile affect. She began cycling and prepared for a long distance competition and became physically stronger. This in turn had benefit in terms of positively impacting on her thinking and feeling and she began to view her handling of her situation as part of a life adventure. It was interesting that the spiritual aspect of her meaning structure, which embraced a form of Buddhism, took on a legalistic form of karma. These two examples clearly illustrate the interdependence of

the three pillars of the self. Excessive emotion, impacted on thinking, while physical activity helped calm feelings and permitted better cognitive functioning and the emergence of a personal meaning structure, which filled out the self-space.

The participants did not articulate the notion of a *self-space* but the ongoing dance within their narratives pointed to such an area. Considerable movement was evident within the participants' narratives as different vantage points were assumed. All the participants in fact, described the self in terms of movement. Participants C and F explained the movement verbally saying that the self moves and fills the space between soul and identity. The remaining participants explained the self by using hand movements to draw circles in the air and indicating movement within these circles.

All the participants said that the life *narrative* approach was a powerful inner connecting medium and made them very aware of themselves and the stories that they lived. *Narrative* holds in tension movement and diverse aspects of living by offering the opportunity for perspective taking. In a way the narrative is the carrier of the self in that it offers different dialogical planes of reference. When the participants framed life experiences within their narrative, they felt a sense of numinosity so touching the very pulse of selfhood and so connecting with the rhythm, and adventure of life itself.

JOHANNESBURG

12.4 Conclusion

Kitzinger (1992) claimed that the nature of the development of the western self has led to an autonomous self, asserted against society. With the changes in world society today, there is a need for this dynamic to be reassessed (Benhabib, 1992; Earley, 2002; Hanley & Abel, 2002; Mageo, 2002). Ever growing populations and increasingly sophisticated technology have meant that the world is becoming smaller, resulting in reduced individual psychological manoeuvrability. Reduced psychological manoeuvrability means that the beliefs and actions of each individual have wide implications, impacting on others and on the environment.

The history of the western self has been a narrative of differentiation, autonomy and self-assertion. In view of the present global configuration (Criswell, 2003), a need is

developing for a higher integration of the components of the self. If, as the historical development of the self has revealed, heightened conscious awareness and changes in the self are indeed possible (Earley, 2002; Criswell, 2003), then a higher level of integration of the components of the self, especially the thinking and feeling components, could be attainable.

The individual self cannot be considered without reference to other people, and to the community as a whole. Therefore education is important in highlighting the implications of different thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Analysis of the participants' narratives indicated that there is a need for psychologists to keep abreast of the broader changes currently occurring in society at large, in relation to historical perspectives. The solutions to problems in the world require a better understanding of human nature. Psychologists can be effective educative conduits. Psychologists are usually embedded in historically determined, theoretical models but these continually need to be re-appraised and challenged otherwise psychologists may situate their clients within too a narrow a context.

The western self has taken a long time to evolve into its present configuration. In terms of its evolution there has been a move away from the self, subsumed within society. There is now a need for a re-evaluation of the alignment of selfhood in relation to community. There is the need for a self, not asserted against community but situated alongside community in the sense of seeing others as concrete individuals not generalised others (Benhabib, 1992). There is the need for a directed self, displaying not only personal, individualised commitment but also commitment to the welfare of society, and that of the planet. The privilege of life lies in being afforded the opportunity and the space for self-expression in the world. This study has shown that, today, the western self has a rapidly enlarging self-space. The challenge is how it will be used. That is another story.

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