

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF KUNDALINI YOGA,
MEDITATION & MANTRA:
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN KUNDALINI YOGIC PHILOSOPHY
AND THE DEPTH PSYCHOLOGICAL TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

Transformative Power of Kundalini Yoga, Meditation & Mantra:
A Dialogue Between Kundalini Yogic Philosophy
and the Depth Psychological Tradition

by

Kelley M. Vandewalle

The purpose of Kundalini yoga is to raise consciousness, to awaken the Kundalini, or serpent energy of the lowest chakra, for the purpose of increasing awareness (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Khalsa, 2009a). This theoretical dissertation engages in a dialogue between the Indian tradition of Kundalini yoga and Western depth psychology of C.G. Jung using hermeneutic and alchemical hermeneutic methods, resulting in a culturally situated, relational understanding. The researcher compares, contrasts, and synthesizes aspects of both into a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1976, p.xix). Similar to individuation, the ultimate goal of Jungian analysis, Kundalini mantras work with one’s own subtle vibrations to elevate consciousness and increase awareness of one’s own unconscious processes (Bhajan, 2003; Jung, 1932/1976; Krishna, 1967). Jung et al. (1964) suggested that through the transcendent function, in which there is a tension between psychic opposites, a third living, intermediate thing is created between the ego and the mysteries of life. The third function is similarly created in Tantric philosophy, which can serve as a bridge to a higher level of consciousness and ultimately to psychic and spiritual healing and freedom (Khalsa, 2009a).

As society transitions from the Piscean Age into the Aquarian Age, the Kundalini yogic technology has become increasingly vital in navigating one’s own consciousness, and as a means of connecting to a greater Awareness. For depth psychology and clinical

psychology as a whole, the implications of this shift are enormously important. What is needed for this day and age is a “new relationship to intuition, emotion and instinct” (Bhajan, 2003, p.4). Through the use of mantra and the vibratory sound current, one can access the Divine, or pure Consciousness, and move beyond where Jung’s depth psychology left off, beyond the opus, the Philosophers’ stone, and beyond the third coniunctio. The experience of shuniya, the stillness at the center of the sound current, has the power to penetrate one’s heart, lift the veils of maya and karma, so that one is able to see the reality of the pure Self through Divine consciousness.

Keywords: Kundalini, yoga, individuation, alchemy, consciousness, coniunctio.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Purpose Statement.....	5
Relevance for Clinical Psychology.....	5
Autobiographical Origins.....	11
Predisposition to the Topic.....	20
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	22
Warnings Against the Practice of Yoga and Meditation.....	24
Benefits of the Practice of Yoga and Meditation.....	26
Chakras.....	27
Tantric Yoga.....	28
Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.....	28
Alchemy and Individuation.....	31
Need for Research on Topic in Clinical Psychology.....	41
Statement of Research Problem and Question.....	42
Definition of Terms.....	43
Chapter 3. Methodology: Approach, Process, Method.....	58
Approach to Research.....	59
Research Process.....	68
Research Method.....	72
Procedures for Data Collection.....	77
Procedures for Data Analysis.....	77
Reflexivity and Limitations.....	78
Organization of Study.....	79
Procedures for Dealing with Ethical Concerns.....	80
Chapter 4. Kundalini Yoga and Meditation.....	82
Aquarian Age Transition.....	83
Mantra: The Sound Current.....	85
Gong.....	88
Shabd Guru technology.....	89
Amrit vela.....	92
Profile of the Bodies.....	94
Soul body.....	95
Mental bodies.....	96
Physical body.....	97
Energy bodies.....	98
Parallel Unisonness.....	100
Maya, Tattvas, Gunas.....	101

Chapter 5. Individuation.....	105
First Coniunctio.....	114
Second Coniunctio.....	116
Third Coniunctio.....	119
Mandala Consciousness.....	123
Symbols of the Self.....	125
Imago Dei.....	127
Chapter 6. Findings: Kundalini Yoga and Depth Psychology,	
A Comparison and Contrasting.....	129
Soul and Subtle Bodies.....	130
Alchemical and Kundalini Symbolism.....	133
Serpent circularis.....	133
Sophia.....	135
Mercurius.....	137
Duality pairs and quaternities.....	137
Chakras.....	139
Shuniya.....	142
Timelessness-Spacelessness.....	144
Vibration.....	149
Heart.....	151
Merging with Consciousness.....	154
Chapter 7. Implications for Methodology, Clinical, and Depth Psychology.....	158
Methodology Implications.....	160
Reciprocal, reverie, receptivity.....	160
Intersubjectivity.....	163
Dialectical relationship.....	164
Ethical epistemology.....	167
Implications for Clinical and Depth Psychology.....	168
Aquarian age shift in consciousness.....	169
Prana.....	171
Soul's teacher.....	173
Meditatio, imaginatio.....	174
Amor Perfectissimus.....	175
Taking Leave.....	177
References.....	179

The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2011-2012).

Chapter 1

Introduction

As I lay on the floor on my yoga mat with my eyes closed in a Kundalini yoga workshop, I could hear the sound of the gong being played at the front of the room and could feel the waves of vibrations and sound pass over and through my body. Suddenly a vision of the moon, luminous and full, appeared beside me. As if looking through a telescope, I could see each crater and valley with perfect clarity. It seemed so close that I could simply reach my hand out beside me and touch it.

I came to yoga because nothing else worked. I needed it in addition to my personal analysis and more recently I need Kundalini yoga *instead* of my personal analysis. Yoga allows me to fix myself, or allow myself to be fixed. The body, subtle body, emotions, and all the other facets of a human being come back into alignment and balance if given the opportunity. Analysis was my introduction to self-care and a growing awareness of my Self; yoga was the natural next step. I would not have found Kundalini yoga had it not been for my first analyst, and for that I am eternally grateful. However, analysis continues to become increasingly less relevant for me personally, as I now find that issues tend to drop away before I have a chance to bring them to analysis. I do not mean that I deal with them and find a deeper meaning, or come to a new understanding; they are just not there, gone. For example, most of the time I find myself unable to get depressed, even if I try. I can literally sit and think and remember how those feelings used to feel, but I am unable to access them. Depression has been replaced by contentment, a deep peaceful being-ness.

Since I began my process of journeying deeper into the Kundalini teachings, I have experienced visions such as my moon vision and I have felt the presence of various

gurus and spiritual beings. Through this process of exploration there have been numerous “openings” in my life that have affected me in surprising and profound ways. The essence and purpose of Kundalini yoga is to raise consciousness, to awaken the Kundalini, or serpent of the lowest chakra, for the purpose of increasing awareness (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Harris, 2001; Khalsa, 2009b). The image of the moon that came to me seemed appropriate, as the moon often is linked to feminine receptivity, imagination, and lunar consciousness (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969). The moon is part of the numinous that links to the collective unconscious; Kundalini yoga is a way for one to connect to the numinous and to the divine feminine (Bhajan, 1977; Khalsa, 2009b; Harris, 2001). The moon is hundreds of thousands of miles away, yet in my vision it felt as if I could simply reach out and touch it. It was not a dream or a waking space but an in-between space that Jung might have identified as a transitional or *psychoid* space (Raff, 2000). Depth psychology calls upon this numinous place, as does Kundalini yoga, as an intermediary, imaginal place that is very real; it cannot be adequately explained by words but it is real in a visceral, felt sense. One has to be able to be present in the numinous space, whether through Kundalini techniques or depth psychological analysis, to experience it firsthand as a reality (Bhajan, 1977; Jung, 1932/1976, 1961, 1978; Raff, 2000). I have experienced the numinous in-between space on numerous occasions since beginning my journey into Kundalini yoga and meditation 5 years ago. The further I allow and let go of what it is I think I am supposed to hold on to, the more I experience the numinous space and the more I am surprised and inspired. Jung called this in-between space the *psychoid archetype*. The term *psychoid* is used to describe something that is founded upon “an only partially psychic and possibly altogether different form of

being” (Jung, 1961, p. 351). Jung hints that what he is describing might be a “spiritual experience,” but he also admits to not having a complete understanding of it. The meditative space is one that has continued to expand and grow for me over the years as a direct result of my *sadhana*, or daily meditative practice. It has been an invaluable tool and way of life for me and has profoundly changed my life in enormous ways. My daily practice sets the foundation for the rest of my life and is the most basic pattern to follow as I move through the day. My group Kundalini yoga and meditation practice is in addition to my personal daily meditation and allows me to go beyond it, and to use the group energy to move exponentially ahead of where I might be on my own. My group Kundalini yoga and meditation practice is in addition to my personal daily meditation and allows me to go beyond it, using the group energy to move exponentially ahead of where I might be on my own. The majority of my most intensely life-changing, consciousness-changing experiences have been with the group. The group allows everyone to benefit from what is best and most pure in each individual, without being impacted by the less beneficial aspects of each person. The collective energy is able to build exponentially faster than one yoga practitioner meditating alone. Through the group meditation, one can participate in the lived experience of Jung’s idea of the collective unconscious, because everyone is connected on another level, more meaningful level than the purely conscious level. Merely being in the meditative presence of others lifts and increases the consciousness of the group.

The majority of this writing process is being done as a “meditation.” There is a process of tuning in, focusing, creating a purposeful intention for writing, and then actually setting a timer to make it a complete meditation that ends at a precise time,

ritually everyday. By turning dissertation writing into a meditative process, a reverence for the work is created that was not previously present, and a renewed appreciation for what is uncovered through the process. The meditative writing process allows for infinitely more to come through than would be possible if it were just I doing the writing myself. By tuning in and surrendering to a specific amount of writing time, down to the very second, it becomes a process of allowing what wants to come through. My hope is that what comes to the surface through this process is something infinitely greater than my self, something of worth, and a contribution to the field of psychology.

Both Kundalini yoga and Jung's depth psychology are part of a kind of alchemical process, a "transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components, of the differentiated with the inferior functions, of the conscious with the unconscious" (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 220). Jung calls this process the *transcendent function*; it is based on what is real and imaginary, rational and irrational, "thus bridging the yawning gulf between consciousness and unconsciousness" (p. 80). Kundalini yoga and depth psychology help foster and nurture transformation through seemingly vastly different methods of attainment. However, they have similar goals. Depth psychology hopes to reach a "mid-point of the personality" (p. 221). In Kundalini yoga, the goal is to join the energy of the positive and the negative polarities together, balancing the chakras, nerves, and various other energy channels throughout the body (Bhajan, 2003, p. 21).

This theoretical dissertation will initiate a dialogue between the Indian tradition of Kundalini yoga and Western depth psychology of C. G. Jung, beginning with the historical and cultural background of Kundalini yoga, major concepts and intellectual

framework, and key themes of Kundalini practice. This will be followed by the historical and cultural background of depth psychology, major concepts and intellectual framework, and key themes of the practice of depth psychology. I will then compare, contrast, and synthesize aspects of both into a “fusion of horizons” as described by H. Gadamer (1977, p. xix).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between Kundalini practices of the East and C. G. Jung’s depth psychology using hermeneutic and alchemical hermeneutic methods, resulting in a culturally situated, relational understanding. At this stage in the research, Kundalini yoga will be defined generally as a “technology of awareness” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 14), which unites one’s individual consciousness with the Infinite Consciousness (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010). Count Hermann Keyserling, philosopher and contemporary of Jung, described yoga as a “psychological system superior to that in the West” (Shamdasani, 1996, p. xx) and he accredited Indian culture as having “done more than anyone else to perfect the method of training which leads to an enlargement and deepening of consciousness” (Keyserling, 1925, p. 124).

Relevance for Clinical Psychology

Meditation and yoga in general have come to be widely accepted by Western culture as valuable for mental, spiritual, and physical wellness and health (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Johari, 2000; Kabat-Zinn, 1994, 2005; Kakar, 2003; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010). Particularly important in clinical psychology is the psychologist’s capacity for seeing beyond their “psychological blinders” (Valente & Marotta, 2005, p. 66). Self-

awareness, which is essential in an effective therapist, can be fostered through the spiritual self of the therapist, which increases the therapist's ability to be sensitive to clients' spirituality (Aponte, 2003). Many researchers (Baker, 2002; Benson, 1975; Miller, 1999) have discussed the relationship between spirituality and psychological and physical well-being. Spirituality can be experienced as a calming agent, which along with mind-body practices foster a sense of "emotional, mental and physical awareness" (Valente & Marotta, 2005, p. 69). Similarly, meditation leads to increased self-awareness and a deepening of spirituality. Researchers (Valente & Marotta, 2005) found that consistent meditation over time can lead to becoming "less defensive, more impartial and even tempered, more alert with enhanced perceptual acuity, and more compassionate and loving" (p. 69). Yoga has been practiced for millennia as a means to prepare the mind and body for deeper meditation; yoga is itself a meditation (Iyengar, 1966). The effects of yoga have been shown to have a positive effect on one's physical and mental health and to promote self-awareness and bring balance to one's life. Through the various postures, breath patterns, and focusing of the mind, one is able to connect to a sense of calm that has far-reaching psychological benefits (Berger & Owen, 1992; Wood, 1993).

The practice of Kundalini yoga emphasizes that one need not look outside of oneself to find answers, but it is the turning inward that holds answers. Kundalini yoga emphasizes the movement of energies within the body, which requires the integration of mind, body, and spirit (Bhajan, 2003; Coward, 1978, 1983, 1985a, 1985b; Johari, 2000; Kakar, 2003; Khalsa, 2009b; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010). In the White Tantric yoga tradition, which will be further defined in the following chapter, as well as in Jungian analysis, mindful awareness of one's unconscious processes prepares a person to be a

suitable vessel, capable of allowing the flow of a higher, transcendent consciousness (Jung, 1975; Kakar, 2003; Khalsa, 2009b). Thus, incorporating Kundalini yoga as a basis for increased awareness and as a means to elevate consciousness is of immense value to clinical psychology (Pankhania, 2005; Paul, 2004; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010). Kundalini *mantras*, *kriyas*, meditations, and *pranayama*, or “breath,” have the power to change entrenched and seemingly unchangeable thought patterns, vibrations, and subtle body energies (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Jung, 1975; Khalsa, 2009a, 2009b).

Similar to individuation, the ultimate goal of Jungian analysis, Kundalini mantras work with one’s own subtle vibrations to elevate consciousness and increase awareness of one’s own unconscious processes that allow for increased consciousness (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Clark, 1994; Jung, 1932/1976, 1961, 1958/1978; Krishna, 1967). Jung (1964) suggested that through the transcendent function, in which there is a tension between psychic opposites, a third living, intermediate thing is created between the ego and the mysteries of life. The third function is similarly created in Tantric philosophy, which can serve as a bridge to a higher level of consciousness and ultimately to psychic and spiritual healing and freedom (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Khalsa, 2009b).

Kundalini yoga has been used to treat various forms of psychopathology with meditations, mantras, postures, physical movements, and breath techniques dating back to India over 5000 years ago (Bhajan, 2003; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010). Yoga is a method of disease prevention as well as treatment of specific physical and mental disorders. David Shannahoff-Khalsa (2006), Kundalini yoga practitioner for over 33

years and director of The Research Group for Mind-Body Dynamics, explained that “the West has made limited progress in the fields of macrosystems biology and understanding physiological states, or in elucidating much of the natural and endogenous mechanisms for self-activating the body’s healing machinery, or in understanding consciousness” (p. 2). Kundalini yoga therapy gives the West a system for healing that is highly technical and precise to promote the natural stages of development and movement toward a higher state of consciousness (Bhajan, 1997, 2003; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010).

Kundalini yoga is not only useful for healing and treating psychological disorders but also for the prevention of them (Bhajan, 2003; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2008, 2010). The techniques of the ancient yogis have been used for thousands of years and continue to be used today to enhance normal neurodevelopmental growth and to increase consciousness and enhance movement toward enlightenment (Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2010). Ancient Indian culture viewed the levels of consciousness as the eight *chakras*, some cultures have as few as six or as many as nine. The chakras are energy centers represented within the body. In the West in particular, society is dominated by the lower three chakras, which will be described in depth in a later chapter. However, for purposes of discussing clinical relevance, the first chakra is related to issues of survival and is often dominated by fear or perversion, the second chakra has to do with a sexual and reproductive consciousness, and the third chakra is often dominated by a “me” versus “we” mentality and the need to control others (Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2010). Moving into the upper five chakras there is more of a “we” mentality, and beginning in the fourth chakra there is a focus on the heart center and compassion. Living primarily in these lower chakras to the exclusion of the higher chakras causes the many kinds of dis-eases

that we see today. Western consciousness as a whole has not fully taken advantage of these ancient Indian ways of living and healing. Disease is a symptom of this imbalance in consciousness; Kundalini yoga technology is a means to move through and beyond that limited consciousness (Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006, 2010; Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003).

Jung (1932/1976) wrote and lectured about the Kundalini chakras as comparable to the psyche (Coward, 1985; Shamdasani, 1996). The chakras are useful in that they provide a way to talk about the psyche that is concretized within the body. The chakras provide a symbolic language to discuss the psyche's vastness and complexities (Coward, 1985; Jung, 1932/1976; Shamdasani, 1996). Aspects of the psyche "overlap and interweave with one another" to such a degree that it necessitates a method of symbolic representation (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 61). The chakras are manifested within the body, in one's individual consciousness, and within the wider culture (Jung, 1932/1976; Shamdasani, 1996).

One of the great contemporary Siddha yoga practitioners and teachers, Swami Shantananda (2003), explored the philosophy of Saivism from the ancient Kashmir Saivite scripture, the *Pratyabhijna-hridayam*, a text that focuses on the evolution of the *Self* and how one can move beyond the veils that conceal the Self. He wrote, "The capacity for expansion exists within each one of us, and the way that we access it is not by reading books or hearing lectures but by taking hold of the awareness within ourselves, by probing our own consciousness" (p. 92). Depth psychologist Robert Romanyshyn (2007) discussed that the act of healing and becoming whole is an act of remembering one's original wholeness, an act of putting the Self back together. In a similar way Shantananda (2003) explained, "Whoever has realized her own divinity even

for a moment learns that her body contains, in a contracted form, all the principles that comprise the universe and also experiences herself as the origin and center of everything that has been created” (p. 107).

This research will attempt to give language to an experience and perspective that have historically constituted a “practice” or set of movements, mantras, and focal points, that is somatically experienced, hence, “the cryptic nature” when looked at from “the perspective of the intellect” (Bryant, 2009, p. 10). This is the endeavor of clinical psychology as well, to put words to internal processes, feelings, and experiences so as to clarify, create space for, and increase awareness. Kundalini yoga goes beyond the psychological goal of increased awareness and understanding, beyond the mind and intellect, to a soul level. This is the location where depth psychology and Kundalini yoga meet. The soul, as defined in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, is “pure consciousness,” unconditional awareness, pure self, and is separable from the mind, intellect, and all forms of thought (Bryant, 2009, p. 8). These truths of yogic philosophy can only be experienced through direct perception, and not through inferential reasoning and intellect (p. 9). Traditional yogic texts such as the Yoga Sutras point the reader to the experience and practice of yoga. Iyengar (2005) said, “What I learned through yoga, I found out through yoga,” meaning, it was always and only through his practice (p. x). He went on to say, “Any contribution I have made to the world has been the fruit of my sadhana,” or daily practice (p. x). This dissertation will attempt to bridge the gap, to find an in-between space, to put to words that which was passed down to each generation from teacher to disciple, and to find a place for depth psychology and Kundalini yoga in a “fusion of horizons” as a means of increasing consciousness and awareness in modern

times. The space I hope to create will be the alchemical vessel in which the possibility of not only a new intellectual understanding can be formed, but a consciousness that is beyond the mind and the intellect, on the level of soul.

Autobiographical Origins

The development of my interest in Kundalini yoga and ritual and its relationship to depth psychology has involved numerous synchronicities, dreams, and images. It has been an emotional journey, which began with continuing to circle round various topics related to depth psychology's connection to Kundalini yoga. Through my intense process of narrowing and focusing of ideas, there was a period of letting some things die and fall away so that others could grow and be fertilized. What I am now left with is a funneling of passions culminating in what fascinates, inspires, and captures my creative imagination and potential in connection with this topic. Synchronistic events have led me slowly and carefully, with great care and reverence, to a treasure seed that has become this project, a journey that I now embark on in a public yet intimate way. By following the threads, I have been profoundly led deeper and more intimately than I had imagined into my Self and into my topic.

I have gained very much personally from my own Kundalini yoga practice. I feel more grounded and centered in many areas of my life. Being grounded has allowed my meditation to grow exponentially and has allowed for me to feel more fully connected and integrated. My daily sadhana, or meditative Kundalini yoga practice, is an integral part of my personal process of unfolding and moving more fully into the work of this dissertation. The yogic tradition has introduced me to Eastern and Sikh traditions and

philosophies that are particularly powerful for me in this time of expansion and exploration.

I was led to Kundalini yoga by way of Anusara yoga, which is part of the larger branch called Hatha yoga. Anusara yoga, which means to step into the flow of grace, was founded in 1997 by John Friend. It is a heart-centered yoga that also focuses on alignment principles, *asanas* or postures, breath, and an opening of supreme consciousness through the divine feminine. I felt instantly drawn to Anusara yoga, and at the time it filled a gaping hole in my life. I ended up in a Kundalini yoga class some years later by mistake. I had started taking classes at a new yoga studio that taught primarily Kundalini yoga classes and a few Hatha classes. A friend encouraged me to try out one of the Kundalini classes. Previously, I had been warned not to take a Kundalini class specifically because they were “weird”; I did not take a Kundalini yoga class for many years. Then one day I got curious. My first impression was not that it was “weird,” but that it felt surprisingly normal. I was not ready to connect instantly with the Kundalini energy, and remained devoted to my Anusara studio and teachers. However, that first Kundalini class made an impression on me. Occasionally I would drop in on a Kundalini class. It was not until years later and torrential circumstances began to pour into my life that I began to feel the need for more than what I could get through the Anusara yoga; I needed the Kundalini energy. A particularly painful break-up initiated by a series of dramatic realizations and discoveries was what initially led me deeper into the Anusara yoga. Overnight, my practice went from being a few-days-a-week practice to an every-single-day-practice. I was inconsolable most of the time following the break-up, except when in analysis or doing yoga. I did both daily for months; the combination of yoga and

therapy saved me in so many ways. Previous to that I had felt completely lost and directionless; the yoga-therapy combination grounded me in my body and gave me a path to follow. A year later my younger sister suddenly and unexpectedly died; again I turned to yoga. This time it was a much more subtle internal shift. At the time I was practicing Kundalini yoga *and* Anusara yoga but did not yet have a consistent Kundalini practice. Initially I took only a couple of Kundalini yoga classes a month, which steadily increased over the following months as I began to feel its far-reaching effects upon my mind, psyche, spirit, and body. Immediately following my sister's death, I would often feel her presence while I was practicing yoga. Sometimes it was a physical sensation or just a thought that would "pop" into my mind or sometimes an auditory sound or single sentence. Over time, it has become an increasingly rare experience, but initially it was an incredible source of comfort to feel her presence in the room.

The very presence of my first teachers initially felt and continues to feel incredibly powerful and often overwhelming. The closer I placed myself in proximity to the front of the yoga room where the teacher would sit, the more intensely I could feel their energy. It felt like a powerful, beaming, focused energy, especially when they would glance at me, as if they could see straight through me. It was years before I ever spoke a word to my teachers. I remember the first time I spoke to Tej, one of my two teachers, in an individual session, and before I had said anything, the first sentence out of her mouth brought me to tears. She has an incredible powerful and subtle way about her that feels clear and loving and pure; the only way I can describe it is that what she said pierced straight through to my soul. It felt like the summation of my Self, everything that was *me*, she had just summarized in a glance and a few words.

Initially, I felt as if my body and mind could not, so I thought, tolerate more than one class a week. Usually following each class I would lie on the floor in my apartment and just stare at the ceiling for hours. I would often feel a spacey, dizzy sensation, as if the room was spinning very slowly. Looking back, I realize my mind and body were recalibrating to the new energy that was introduced through the Kundalini, which can be very disorienting. I could literally feel the physical and psychical shifts in my brain and in my energy field after each class. The experience of Kundalini energy is indescribable; it is different every time and yet always the same. I felt as if my entire body was being worked on at a cellular level. Subtle changes continued to move through my life. I was different spiritually, physically, emotionally, psychically, physiologically, cellularly. Everything was different. On a soul level, I was connected to what you might call Source Energy, the Divine Feminine, God, Shiva.

I have been practicing Kundalini yoga since 2007, but have only in the past two years immersed myself more fully into the teachings. I traveled on a *yatra* to India in 2010 to study and experience the Kundalini energy first hand at the source. I began in Amritsar, at the Golden Temple, or *Harmandir Sahib*, which means “temple of God.” The temple is one of the most serene and eerie places I have been in all of my life. There is an energy there that is palpable. The air is incredibly thick, as if you could quite possibly reach out and touch it. It is a surreal experience, much of it quite imperceptible. The temple feels as if there is more happening than one can sense with the ordinary senses, as if there is another layer that cannot be seen by most, but is felt or perceived by virtually all who enter there. One must cover one’s head before entering the *gurdwara*, or temple. I was able to dip in the water at the temple; the water is considered sacred and

healing water originating from the Ganges River. There is a separate area for women and men; women have to dip in the water hidden within a small concrete structure near the side of the gurdwara. Men are able to dip in the water anywhere along the banks of the water. When it was my turn, I undressed and lowered myself into the water; the water felt slimy and truly magical. I do not know exactly what happened in the water, but I felt suddenly overcome with pure joy; that is the only way that I can describe it. It was a feeling of youthful excitement and freedom, as if I could not wait to come back the next day and do it again. It felt as close to bliss as I have experienced. The Golden Temple is one of my favorite places on earth. Simply by looking at a picture of the Temple, or even imagining it, I can feel physical changes happen within my body; my breathing slows down and feels much deeper, my heart rate feels stronger and slightly quickened, I feel a subtle clarity and stable groundedness.

Secondly, I visited Dharamsala, which is where the Dalai Lama lives when in India since his exile from Tibet decades ago. Thirdly, I visited the 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, at his monastery near Dharamsala. He is the 17th reincarnated Karmapa, which means, quite literally, “one who carries out buddha activities.” The Karmapa was appointed by the Dalai Lama at the age of 7. The Karmapa’s temple is quite decorated and is the home of several hundred monks. I was able to listen to them do their morning chant; I was invited by one of the monks to slip in through the back entrance of the enormous temple, seemingly unnoticed, like a fly on the wall. There are no words to describe the energy in the room. I surreptitiously took a few photographs from the back, but all of them came out blurry; I could not hold the camera still from the reverberating chanting filling the room. One of the monks served us traditional Indian chai tea and a

cookie while we waited to meet the Karmapa. I met him at the end of the afternoon with a group of other travelers and found his presence to be quite overwhelming and very loving. He blessed a white scarf and put it over my head and smiled; the visit was over.

One of the purposes of the yatra, or sacred spiritual journey, was to immerse myself more fully in the White Tantric and Kundalini yoga tradition, and to have the personal experience of daily sadhana, kriyas, and meditation in the historical, sacred birthplace of Kundalini. Sadhana is a daily “morning meditation” that takes place as part of a morning ritual usually between the hours of 3 and 6 in the morning. Kriya means “action,” which is essentially the yoga movements that are done to prepare the mind, body, and spirit for meditation.

I engaged in a Kundalini Research Institute, Level 1 Teacher Training over the course of 8 months, which I completed in August 2011, to become a certified Kundalini yoga teacher. The experience began a few months after my return from India. The teacher training happened during a time in my life when I was at a particularly toxic and dysfunctional internship site and struggling with how to handle my day-to-day life there. One of the first meditations that I was given to do as part of the teacher training experience was a 31-minute meditation, for 40 days, that was intended to clear the *arcline* or “nucleus of the *aura*” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 202) and clear away unwanted, unnecessary parts of one’s life, or unnecessary energies. A few days into the meditation, *all* of my supervisors at the internship site quit working at that hospital. There was a mass exodus of nearly all psychologists in the specific area of the hospital where I was training. I was told by hospital administrators that my internship would be ending effective immediately. I was devastated, as I only needed a few hundred more predoctoral internship hours. The

timing was interesting in the situation and I can only assume that it was the result of my meditation that “cleared” the toxic internship situation from my life. As timing would have it, I had a vacation planned to the Dominican Republic the following week; I decided to go on the vacation anyway. While away I received an e-mail from a lovely former supervisor saying that she would like for me to come help out at her college counseling site to help complete my hours. The opportunities that have followed through interning at the college counseling center have been incredible and have led me to my current, particularly talented supervisor and to a pre- and postdoctoral position in a private practice setting, which is exactly where I know I am supposed to be. All of this may or may not relate to the meditation; my best guess is that it had everything to do with the meditation. It felt like the perfect meditation, at the perfect time, for the exact circumstances that were happening in my life. Similar synchronistic events have occurred and continue to occur with some regularity through this and other meditations, which I will discuss further in upcoming chapters.

The topic of Kundalini yoga as it relates to depth psychology is a profoundly personal one to me, and as such I have biases on the topic. I was led into the Kundalini teachings through depth psychology and my own personal analysis. I have since ended analysis, at least temporarily, and I am solely practicing Kundalini yoga and meditation as a means of increasing consciousness and awareness. Kundalini yoga has taken me far beyond what would have been possible in analysis alone. Analysis has served an invaluable purpose in my life, mostly because it was the stepping stone to Kundalini yoga, without which I quite possibly might not have been prepared, on many levels, to move into a deeper space with my practice. What is lacking for me in analysis is an

embodied, felt sense of the work in the analytic individuation process. There is something that is lost in the symbolic language of analysis that feels unnecessarily complicated and superfluous. At this time, analysis feels counterintuitive to my current progression. I have found that through Kundalini yoga, I am able to just “drop” complexes that have been a part of my psyche for as long as I am aware. I realize that for many, complexes do not feel as if they can simply be “dropped” or let go of. Analysis is the long way around something that feels to me very simple. Kundalini yoga is a technology that is designed to work quickly and is designed to work in this time and space we are now in. It works as fast as one allows it to. Fast can mean very different things to different people; for some it means this lifetime; for others in the blink of an eye, complexes can be dropped, let go of, on the deepest of levels. I am not referring to a superficial letting go or realization that fades away. Kundalini for me has been life-altering. It is not for everyone; depth psychology and personal analysis may be the answer for some. Just as therapy is not necessarily for everyone, so Kundalini yoga is not either. I have witnessed in others and within myself the profound effects that Kundalini yoga and meditation can have on one’s life. Psychologically, physically, emotionally, spiritually, physiologically, and mentally, it has completely transformed my life down to the cellular level. Kundalini yoga has changed the way I live, the way I breathe, the way I think, what I eat, what I say, and has transformed my life in extremely subtle ways and in drastic, sweeping, transformational ways.

An example of this is my sadhana or daily meditation practice. I have never been one to be disciplined about anything. Since traveling to India and then going through the process of teacher training I have had a morning sadhana, which I have been doing for

over a year-and-a-half. I have never missed a day. My mornings begin by waking up and taking a cold shower, every morning, not a lukewarm shower, a *cold* shower. In Indian culture, the cold shower, known as *Ishnaan* or the science of hydrotherapy, is thought to flush and detoxify the organs, open the capillaries, change the blood chemistry, and stimulate the glandular system, along with numerous other benefits (Bhajan, 1997, 2003). I have felt immense benefits from simply adding a cold shower every morning. I will admit that it felt incredibly torturous at first, and then it got better, and now I usually enjoy the cold water and actually feel *warm* by the end of the process. The shower is followed by meditation; my teachers gave me a series of meditation to do, which I will describe in greater detail in later chapters. My meditations are exactly one hour and twenty-four minutes; they are timed down to the second and I have never missed a day. I give the example of my morning ritual here because it has never been in my nature to be “disciplined” about anything. My daily practice has changed my life and continues to do so. The most profound way that it has changed my life is that my moods are much more even. As I said earlier, I do not get depressed; it is very difficult to get myself into that place. I am sure I could get to that feeling place if it were my intention. However, I have not felt the desire to do so. Some days it takes an enormous effort to get up and meditate. There have been days when I cried through the entire meditation, or had a sprained foot, or had a cold and could not breathe well, or did not feel totally well, but I got through it and have felt the benefit of just getting through it. My practice gives me a sense of perspective and an appreciation for the ritual and the clarity that come through simply going through the process.

Predisposition to the Topic

My predisposition to the topic of research, the relationship between Kundalini yoga and depth psychology, may both serve and inhibit my research. I am aware of my profound affinity for Kundalini yoga and depth psychology. However, my personal affinity as of late is to the processes of Kundalini, beyond that of depth psychology. I have a positive transference to yoga and meditation, and I am conscious of the need for awareness of that transference as the relationship is shaped and changes throughout the research process. Through self-awareness and the alchemical hermeneutic process of making a space for the work to speak, my transference to the topic of Kundalini yoga and depth psychology will be monitored. I will attempt to remain unattached from my personal ideas of what the work will or should be in order to create a space for the work to speak as autonomously as possible. My predisposition to the topic and positive transference will serve as a catalyst for the work, in that it will help propel it forward. My passion for the topic will not only sustain my interest, but ideally will also help to engage the “others” and “strangers” present in the work. Through the transference dialogues, I will begin a conversation with the “others” in the work and make a space for their argument to count. Romanyshyn (2007) wrote about the researcher standing in the “gap between the conscious and the unconscious” and taking the notion of the unconscious seriously (p. 49). Through my encounter with my own unconscious and the unconscious processes in the work, a transformation of the work is made possible. The researcher “descends into the dark-light of the underworld, where the complex patterns of the researcher encounter the soul of the work, its unfinished business” (p. 48). Through this

process of re-membering, both researcher and topic emerge changed. I will discuss the transference dialogues more fully in a later chapter.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The focus of this dissertation is on key texts in the Kundalini yoga tradition, the depth psychological tradition, and my own experiences of Kundalini yoga as “text.” Through the yogic texts of Yogi Bhajan (1977, 1997, 2003), Gurucharan Singh Khalsa (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998), Paramahasa Yogananda (1946), and others, a sense of the historical and cultural background, major concepts, intellectual framework, and themes of Kundalini yogic philosophy are developed and explicated. C. G. Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, wrote numerous texts that discuss his interactions with Eastern practices, specifically Kundalini yoga and meditation. I will focus on Jung’s lecture, “The Psychological Commentary on Kundalini Yoga” (1932/1976), *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1956/1963), and other texts in Jung’s *Collected Works*, as well as writings from other Jungian scholars including Sonu Shamdasani (1996, 2009), Veronica Goodchild (2006), Jeffrey Raff (2000), and Edward Edinger (1972, 1985). I will utilize my experiences in and outside of India as an additional “text” in dialogue with the Kundalini yogic texts and depth psychological texts. In addition, I will discuss numerous other articles and texts relevant to the interweaving of material from the Kundalini yogic tradition with the depth psychological tradition.

Kundalini is a systematized process through which consciousness is elevated (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Harris, 2001; Khalsa, 2009b; White, 1979). It is a yoga of incrementally increasing awareness, where the “total potential of the person becomes known to the person” (Bhajan, 1977, p. 172). Kundalini is a personal aspect of the lifeforce (Bhajan, 1977; White, 1979), much like considering the personal

unconsciousness in relation to the collective unconscious in depth psychology (Jung, 1976, 1943, 1944/1953, 1961, 1958/1978). The life force is often called the *prana* or “breath” (Bhajan, 1977; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Iyengar, 1966; White, 1979). Kundalini yoga was established as a verbal and written tradition through ancient Indian texts, and Hindu and Sikh scriptures over many millennia (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Johari, 2000). *Kundalini* is a Sanskrit word that means “spiral” or “coil” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969; Iyengar, 1966; Johari, 2000). The awakening of Kundalini links to the serpent image as a description of the uncoiling that takes place within the lower chakras as the energy is able to elevate and move upwards toward greater awareness (Bhajan, 1977; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969; Iyengar, 1966; Johari, 2000; Krishna, 1967).

Jung wrote extensively about Eastern philosophy and the historical ancestry of Kundalini yoga as an “indispensable basis for critique and an objective consideration of Western Psychology” (Shamdasani, 1996, p. xlvi). Jung (1932/1976) discussed yoga in a number of contexts beginning with his lecture on Kundalini yoga. For Jung, the intrinsic value of yoga was in the rich symbolism that he used comparatively to describe the inner experience of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1932/1976; Shamdasani, 1996). Jung’s personal feelings toward the ongoing practice of yoga in the West aside, he valued the tradition of Kundalini yoga for its contribution to knowledge of the personal and collective unconscious (Jung, 1932/1976, 1943, 1958/1978). Jung drew many parallels between Eastern philosophy and practices of elevating consciousness through Kundalini and the depth psychological process of individuation (Shamdasani, 1996). For Jung, yoga represented a “rich storehouse of symbolic depictions of inner experience,” which

paralleled the process of individuation (p. xxix). This comparative material from Kundalini yoga was used by Jung to contrast and in comparison to the images of the collective unconscious in the hopes of creating a “cross-cultural comparative psychology of inner experience” (p. xxix). Jung held a seemingly conflicted position on the questionable value of Kundalini yoga. On the one hand he described his perspective on yogic practices as “critically adverse to yoga,” and at the same time he was known to practice yoga himself on occasion and regarded Kundalini yoga as a “spiritual achievement,” and “one of the greatest things the human mind has ever created” (p. 85). At one point Jung described yoga in general as having “no real interest” for the Westerner, as well as warning against yoga’s “bad effect” and the possibility of yoga leading the Western practitioner “over the edge of madness” (p. xxx). Contemporaries of Jung, such as Eliade (1958) and Keyserling (1925) were similarly critical of the practice of yoga and meditation by the Westerner and adamantly warned against the practice. Much of this limiting viewpoint persists today among yoga practitioners and nonpractitioners alike across all schools of yoga, not just Kundalini yoga, and deters would-be yogis from further exploration. Limiting beliefs about the “dangers” of yoga are most prevalent among nonpractitioners and those unfamiliar with yoga in general. However, yoga teachers occasionally give misinformation about potential “dangers.”

Warnings Against the Practice of Yoga and Meditation

Jung (1932/1976, 1961, 1958/1978) spoke and wrote on the dangers of practicing yoga for Westerners, specifically, before and after his journey to India; “Study yoga—you will learn an infinite amount from it—but do not try to apply it, for we Europeans are not so constituted that we apply these methods correctly” (Jung, 1958/1978, p. 82).

Jacobi (1965) described yoga as something “designed for totally alien psychic structures” that “do not correspond to the European’s state of consciousness and consequently lead him not into individuation but only into error” (p. 18). Jung (1958/1978) wrote that the West was “the most unfavorable soil one can think of for the application of yoga,” because of the relative newness of Western civilization (p. 85). Jung praised yoga on the one hand, yet warned against its use. He described how, “in training of the parts of the body, it unites them with the whole of the mind and spirit” (p. 80). He gave an example of this:

Prana is both the breath and the universal dynamics of the cosmos. When the doing of the individual is at the same time a cosmic happening, the elation of the body (innervation) becomes one with the elation of the spirit (the universal idea), and from this there arises a living whole which no technique, however scientific, can hope to produce. Yoga practice is unthinkable, and would also be ineffectual, without the ideas on which it is based. (pp. 80-81)

The attraction of the system of yoga is that it appeals to both scientific and religious senses. Yoga combines the spiritual and the physical in an “extraordinarily complete way” (p. 81). Indian culture does not have the split between religious faith and the philosophical, scientific mind as with the European mind. Jung warns that Western man already has an extraordinary power over nature within and without him, and that what he lacks is “conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him” (p. 83). According to Jung, the value to the Westerner lies solely in the rich symbolism of Kundalini yoga, for interpreting the collective unconscious, which is a “collective psychic disposition, creative in character” (p. 85). He recommended the use of active imagination instead to lessen the intensity and narrowness of the Western consciousness (p. 85). He described active imagination as consisting of a way of “switching off consciousness, at least to a relative extent, thus giving the unconscious contents a chance

to develop” (p. 85). Jung predicted that “in the course of the centuries the West will produce its own yoga, and it will be on the basis laid down by Christianity (p. 85).

The Indologist Wilhelm Hauer lectured with Jung on the topic of yoga and the chakras at the Psychological Club in Zurich in 1932. Hauer talked about the preparatory work of analytic psychology in comparison with the development of yoga over many millennia. Hauer stated that Christianity is no longer “valid” for everyone, “just as tantric yoga has disappeared” (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 96). He went on to say that these are both “human attempts to grapple with the great problem of life by symbols and sentences... but in a few hundred years that epoch is finished. The symbols change, or their life changes” (p. 96). And he warns that the danger lies in “carrying on with that symbol as valid in the new epoch” (p. 96). Judith Harris (2001) wrote on the many benefits of the yogic path, yet warned of its potentially harmful effects: “The dangers of such a path are enumerated throughout yogic texts. . . . Missing the link with the physical level is both uncomfortable and potentially dangerous. The ego must be strong enough to surrender to a higher power” (p. 116).

Benefits of the Practice of Yoga and Meditation

One of the benefits of yoga for the European according to Jung was that it served to remind the Westerner of his own cultural heritage of alchemy (Coward, 1985a, p. 23). Yoga can show the West the importance of one’s “inner nature and its intuitive functioning” (p. 23). Psychology is the means or pathway into the intuition and a way of turning inward (Coward, 1985b). However, for Jung (1943) there remained fundamental differences between the East and West. Jung makes the point that “outer reality, with its bodiliness and weight, appears to make a much stronger and sharper impression on the

European than it does on the Indian” (p. 570). Jung believed that Eastern and Western cultures could benefit immensely from exposure to the opposite culture, so long as they did not lose the inherent benefits of their own. He explained that the West could not simply copy the yoga of the East and adopt it as their own but could “rediscover or resensitize itself to the interior aspects of intuition and feeling—but without letting go of its strong grip on exterior scientific consciousness” (Coward, 1985a, p. 9). The East could benefit from “science, industry, and technology of the West, but not at the expense of its sensitivity to the inner man” (p. 9). The benefit of yoga for Jung was that it “provided confirming evidence that others had had similar experiences to those of his own” (Coward, 1985b, p. 10) and similar to his experiences of the collective unconscious. Other benefits of yoga are that it proposed that “consciousness was wider than the typical modern Western fixation on the scientific intellect” and that it included the “intuitive side of psychic functioning” (p. 10).

Chakras

In his lecture on Kundalini yoga, Jung (1932/1976) explored the movement of energy through the chakras from the lower base chakras up through the elevated, more conscious, stages as related to the process of individuation. Jung used the chakra symbolism and imagery to understand the unconscious processes and symptomatology of his clients, which he understood to be a result of an awakening of Kundalini forces within the patient (Jung, 1961; Shamdasani, 1996). The “root chakra,” or *muladhara*, is related to the earth, instincts, impulses, and to a state of unconsciousness (Jung, 1932/1976). The Self is essentially asleep or unconscious at this point. As the energies are able to move further up the chakra system, there is an awakening that begins to take place,

consciousness begins to develop, and things that were unconscious begin to come into awareness (Jung, 1932/1976; Harris, 2001; Shamdasani, 1996; White, 1979). The chakras and their relationship to increasing consciousness, increasing levels of awareness, and individuation will be more fully explicated in the definition section and in later chapters.

Tantric Yoga

In the Tantric yoga tradition and Hindu scriptures, before manifestation there is only consciousness without matter, which is *Shiva*, and the power of consciousness, which is called *Shakti* or Kundalini (Johari, 2000). *Shakti* is the “feminine creative energy” that allows one to connect to the Divine Mother and to “activate this female power of the universe within” (Khalsa, G. K., 2009, p. 317). When *Shiva* and *Shakti* come together, *nada* and *maha bindu* are born; *Nada* is “pure cosmic sound” and *maha bindu* is “the supreme truth that is the seed of all manifest phenomena” (Johari, 2000, p. 23). In this union and coming together, consciousness has begun. “The culmination of the evolution of creation is in the individuated self” (Johari, 2000, p. 24). Kundalini is ultimately “the means by which the individual consciousness is absorbed into the *Param Shiva*, or “supreme consciousness” and a new “nondual consciousness” is attained (Johari, 2000, p. 25). Kundalini embodies this process of merging the individual consciousness into the Universal, nondual, *Param Shiva* consciousness (Johari, 2000).

Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras

Quite possibly the most historically influential text of yogic philosophy, Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*, are a collection of texts compiled by Patanjali approximately two millennia ago. The Sutras have come to be regarded as one of six main classical schools of Indian philosophy (Bryant, 2009; Iyengar, 1966). Numerous scholars and yogis have

since written extensive commentary and interpretation of the Yoga Sutras. B. K. S. Iyengar (1966, 1993, 2005), one of the founders of yoga in Western society in the 1960s wrote and spoke on the Sutras. The majority of yogic schools of thought in the West trace their origins back to the Yoga Sutras. It is believed that yoga and the Yoga Sutras were introduced to the West late in the 19th century; more popularized kinds of yoga arrived in the West in the 1960s. The sutras were written as a kind of shorthand as aphorisms to assist disciples with memorization and to go along with formal oral teachings from the master. They are meant to “thread together” in one’s memory the key ingredients of a more extensive body of material that the reader would already have been familiar with (Bryant, 2009, p. xxxv). Hence, the Sutras would be meaningless without extensive transliteration and commentary from scholars. The Sutras are part of a knowledge system handed down orally. The meaning must be ‘unpacked’; otherwise, they remain “esoteric” and “incomprehensible” when looked at alone (p. xxxv).

Bryant (2009) discussed the Yoga Sutras as attempting to describe something that is beyond the intellect: “the truths of Yoga cannot be experienced by inferential reasoning but only by direct perception” (p. 9). From a yogic perspective, “all aspects of mind, intellect, and cognition” are external to and distinct from the true self or soul (p. 8). Soul is pure consciousness, and as such is autonomous and separable from the mind and “lies behind and beyond all forms of thought” (p. 8). Through yoga, the soul is uncoupled from the gross body, and *citta*, or mind, intellect, ego, and persona (p. 8). The ultimate goal of yoga is to arrive at *asamprajnata-samadhi*, or pure consciousness (p. 9). The nature of the soul is pure consciousness. An example of pure consciousness is the comparison of

consciousness or soul, to a crystal. When a red flower is placed next to the crystal, the color is reflected in the crystal and it appears to be red:

The true nature of the crystal, however, is never actually red, nor is it affected or changed by the flower in any way. . . . Similarly, consciousness reflects or illuminates external objects and internal thoughts, *vr̥ttis*, but is not itself affected by them. (p. 23)

By definition this consciousness is “beyond the intellect, and thus beyond words and concepts. . . hence the cryptic nature from the perspective of the intellect” (pp. 9-10). The purpose of the text, then, is to point the reader toward the actual practice of yoga. The dualism commonly thought of in the West, Descartes described as follows: “the self thinks and lacks extension, the body is unthinking and extended” (p. xlv). There are two kinds of thinking in Western dualism, a physical reality that is “empirically” perceivable by the senses, and the mental reality, which is unperceivable and private (p. xlv). In the sutras, the dualism split is not between mind and body, but “between pure awareness and all objects of awareness—whether these objects are physical and extended, or internal and nonextended” (p. xlvi). Therefore, the goal of yoga, to get to pure consciousness or *asamprajnata-samadi*, means to “extricate pure consciousness from its embroilment with the internal workings of the mind as well as the external senses of the body” (p. xlvi). Through the processes of yoga and meditation, objects of awareness fade away, one is aware of one’s own source and is able to realize the *purusa*, or the soul and innermost conscious self.

The soul is then completely separate from the mind. The soul appears to go through the fluctuations of pain and discomfort and wavering states of mind and these states appear to be experienced by the self. Soul is completely pure and transcendent: “This is like the phenomenon of a lake appearing to have trees on it due to the reflection

of the trees on its bank” (Bryant, 2009, p. 25). The soul can also be compared to the moon “appearing to be altered and rippled when reflected on rippling water, but it is the water, not the moon, that constantly fluctuates due to the wind” (p. 25). The soul or self often misidentifies with these changing states of mind and experiences the emotions associated with them, when in reality “it is not affected, any more than the moon is affected by the ripples on its reflection in the water” (p. 26).

Alchemy and Individuation

Jung (1932/1976, 1961, 1978) discussed Kundalini and other forms of yoga and traditions of Eastern spiritual practice, as a powerful source of spirituality and personality development (Coward, 1978, 1985b; Ramaswami, 1989). Jung analyzed the Eastern and Western views of yoga and the ways that each aspires toward individuation: “The West is always seeking to uplift, but the East seeks a sinking or deepening. . . . The European seeks to raise himself above this world, while the Indian likes to turn back into the maternal depths of Nature” (Jung, 1943, p. 580). Similar to alchemical symbolism that provides an “anatomy of individuation” which is experienced in the body (Edinger, 1985, p. 2), Kundalini provides a physical, embodied sense of the individuation process that is concretized within the body through the experience of the opening of the chakras (Jung 1932/1976; Edinger, 1985).

Edinger (1985) wrote about the parallels between alchemy and psychotherapy. The alchemical images “concretize the experiences of transformation that one undergoes in psychotherapy” (p. 2). Alchemy adds to psychotherapy or any philosophy of increased consciousness, a tangible, experiential quality that is centered in a physical sensibility, which is grounded in the language and images of alchemy. It is a way to talk about an

elusive process that is sometimes difficult to bring language to. The processes of alchemy toward the opus are quite simple:

The purpose is to create a transcendent, miraculous substance, which is variously symbolized as the Philosophers' Stone, the Elixir of Life, or the universal medicine. The procedure is, first, to find the suitable material, the so-called *prima materia*, and then to subject it to a series of operations that will turn it into the Philosophers' Stone. (p. 9)

The *prima materia* is the “original stuff, the so-called first matter” (p. 10). It is the archetypal image of the source of the world, the cosmos, everything is created through this matter. Out of the *prima materia* comes the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water, which are also associated with the chakras in Kundalini yoga. Psychologically this is the creation of the ego from “undifferentiated unconscious” by the process of separating out the four functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition (p. 10). In alchemy, before a substance can be transformed it has to be reduced to its pure potential or original form, the *prima materia*. This parallels the process that takes place in psychotherapy where the “settled aspects of the personality that are rigid and static are reduced or led back to their original, undifferentiated condition as part of the process of psychic transformation” (p.10). This process is the work of psychotherapy that eventually allows for new possibilities in the personality to emerge. Finding the *prima materia* is challenging precisely because it is located in the shadow material that is perceived as most painful and shameful. The *prima materia* is infinite and without definite boundaries, which corresponds to the experience of the unconscious. It “exposes the ego to the infinite, the *apeiron*. It may evoke the terror of dissolution or the awe of eternity” (p. 12). One’s hesitation to engage with the *prima materia* is indicative of its volatile nature, and enormous and possibly terrifying transformative potential.

Edinger (1985) described the operations in alchemy as a set of chemical procedures to refine the prima materia and transform it. The process applies alchemical imagery as well as images from myth, folklore, and religion, all having their origins in the “archetypal psyche” (p. 14). The combination of the alchemical processes and the cluster of symbolic systems around them “illustrate almost the full range of experiences that constitute individuation” (p. 15). Jung (1967) commented on these processes regarding what can be given language to, and what should remain in symbolic form:

But we are apt to forget that in psychic matters we are dealing with processes of experience, that is, with transformations which should never be given hard and fast names if their living movement is not to petrify into something static.... for the symbol not only conveys a visualization of the process but- and this is perhaps just as important—it also brings a re-experiencing of it, of that twilight which we can learn to understand only through inoffensive empathy, but which too much clarity only dispels. (p. 162)

The alchemical process is not one of crystal clarity, but of mystery and as such demands a space and temenos, or vessel, to simmer and be what it will. The psychotherapeutic processes demand an attitude of reverence. Something is lost when too much is put into language and made explicit; the implicit meaning is sacrificed. Similarly, the mechanisms and process of Kundalini yoga cannot be fully explicated with language, but require one to experience the energy first hand and to be in the energetic space. As I navigate through this research process I am aware of the same tendency within myself, to question what should be laid-out in plain language and what should be left in the imaginal realm. As with the alchemical process and the meditative experience, what is put into language cannot be taken back and put back into its pure organic form. One cannot start over again with the same prima materia; timing is critical.

The path of inner alchemy parallels the path of the imaginative experience, which leads to the formation of the Self (Raff, 2000). Veronica Goodchild (2006) gave a psychological description of alchemy as “the projection of the unconscious onto matter, and its images and texts usefully studied to help elucidate the transformative difficulties encountered in the individuation process” (p. 64). The alchemical operations “represent an inner transformative experience that affects the ego as well as the unconscious” (Raff, 2000, p. 160). The process of individuation takes place through the active imagination. The alchemists themselves were not responsible for the outcome of the processes, but merely the maintaining of the fire. The processes were “autonomous.” The prima materia undergoes what it undergoes on its own accord and the processes unfold organically and according to their nature. Much time is spent patiently waiting, as is the case with much of the imaginal process. Similarly, in the individuation process, “there is no way for an individual to control or ‘make’ a process unfold. One cannot will the self to manifest. Working in the imaginal realm requires a willingness to follow, avoiding the temptation to control the processes” (p. 161). The process cannot be directed according to the ego or conscious desires. But a relationship is created, a sacred space or *temenos*, which is the vessel in which the alchemical processes take place. This space is the psychoid realm, the third imaginal realm that is in between the physical and spiritual world.

From the imaginal perspective, the alchemical process is synonymous with the inner work of transformation (Raff, 2000). The alchemical “theory of correspondences” also governs that of the inner alchemical process. According to this theory, “anything that happens on one plane of reality produces a corresponding effect on another level of reality” (p. 177). Raff gives the example of the metal “iron” in the physical world, which

corresponds to the specific planet Mars, and the planet “might correspond to an angel or archangel in the heavenly world” (p. 177). The substance corresponds to a planet, and to a “spiritual being” (p. 177). In the alchemical equation, “manipulating the substance would cause a corresponding change in the planetary and spiritual worlds” (p. 177). All worlds are “parallel and congruent,” and therefore “performing an operation on the physical level will have an impact on the spiritual level” (p. 178). And the reverse is true as well. From the perspective of inner alchemy, physical operations “symbolize the effort that the ego must expend to understand imaginative experiences and integrate them” (p. 178).

Part of being able to do this work involves grounding, and having a “balance between imaginal visionary experiences and outer world application” (Raff, 2000, p. 181). According to the above theory of correspondences, what one does in the physical world affects the imaginal visionary world and vice versa. This is important because the theory connects the seemingly different world of Kundalini yoga with that of the imaginal and depth psychology. In Kundalini yoga what one does physically in the body with different *mudras* or postures, *mantras* or sound currents has a direct effect on one’s internal world, as well as on the cosmos and spiritual world. Meditative techniques or technologies are designed not only to affect one’s own personal consciousness, but that of the group psyche, the universal consciousness or collective unconscious, and the celestial world or cosmos. Kundalini yoga takes up where Jung left off, which is at the level of quantum physics and the metaphysical. One cannot meditate and change only one’s own interior consciousness or psyche, without the psyche of others, the world psyche, and celestial forms changing as well.

Having an alchemical space of reverie allows for the expression of the “others,” or archetypal figures in the work. Jeffrey Raff (2000) discussed the importance of “inner figures” and distinguished between those psychic figures coming from within and without. The inner figures often “feel as if they were coming from within oneself. Typically one experiences them with eyes closed, attention directed inward” (p. 29). Occasionally, one experiences a figure that feels different, “as if it were coming from outside oneself, as if it existed in the external world . . . the felt sense is that one perceives a figure that does *not* come from within” (p. 29). This is the experience of the *psychoid*. Experiences of the psychoid realm are more likely to be “coupled with synchronistic experience, and their effects are often physical as well as psychological . . . less ‘imaginal’ and more ‘real,’ though the reality in which one is engaging is not that of the ordinary world” (p. 29). It is an in between world of the imaginal, that is not physical and not purely spiritual. Raff described two types of “inner figures.” The type one might commonly think of in analysis, “originates in the inner, unconscious world and personifies archetypes and complexes” (p. 31). The other is from the psychoid world, “an imaginal world that is real unto itself, and that transcends the psychic world of human beings,” where figures may “incarnate from this other reality in the psyche of the human being” (p. 31). The latter are a part of the psychoid realm. Jung’s relationship with Philemon is an example of the psyche’s relationship with a figure from the “other” or psychoid realm; this will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

Both Jung and Raff (2000) described symbols as originating in the unconscious, “a true symbol was never created by the ego, but emerged from the unconscious . . . from the imagination” (p. 82). As such, these symbols are “an expression of the imaginal,” and

are “closely related to the inner figures that appear in active imagination” (p. 82). Raff made the important connection with alchemical emblems that represent a spirit or “wisdom” in a visual way, and are the “best possible expression of inner truth” (p. 82). The emblems are not only a communication of wisdom but also are the “embodiment of energies needed by the alchemist”—when meditated on they can produce that specific energy and connect the alchemist to the alchemical work (p. 83). Planets and stars alike represent “celestial forces whose energies can be channeled” and are not often accessible to the ordinary world (p. 147). The *filius* is an “ally figure” which is a “divine entity of some kind” (p. 143). Through an “imaginative experience” of the filius one is able to connect to the spiritual world that exists outside of the individual self (p. 143). The filius is able to “bring the psyche into relationship with that which transcends the psyche” (p. 144). Through one’s interaction with the filius in imaginal work, one is able to “embody” those energies within the psyche, “creating a further transformation within the self and uniting it to the transpsychic realm” (p. 149). One must have an ally in this work; “the body, or incarnated human being, becomes a vessel for psychoidal energies through the imaginal encounter with psychoidal powers” (p. 149). The filius “integrates and harmonizes psychoidal forces” in the same way that “the manifest self has been able to integrate and harmonize the archetypes” (p. 151). This is all done through the processes of the imagination in the in-between psychoid realm. The parallels drawn between the depth psychological processes of integrating the archetype and the alchemical integration of psychoidal forces also parallels the integrative meditation process in Kundalini yoga. The filius or ally figure, is the guru in Kundalini, the one who is the link in the “Golden Chain of teachers” passed down to each generation dating back to the first Sikh guru,

Guru Nanak (Bhajan, 2003, p. 54). When one tunes in with the *Adi Mantra* in a Kundalini yoga class, there is a shift of consciousness and one has become part of that Golden Chain of teachers and is being led by Guru Ram Das and the other Sikh gurus. The *Adi Mantra* is the connection or link, similar to the imaginal or psychoid realm, it is the place where the present interacts with the teachings and a space opens up to the infinite. In alchemical terms, this is the *Aurea Catena* or Golden Homeric chain in alchemy that connects all the way back to *Hermes Trismegistos*, which “links heaven and earth” (Jung, 1961, p. 189). This is the stage in the process where the *prima materia* is now being placed in the alchemical vessel; the transformation has begun. Similarly, once the vessel has been sealed, the alchemist cannot start over and has little control over what is happening inside except to apply heat. Similarly, in Kundalini, one has very little control over the meditative process except focus and concentration; what happens is out of one’s personal control. One is protected by the link to the Gurus, as one is with the *filius* or guide, and the collaborative process moves forward toward individuation.

The psychoid and psyche can only be integrated to a limited way. Raff (2000) wrote that the “manifest self may unite with the psychoidal self, but it may not assimilate it” (p. 153). The psychoidal forces are “extremely powerful,” and may have “dramatic effects” when introduced to the psyche (p. 153). He warns that “because of their powerful nature, their introduction in the individual may be extremely dangerous” (p. 153). However, one can mitigate these effects through the use of an “inner figure” able to take on this energy, lessening the effects on the individual psyche. Without the intermediate figure, there are dangers of “inflation or overwhelm”:

But if the ally, which previously existed in the psychoid, dies to its original form and is reborn within the psyche, union between the human and the psychoid world is safely effected. The ally does not lose its independence and remains in essence psychoidal, but it resides within the human soul. (pp. 155-156)

In such a way one is able to incorporate the imaginal world into the world of the psyche such that the celestial elements are safely assimilated. This is the third *coniunctio* in alchemy, in which imaginal experiences connect the individual not only to “the inner world of the psyche,” but to “other worlds and other realities” in a safe and transformative way (p. 157).

In the third *coniunctio*, the individual has reached an “ineffable quality of being,” similar to the “highest state of any spiritual tradition” (Raff, 2000, p. 159). Jung (1956/1963) described this experience as

the ineffable mystery of the *unio mystica*, or *tao*, or the content of *Samadhi*, or the experience of *satori* in Zen, which would bring us to the realm of the ineffable and of extreme subjectivity where all the criteria of reason fail. (p. 540)

In Kundalini yoga, this would be the highest level of meditative and spiritual attainment; all of the chakras through the ninth chakra opening and rising of the Kundalini energy through the crown chakra. This is the experience of bliss and oneness described in numerous yogic and spiritual traditions as the goal of human experience. Jung writes about this *coniunctio* as a “synthesis of the conscious with unconscious” where the individual had produced the *caelum* or “symbolic prefiguration of the self . . . balsam and elixir of life . . . living stone . . . *anima mundi*” (p. 539). Jung described this third realm between the physical and psychical as the intersection between “microphysics and depth-psychology . . . in essence it is transcendental” (p. 538). One is able to know about the nature of the third *coniunctio* only “indirectly from the symbolism” (p. 539). This is where Jung and depth psychology stop short of the fullness of the third *coniunctio*. He

described the Christian struggle of his time to unite the “*unio mentalis* with the body” (p. 542) and described the body as “de-souled,” because the soul was “drawn up by the spirit to the lofty regions of abstraction” (p. 541). Jung stops with the symbolic and does not move into an embodied coniunctio. In closing *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung suggested that it would be “wiser not to drag the supreme metaphysical factor into our calculations,” but to make “an unknown psychic or perhaps psychoid factor in the human realm responsible for inspirations and suchlike happenings” (pp. 550-551). The choice to limit the third coniunctio to the psychoid realm, he described as “better and less controversial . . . it presents a world of relatively autonomous ‘images’” (p. 551). Jung stops short of the final step beyond the individuation process, the true third coniunctio that is an embodied experience of the divine, or pure consciousness. This is where depth psychology leaves off and Kundalini yoga and meditation continue as a necessary “technology of awareness” that moves beyond the depth psychological notion of individuation. Depth psychology ends in the realm of symbolic unity; the “goal consisted in a symbol” (p. 554), whereas Kundalini moves beyond the symbols to a personal, embodied experience of pure consciousness.

Despite Jung’s description of the limitations of the third coniunctio in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, his personal experiences and visions in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and *The Red Book* seem to suggest a personal experience going beyond his description of possibilities. Jung described his near-death experience of illness, “as though I were floating in space, as though I were safe in the womb of the universe—in a tremendous void, but filled with the highest possible feeling of happiness” (Jung, 1961, pp. 293). He went on to write, “I would never have imagined that any such experience was possible”

(p. 295). Jung's experiences and the figures and images that appeared to him were "not a product of imagination," but were "utterly real; there was nothing subjective about them" (p. 295). The experience for Jung was "ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past, and future are one" (p. 295). It was the experience of "a sum, an iridescent whole, containing all at once expectation of a beginning, surprise at what is now happening, and satisfaction or disappointment with the result of what has happened" (p. 296). There was the "*pneuma* of inexpressible sanctity in the room, whose manifestation was the *mysterium coniunctionis*" (p. 295). Jung described this experience and the "objectivity" with which he witnessed it as signifying "part of a completed individuation" (p. 296).

Need for Research on Topic in Clinical Psychology

There remains much space for research into the relationship between Kundalini yoga and Jungian depth psychology. Jung's often limiting perspective on the benefits of Eastern psychology and yogic philosophy has no doubt deterred many from further investigation on into the topic over the years. To look at Kundalini yoga and meditation merely for its symbol value as a representation of parts of the psyche and not to experience the Kundalini energy in an embodied physical way is a disservice to soul, a huge loss of psychic potential, and a loss of an incredibly invaluable tool in the process of individuation. Much remains to be uncovered and re-membered at the cross-section of Kundalini yogic philosophies and depth psychology as methods of increasing consciousness, openings into the transcendent and psychoid realms, and as part of the transformational processes of the *prima materia* into the goal of the *opus*.

We have come to know much about Jung's perspective of Eastern philosophy, specifically Indian culture, chakras, Kundalini yoga, and meditation. Much has been

written about the benefits of yoga and meditation, which extend far beyond Jung's recommendation of yoga as a symbolic representation of various aspects of the unconscious, collective unconscious, and the psyche. There remains work to be done as to the specific nature of the relationship between Kundalini yoga and meditation, and depth psychology, which would produce a way forward, as a means of reaching individuation, or in yogic terms, an increased awareness and consciousness.

As the above literature review has shown, Jung's depth psychology was the beginning of a long and important journey inward, to finding the prima materia, and movement toward individuation. Kundalini yoga and meditation is a possible means of increasing awareness and bridging the gap between the said and un-said, as a means of moving forward from where depth psychology left off. This research comes out of that intersection, in the depths of the psyche, and physically embodied at the base of the spine where the Kundalini serpent lies dormant. The possibility of awakening that Jung alluded to and that Kundalini yoga aspires to is the gap in the research. Any system is forever incomplete, and my hope is to expand what is already known and to make a space for a new way of relating within that psychoid, third reality that creates the possibility of moving forward, moving the Kundalini upward in profound and subtle ways.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The proposed dissertation will explore the relationship between Kundalini yoga and the depth psychology of C. G. Jung. The dissertation will make connections between Kundalini yoga, as experienced by traditional and contemporary Indian gurus and masters, and depth psychology's perspective of Kundalini yoga as a part of Western psychology. Further, I will analyze aspects of Kundalini and look at each quality or

characteristic of the yoga individually, in comparison to Jung's use of alchemical symbolism. Through exploring the origins and meaning of Kundalini mantras, meditation, chakras, bodies, rituals, kriyas, yatras, and other aspects of the sacred practice, I hope to further expand the topic and make connection between Kundalini philosophy and Jung's depth psychology. I will explore Kundalini yoga and meditation as a means of elevating consciousness and moving towards a higher awareness. I will show how Kundalini yoga is a necessary further elaboration of depth psychology that goes beyond Jung's largely symbolic notion of individuation, to an experience of the Divine and pure Consciousness.

Definition of Terms

A working definition of Kundalini is of central importance to this dissertation process. Jung discussed Kundalini as the *devi* or the divine; it is the "supra personal, the non-ego, the totality of the psyche through which alone we can attain the higher cakras in a cosmic or metaphysical sense" (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 68). Its purpose is to "kindle the light of the gods" (p. 68) within the individual. In the Hindu Tantric tradition of India:

The feminine cosmic energy of the kundalini lies asleep like a coiled serpent at the base of the spine. Awakened in processes of yogic meditation, this serpent, Shakti, rises through the subtle body, the two nerve currents flowing on either side of the spinal cord, passes through and opens the energy centers, or chakras, to unite in the crown with Shiva in ecstasy and transcendence. (Ronnberg, 2010, p. 196)

According to Jung, Kundalini is useful for the Westerner as a way to describe one's experience with the unconscious and to initiate the suprapersonal processes within the individual (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 70). Jung (1968/1974) wrote on the significance of the serpent image, "Probably the most significant development of serpent symbolism as regards renewal of personality is to be found in Kundalini yoga" (p. 218). Yogi Bhajan

(2003) brought Kundalini yoga and meditation to the West in 1969. He was born Harbhajan Singh Puri August 26, 1929 in the village of Kot Harkarn, which was India at the time and is now part of Pakistan (p. 59). He studied Kundalini yoga, Tantric Yoga, and gong meditation under Sant Hazara Singh, master of Kundalini yoga and the “Mahan Tantric of that time” (p. 59). Yogi Bhajan defined Kundalini as “the whole energy of the cosmos in the individual and beyond the individual. It is the energy of consciousness The Kundalini is the creative potential of the human being” (p. 176). Kundalini is “the biological mechanism of both individual enlightenment and evolution of the species toward higher consciousness . . . a potential force that once awakened, can produce a variety of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual effects” (Khalsa, 2009b, p. 174). It is a normally dormant “mechanism, or organizing principle, that could be activated or aroused under certain conditions to strengthen or purify an individual’s prana” (p. 174), which is the energy life force in every being.

Yoga means union; it implies a relationship between two or more things united (Bhajan, 2003). However, yoga as defined by Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* can have quite a different and ambiguous meaning. Bryant (2009) wrote about a variety of meanings of yoga, comparing it to *samadhi*, or the “stages of mental concentration,” or meaning “to contemplate” and he acknowledged the English translation “to yoke” or join together (p. 5). In the context of the Yoga Sutras however, “the goal of *yoga* is not to join, but the opposite: to unjoin, that is, to disconnect *purusa* from *prakrti*” (p. 5). The translation of “to yoke” would entail “yoking the mind on an object of concentration without deviation” (p. 5). Yogi Bhajan (2003) described yoga as the soul united with Being or God; “These pathways toward union and relationship are the contours of yoga practices” (p. 34). Jung

defined yoga more generally than one might think of yoga today. Jung used the term *yoga* to refer to a variety of Eastern traditions, “as diverse as Hinduism, Indian Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism and Chinese Taoism” (Coward, 1983, p. 3). He did not mean for yoga to refer to a narrow, technical definition. Jung applies yoga to psychology and philosophy as well. He broadly defined yoga as an Eastern method of release and self-realization (Coward, 1985a). Yogi Bhajan discussed yoga as having originated many thousands of years ago as a means of “stimulating and regulating the human energy that is the very essence of consciousness” (2003, p. 32). Yoga is holistic and is meant to permeate “every level of human existence” (p. 32), through mantra, meditation, breath control, and movement. Over the years it became diluted, and people began to only practice the physical through postures, or the mental through meditation. This led to the breakdown into the 22 different forms of yoga that are practiced today (Bhajan, 2003).

The development of a working definition of meditation is critical for this dissertation. Researchers tentatively found three criteria common to various forms of meditation, which included “the use of a defined technique, logic relaxation, and a self-induced state/mode” (Bond et al., 2009, p. 135). However, any such definition may be artificially limiting an intrinsically complex phenomenon (Andreson, 2000). Yogi Bhajan (2003) described meditation as a way of cleansing the mind and allowing the subconscious to be emptied. Meditation uses the “inherent self-sensory system, the mind, and the body. Through the use of refined patterns, meditation creates a communication between you and your mind, and between your mind and your body” (p. 126). It is “the process of controlling and transcending the waves of the wind, allowing the flow of

radiance from the soul” (p. 126). Meditation is “a process of deep concentration or merger into an object or a state of consciousness. Meditation “releases reactions and unconscious habits and builds the spontaneous and intuitive link to awareness itself” (Bhajan, 1998, p. 196). Meditation can be done silently, with the use of a breath pattern or *pranayam*, with or without the use of a mantra, which can be said silently or out loud, or with the use of mental visualization. Meditation is a process that “confronts the flow of thoughts and feelings and uses many techniques to create balance or change in the meridians, chakras, nerves and glands” (Khalsa, G. S., 2005, p. 327). Further specifics on Kundalini meditations will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.

The term *chakra* is a Sanskrit word meaning “wheel” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969, p. 177; Bhajan, 2003). The chakras are applied to the “hidden meeting points of the *nadis* or channels of the ‘subtle’ body, along which, according to Hindu physiology, vital energy flows” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969, p. 177). These channels, Chevalier and Gheerbrant explain, run up and down the spinal column from the base of the spine to the top of the head and are the pathway of Kundalini energy. Jung discussed the term *chakra* as coming from the Greek word *symbolleîn*, meaning to throw together (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 60). Each chakra is essentially things thrown or brought together to make a whole or totality (Shamdasani, 1996). The chakras are highly complex psychic facts that represent a “real effort to give a symbolic theory of the psyche” (Shamdasani, 1996, p.61). The symbol of the chakra “affords us a standpoint that extends beyond the conscious. . . . They are intuitions about the psyche. . . . They symbolize the psyche from a cosmic standpoint” (p. 67). The chakras are symbols for human levels of consciousness (p. 85). There are different archetypal energies associated with each chakra, as well as

various “colors, sounds, numbers elements, deities and animal entities” (Ronnberg, 2010, p. 780) that each have a symbolic meaning. It is the literal embodiment of “the potential of bringing together heaven and earth within ourselves” (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 780). Yogi Bhajan (2003) described the chakras as energy centers or vortices in the body that exist as dynamic energies. Each chakra is physically located in the body and includes specific organs and glands. For example, the third chakra is located at the navel point or solar plexus, and includes the navel plexus, liver, gall bladder, spleen, digestive organs, pancreas, and adrenals (Bhajan, 2003). By understanding the way that energy moves through the chakras, Yogi Bhajan explained, one can better understand the “vast and complex interplay of a multi-leveled existence” (p. 184). Scholars have discussed anywhere from five to nine chakras in total. Hindu Tantrism has six, Tibetan Tantric Buddhism has five located at the perineum, navel, heart, throat, and brain (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969, p. 177). Both Jung and Yogi Bhajan discussed eight chakras; Yogi Bhajan occasionally alluded to a ninth chakra. Yogi Bhajan (2003) elaborated that the first five chakras are associated with the five *tattvas* or five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether and the qualities associated with those elements; the upper three chakras correspond with the more subtle realms and not with the elements. The chakras will be further explicated and an in-depth analysis of each chakra as it relates to different psychological states will be given in a later chapter.

White Tantric is a specific type of Kundalini yoga. *Tantra* means to weave (Bhajan, 2003, p. 33). It is a weaving of consciousness, a union of male and female polarities, with infinity. Through the practice of White Tantric yoga, “subconscious and mental blocks to living one’s potential are cleared” through the use of a “Z” energy

which flows diagonally (p. 33). White Tantric yoga is done in pairs or couples under the direct supervision of the Mahan Tantric, and an energy is generated through “maintaining a position, mantra, concentration, and communication between the individuals and the group” (p. 33). There are other types of Tantric yoga, such as Black Tantric, which involves mind control and manipulation, and Red Tantric involves sexual practices; both of these are not a part of the White Tantric tradition (p. 33).

Jung (1944/1953) described the unconscious as containing “not only repressed contents, but all psychic material that lies below the threshold of consciousness” (p. 127). The unconscious also contains “the material that has *not yet* reached the threshold of consciousness (p. 128). The unconscious is “a collective psychic disposition, creative in character” (1958/1978, p. 85); it has taken thousands of years to form and is comprised of archetypes, “crystallized” over time (1944/1953, p. 95). Jung (1944/1953) wrote that it is “a source of energy and insight in the depth of the human psyche which has operated in and through man from the earliest periods of which we have records” (p. v).

Synchronicity was greatly discussed by Jung and is a concept that he came up with from his interactions with the East (Jung, 1960/1971). Jung described the relationship between synchronistic events and the notion of time:

It seems as though time, far from being an abstraction, is a concrete continuum which possesses qualities or basic conditions capable of manifesting themselves simultaneously in different places by means of an acausal parallelism, such as we find, for instance, in the simultaneous occurrence of identical thoughts, symbols, or psychic states. (Jung, p. 56)

The term *synchronicity* originally comes from the Hindu word *rta*, which is a kind of “principle or path by which the libido or psychic energy of the unconscious would be controlled according to a predetermined cosmic pattern. . . it stresses the acausal

simultaneity of events” (Coward, 1985a, p. 42). Astrology is a concrete example of synchronicity on the cosmic level. Stein (1998) gave an example of an archetypal synchronicity. Archetypes are “*transgressive*” meaning that they are “not limited to the psychic realm . . . they can emerge into consciousness either from within the psychic matrix or from the world about us or both at once. When both happen at the same time, it is called synchronistic” (p. 201).

Jung (1944/1953) defined archetypes as “deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity” (p. 69). They are image founded on a “psychoid base, that is, upon an only partially psychic and possibly altogether different form of being” (1961, p. 351). Jung clearly stated that “insofar as the archetypes act upon me, they are real and actual to me, even though I do not know what their real nature is” (p. 352). An archetype is not a concept or idea, but a reality, not in the sense of physical, but all the same, real and experienced as an energetic charge. It is part of the collective unconscious, “pre-existent to consciousness... the collective component of perception” (p. 347). An archetype is a priori structure that precedes the personal psyche, and is impersonal and collective in nature (p. 161). Archetypes can be metaphorical, “as intuitive concepts for physical phenomena” (1953, p. 95). Jung goes on to give the example of “*aether*” which is both “the primordial breath or soul-substance” and “energy, or magical power,” both concepts and intuitive ideas that are widely known (p. 95). Another example would be the shadow archetype, “the dangerous aspect of the unrecognized dark half of the personality” (p. 96). Stein (1998) described the archetype of the self through the various stages of individuation, which “appear in the developmental sequence from birth to old

age—the divine infant, the hero, the puer and puella, the king and queen, the crone and the wise old man” (p. 194).

According to Kundalini philosophy the soul is one of ten “bodies.” Most people identify only with the physical body, but in Kundalini yogic technology there are ten bodies: “the physical body, three mental bodies, and six energy bodies” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 200). These bodies are aspects or capacities of the psyche. The soul is the first body and is one of the six energy bodies; it is associated with Guru Nanak, one of the ten Sikh gurus. The Soul is associated with humility, creativity, and heart over mind. When the soul body is strong “you live by your heart instead of your head, your creativity flows in a simple, pure way” (p. 201). The soul body is closely associated with the ninth body, the subtle body. It is believed that the soul body and subtle body leave the physical body, and the rest of the ten bodies at death. “When the soul desires to leave the Physical Body, the Physical Body’s connection with the Pranic Body totally breaks, and the Soul leaves with the Subtle Body. That means your identity is gone. Your Physical Body remains, but “you” are gone. We call it “death” (Bhajan, 2003). The rest of the “bodies” will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters. The Soul Body and Subtle Body are of particular importance to define because Jung often referred to and discussed them.

Jung (1961) described the soul as having an “intensely historical character” (p. 235): “Our souls as well as our bodies are composed of individual elements which were all already present in the ranks of our ancestors. The ‘newness’ in the individual psyche is an endlessly carried recombination of age-old components” (p. 235). Jung talked about the loss of soul in his own life, “If, therefore, one has a fantasy of the soul vanishing, this means that it has withdrawn into the unconscious or into the land of the dead” (p. 191).

The “dead” took on significance for Jung; he took on the personal responsibility to give voice to the “Unanswered, Unresolved, and Unredeemed” (p. 191). Jung’s felt responsibility was to the unconscious, the inner world that spoke through the “dead” in dreams and fantasies. Jung (1960/1971) made a distinction between soul and psyche. By psyche he meant “the totality of all psychic process, conscious as well as unconscious” (p. 463). He differentiated between the two, defining soul as “a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a ‘personality’” (p. 463). The psyche acts autonomously, the activity Jung described as “fantasy” (p. 52). The psyche is a creative expression where “psychological opposites” come together, “subject and object, introversion and extraversion” (p. 52). Fantasy also implies that the contents of the psyche come from the unconscious, similar to a dream, “the latter of course is involuntary and strange in a much higher degree” (p. 53).

Jung (1960/1971) defined individuation as “a process of *differentiation*, having for its goal the development of the individual personality” (p. 448). Jung (1944/1953, 1961, 1960/1971) and others (Goodchild, 2006; Jacobi, 1965; Raff, 2000; Stein, 1998) described the process of individuation at great length, which I will discuss here in some detail, as well as more fully in later chapters. Individuation does not follow a direct path of “development and maturation,” but follows a path consisting of “progress and regress, flux and stagnation in alternating sequence” (Jacobi, 1965, p. 34). Jacobi describes the process of individuation as a “spiral, the same problems and motifs occurring again and again on different levels” (p. 34). Jung (1961) wrote that “the goal of psychic development is the self. There is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation of the self. Uniform development exists, at most, only at the beginning; later, everything

points toward the center” (p. 196). The self, for Jung is “transcendent . . . it is not defined by or contained within the psychic realm but rather lies beyond it and, in an important sense, defines it” (Stein, 1998, p. 152). Within the self, “subject and object, ego and other are joined in a common field of structure and energy” (p. 152). It is “paradoxically *not* oneself. It is more than one’s subjectivity, and its essence lies beyond the subjective realm” (p. 152). Individuation is “an extension of the sphere of consciousness, an enriching of conscious psychological life” (Jung, 1960/1971, p. 450). It is similar to the transcendent function, in that the “function creates individual lines of development which could never be reached by keeping to the path prescribed by collective norms” (p. 449). However, “the educational aim of adaptation to the necessary minimum of collective norms must first be attained” before one can pursue the ultimate goal of individuation in analysis (p. 449). Because individuation is a separation from the collective, one must first be able to function within the collective. Individuation is an “extension of the sphere of consciousness, an enriching of conscious psychological life” (p. 450). Jung’s definition of individuation is comparable to the ultimate goal of Kundalini yoga and meditation that seeks to increase consciousness and self-awareness. In Kundalini yoga, one’s consciousness and awareness are increased through a process of using the sound currents of the mantras in sadhana, or daily meditation practice, and through the yogic asanas, or postures. The process of Jung’s concept of individuation and the process of Kundalini sadhana both create movement in the direction of increasing awareness of one’s external and internal relatedness. There is a new awareness of oneself as well as one’s surrounding external relationships and ways of being related.

Stein (1998) described the five stages of consciousness according to Jung. The first stage is characterized as “*participation mystique*,” which refers to “an identification between an individual’s consciousness and the surrounding world, without awareness that one is in this state” (p. 179). In that state “consciousness and the object with which one is identified are mysteriously the same thing” (p. 179). One is one’s perception. It is based on “identification, introjection, and projection . . . an intermingling of inner and outer contents” (p. 179). At the beginning there is an “unconscious wholeness,” whereas, at the end of the individuation process, “the sense of wholeness is conscious” (p. 180). As one enters the second stage of consciousness the “projections become more localized,” and some “self/other distinctions begin to appear in consciousness” (p. 180). The differentiation between “self and other and between inner and outer increases and sharpens,” and projections “become more localized, focusing on a few objects rather than on the whole wide world” (p. 180). This stage can continue throughout one’s lifetime, and one can “continue to project positive and negative features of the psyche massively into the world around and to respond to the psyche’s images and powers as though they were located in external objects and persons” (p. 181). One can also develop within this stage the capacity for “abstraction relatively free of concretism—one becomes aware that specific projection carriers are not identical with the projections they carry” (p. 181). The projected psychic content becomes “abstract, and they now manifest as symbols and ideologies” (p. 181). In the third stage, there are still projections, of unconscious material; however, “these projections are invested not so much in persons and things but in principles and symbols and teachings” (p. 182). The projections are still considered “real” in an “almost concrete sense” (p. 183). For example, “God really does exist somewhere.

He or She is a distinct personality. . . . As long as one believes that an actual God will punish or reward one in the afterlife, this indicates a Stage 3 level of consciousness” (p. 183). The projection has been transferred “from the human parent to a more abstract, mythological figure” (p. 183). The fourth stage “represents the radical extinction of projections,” where it “*seems* as if psychic projections have disappeared altogether,” however this may be a “false assumption” (p. 183). This initially leads to what Jung called an “empty center,” which leads man to search for his soul (p. 183). The “God within” is replaced by “utilitarian and pragmatic values” (p. 183). However, “in actuality the ego itself has become invested with the contents previously projected out onto other and objects and abstractions” (p. 183). The ego becomes inflated and is now “the sole arbiter of right and wrong, true and false, beautiful and ugly. There is no authority outside of the ego that exceeds it” (p. 184). Meaning is “created by the ego” alone (p. 184). Jung believed this stage to be “extremely dangerous” where the inflated ego is “unable to adapt very well to the environment and so is liable to make catastrophic errors in judgment” (p. 184). Here the ego is “easily led to indulge in the shadow’s lust for power and its wishes to gain total control of the world. This was Nietzsche’s Superman” (p. 184). The person in stage four is “no longer controlled by societal conventions related either to people or values. Consequently the ego can consider unlimited possibilities of action” (p. 184). These first four stages of consciousness relate to “ego development and the first half of life” (p. 185). Jung’s “postmodern” fifth stage takes place in the second half of life and is the “re-unification of conscious and unconscious” (p. 185). Through the transcendent function and a “unifying symbol” a union becomes possible between the conscious and unconscious (p. 185). “The psyche becomes unified but, unlike in Stage 1, the parts

remain differentiated and contained within consciousness” (p. 185). One’s relationship to the psyche is a central issue in this stage. Jung techniques of active imagination and dream interpretation “lend themselves to interacting with the psyche directly and forming a conscious relationship with it “ (p. 186). In this stage one is able to “approach the archetypal images and to relate to them consciously and creatively” (p. 186). Here, “the ego and the unconscious become joined through a symbol” (p. 186). In the majority of Jung’s writings, this is where the individuation process stopped. However, he did hint at a sixth or seventh stage in various works, such as his Kundalini Yoga Seminar in 1932. The sixth stage “could be seen as a state of consciousness that recognizes the unity of psyche and the material world” (p. 187). This is tentatively stated by Jung, as one is now moving into “physics, cosmology and metaphysics,” areas in which Jung “did not feel intellectually qualified and competent” (p. 187). Potential further stages of development will be discussed in later chapters.

The goal of individuation, according to Jung (1944/1953) is “becoming one’s own self” (p. 173), which is “an organic part of a long and continuous series of transformations which have as their goal the attainment of the mid-point of the personality” (p. 221). The self is “the completest expression of the fateful combination we call individuality, the full flowering not only of the single individual, but of the group, in which each adds his portion to the whole” (p. 240). The process of individuation begins with divesting the self of “the false wrappings of the persona,” and from the “suggestive power of primordial images,” and from the influences of the collective unconscious (p. 174). As one is increasingly more conscious of themselves “through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is

superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished” (p. 178). The integration of the personal and collective shadow is a significant part of the individuation process. In order for the shadow to become integrated it must be “grasped not merely intellectually but understood according to its feeling value” (Jacobi, 1965, p. 40). The new consciousness that eventually develops is no longer purely governed by the desires of the ego; one is now aware of the wider world and is more able to interact freely. Jung (1944/1953) wrote that as one moves toward individuation it is essential for him to distinguish between “what he is and how he appears to himself and to others,” or what would be called his *persona* (p. 195). In addition he becomes more “conscious of his invisible system of relations to the unconscious, and especially of the anima, so as to be able to distinguish himself from her” (p. 195). By making unconscious processes more conscious and becoming familiar with one’s own anima or animus, they are divested of their power and integrated consciously (p. 210). The processes of individuation parallel the symbolic processes of alchemical transformation. Through the transcendent function, there is a “transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components, of the differentiated with the inferior functions, of the conscious with the unconscious” (p. 220). Once there has been an integration of the conscious to the unconscious, and one has sufficiently incorporated the anima/animus and complexes, one has arrived at the stage of the “mana-personality” (p. 227). The mana-personality is a “being full of some occult and bewitching quality (*mana*), endowed with magical knowledge and power,” namely a “naïve projection of an unconscious self-knowledge” (p. 227). Through the eventual dissolution of the mana-personality and

assimilation of its contents, one is able to find the “mid-point” of the personality, the “centre of the *self*,” or the “God within” (p. 238).

Chapter 3 **Research Methodology: Approach, Process, Method**

This dissertation will use a hermeneutic research method which will follow Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1976) notion of a "fusion of horizons" (p. xix), to examine traditional and contemporary Indian texts on Kundalini yoga, which will be in dialogue with the depth psychological and alchemical texts of C. G. Jung. The hermeneutic method will follow the methodologies of Richard E. Palmer (1969) and Martin J. Packer and Richard B. Addison (1989). I will use an alchemical hermeneutic method and imaginal approach to complement and add personal meaning and significance to the hermeneutic method. The alchemical hermeneutic method will follow the five steps and ten characteristics as outlined by Robert D. Romanyshyn (2007).

The alchemical hermeneutic method will allow a deepening of the dialogue between Kundalini yoga and Western analytical psychology. I will be recording and analyzing my own experience as the "site" in which the theoretical research is concretely embodied. Through the transference dialogues and my own complex wounds that first drew me into the work, the unfinished business of the work will be addressed and transformed (Romanyshyn, 2007). The alchemical hermeneutic research will be taken from my personal experiences and time spent in India on yatra. A yatra is a spiritual and physical journey that allows one to take themselves completely out of their ordinary life, to connect with the people and places of an ancient lineage and history. The purpose of a yatra is to find inspiration and to deeply connect to the Divine (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Khalsa, 2009b). The alchemical hermeneutic approach to this research will include a collection of experiences, journal writings, dreams, synchronicities, transference

dialogues, meditations, kriyas, mantras, and my personal experiences traveling through India.

The hermeneutic task is a historical one that spans the horizons of the present with that of the textual constructs of the past. To do this one has to ask, “what the text did not or could not say” (Palmer, 1969, p. 237). There can then be a “creative bridging of the tension between the horizon of the text and that of the interpreter” (p. 237). This requires an understanding of “the nature of historical encounter, for hermeneutical experience is historical encounter” (p. 237).

Approach to Research

The root meaning of the word *hermeneutics* comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which translates as “to interpret” and from the noun *hermeneis*, “interpretation” (Palmer, 1969, p. 12). The Greek word refers to the “wing-footed messenger-god Hermes” (p. 13). Hermes is associated with “the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp” (p. 13). Hermes is credited as having created writing and language as a means of communicating meaning to others. Martin Packer and Richard Addison (1989) described Hermes as the “god of travel, commerce, invention, eloquence, cunning, and thievery” with a reputation for being a “precocious trickster” (p. 1). He brings “messages of advice, warning, and instruction to humans from the gods” (p. 1); hence the term *hermeneutics* to signify an act of interpreting. Martin Heidegger discussed the relationship between Hermes and philosophy; Hermes “brings the message of destiny; *hermeneuein* is that laying-open of something which brings a message, insofar as what is being exposed can become message. Such ‘laying-open’ becomes a ‘laying-out’ explaining of that which

was already said through the poets” (p. 13). The original meaning of the word *hermeneutics* is a process of “bringing to understanding” (p. 13).

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1976) described the hermeneutic process as having to do with “bridging the gap between the familiar world in which we stand and the strange meaning that resists assimilation into the horizons of our world” (p. xii). Gadamer further explained that “such horizons constitute the interpreter’s own immediate participation in traditions that are not themselves the object of understanding but the condition of its occurrence” (p. xii), which creates the reflexive dimension of understanding. The meaning must be “recovered by a disciplined reconstruction of the historical situation or life-context in which it originated” (p. xiii). The past is a vital part of any hermeneutic undertaking; the past “defines the ground the interpreter himself occupies when he understands” (p. xv). In hermeneutics there is a translation from past to present. One is not able to take an objective stance outside of their personal historicity; one is always historically situated and perceiving from that limited vantage point. Gadamer aimed to “illuminate the human context within which scientific understanding occurs and to account for the necessity for repeated attempts at critical understanding” (p. xviii). Acknowledging one’s conscious prejudices and “preunderstanding” gives one a wider vantage point from which to interpret, but one is never able to see or perceive the entire view. Gadamer recognized that the interpreter is able to see “something—but not everything, for what I have called the consciousness of effective history is inescapably more being than consciousness, and being is never fully manifest” (p. xviii). For whatever is said or uncovered through the hermeneutic process, there remains as much if not more that is yet unsaid. One cannot say something without leaving out something,

and this must be acknowledged in the work itself, as the work for future researchers. The task of this sort of hermeneutics is ontological rather than methodological in nature. In philosophical hermeneutics the question the researcher asks is not “what we do or what we should do, but what happens beyond our willing and doing” (p. xi). The researcher seeks to “throw light on the fundamental conditions that underlie the phenomenon of understanding in all its modes, scientific and nonscientific alike, and that constitute understanding as an event over which the interpreting subject does not ultimately preside” (p. xi). A relationship of “intersubjectivity” is created through this process of relating to the work (p. xii).

Hermeneutics has evolved and transformed over time and moved beyond its traditional Biblical and philosophical foundations. Drawing on the work of Paul Ricoeur, Palmer (1969) described an obvious example of hermeneutics as a “recovery of meaning” in analysis, specifically in working with dreams (p. 43). All of the hermeneutical pieces are present in analysis; “the dream is the text, a text filled with symbolic images”; the analyst “uses an interpretive system to render an exegesis that brings to surface the hidden meaning” (p. 43). Hermeneutics is the interpretation of “manifest content and meaning to latent or hidden meaning”; hence, the objects of interpretation are “text in the very broadest sense,” such as “symbols in a dream” or “myths and symbols of society or literature” (p. 43).

Socrates was one of the first to use dialectical questioning to peel back the layers of a text to uncover new meaning. There is a circling around the text, similar to a coil or spiral, leading ever closer to the center and to one of possibly many truths. Dialectical questioning can be compared to the coil of the Kundalini serpent, or to the spiraling

around the center in alchemical hermeneutics. There is a process of circling around the yet undiscovered center, which is the prima materia, or the alchemical gold. The attitude is one of “openness to what is being ‘said’ in a literary text. In dialogue with the text, the questioning and being placed in question must go both ways” (Palmer, 1969, p. 234). Methodologically, this hermeneutical process will resemble more closely that of theological and juridical theory of interpretation, as both are “obliged to see understanding not simply as an antiquarian effort to enter another world for its own sake but as an effort to bridge the distance between the text and the present situation” (p. 236). One is not “appropriating” another morsel of knowledge, but “being appropriated himself by the governing claim of the text” (p. 236). There is a tension between the past and the present moment of interpretation. “The creative bridging of the tension between the horizon of the text and that of the interpreter is the task of interpretation, the basic importance of an authentic historical consciousness” (p. 237).

Martin Buber’s I-Thou relationship is created through the hermeneutic interpretive process (Palmer, 1969). The texts themselves and the interpretive work that comes out of it is not “an it that is at my disposal but a thou who addresses me” (p. 227). There is a relationship that is created and a “wrong relationship will produce a distorted and incomplete meaning” (p. 227). In this relationship, there is much less reliance on method, which “runs the risk of closing to the interpreter the possibility of being led by the work itself” (p. 227). There is an openness on the part of the researcher to truly hearing what the work has to say and giving the work the time and a space to say it and be heard.

However much is brought to light, there remains an unconscious portion below the surface. Romanyshyn (2007) discussed the nature of the relationship of the unconscious in the alchemical hermeneutic method. The “hermeneutic spiral” is an extension of the hermeneutic circle of traditional hermeneutics. What the spiral adds to the work is a deepening process that re-connects the work by “making a place for those other subtle unconscious connections between a researcher and his or her work” (p. 222). Then the researcher “follows the arc of the hermeneutic circle, but in such a way that the engagement of the two takes into account the unconscious aspects of the researcher and the work” (p. 222). The research is then able to attune to “the gap between what is said and what is always left unsaid, the gap between conscious and unconscious, which is bridged by the symbol as the expression of the transcendent function” (p. 220). The transference field that is created becomes the “alchemical vessel in which the complex researcher and the unfinished business in the soul of the work are mixed” thereby, the “complex wounds of the researcher are transformed into a work that comes through the researcher but is not about him or her” (p. 228). The act of creating a work that is not controlled or created solely by the researcher is done with an attitude of reverie in service to the work that is coming through.

The alchemical hermeneutic method adds to the traditional hermeneutic method a poetic quality of “lingering” and getting lost in the text and sub-text of the work (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 223). There is a deepening that is allowed to take place through the reverie of “loitering” and “lingering” in the work to allow the soul of the work to speak (p. 223). Alchemical hermeneutics adds an aspect of “mourning” and “longing” for what is lost in the symbolic expression of meaning (p. 225). A third or transcendent

function is created from the joining of the conscious and unconscious, which creates “a tension of opposites” (p. 224). Symbolic meaning is a way of acknowledging and making a space for mourning what has been lost. Alchemical hermeneutics adds an awakening of the *Sophianic* wisdom or feminine elements of interpretation; this is “the art of receptivity” (p. 231). It is an art of “allowing the critical mind to become virginal for a moment, free of its preconceptions, plans, and intentions, so that it might be inseminated by the soul of the work” (p. 231). Without lingering and waiting with an attitude of reception, “the voice of Sophia can easily be silenced” (p. 231). There is an “embodiment of understanding” where one has already been “encircled,” “interpreted,” and “questioned” by the work (p. 232). The researcher is the witness and maintains an attitude of receptivity, allowing oneself to be “impregnated by the work and nurturing the fruit of that impregnation” (p. 233). This allows for the joining of Sophia and Hermes, challenging “the usual position of the critical ego-mind in the research process” (p. 233).

The imaginal approach to the alchemical hermeneutic method is appropriate for my specific research because it allows for a dialogue to happen that quite possibly could not happen as well in any other mode of investigation. The hermeneutic method allows for the fusion of textual understanding in a way that allows the other, strangers, and the collective and personal unconscious to have a say. This is so important for Kundalini yogic texts and depth psychological texts that have infinite layer upon sublayer of textual meaning, and multiple inferences can be made of both. Through the transference dialogues there is the possibility of

a breaking down and breaking open of one’s old way of seeing. It is not the interpreter who has manipulated the work, for the work remains fixed; rather, the work has impressed itself on him and he is so changed he can never regain the innocence lost through experience. (Palmer, 1969, p. 249)

There is an experience that is created through the work: “it is not the interpreter who grasps that meaning of the text; the meaning of the text seizes him” (p. 248). Dialectical questioning and transference dialogues put the researcher in contact with the others in the text and allow a fusion of the past and present. When interpreting a text from a previous age, “the interpreter does not empty his mind or leave the present absolutely; he takes it with him and uses it to understand in the dialectical encounter of his horizon with that of the literary work” (p. 251). The interpretive process allows for an intimate relationship with the texts and an embodied understanding, not only on the mental, theoretical level; “the meaning of a literary work is dynamic, temporal, personal. In conceptual knowing, only a part of one’s mind is really involved, but in understanding literature one’s self-understanding must come into play. The work addresses one as a person” (p. 252). Something within the person is touched or shifted by the event; “Literature, in short, is not conceptual knowledge but experience” (p. 252).

In hermeneutics we understand the object of interpretation by looking at its parts; conversely we can only know the parts by looking at the whole. Palmer (1969) described this interaction: “an individual concept derives its meaning from a context or horizon within which it stands; yet the horizon is made up of the very elements to which it gives meaning” (p. 87). The circle is a “dialectical interaction” where there is a relationship between the whole and the part, where “each gives the other meaning; understanding is circular” (p. 87). In the act of interpretation and meaning making, “logic cannot fully account for the workings of understanding. Somehow, a kind of ‘leap’ into the hermeneutical circle occurs and we understand the whole and the parts together” (p. 87). Schleiermacher, one of the original founders of hermeneutics, called this factor “partly a

comparative and partly an intuitive and divinatory matter” (p. 87). The hermeneutic circle suggests a “shared understanding” and shared meaning in the dialectical relationship.

There is seemingly a contradiction in that there is “minimal preknowledge necessary for understanding, without which one cannot leap into the hermeneutical circle” (p. 88). One must have some personal frame of reference to be able to make the connection;

“Sometimes a single sentence will illuminate and draw all that was previously without coherence into a meaningful whole, precisely because it suggests ‘the whole thing’ about which the author has been speaking” (p. 88). In order for this to be possible, the circle must be operating on a “linguistic level” as well as the “level of the ‘matter’ being discussed” (p. 88).

Packer and Addison (1989) discussed the significance of fore-structure in hermeneutic, interpretive research. In order to know something, there must be a fore-structure or contextual pre-knowledge. The pre-understanding or fore-structure “remains largely in the background as taken-for-granted . . . however it is important to recognize the influence of our fore-structure in order to arrive at a more explicit interpretation” (p. 52). In the hermeneutic tradition there is not an objective observer perspective from which one can objectively observe and interpret. One must recognize that one is already “within an interpretive framework or paradigm,” and “predisposed to looking for certain aspects and away from others in the situation” (p. 52). Acknowledging that as a researcher one is always within a perspective and acknowledging that perspective is of critical importance in the hermeneutic perspective. The researcher needs also to consider the larger background context in which the interpretation is taking place. The quality of interpretation is ultimately based on its “comprehensiveness, comprehensibility,

intelligibility, credibility, meaningfulness, significance, and fruitfulness for opening up new possibilities” (p. 55). Unlike positivist research that is looking for a “reality” that is “out there,” in interpretive work “truth is seen as an ongoing and unfolding process, where each successive interpretation has the possibility of uncovering or opening up new possibilities” (p. 56).

The German philosopher Heidegger is known for his contributions to ontological hermeneutics; Gadamer’s contribution to the philosophy of hermeneutics is historically situated where Heidegger left off. Gadamer (1976) described the ontological perspective as one where “all deliberate interpretation takes place on the basis of Dasein’s historicity” which means, “on the basis of a prereflective understanding of being from within a concrete situation that has intrinsic relation to the interpreter’s past and future” (p. xlvi). *Dasein* can be defined as a “‘thrown projection’ . . . as projective, understanding is intrinsically related to the future into which Dasein continually projects itself” (p. xlvi). Therefore, every interpretation, whether qualitative or quantitative, is affected by the “concrete situation of the interpreter” (p. xlvi). Everything discovered is within a perspective. “There is no presuppositionless, ‘prejudiceless’ interpretation, for while the interpreter may free himself from this or that situation, he cannot free himself from his own facticity,” which is “the *ontological* condition of always already having a finite temporal situation as the horizon within which the beings he understands have their initial meaning for him” (p. xlvi). Through this means, Heidegger solved the German philosophical problem, which had been leading to increasingly refined methodological approaches to knowledge that would “neutralize the knower’s own immediate participation in history” (p. xlvi).

Language plays an important role in ontological hermeneutics. Gadamer (1976) emphasizes the “disclosing and concealing power of language as it functions in living conversation” (p. lv). What is said and what remains unsaid are of vital importance, “for what is spoken has about it the circle of the unsaid” (p. lv). The words and meanings of a language reveal an “initiative of being: the language of a time is not so much chosen by the persons who use it as it is their historical fate” (p. lv). Therefore, the task of hermeneutics is “to hearken to and bring to language the possibilities that are suggested but remain unspoken in what the tradition speaks to us” (p. lv). This work is never finished and always present. “Every historical situation elicits new attempts to render the world into language. Each makes its contribution to the tradition, but is itself inevitably charged with new unspoken possibilities that drive our thinking further” (p. lv).

Research Process

The alchemical hermeneutic method will utilize an imaginal research approach, which takes place through the process of transference dialogues. Romanyshyn (2007) draws on Corbin’s *imaginatio vera*, as “an organ of understanding mediating between intellect and sense” (Corbin, 1977, p. xviii). Similar to the transference field between analyst and patient, so too the transference field is created between researcher and the work through the dialogues. The field is a “complex and imaginal intermediate place where imagination as a mode of knowing plays with the possibilities of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 146). The transference field that is created between researcher and text is an in-between place “between the world of sense and that of intellect” (p. 147). In the field that is created, “imagination is a legitimate way of knowing” (p. 147). As the dialogues proceed, the researcher prepares to let go of the work, “With these

dialogues the researcher's perspective on the work is loosened, deepened and transformed" (p. 148). This can feel counterintuitive, as it is the opposite of what happens in empirical research where the researcher takes charge of the work. The researcher is making a place for the "others," the "strangers," and the unconscious in the work to speak.

Jung (1961) gave numerous examples of working with one's unconscious through transference dialogues and active imagination. In *The Red Book*, Jung wrote of his early encounter with the unconscious:

The years, of which I have spoken to you, when I pursued the inner images, were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this... . My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. That was the stuff and material for more than only one life. Everything later was merely the outer classification, the scientific elaboration, and the integration into life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then. (Shamdasani, 2009, p. vii)

Jung (1961) wrote extensively on various figures that appeared in states of waking, sleeping, and imaginal realms in between. Through dreams, reverie, and active imagination, various figures begin to immerse from Jung's unconscious. He wrote in great depth about his interactions with the Elijah, Salome, the black serpent, Logos, and other imaginal figures. He described his first encounter with Izdubar, the "bull man" on the mountain ridge: "Two bull horns rise from his great head, and a rattling suit of armor covers his chest. His black beard is ruffled and decked with exquisite stones" (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 278). Jung met Philemon at a "small house in the country fronted by a large bed of tulips," where Philemon lived with his wife Baucis (p. 312). He described Philemon as "one of those magician who has not yet managed to banish old age" (p. 312). Philemon first appeared to Jung in a dream as "a winged being sailing

across the sky . . . an old man with horns of a bull . . . he had the wings of a kingfisher” (Jung, 1961, pp. 182-183). Synchronistically, while painting this particular dream figure, Jung came across a dead kingfisher in his garden. Philemon and other imaginal figures were figures produced purely by the psyche and each had their own life. Jung held conversations with each of them in his fantasies. At one point, Philemon questioned Jung about his original assumption that he invented him: “If you should see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them” (p. 183). Philemon was “what the Indian’s call a guru” to Jung and taught him about “psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche” (p. 183). Over time he was able to integrate Philemon and figures like him, “through the study of alchemy” (p. 185). These inner images, figures, and symbols were the “*prima materia* for a lifetime’s work” (p. 199).

Romanyshyn (2007) explicitly outlined the five steps of an alchemical hermeneutic method to follow using transference dialogues as protocols. He begins with an initial ritual space of reverie that has to be created as part of phase one before the steps can begin. Part of my own reverie included journeying to India in 2010 and allowing myself to be claimed by the work. My personal Kundalini sadhana, or daily meditative practice, is another example of reverie in the alchemical hermeneutic research process. Von Franz, a Jungian psychologist and contemporary of Jung, discussed the alchemist’s notion of reverie: “There in front of his fire, with no conscious plan or intention, the alchemist is neither dreaming nor fully awake, and in this condition he is drawn into matter through the images of the unconscious” (p. 143). Romanyshyn wrote, “Reverie is something one falls into. Reverie happens to us” (p. 142). It is “a pathway into the

unconscious depths of the moment” (p. 143). Phase 2 is a series of working with transference dialogues. This phase begins with setting the stage and creating a space, which is done through a “willing suspension of disbelief” (p. 151). Step 2 is done with an attitude of invitation and welcoming the *Others* in the work into the psychological dialogues. There are four levels on which the dialogues occur: the personal, cultural-historical, collective-archetypal, and eco-cosmological (Romanyshyn). Step 3 involves waiting with hospitality and faith for the Others to answer. Romanyshyn goes on to question, what is it that the researcher is waiting for? What the researcher is waiting for is much more subtle than waiting for a “clear and distinct idea to form, for some thought to arise to give a sense of direction to the work” (p. 155). The researcher does not wait for a conscious thought, but what comes can simply be a mood, a dream image, or bodily sensation (p. 156). Step 4, engaging the Others of the work, has two parts. There is first a moment of reception and suspension of disbelief, which lets “the other’s argument count” (p. 159). To amplify and give form to the images that have been uncovered, the images can be “drawn, painted, sculptured, or written as a dialogue between the researcher and the others in the work” (p. 158). This is a process of deepening the work. “The transference dialogues are a way of letting the other’s argument count. It is an ethical way of doing research” (p. 159). The second part of step 4 is having a critical regard for what was just created between oneself and the Others. This is a place of reflection on how the work produced is related to the rest of the work. Having a critical regard for the work that was created does not mean being judgmental, but rather taking a “critical stance towards the products of that first moment by posing the question, “What do they say about the

work?” (p. 159). There is a period of time and a space between reception and reflection on what was received that is a valuable part of the process.

The intention behind creating this little space between reception and reflection is for the researcher to hold the products of the dialogues alongside his or her more conscious thoughts and ideas about the work, to allow a time and place for them to rub up against each other. (p. 159)

Allowing a space for the co-mingling of ideas and fantasies about the work, creates a space for something new to enter.

There are two ways of critically analyzing the work, through “creative formulation,” or “the way of understanding” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 160). The creative formulation overemphasizes the aesthetic value of the work to the detriment of all else and judges the work in terms of artistic value. When understanding is dominant, “the individual tends to focus on the meaning of the product” and overvalue of content, to the detriment of curiosity and creativity that comes from the transference dialogues (p. 160). Ideally, there is a balance of the two approaches to critical analysis, a rhythm between the creative formulation and the way of understanding. In the fifth and final step, the dialogues are amplified through scholarly research and investigation. The unconscious is much more present at this stage in the process and has been incorporated as an invaluable part of the work, in service to the soul of the work. The transference dialogues are of value to the research in that they slow the work down to allow the alchemical processes of the work to cook; “the heat under the flask where the work is being done has to be turned up if the stone as the goal of the opus is to be achieved” (p. 162).

Research Method

The research methodology for this dissertation is based on hermeneutic and alchemical hermeneutic methodologies. The term *alchemical hermeneutics*, coined by

Veronica Goodchild, connects “this method to the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics,” as well as to “Jung’s psychology of the unconscious, which he deepened through his studies of alchemy” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 263). Alchemy creates a means of expression for the unconscious and connects the researcher to the ancestors and ‘others’ who “carry the unfinished business of the soul in the work” (p. 263). The data uncovered will be interpreted through a Jungian interpretive framework or theoretical lens to elucidate and structure the findings. The theoretical formulations anticipated as having a central role in the analysis of data are based on the theoretical constructs of depth psychological and psychoanalytic theory.

There are ten characteristics of alchemical hermeneutic method outlined by Romanyshyn (2007) that have implications for the writing and ethics of research. The characteristics show how this method makes a place for the “researcher’s dreams, symptoms, intuitions, feelings, and synchronicities,” as well as how the method “impacts re-search that does keep soul in mind” (p. 264). The first characteristic of the alchemical hermeneutic method is that it is a “*complex* method” which grows out of the transference dialogues, and creates a space for the continuation of those dialogues throughout the research process (p. 264). Secondly, this method is a “*creative* method” that allows the imagination of the researcher and that of the work to be involved (p. 264). There is a freedom and playfulness to the process that invites the researcher to “get lost from time to time in his or her dreams, reveries, and fantasies of the work” (p. 264). Third, this method is an “*imaginative* method” which gives a primary place for the “invisible landscapes of the imaginal realm of the soul” (p. 265). He describes an invisible realm, not that of the intellect or the sense, “whose traces of the underworld and the otherworld

of soul both haunt the visible work and break into it” (p. 264). The imaginative method and all of the archetypes and dreams connected to it are a way of seeing that “perceives the world through the dark-light of the soul’s complex” and allows the researcher to bring “the depth, presence, and shadows of the soul of the work into view” (p. 265). The fourth feature, “*aesthetic* character” encourages a “gnosis of the heart,” and is open to “non-ordinary states of consciousness, such as reverie and active imagination” (p. 266). This type of writing is seemingly poetic and involves a much more “embodied” style, “which arises out of actual experience” instead of being “about” experience (p. 266). The *aesthetic* quality of this method makes it an ideal fit for the subject matter of this dissertation because of the embodied nature of the topic. Kundalini yoga and meditation is expressly embodied; one is meant to have an experience. It is not a matter of intellectual understanding but an altered state of consciousness wherein one experiences an actual physical, psychical, and emotional shift that takes place through the Kundalini meditative process. Fifthly, the method has a “*hieratic* character,” a term used by Henry Corbin to describe “*ta’wil*,” which he defines as “a symbolic mode of understanding, the transmutation of everything visible into symbols” (p. 266). *Ta’wil* is a method that “saves appearances (the exoteric) by returning them to their original form (the esoteric)” (p. 266). This adds to the work “the procedure of the return, the work of carrying a work back to its other, invisible, source” (p. 266). This style draws out what was once hidden, so that it is less hidden and more of a reality in the work:

In practicing *ta’wil* the topic is continuously drawing the researcher beyond his or her intentions more deeply and thoroughly into the source of the work, to its archetype, its angel, its imaginal history, its subtle essence, moving both researcher and work from the personal through the cultural-historical and collective-archetypal into the eco-cosmological and imaginal depths of the work. (p. 267)

Ta'wil is a "sacred" and "spiritual" act that is an act of re-membering that perhaps "research done with soul in mind is simply a recognition that all of our acts of knowing are attempts at remembering what we once knew but have forgotten" (p. 268). This characteristic of the hieratic character or ta'wil is particularly in line with both Kundalini yoga and depth psychology. Jung's notion of individuation through the alchemical processes works directly with the symbols and symbolic meaning; Kundalini yoga takes it a step further, beyond the images and symbols to an embodied experience of the divine or pure consciousness. The sixth characteristic is that research done with soul in mind is a "*spiritual* method," meaning that the researcher "undergoes a radical transformation," as described above (p. 269). The researcher is "initiated into another way of knowing and being" (p. 269). The work and the person doing the work are the same, and at the same time "the person who, in working on the topic, is also being worked on, and even at times worked over, by the topic" (p. 269). This leads not only to the question, "for whom is the work being done?" but also, "who is doing the work?" (p. 270). There is a life and perspective-changing encounter between who the work is being done for, and the one who is doing the work. The seventh characteristic is that it is an "*ethical* method," which will be discussed further in the section on ethics. The eighth aspect is that of "*anamnesis*" or "un-forgetting" (p. 270). This is done with an "attitude of re-gard, in which the researcher is always taking a second look in order to attend to what has been and is forgotten and is asking to be remembered through the researcher doing the work" (p. 270). It is an act of 're-gard' and a "healing act of un-forgetting" (p. 270). The ninth characteristic is that of "*re-creation* or reiteration of unfinished events" (p. 271). This arises "out of the reciprocity between the researcher and the ancestors whose unfinished

stories are waiting to be told” (p. 271). Like the alchemist, the researcher may be accompanied by “a guide, with whom he or she may enter into dialogue for the purposes of the work . . . a partnership between the researcher and these ‘others’ who shepherd the work” (p. 271). In alchemy *meditatio*, meaning “when a man has an inner dialogue with someone unseen” can be a defining moment of the research (p. 271). Re-creation, then, is an “act of ongoing meditation, which extends our sense of method beyond the notion of the application of procedures” (p. 271). The tenth and final characteristic is an “*erotic* method,” which “follows a path of love, where love is the mode of knowledge whereby one being knows another” (p. 271). This allows the work to be the alchemical vessel “in which the researcher and the ancestors in the work meet” (p. 271). This is what Jung (1944/1953) called “*amor perfectissimus*” which expressed the adept’s “extraordinary devotion to the work” (p. 274). This is the realm between the physical and the psychical, the in-between realm of the psychoid that is similarly created through the therapeutic relationship, in the alchemical process, and through a direct experience of one’s own Kundalini energy.

Through the processes of the five steps and ten characteristics the alchemical hermeneutic method is deepened and one is brought to a place of “deep subjectivity” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 272). Corbin described this process in three levels, moving from “theoretical certainty,” which is a second hand knowing, to the “certainty of eyewitness” account, and finally to the third level which is “gnostically lived and realized,” where the researcher actually becomes what they are researching (p. 272). The third stage is reached by entering the “*mundus imaginalis*” or ritual space led by a guide from the ‘others’, to a

deepening of the work and the researcher through the process, and finally transformation, “becoming the work and living it in an embodied way” (p. 272).

Procedures for Data Collection

Procedures for gathering data will vary depending on the type and source of the information. Texts from both the Kundalini yoga tradition and the depth psychological tradition will be chosen based on relevance and proximity to the “source” of information. Ideally I will be using first-hand, primary texts when available. Given that many of the Kundalini yogic texts were passed down orally, or texts were translated centuries after their original transmission, there may be times when it is not possible to access primary texts. For Jung’s work, I will use primary texts written by Jung himself, as well as other Jungian scholars’ analysis and commentary as relevant to supplement Jung’s own writings. My personal experience as “text” will be handwritten and documented in journals as part of the alchemical hermeneutic research. The journals will consist of personal reflections, meditations, transference dialogues, dreams, synchronicities, active imagination, daydreams, experiences, travel notes on yatra, and other work done in a space of reverie as part of the deepening process of the work. All of these potential sources of data will be used selectively in an interweaving of material to create a dialogue between Kundalini yoga and Jung’s depth psychology.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The data for this dissertation will be generated through the process of deepening to create an interpretive relationship between texts through the hermeneutic process. The data will be analyzed through a Jungian, imaginal theoretical lens. Regardless of how well I am able to anticipate the data analysis process at this point, there remains much

that has yet to be discovered and re-membered through the hermeneutic spiraling, which is an invaluable part of the research process. The interpretive, analytic process cannot be fully laid out in advance. Forced delimitations to the process could stunt further creativity and the interpretive process. In a later chapter I will include a retrospective description of analytic procedures that reveal themselves through the hermeneutic and alchemical hermeneutic processes and explain how what was discovered had an effect on the process of analysis of the data.

Reflexivity and Limitations

The delimitations of this dissertation were chosen to limit the enormous amount of information available on Kundalini yoga and depth psychology. There have been thousands of texts written over the years on various types and subtypes of yogic practices, hence the main focus of this dissertation will be limited to Kundalini yoga and meditation. Wherever possible, primary, original texts will be used. However, because of the culturally and historically secretive nature of Kundalini yoga, as with other styles of yoga for many past millennia, the availability of first hand, written texts is scarce. This limits the study because of lack of access to first-hand, oral yogic tradition. There is also the limitation that I do not read Gurmukhi, the ancient Northern Indian dialect from which most of the texts are translated from to English. The closest possible reading of the text would be in the language that it was written.

As a researcher, my personal experience will be used as “text” in dialogue with the Kundalini yoga texts and Jung’s own works. As such, my experience as text will be personal and biased. Whenever possible, the Jungian texts used in this dissertation will be primary texts and accounts written by Jung himself, often relating to alchemical

processes of individuation and to Jung's own experiences traveling through India and the East.

Organization of Study

The organization of the proposed dissertation manuscript must be tentative at best at this point in the research. Because of the nature of hermeneutic and alchemical hermeneutic method and approach, much will be revealed through the research process that will affect the direction of this dissertation. There is a coming together or culmination of what the work wants for itself, what I want for the work, and what the others and strangers in the work want. Hence, through listening and making a space for all of the voices in the work, the research will become what it will.

I anticipate the coming chapters of the research to have a presentation of findings, which will elaborate on the relationship between Kundalini yoga and depth psychology. This will consist of a chapter on Kundalini yoga and meditation, followed by a chapter on individuation, and movement toward increased consciousness and a direct experience of pure Consciousness and the Divine. Thirdly, the section on findings will include a comparison and contrasting of how the Kundalini yoga and depth psychology interact, followed by a critical look at the significance of what has been done. Next, there will be a section on the implications for methodology, as well as implication for clinical psychology in general, and specifically for depth psychology and how this can be applied clinically. Concluding remarks will serve as a way to move forward, directions for future research, and any further social or cultural implication not yet fully explicated. The dissertation will end with a purposeful closing section and "letting go" of the work.

Procedures for Dealing with Ethical Concerns

The ethical considerations for this dissertation involve doing a careful and close reading of the texts so as to be faithful to their original meaning within the historical context that the texts were written. In witnessing the dialogue that develops between texts, it is important to listen diligently for the meaning that each text is trying to convey, treating each as a vital, invaluable co-creator of a new story. This is an intimately personal work that is close to my heart; hence it will be vital to the life and integrity of the work that I be true to my own experience in this process as well. I must ethically keep a sacred temenos for the work to expand, evolve, and become what it will. The work has a life of its own that needs to be respected as something that will ultimately be separate from myself (Romanyshyn, 2007).

Throughout the dissertation, the transference dialogues will create a space for “letting the ‘other’s’ argument count” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 159). Jung (1960) acknowledged the immense value of including arguments other than one’s own:

The present day shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other man’s argument count, although this capacity is a fundamental and indispensable condition for any human community. Everyone who proposes to come to terms with himself must reckon with this basic problem. For, to the degree that he does not admit the validity of the other person, he denies the “other” within himself the right to exist—and vice versa. The capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone for outer objectivity. (p. 187)

Through the transference dialogues, which are central to the research process in the imaginal approach, the others in the work are provided a place to be heard. This kind of writing invites an attitude of listening and reception, above that of speaking and making oneself known through the writing. It requires an attitude of reception on the part of the researcher. Romanyshyn (2007) describes this process as “steeped in the art of listening”

(p. 341). The researcher's ethical obligation is to the "others" and "strangers" whose voices speak through the texts and the work being created. In alchemical hermeneutics, the researcher also has an ethical obligation to "consider the other(s) within himself or herself who constitute his or her unconscious complex presence to the work" (p. 341). The unconscious processes of the researcher are a valuable part of the research data leading the researcher deeper into the work as the unconscious becomes conscious.

The proposed dissertation research will also comply with the standards established by the American Psychological Association, with the standards of Pacifica Graduate Institute's Ethics Committee, with the standards inherent in the chosen methodologies, and with the standards of the field of psychology as a whole.

Chapter 4 Kundalini Yoga and Meditation

Yogi Bhajan (1977) described Kundalini yoga and meditation as a technology of increasing awareness and consciousness: “Kundalini yoga is a method to become nothing, so that everything can flow through you. That’s all it is” (p. 173). Becoming nothing is the experience of *shuniya*, or the “zero” point; it is a state of stillness into which the *bij* or seed is planted to “create a new rhythm or pattern of being” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 91). Pranayam is the science of breath, “controlling the movement of *prana* through the use of breathing techniques” to create the experience of *shuniya* (p. 91). Kundalini yoga is “the science to unite the finite with Infinity and the art to experience Infinity within the finite” (Khalsa, 2006, p. iii). It is not only “a flow of energy within our bodies, it is a flow of the energy of consciousness of all the masters of Kundalini Yoga from ancient times up to the present day (p. iii). The process of awakening the Kundalini energy can be incremental and gradual, taking an entire lifetime or lifetimes, or it can happen in an afternoon. Kundalini yoga is a “technology,” a technique or method designed specifically to work quickly. It was designed for the Aquarian Age, to which we are currently transitioning from the Piscean Age (Bhajan, 1977, 1997, 2003; Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998; Khalsa, G. K., 2009). Kundalini yogic technologies were designed for this time and space as a means to affect and experience the bliss of ones own consciousness. The yoga is meant to be experienced firsthand, not read about in the texts. Iyengar (2005) wrote, “what I learned through yoga, I found out through yoga” (p. x). Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, Master and Guru to Paramahansa Yogananda (1946), said, “Wisdom is not assimilated by the eyes, but with the atoms . . . truth is not merely in your brain but in your being” (p. 149). The name Yogananda itself is laden with meaning; it means “bliss

(*ananda*) through divine union (*yoga*)” (p. 248). The title of *swami* means “one who seeks to achieve union with the *Swa* or Self” (p. 249). It is not through textual knowledge, but through actual experience that one is awakened to Divine Consciousness. The tools of Kundalini yoga and meditation allow the practitioner to direct one’s own energy in order to be able to use it most effectively to one’s advantage. By directing the energy, one is able to affect the quality of one’s internal and external environment (Bhajan, 2003). Gopi Krishna (2009) discussed the work of past intellectuals during the Piscean Age, saying, “the real quest of man has yet to begin. . . . All the knowledge and experience they have gained, all the discoveries they have made . . . so far, have been a preparation for the next step” (p. 278). That “next step” is the “exploration” of one’s “own mind” (p. 278).

Aquarian Age Transition

The Age of Aquarius is the next astrological age in succession following the Piscean Age, each age “lasting approximately 2000 years” (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 193). This age will “witness a radical shift in consciousness, human sensitivity, and technology” (p. 193). The central change will be an “evolution” in one’s “power of awareness and a new relationship” to the mind (p. 193). The shift from the Piscean Age to the Aquarian Age is occurring in the immediate time and space in which we currently reside. The Piscean Age was “dominated by machines and hierarchies” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 4). The central “and even sacred task” was to “find and gain access to the right information” (p. 4). There were specific, isolated places of study, like Tibet or various villages in India, which were “accessible to a few who could qualify or who had a special destiny” (p. 4). The Kundalini teachings were “necessarily secret and required initiation,

lifetimes of positive karma, or the blessing of a teacher to learn” (Khalsa, G. S., 2009, p. 321). The motto of the Piscean Age was “to be or not to be. . . . Learn, grow, and become something” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 4). Great knowledge about “human potential was guarded by secrecy and layers of initiations” (p. 4). In the Aquarian Age, into which we are currently transitioning, information is available, “finding it is not the central task any longer” (p. 4). The motto of this age is “be to be” (p. 4). It is an unprecedented “evolutionary leap” in consciousness (Khalsa, G. K., 2009, p. 316). The age is ruled by “awareness, information and energy” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 4). The task here is to “accept your wholeness and your connectedness to a larger creative existence, and express it with each committed action. Let your actions demonstrate wisdom. . . . knowing a truth alone, will not be important” (p. 4). It is an embodied, active knowing, an action. Yogi Bhajan described the transition:

The greatest power will be your Word—your consciously projected words. This change is radical, not incremental. It is a simultaneous change in both the *outer* and *inner* worlds. The mind is changing its sensitivity, its basic frequency and functioning. Our lifestyle is changing its sense of *time*, *space*, relatedness, and relevancy. (p. 4) (italics mine)

In the Piscean Era, change took decades if not lifetimes. The Aquarian Age is different; change can happen in an instant. Because one’s sense of time and space is evolving, a psychic shift in consciousness can happen in an instant. The polarities, inner and outer, physical and psychical, are changing instantly and simultaneously. Yogi Bhajan said: “Real value will come from truth embodied in practical actions and in the internal caliber and qualities of your mind and heart. This is the profile of a fulfilled human being” (p. 4). Opening the heart chakra, the fourth chakra, is key in the Aquarian Age; no longer is one able to live in an unembodied, cerebral, disconnected way. The power of Kundalini yoga

lies in “the actual experience” (p. 20). Yogi Bhajan said that “your experience” of the Kundalini energy “goes right into your heart. No words can replace that experience. Your mind may accept the words or it may not, but your consciousness will not accept just words” (p. 20). The experience is what “extends your consciousness. . . . Ultimately you come to understand your existence in relationship to the universe and understand you already are, and this brings you to the practical experience of Infinity” (p. 20). The “fulfilled human being” that Yogi Bhajan described is similar to Jung’s notion of the individuated Self (p. 4). In order to function in the new consciousness of the Aquarian Age, a “new relationship to intuition, emotion and instinct” is required (p. 4). This is an “age of paradox—more global and more individual . . . stamina and constant peak performance are the common benchmarks to evaluate all people and their work, and the need is to go inward and regenerate” (p. 5). There is no longer the possibility of isolation, each action must be “considered ecologically, and globally” (p. 5). The “outer education provided by the information revolution must be matched by an inner education in wisdom, self control, intuition, and the use of the neutral mind” (p. 5). This all highlights the “necessity for a potent and practical technology to generate the inner energy needed to survive and excel under this pressure” (p. 5). Energy is defined as “the capacity for action or accomplishment; the effort the mind and body is able to exert to move from the current state to a desired state” (p. 5).

Mantra: The Sound Current

Mantra is a tool that allows one to connect to the Divine, vibrate with the cosmos, and experience a drastic shift in consciousness. Yogi Bhajan (1997), expert on the ancient linguistic technologies of the yogis, said mantra is “sounds or words that tune or control

the mind. *Man* means mind. *Tra-ng* is the wave or movement of the mind” (p. 196).

Recited correctly, mantra will “activate areas of the nervous system and brain and allow you to shift your state and the perceptual vision or energetic ability associated with it” (p. 196). Each sound unit is pronounced in a particular part of the mouth, the tongue touches the upper palate of the roof of the mouth and “vibrates the vocal cords and specific areas in the skull,” which form unique sound patterns that then direct the patterns of the brain (Bhajan, 2003, p. 73). Pranayam, or breath, is the first mantra that one must perfect.

Bhajan (1977) said:

Meditation on the breath is a meditation on life. . . . This sound in you is an infinite sound and as long as this sound of inhale and exhale continues, you are alive. They call it *Anhat*, ultimate mantra. If you don’t chant this mantra, you cannot chant any others either. . . . Any moment that you cannot chant this mantra, you cannot exist. . . . It is known as *pranayam*, and it is very essential. (p. 181)

Prana changes how energy moves through the body and shifts one’s experience of the world. *Anhat* is the state in which the nervous system “vibrates the mantra without your conscious effort, and the mantra is attuned to the Infinite”; one is able to “vibrate in concert with a pattern beyond anything you could create from your finite self or ego” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 68). Breath is the most simple, immediate means of connecting to the Universal Consciousness. Even thinking of taking a breath is said to expand the Aura by one foot (Bhajan, 2003). The “depth, rate, and pattern” of breath, are correlated with one’s “moods, and level of energy,” and can change those patterns through a variety of techniques (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 145). Some meditations require one to simply draw one’s attention to the “flow of breath,” while other require altering it in some way, such as “regulating the ratio of the inhale and exhale; by breaking the inhale or exhale into segments; by changing the speed of the breath; or by using mantra” (p. 145). The

experience of Kundalini meditation is one of “relating the mantra to the Infinite Being and the finite, and creating that direct connection,” which ultimately “opens up the heart magically” (Bhajan, 1977, p. 182). Through mantra, meditation, and breath control, one can reach “a point of stillness,” or shuniya, the zero point (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 121). Many of the mantras used in Kundalini yoga are from Punjabi or Sanskrit, but others are also in English, German, and many other languages (p. 145). Mantra is not a “chanting to someone” as in a god or deity, but is an “energetic act” that changes the “brain, stimulates hormone balance,” and engages one in “conversation” with one’s own mind about “vastness and truth” (p. 145).

The science behind mantra is based on “the knowledge that sound is a form of energy having structure, power and a definite predictable effect on the chakras and the human psyche” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 66). Mantras are “formulas that alter the patterns of the mind and the chemistry of the brain, according to physical and metaphysical laws. The power of mantra is in its sound vibration” (p. 66). Yogi Bhajan discussed the nature of sound in one of his lectures:

Every element of the universe is in a constant state of vibration manifested to us as light, sound, and energy. The human senses perceive only a fraction of the infinite ranges of vibration. . . . A person can tune his or her own consciousness into the awareness of that totality with the use of a mantra. By vibrating in rhythm with the breath to a particular sound that is proportional to the creative sound, or sound current, one can expand one’s sensitivity to the entire spectrum of vibration. It is similar to striking a note on a stringed instrument. In other words, as you vibrate, the universe vibrates with you. (p. 66)

The higher the frequency of the vibration, the “less dense,” and “more etheric” the quality of the vibration (p. 66). This is the closest possible vibration to that of the Universal Consciousness (p. 66). Raising one’s own vibration through the sound current of chanting mantra, brings one closer to this experience of the Divine. The particular sound-vibration

combination is what allows one to “tune into various levels of intelligence, or consciousness” (p. 66). Chanting mantras, aloud or silently, is a “conscious method of controlling and directing the mind,” and “vibratory frequencies” of the mind (p. 66). “Happiness, sorrow, joy, and regret” are all examples of the experience of the “vibratory frequencies” (p. 66). *Naad* yoga, is a linguistic science that is thousands of years old. It is “the essence of all sound. Naad is the vibrational harmony through which the Infinite can be experienced” (p. 66). It works with the “movement of the tongue in the mouth, language, and chemical changes in the brain” to alter consciousness (p. 67). When the mantra is chanted silently or aloud, the “chemical composition of the brain fluids” changes, leading to increased consciousness (p. 67). Through the somewhat complex system involving the tongue and upper palate of the mouth, various meridian points, the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and the brain chemistry functioning is altered (p. 67).

Gong.

The gong is an “intervibratory system,” often played following Kundalini yoga, meditation or *sadhana* (Bhajan, 2003, p. 137). The gong uses the sound current to increase and elevate consciousness (p. 137). Yogi Bhajan described the power of the gong: “It is the sound of Creativity itself. One who plays the gong plays the Universe... Out of it came all music, all sound, and all words. The sound of the gong is the nucleus of the Word” (p. 137). It is not a musical instrument or drum, but a “reinforced vibration” and a form of mantra (p. 137). Experiencing the gong is an energetic experience as opposed to an intellectual one. Yogi Bhajan said it is “like a multitude of strings, as if you played with a million strings. The gong is the only tool with which you can produce this combination of space vibrations” (p. 137). It impacts “the body and its meridians”

and “stimulates the glandular system to a higher level of functioning” (p. 137). There are eighty-four *meridian* points located on the upper palate of the roof of the mouth; they are connected to and regulate the hypothalamus and pituitary gland of the brain. Stimulating them through the gong affects the neuron pattern in the brain and serum in the spinal column. Master gong player Harijiwan Singh Khalsa, who was trained for many years by Yogi Bhajan, said: “The Universe is powered by sound. The gong is the basic creative sound. Out of the gong comes all music, all sounds, all words” (personal communication, February, 20, 2011). The gong is an “amplification device... what it is going to amplify is your energy field” when you play it (personal communication, February 20, 2011). If one listens regularly to the gong it will “repattern your magnetic field, open you to the vastness of your own psyche, and release you from all that prevents you from living a life of complete and utter happiness” (personal communication, February 20, 2011).

Shabd Guru technology.

The *Shabd Guru* is a specific technology of sound, which directly alters “consciousness through the power of Naad. . . . The Shabd Guru is sound current as Teacher” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 66). Shabd means sound, Guru means “teacher or knowledge that transforms you” (p. 70). Yogi Bhajan (1977) said, “A guru is a consciousness and not a person. This should not be misunderstood” (p. 116). Guru is an “active knowledge. It is not the intellectual knowledge that simply classifies or analyzes. Guru changes you. Guru develops the capacity to see. It removes darkness. . . . The encounter with the Guru is through action” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 71). It is the connection between “sound, breath and their rhythms,” which is the “crucial link in the mind-brain-behavior chain” (p. 74). The Guru Shabd is a sacred sound current, through mastery of the current, one moves “from

gross to subtle and from subtle to Infinite” (p. 212). It is a way of seeing and perceiving. “Repeating the primal sounds captured in the Shabd Guru is really about listening” and allowing the energy of the sound to penetrate consciousness (p. 73). This kind of listening involves “not simply concentrating with a singular, robotic focus on the sounds; it is an opening up of the sphere of awareness to the sound current” (p. 73). Yogi Bhajan said that one need not “try to stop the inner chatter” of the mind during meditation on the Shabd Guru, but “simply let the feeling of the primal sounds rise and match the thoughts thrown into the mind” one’s inner dialogues (p. 73). The mind will constantly produce thoughts: “do not try to create silence or block thoughts. We just synchronize them with the sounds and the breath” (p. 74). They are “blended” with the “steady centered rhythms of the shabd” (p. 73). The Shabd Guru is a specific vibrational sound pattern that can “stimulate the hypothalamus to change the chemistry of the brain. This adjusts the functions of the endocrine system and the metabolism to create a neutral, balanced mind, and to strengthen the immune function” (p. 67). The Shabd Guru works in the following way:

When you repeat the patterns of sound and thought in a Shabd, those thoughts counter the direction and intensity of the habitual thoughts. The Shabd provokes a release of the stored subconscious patterns of thinking and feeling. If, under the torrential flood of subconscious feelings and thoughts, you persist in repeating the pattern of the Shabd Guru, then the new pattern establishes itself. Your mind clears, and you awaken dormant inner capacities or enhance existing ones. (p. 71)

These patterns have existed from “the beginning of creation. They are the tides and rhythms of the movement of the creative pulse of Infinite consciousness. They vibrate in all things continually” (p. 71). The Shabd Guru is the “path to the center of the storm,” to the shuniya, the stillness, through the “neutral mind” (p. 70). When chanting any mantra, the “inflow of cosmic energy into the body cascades like a waterfall through the crown of

the head- the Tenth Gate, and collects in seven pools or special vortices. Those pools are called chakras or energy centers” (p. 72). All mantras should be projected initially from the third chakra, or navel point. It is from here that one’s power of projection is strongest, giving the mantra the power to penetrate and to be most effective. The mantra’s vibrational frequency is powerful whether chanted aloud or silently, however, “because the reflex points are stimulated by the movements of the tongue, you get the maximum benefit from the pattern of a Shabd by consciously repeating the sound out loud” (p. 71). The Shabd Guru works because one merges into the sound; “you have become the Shabd and the Shabd has become you” (p. 72). There is a “merger between the personal experience of you and the impersonal experience of Infinity beyond you and within you” (p. 72).

The impact of the Shabd Guru is enhanced by the “pendulum effect” and “resonance” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 77). Yogi Bhajan gave this example: “Watch a pendulum swing. Tap it slightly exactly as it reaches its zenith. A little tap will make it gain energy” (p. 77). Similar to pushing someone on a swing, “it takes very little effort to keep the swing going against the forces of friction and gravity if your timing is just right” (p. 77). The pendulum effect works in the Shabd Guru in the “timing and synchronization of the tongue and breath with repetition. Instead of effects from high levels of effort, the effect comes from a gradual build up of synchronization and the energies natural to the body-mind system that are released” (p. 77). It is a gradual spreading like a wave of awareness, “it is your own system uncoiling itself rather than a force shoving it” (p. 77). Resonance is another factor that enhances the effects of mantra. An example is that of an opera singer hitting a high C note and shattering a glass: “It is the attunement of a particular

frequency to the shape of the glass so that the energy can be absorbed by the glass. Different shapes have different fundamental frequencies at which they can vibrate” (p. 77). This is the basis for instrument design. So too, “the body has many cavities that resonate to specific words and sounds. High pitches will be felt in different areas of the body than low” (p. 77). Through the ratios of sound and breath used in the Shabd Guru, a specific resonance can be induced. “It is the resonance of the body cavities and the body’s subtle systems produced sympathetically by the tones and the complexity of the resonating patterns that create” (p. 77). The power of mantra is in the word and the rhythm: “Words and sounds are psycho-active events that are rooted in the body and give roots to the sense of self. Rhythm increases our sense of balance, of control of our movements and general well-being” (p. 77). One can experience an embodied sense of the Divine or pure consciousness through attunement to mantra. Merging through “rhythm and *naad*” takes one into “*anahat*, which changes the structure of the consciousness itself” (p. 133). Yogi Bhajan described the experience in this way: “So every part of you vibrates as one in a merger in ecstasy of consciousness. You become the mantra and the entire universe meditates on you” (p. 133).

Amrit vela.

In the Kundalini yoga community, on significant dates, such as that of the birth of a teacher or guru who has since passed, people come together to chant and meditate during the *amrit vela*, which translates literally to the “ambrosial time” (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 193). During this two-and-a-half hours before dawn, it is considered the ideal time for meditating (Bhajan, 2003). The morning that I will describe was one such occasion. I arrived at the Kundalini yoga studio at 2:30 a.m., to begin at 2:45 a.m. The

room was packed with people, all wrapped in layers of blankets, sweaters, and scarves to keep warm in the chilly night air. Some were wearing turbans to protect the crown chakra from the tremendous amount of energy that can come through, especially during the amrit vela hours. There is an eerie stillness at that hour of the morning. Everything is amplified; it feels almost magical. The power of the group meditating together during the amrit vela exponentially increases the meditative energy and potential capacity of the meditation to transform one's consciousness, partly because of the angle of the sun to the earth and the extra prana available during the early hours. It is said that meditating between the hours of 4 and 6 in the morning increases the effectiveness of a mediation 40 times. About a hundred-and-twenty adults and few children and babies were present in the yoga room that morning. Everyone spoke in a hushed whisper or was silent as we entered the large yoga room. There was order to the chaos as everyone set up their yoga mats and spread out their blankets and getting settled in to their cozy, nest-like space. I did not feel tired but the energy felt intense and heavy, more so than other mornings. We began with various shorter meditations: one for 11 minutes, another for 26 minutes, and a little light yoga. Then we settled in for the main meditation, 2 1/2 hours of chanting in a seated posture. I cannot tell you exactly what happened during those 2 1/2 hours. I do not have a clear memory of it, but I know I felt profoundly peaceful, and still. I felt clear, and empty, and zero, the possible mid-point, or shuniya. I felt connected and intimately held, and yet alone, but not in an isolated way. I felt safe, as if in a sealed glass vessel, very contained.

Such experiences during the amrit vela have been some of the most powerful in the transformation of my consciousness. As much of a struggle as it is to get up at that early hour in the morning, the rewards extend far beyond the cost in sleep. There is a

palpable weight and heaviness at that time of day, which keeps most people soundly asleep through the night. When one is able to move through that weightiness, get into a cold shower, get re-dressed in warm layers of clothes, and sit and meditate, the benefits and the transformational effects are enormous. Yogi Bhajan (2003) said of *sadhana*:

We consciously choose to rise up, to exercise the body, and to meditate. Each day is different. Each day, we are different. Every 72 hours all the cells of the body totally change. Sickness comes and goes. Motivation waxes and wanes. But through all the flux of life, through all the variations of the mind and heart, we consciously choose to maintain a constant and regular practice. (p. 144)

This is a “practice of self-discipline that allows one to express the Infinite within one’s self” (p. 144). Through *sadhana* one can become “more flexible and feel more free” (p. 144). Yogi Bhajan said that “it seems that on a daily basis, when you do *sadhana*, nothing happens. But you don’t do it out of greed. . . . We don’t do it to get anything” (p. 145).

Profile of the Bodies

As described briefly in an earlier chapter, in Kundalini yogic philosophy as taught by Yogi Bhajan (2003), there are ten bodies that make up the human being. In the West especially, it is most common to identify primarily with the physical body and the mind. The ten bodies are “powerful capacities of the psyche. Each body has specific gifts that manifest when strong, and certain deficit tendencies that surface when weak” (p. 200). One is able to strengthen any one of the ten bodies that is out of balance through meditation and yoga. Each body is associated with one of the ten Sikh gurus, who were Masters of the Kundalini energy and each “personified” one of the ten bodies (p. 200). Dis-ease manifested in the physical body, has first been experienced as an unbalance in

the spiritual, or energy bodies (p. 200). The ten bodies include: the physical body, three mental bodies, and six energy bodies.

Soul body.

The first body is the Soul Body, which is in a category of its own and is the first of the six energy bodies. The Soul Body connects one to one's "inner infinity" and is the experience of the inner "flow of spirit" (Bhajan, 2003, p. 201). One is "most receptive to the soul" during the amrit vela, the morning sadhana (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 193). The Soul Body is intimately connected to creativity and to the heart center, which is the fourth chakra. The Soul is "the individual expression of spirit; it contains the basic nuclear energy of you, your foundational self" (Bhajan, 2003, p. 201). The power of the "unlimited soul" is directly connected to and impacts the aura, which appears as a "halo" or light around the head (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 56). When this connection is strong, one's "presence alone immediately impacts" others (p. 56). Through training the mind and directing it toward the soul, "the mind will be elevated, and you will be elevated (p. 57). The "consistent projection and training" creates a "permanent state of bliss" (p. 57). Yogi Bhajan said, when the "mind stays with the self-illuminated soul within you, then all pains and suffering disappear and your presence radiates and works" (p. 56). If the first body is weak, one will approach life from the mind over the heart, and "feel stuck," and unable to access one's "purpose and creative flow of life" (Bhajan, 2003, p. 201). The Soul Body's relationship to the Subtle Body, and the interrelated connection with depth psychology will be discussed more fully in later chapters.

Mental bodies.

The second, third, and fourth bodies are mental bodies (Bhajan, 2003). The second body is the Negative or “Protective” Mind, which helps “give form to the creativity” of the Soul Body, by providing “containment, form, and discernment” (p. 201). The Negative Mind instills a “longing to belong” and connect to the Infinite Divine Consciousness or “God Self,” and gives one the “patience to be obedient” to one’s own inner guidance (p. 201). When the Negative Mind is underdeveloped, the longing to belong becomes “inappropriate” and “self-destructive,” and overly influenced by others (p. 201). One will feel uncontained in one’s own center. The Positive, or “Expansive” Mind is the third body (p. 201). It “sees the positive essence of all situations and beings. It is expansive and allows resources in. . . . It gives you a strong will. . . makes you naturally playful and optimistic. . . . It makes your communication strong and direct” (p. 201). Yogi Bhajan said that if the Positive Mind is weak, “it is like receiving a daily injection of poison” (p. 201). One can be overly influenced by the Negative Mind, which can be “depressing” and “paralyzing” (p. 201). An underdeveloped Positive Mind is associated with feelings of anger, intolerance, hesitation to use one’s own power or “heat,” and fear of responsibility (p. 201). The fourth body is the Neutral “Meditative” Mind, which comes from a place of compassion. The Neutral Mind “evaluates the input” of the Negative Mind, Positive Minds, and the rest of the bodies and gives “guidance within nine seconds” (p. 201). It is an “intuitive vantage point” which allows one access to the Soul (p. 201). If this mind is weak, decision-making will be difficult and one may feel “victimized by life” and unable to integrate experiences and find meaning in them (p.

201). One will be challenged to “see beyond the polarities of life on Earth and tuning into the great cosmic scheme” (p. 201).

Physical body.

The fifth body is the Physical Body, which is the “temple” for the other nine bodies (p. 202). It gives one the “capacity to self-sacrifice- to make sacred” and the “ability to balance all the parts” of one’s life (p. 202). If the Physical Body is strong, it represents the teacher who is able to understand and interpret life’s “abstractions,” and to “bring the information into an earthly, concrete form” (p. 202). This is the experience of “dharma over karma” (p. 202). *Karma* is the “law of cause and effect applied to mental, moral, and physical actions” (p. 213). It is essentially the “tendencies” one may develop through ego attachment and identification with certain “objects, feelings and thoughts” (p. 213). *Karmas* are the “conditions required in order to balance or complete these tendencies” (p. 213). *Dharma* is “the path of life above the wheel of karma” (p. 213). One is aligned with Soul and destiny, where all actions are inclined toward the Infinite; “it is action without reaction, or karma” (p. 213). Yogi Bhanjan (2003) said karma and dharma is a matter of “fate and destiny. . . . In fate, we create karma—actions we must complete or resolve. Acting in destiny we are in the flow with the universe, with our spirit, and with our basic nature” (p. 229). Karma is also “a gateway into the human experience through which we can shift into dharma” (p. 229). Weakness in the fifth body is associated with anger, greed, jealousy, competitiveness, and ungratefulness. When the “inner and outer realities” are “out of balance,” one will have difficulty expressing oneself verbally (p. 202).

Energy bodies.

The sixth through tenth bodies comprise the six “energy bodies,” with the addition of the first body, the Soul Body (Bhajan, 2003, p. 200). The sixth body is the Arcline, which extends from earlobe to earlobe, across the hairline and brow. Yogi Bhajan said that the Arcline is “your halo, and is the nucleus of the aura. Women have a second arcline which extends from nipple to nipple. The Arcline is your projection, your radiance. It gives you the ability to focus, to be concentrated, to meditate” (p. 202). It is associated with the pituitary gland, “regulates the nervous system and glandular balance,” and protects the heart center (p. 202). The pituitary gland is associated with the “Third Eye,” between the two eyes at the center of the brow. The intuitive center of the Arcline allows one to protect oneself, without “shutting down” the heart (p. 202). The projective power of the Arcline helps “manifest” whatever one wants in life (p. 202). The Arcline is “the balance point between the physical realm and the cosmic realm” (p. 202). If it is weak one may be “overprotective and easily influenced,” have inconsistent moods and behavior, feel unfocused, and be unable to use one’s intuition to protect oneself (p. 202).

The seventh body is the Aura; it is the “electromagnetic field” which surrounds the body, “in the same way that the Earth’s Magnetic field envelops the Earth” (Bhajan, 2002, p. 203). It is a “container” for the life force and creates a feeling of security and confidence (p. 203). This allows simply one’s presence to be uplifting to others. It is a “protection” or “shield” and can “attract positivity and repel negativity—negativity from other people, from situations, and illness” (p. 203). A weak Aura is associated with paranoia, and negativity is more able to flow into one’s life in the form of dis-ease: “All illness goes into the Aura first” (p. 203). Hence, if one is able to keep the Aura strong,

one can prevent illness from penetrating into the physical body, which is the last body to be affected by dis-ease.

The Pranic Body is the eighth body; it is most closely connected with the breath, or prana. A strong Pranic Body is associated with deep, relaxed breathing and a feeling of self-motivation and of having ample energy to achieve one's goals (Bhajan, 2003, p. 203). "All disease starts with an imbalance in the Pranic Body" (p. 203). If this body is weak one will have "constant low-level anxiety and chronic fatigue" (p. 203). One may try to "get energy from food or stimulants" and feel often "fearful and defensive" (p. 203). This body has "inherent healing" qualities through the *nadis*, or channels of the *sushmuna*, *ida*, and *pingala* (p.179). These three channels are activated through Kundalini yoga kriyas, or postures and sets. The sushmuna is the central nadi through which Kundalini ascends; it originates at the base of the spine and travels up the spine to the top of the head. It is often called the "Silver Cord" (p. 174). The ida is a channel that ends at the left nostril and brings "cooling, soothing, mind-expanding energy of the moon" (p. 174). The pingala nadi ends at the right nostril and brings "the stimulating, energizing, heating energy of the sun" (p. 174). The pingala is the "gathering of force, or shakti" (p. 179). These channels are "activated and applied automatically in the structure of the *kriyas*" as a method of healing (p. 179).

The Subtle Body is the ninth body; it is associated with "calmness, subtlety, and mastery" (Bhajan, 2003, p. 204). It helps one to "see beyond the immediate realities of life to the sublime universal play that lies beyond" (p. 204). It is deeply connected with an intuitive sense of knowing and is intricately linked with the first body, the Soul Body.

The Subtle Body will be discussed more fully in later chapters in relationship with the Soul Body.

The tenth and final body is the Radiant Body. Yogi Bhajan called it the “One-Plus Body” because it is the totality of the Subtle Body, plus the radiance (p. 204). It is associated with radiant-like qualities of “royal courage,” and “nobility” (p. 204). If this body is underdeveloped one would feel “afraid of conflict” and “shy away” from attention of others, for fear of “the energy and responsibility that come with the recognition” of one’s “inner nobility” (p. 204). One might feel “ineffective and unable to come through in situations” (p. 204). All of the bodies are balanced and activated through unique, specific meditations, pranayam, or breath patterns, kriyas, or yoga sets, or various other means of raising the Kundalini energy and increasing conscious awareness.

Parallel Unisonness.

Yogi Bhajan (2003) described an “eleventh embodiment” called “Parallel Unisonness” (p. 203). Parallel Unisonness represents the sound current, “the wellspring of Infinity from which all mantras originate” (p. 203). Yogi Bhajan described this elevated state of consciousness:

When the God in you, and the human in you are in parallel unisonness, then you are an 11. You have no duality, you have divine vision, and the truth flows from you. You don’t have to find anything outside of you. The jewels are all in you—you are rich inside, you have satisfaction and contentment. (p. 203)

This is the experience of pure Consciousness from the yogic perspective. In this state, one has total control over all the other ten bodies and can “direct the parts” of one’s being from an “impersonal, expansive space that allows Infinity to flow through” at all times (p. 203). The key to balancing or achieving this state is through the Shabd Guru, or *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*. The Shabd Guru is “sound as teacher” (p. 70). The Siri Guru Granth Sahib

is the ultimate Shabd Guru written by the ten Sikh Gurus. It is a specific “rhythm and pattern of energy” (p. 71). The patterns “exist from the beginning of creation. They are the tides and rhythms of the movement of the creative pulse of Infinite consciousness. They vibrate in all things continually” (p. 71). *Granth* means “knot”; it is the knot that “binds the pattern of awareness into the words of the mantras, or poems (p. 71). Through the sound current of the mantra, one can experience and reside in Divine Consciousness. The Shabd Guru is explained more fully in later chapters.

Maya, Tattvas, Gunas

Yogi Bhajan (2003) taught, in accordance with various saints and sages that “whatever elements are found in the constitution of the Infinite Universe will also be found in the human body. The Universe is the entire Cosmos; and we are a microcosm of the entire Cosmos” (p. 211). According to yogic teachings, one begins on the earth as a newborn baby with a consciousness that is “undifferentiated” (p. 210). The baby “experiences itself as merged into everything” and then over time differentiation begins to happen between “that which is ‘me’ and that which is ‘not me’” (p. 210). Yogananda (1946) described *maya* according to the Vedic scriptures as “the principle of relativity and duality... a false or unreal veil” (p.298). Newton’s law of motion is the law of maya, “to have a single force is impossible. There must be, and always is, a pair of forces equal and opposite” (p. 298). Humanity’s highest goal is “to rise above the duality of creation and perceive the unity of the Creator” (p. 299). Duality is cyclical and based on the law of polarity: “flow and ebb, rise and fall, day and night, pleasure and pain, good and evil, birth and death” (p. 299). Maya is the process by which one increasingly feels a sense of the illusion of separation from the greater Consciousness. There are thirty-one stages of

separation going from “complete Oneness down to pure individual atom separateness” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 210). Each stage, or *tattva*, has its own qualities. The final five tattvas “give rise to what we experience as the qualities of matter and the sensations we are used to” (p. 210). The five densest tattvas are earth, water, fire, air, and ether. These are the “same ‘elements’ known to Hermetic science, Chinese medicine and medieval alchemy” (p. 210). The tattvas are “specific frequency ranges of pranic vibrations, each associated with a particular chakra . . . we can most readily experience them as emotions but they serve other energy functions in the body as well” (p. 196). Yogi Bhajan said, “Creation has layers. It is subtle. In the West we pay attention only to the last most dense layer of matter” (p. 210). Guru Nanak and many other saints and sages in the East have described “worlds upon unseen worlds. The mind sense all those seen and unseen” (p. 210). The balance of the tattvas with the mind creates “the qualities of our life, our mind, and our health,” creating a “unified personality” (p. 210). The five earthly tattvas are qualities of one’s individual senses, and qualities in the world. The five tattvas “engage in three types of behaviors or qualities” called *gunas*, which determine much about the quality of one’s life. The three *gunas* are *sattvic guna*, *rajasic guna*, and *tamasic guna*. The *sattvic guna* quality of the mind brings “clarity and lightness” and one becomes “both connected and effective” (p. 210). The *rajasic guna* is a “forcefulness and will” that empowers one to “be the king of the territory” or “gain jurisdiction” over one’s surroundings (p. 210). *Tamasic guna* is associated with “dullness, unawareness, attachment, and functioning only from need and instinct . . . without any blessings or guidance from the heavens” (p. 210). Each of the five tattvas are associated with various emotional states that can be channeled through Kundalini yogic kriyas, or sets, and meditations. Fire, for example, is

connected to anger and to the third chakra, the navel point. Anger can be a productive or destructive force in one's life and can be channeled so as to take advantage of its useful qualities.

Yogi Bhajan (2003) spoke extensively about the tattva, ether, which is the most subtle element. The ether tattva, also called *akasha tattva*, is centered at the throat or fifth chakra in the body, "the space between the collar-bone and the nape of the neck" (p. 212). This is the *vyama-granthi* region of the body, which is made up of the following glands: thyroid, parathyroid, salivary, and tonsils. The glands' secretions "help mold our minds and keep them nourished" (p. 212). A person with a tendency toward the *vyama-granthi* region in the body will be able to use the mind to tune in to the "Supreme Consciousness" (p. 212). This region "of females is much stronger than that of males" and is associated with qualities of the Divine Feminine (p. 212). The "trinity" of the elements air, fire, and water are the "primal constituents of the material world," and this trinity maintains the elements within the body (p. 212). In order to reach a higher Consciousness, one must not "remain rooted at the lower centers of earth, water, and fire" (p. 212). When one is able to raise Consciousness above the lower centers, one is able to "get in tune with Divine Love (the heart center) and Universal Intuition (the throat center)," to "merge totally with the Infinite" (p. 212). Through mastery of the Shabd Guru, "the sacred sound current," one is able to "move from gross to subtle and from subtle to Infinite" (p. 212). Yogi Bhajan said it is not enough to "simply relate our physical elements to the cosmic elements," one must "learn the technical know-how by which we mentally and spiritually tune into the Infinite Supreme Consciousness" (p. 212). The "know-how" is yoga: "the science of union with the Higher Consciousness" (p.

212). Through Kundalini yoga, one can fulfill the “longing to belong to the Supreme Consciousness,” and transcend one’s “finite nature and merge with the Infinite” (p. 212).

Chapter 5 Individuation

Jung (1944/1953, 1956/1963, 1961, 1967) and others described the third coniunctio of alchemy as paralleling the attainment of individuation in depth psychology (Goodchild, 2006; Raff, 2000; Odajnyk, 1993; Schwartz-Salant, 1995). Goodchild (2006) described the nature of the third coniunctio as “important not only theoretically and for understanding psychological processes, but also experientially,” in an embodied, physical way (p. 64). The third coniunctio is “symbolized by the diamond body,” a “crystallization of the archetype of the universal Self as a permanent part of the individual’s psyche” (Odajnyk, 1993, p. 164). Mystics who have experienced this coniunctio are often “reduced to silence” or say the experience is “indescribable” (p. 166). This is the ultimate goal of Eastern and Western meditation, and “expresses the highest psychological and spiritual development of which human beings are capable” (p. 166). It is through this creation of a “psychic energy field,” or third reality that there is a “union of the personal Self with the transpersonal Self,” which becomes a “permanent part of an individual’s personality” (p. 166). Odajnyk (1993) suggested that Jung’s familiarity with Eastern alchemy and meditation and his own personal experiences of the third realm “raise the possibility of another interpretation of the coniunctio stages,” as the “actual psychological experiences that take place during meditation” (p. 158). The possibility of the experiencing of the coniunctio through meditation of one kind or another, will be further explored in later chapters.

Edward Edinger (1985) defined coniunctio as “the culmination of the opus... two substances come together to create a third substance with different properties. These experiences provided important images for alchemical fantasy” (p. 211). The alchemists

sought to produce the infallible substance, the opus, or philosophers' stone which was quite literally, a transformation of base substances into "noble" metal: "our gold is not the common gold" but it is "philosophical gold" (Edinger, 1972, p. 267). A stone is "matter in one of its hardest forms and connotes solidity, permanency and stubborn factuality" (p. 267). Thus, the philosophers' stone symbolized "concretized or actualized wisdom" (p. 267). This can be understood psychologically. Edinger (1972) writes:

This capacity of the stone refers to the ability of the integrated personality to perceive meaning and value in the most ordinary and even disagreeable of happenings. Likewise, inferior, "base" aspects of oneself will be seen to contain value. Since beauty is in the eye of the beholder, it is a change in perceiving attitude which brings the transformation. (p. 267)

Gold and silver were considered the most "noble" materials because they were "incorruptible... thus they carried the qualities of unchanging consistency and eternity. Similarly, the experience of the Self in the individuation process conveys to the ego the characteristics of reliable stability" (p. 266). These qualities develop from an "increasing awareness of and relationship to the transpersonal or 'eternal' dimension of the psyche which is an important aspect of the experience of the Self" (p. 266). The alchemists were trying to produce "philosophical" or "spiritual content" through "chemical procedures," which was "doomed to failure" (p. 267). But it ultimately "left us a rich heritage of symbolic material which describes the phenomenology of the individuation process" (p. 267). Edinger (1985) cited the example of the alchemist's combining of mercury and sulphur to make red mercuric sulphide, or the "red stone of the philosophers" (p. 211). Edinger wrote of a "lesser" and "greater" coniunctio; the former, "a union or fusion of substances that are not yet thoroughly separated or discriminated. It is always followed by death or *mortificatio*" (p. 211). The greater coniunctio is "the goal of the *opus*, the

supreme accomplishment” (p. 211). Jung (1956/1963) described the lesser coniunctio as represented by “the dragon embracing the woman in the grave, or by two animals fighting, or by the king dissolving in water” (p. 470). His description shows the “paradoxical nature” of the coniunctio through symbols, none of which represent an expression of wholeness (p. 470). The union of the coniunctio takes place in the “psychological authority” of the self (p. 471). The unio mentalis or individuation, is an “interior oneness” from facing the shadow and complexes and “psychic equilibration of opposites ‘in the overcoming of the body,’ a state of equanimity transcending the body’s affectivity and instinctuality” (p. 471).

Edinger (1985) described the lesser coniunctio, where the opposites have been “imperfectly separated” as a “contaminated mixture that must be subjected to further procedures” (p. 212). It is the image that has been “killed, maimed, or fragmented” and possibly overlapping with other alchemical procedures of *mortificatio* or *solutio* (p. 212). An example of this would be Oedipus’s union with his mother, commonly known as the Oedipus complex. The mother is the “*prima materia*” that “brought about healing and rejuvenation as well as death” (p. 212). This is the dangerous aspect of the lesser coniunctio; “the immature son-ego is eclipsed and threatened with destruction when it naively embraces the maternal unconscious” (p. 212). The lesser coniunctio occurs whenever “the ego identifies with contents emerging from the unconscious,” or when “the ego identifies with certain individuals, groups, institutions, and collectivities,” which are identified as “individual and collective transferences” (p. 215). The lesser coniunctio is most often followed by “*mortificatio*,” or “*putrefactio*,” which is the nigredo or blackening, literally translated as “killing” (p. 147). One experiences a death. Following

the lesser coniunctio one undergoes “the most negative operation in alchemy. It has to do with darkness, defeat, torture, mutilation, death, and rotting,” which often then leads to “growth, resurrection, rebirth,” and the possibility of the greater coniunctio (p. 148). In this phase of the nigredo, “the worthless becomes the most precious, and the last becomes the first. Psychologically, the “blackness” is the shadow aspect of the personality.

According to Jung (1956/1963) “even a moderately comprehensive knowledge of the shadow can cause a good deal of confusion and mental darkness” (p. 520). Jung called this blackness of the nigredo, a substance of “great importance,” as well as the “starting point of the work” (p. 512). The Philosophers’ Stone is “extracted from the ugly *prima materia*, which is poison in its original form but panacea after undergoing *mortificatio*” (Edinger, 1985, p. 154).

Edinger’s (1985) greater coniunctio is the goal of the opus or “Philosophers’ Stone,” “Penetrating Water,” “Tincture,” and a long list of other names for the final union of opposites (p. 215). It is “the stone which is not a stone” (p. 216). “The back and forth of the coniunctio parallels the psychotherapeutic process where one is “alternating to improve,” moving back and forth between the opposites (Jung, 1956/1963, p. 216). Then “very gradually a new standpoint emerges that allows the opposites to be experienced at the same time. This new standpoint is the coniunctio” (p. 216). The Philosophers’ Stone is itself a “union of opposites” (p. 216). Philosophy is a “love a wisdom, is a spiritual endeavor, whereas a stone is crude, hard, material reality” (p. 216). Jung (1967) gave an example of the coming together of the high and the low in the image of the Christ figure and the lapis:

What unconscious nature was ultimately aiming at when she produced the image of the lapis can be seen most clearly in the notion that it originated in matter and

in man . . . its fabrication lay at least potentially within man's reach. . . . Christ's spirituality was too high and man's naturalness was too low. In the image of Mercurius and the lapis the "flesh" glorified itself in its own way; it would not transform itself into spirit but, on the contrary, "fixed" the spirit in stone. (pp. 95-96)

The high is united with the low and both are transformed through the alchemical process and what is produced is something more stable, grounded, and elevated than either were before.

During my yatra to India, I became fixated on finding the "right" or "perfect" lapis stones in the form of a *mala*, which is a strand of small, round beads used in ceremonies and prayer rituals of various Eastern and Western religions from Catholicism to Buddhism. I had not previously read a lot of material on alchemy and knew very little if anything about the lapis stone but somehow felt drawn to it. In Dharamsala, I found and purchased the lapis stones. As I sit now at my writing desk, the lapis stones are here as a memento that has been a part of my journey much of the way. While I am writing I will often reach over mid-sentence and just hold the beads for a moment. Something intuitively told me from the beginning of this process that I should have the beads near me as I write. I am not entirely sure that I did find the right or perfect lapis stones that I was looking for in India. They are not comfortable to wear, are not well strung, and are interspersed with turquoise beads. I was told by the shopkeeper, that this was because the strand was dropped on the floor and the round stones scattered across the room; they could not find all of the stones and so they mixed in turquoise ones to make a complete strand of 108 stones. In this same shop I immediately felt drawn to a bright gold, little charm looking something like a small seed in the center with two spheres on either side. The shopkeeper wrote down the name of the symbol on a folded-up, little scrap of paper

and put it in with my purchase: “vajra.” It was only later that I realized the significance of this little symbol. In the Tibetan culture, *vajra* is in Sanskrit for thunderbolt; it is a “ritual instrument of Tantric Buddhism” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969, p. 1058). It can be directly translated as “‘diamond’, ‘sceptre’, ‘thunderbolt’ or ‘Philosopher’s Stone’” (p. 1058). Double vajras often appear in the center of Tibetan mandalas with a lotus as a reminder of the Infinite (p. 1058). They are a remainder that “in the very heart of the person meditating, the whole cosmos is reflected in the spirit as if in a flawless mirror . . . enlightenment consists in knowing one’s own heart for what it is” (p. 1058).

In *Man and his Symbols*, Marie-Louise von Franz (1964) wrote a chapter about the lapis or philosophers’ stone as symbolizing “something that can never be lost or dissolved, something eternal . . . the mystical experience of God within one’s own soul” (p. 226). It often takes “prolonged suffering to burn away all the superfluous psychic elements concealing the stone” (p. 226). Psychologically, this is a description of the experience of the Self that will “occur to most people at least once in a lifetime” (p. 226). The stone is a symbol of the Self that unites the “unconscious psyche” with “matter” (p. 226). Von Franz went on to hypothesize that “‘psyche’ and ‘matter’ are actually the same phenomenon, one observed from ‘within’ and the other from ‘without’” (p. 226). Jung’s concept of synchronicity is “a way in which we might penetrate deeper into the inter-relation of psyche and matter,” through the symbolic meaning created in the relationship between inner and outer, or psyche and matter (p. 227). Synchronistic events also “invariably accompany the crucial phases of the process of individuation. But too often they pass unnoticed, because the individual has not learned to watch for such coincidences and to make them meaningful” (p. 227).

The coniunctio is a symbolic marriage between opposites, or “sexual intercourse between Sol and Luna” (Edinger, 1985, p. 217). Other symbolic examples of the coniunctio are the crucifixion of Christ and the marriage of Zeus and Hera. The extension of these unions beyond the joining of opposites leads to a new creation that is beyond opposites, to “love,” as “the extraverted aspect of individuation” (p. 223). It is an “*objective* love, a love purged of personal desirousness, not one side of a pair of opposites, but rather beyond the opposites” (p. 223). This extraverted aspect of the coniunctio “promotes social interest and the unity of the human race; the introverted aspect promotes connection with the Self and the unity of the individual psyche” (p. 223). Transpersonal love “both generates and is generated by the greater *coniunctio*” (p. 223). Jung (1961) described the greater coniunctio of transpersonal love as

something superior to the individual, a unified and undivided whole. Being a part, man cannot grasp the whole. He is at its mercy . . . he is always caught up by it and enclosed within it. He is dependent upon it and is sustained by it. Love is his light and his darkness whose end he cannot see. Love ceases not. (p. 354)

Once this transpersonal love, or coniunctio union is created it “has the power to transform base matter into noble” (Edinger, 1985, p. 227). *Proiectio* and *multiplicatio* or *augmentatio*, are operations not performed by the alchemist but by the material itself. They are “properties” of the Philosophers’ Stone, or lapis, which are “projected” onto other matter and it “thereby multiplies itself” (p. 227). *Multiplicatio* suggests that “transformative effects emanate from the activated Self in the process of conscious realization,” or individuation, and that the “consciousness of an individual who is related to the Self seems to be contagious and tends to multiply itself in others” (p. 227). Yogi Bhajan (1997) has stated a similar yogic principle of influence: “If your presence doesn’t work, nothing works” (p. 10). One’s presence alone should be sufficient to uplift and

influence another. Being in the vibratory field of and experiencing the Aura of a highly evolved being, such as the Dalai Lama, or other Gurus, or Masters, who have reached a certain level of consciousness, affects one's entire being. One can immensely benefit from their presence alone. Simply sitting in a Kundalini yoga class and being in that vibratory energy affects one's various bodies and has an effect of contagion. However, in order for this contagion to occur one must be open to the process and "open to receive the effects of the tincture" (p. 228). Edinger cited Paracelsus' alchemical process: "For if the tincture is to tinge, it is necessary that the body or material which is to be tinged should be open, and in a state of flux: for unless this were so, the tincture could not operate" (p. 228). As with psychotherapy, unless the patient is open to change and to the work, they will not feel the effects of the "tincture." Jung (1954) commented on the reciprocal nature of therapeutic relationship: "You can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence" (p. 163). The analyst must be open to the effects of the transformative process taking place within the patient in order for it to create an effect. Yogi Bhanjan (2003) discussed the nature of the Guru Shabd or "sound current as teacher," as similarly creating a contagion of synchronous sound patterns (p. 66). When one chants the mantra correctly, a merging occurs with the vibratory energy. This "sympathetic vibration" is created through focused attention, or "active stillness, a shuniya, a zero-point in the consciousness" (p. 72). In that stillness "you are like an instrument perfectly played in an orchestra. The sound of your instrument merges into the larger tune and becomes one with it" (p. 72).

The process of moving toward individuation or the Philosophers' Stone, involves a circling around, once and again, back to what is true and back through previous

alchemical stages in search of the opus. So too, like the process of this alchemical hermeneutic dissertation, there is a spiraling that takes place between what is known and what is being re-membered that was once lost. There is an attitude of reverence for what is found along the way and value to the process of the work. Edinger (1985) described one of the requirements for seeking the Philosophers' Stone; one must be more "Self-oriented rather than ego-oriented" (p. 6). Paradoxically, the Self is the opus, the Philosophers' Stone, and the end goal of the process of individuation. However, "the potential at least must exist from the start . . . one must start with a bit of the Philosophers' Stone if one is to find it" (p. 6). There is a deepening of the process that occurs and one realizes that "development occurs not by the will of the ego but by the urge to individuate from the Self" (p. 6). Historically, knowledge of the alchemical Stone was to remain secret, and alchemists were themselves "guardians of the mystery that was not to be divulged to the unworthy" (p. 6). According to Jung (1944/1953) the alchemists worked as "decided solitaries; each has his say in his own way. They rarely have pupils, and of direct tradition there seems to have been very little, nor is there much evidence of any secret societies" (p. 314). Despite the alchemists' relative isolation, there was "remarkable agreement on first principles," and there was "little of that disputatiousness and splitting of hairs that so often mar theology and philosophy" (p. 314). The reason for this, Jung hypothesized, was that "true alchemy" was "never a business or a career, but a genuine *opus* to be achieved by quiet, self-sacrificing work" (p. 314).

Psychologically, the misuse of alchemical knowledge of the opus refers to "inflation following the ego's identification with an archetypal image" which could be potentially destructive (Edinger, 1985, p. 7). However, the nature of the opus or

individuated Self is such that it is “not communicable to those who have not yet experienced it for themselves” (p. 7). The same is true for Kundalini yoga. As recently as the late 1960s, Kundalini yoga was forbidden from being taught publically for fear of misuse of the technology (Bhajan, 2003). The knowledge surrounding Kundalini yoga was “necessarily secret and required initiation, lifetimes of positive karma, or the blessing of a teacher to learn” (Khalsa, G. S., 2009, p. 321). Only in the last 40 years has Kundalini yoga been taught openly, beginning with Yogi Bhajan, who decided that because of the coming shift from the Piscean to the Aquarian age, the teachings were now necessary technology for all of humanity. Paradoxically, one must generally have a certain level of awareness or have previously felt something of one’s own Kundalini energy to be drawn to, or open to the practice.

First Coniunctio

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis* Jung (1956/1963) described in detail the three levels of the coniunctio based on the writings of various alchemists, philosophers, and theorists, focusing on the 16th-century alchemist, Gerard Dorn. Dorn wrote about the psychological aspects of the “chymical marriage” as a psychic event paralleling the individuation process (p. 469). The psychological union or “interior oneness” is the *unio mentalis* or individuation (p. 471). The *unio mentalis* takes place within the self as a “psychic equilibration of opposites ‘in the overcoming of the body,’ a state of equanimity transcending the body’s affectivity and instinctuality” (p. 471). In order for the spirit, or animus, to unite with the soul, “the mind (*mens*) must be separated from the body—which is equivalent to ‘voluntary death’” (p. 471). The purpose of this process is to reduce the influence of the body on the mind, which parallels the psychotherapeutic

process as it “objectifies the affects and instincts and confronts consciousness with them” (p. 471). In this separation, the soul and all its projections are withdrawn from the “bodily sphere” and from “environmental conditions relating to the body . . . a withdrawal of the fantasy-projections” (p. 472). Jung described this as a process of “introversion, introspection, meditation, and the careful investigation of desires and their motives” (p. 472). The process naturally brings a confrontation with the shadow where one has the “opportunity to discover the dark side of his personality, his inferior wishes and motives, childish fantasies and resentments . . . all those traits he habitually hides from himself” (p. 473). Here, one is exposed to “all those traditional, intellectual, and moral values which educate and cultivate the individual, and, on the other, of the products of the unconscious, which present themselves to consciousness as archetypal ideas” (p. 473). The archetypal ideas, being more rare than the super-ego oriented values, “fill the gaps” in the individual values and ideas. The “*arcanum*” of alchemy fills in the space between opposites, “in particular between good and evil” (p. 473). The “*lapis Philosophorum*” is the arcanum that “would heal not only the disharmonies of the physical world but the inner psychic conflict as well, the ‘affliction of the soul’” (p. 473). In order to achieve the *lapis Philosophorum*, one must “loosen the age-old attachment of the soul to the body and thus make conscious the conflict between the purely natural and the spiritual man” (p. 474). The goal of all of this is “the *unio mentalis*, the attainment of full knowledge of the heights and depths of one’s own character” (p. 474). In order for this to be obtained, one must be willing to “see through his own projections and recognize the nature of his anima . . . to question the fictitious picture of one’s own personality,” all of which requires “an unusual degree of self-abnegation” or self-renunciation (p. 474). The “mental union

in the overcoming of the body” is the first stage of the coniunctio or individuation (p. 474). This union is a “*total* union of opposites in symbolic form,” through a substance that is “material as well as spiritual, living as well as inert, masculine as well as feminine, old as well as young, and-presumably-morally neutral... created by man, and at the same time... by God himself” (p. 475). The end product of the first coniunctio is “the ego-personality’s coming to terms with its own background, the shadow,” which “corresponds to the union of spirit and soul in the *unio mentalis*” (p. 497).

Second Coniunctio

The second stage towards the production of the final coniunctio is “the reunion of the spirit with the body” often symbolized by the “chymical marriage” (Jung, 1956/1963, p.475). To Dorn and to Jung, the person of the alchemist was of utmost importance, not just the procedure, “for in the individual was hidden that ‘substance of celestial nature known to very few,’” which “can be freed from its fetter, not by its contrary but by its like” (p. 475). The alchemist must contain something of the ultimate opus within himself to even consider reaching the actual opus, the third coniunctio. Part of the preparation for this stage was presumably ongoing “reading and meditating,” which led to the “spagyric,” an herbal medicine created through the alchemical process, and ultimately leading to the “true and perfect wisdom” (p. 476). This second stage is of particular importance because it is only through “the re-uniting of the *unio mentalis* with the body” that it becomes possible for a “union with the *unus mundus*” (p. 476). This stage consists of the reunion of “the spiritual position with the body,” and “making a reality of the man who has acquired some knowledge of his paradoxical wholeness” (p. 476). There is much ambiguity here, because “no one knows how the paradoxical wholeness of man can ever

be realized” (p. 476). The “realization of the wholeness that has been made conscious is an apparently insoluble task and faces the psychologist with questions which he can answer only with hesitation and uncertainty” (p. 476). In order to reconcile the opposites, there must be a production of the quintessence, “a certain heavenly substance hidden in the human body . . . the balsam . . . the philosophic wine . . . a virtue and heavenly vigour—in short, the truth. This truth was the panacea” (p. 477). In the symbol of the philosophic wine, the “liquid represents the body, but as alcohol it represents spirit, which would seem to correspond with the ‘heavenly virtue’” (p. 478).

Jung (1956/1963) went into great detail describing Dorn’s “ways and means for producing the quintessence,” which will not be discussed in full detail, only to point to the symbolic nature of the processes. Jung acknowledged that “to the modern mind such contrivances of thought will seem like nebulous products of a dreaming fancy,” which at the same time makes them ideal subjects for “decipherment by the method of complex psychology” (p. 482). The medieval alchemist used “chemical substances and implements” to illustrate fantasies through chemical procedures as a description of the union of the “*unio mentalis* with the body” (p. 483). The final process of this stage is defined: “As in a centrifuge, the pure was separated from the impure, and a liquid ‘of the colour of the air’ floated to the top. This was the *caelum*” (p. 486). All of these procedures within the alchemical vessel led up to this point, the creation of the caelum, “the celestial substance hidden in man, the secret ‘truth,’ the ‘sum of virtue’” (p. 487). For Dorn this was a description of the “kingdom of heaven on earth” (p. 487). The creation of this caelum for Dorn and the alchemists of his time was based on projection. Projections are “unconscious identification with the object,” and can be “withdrawn only

when they come within the possible scope of consciousness. Outside that, nothing can be corrected” (p. 489). Dorn was not able to recognize the “blatant projection of psychic contents into chemical substance and thereby dissolve it” (p. 489). Hence, the “chemical *caelum* coincided with the heavenly substance in the body, the ‘truth.’ For him this was not a duality but an identity” (p. 489). Jung wrote that the processes of the alchemist not only was meant as a literal process of mixing “magic herbs” to create the quintessence, but that its purpose was also to “express a moral meaning” (p. 493). The alchemist worked with “*ideas*, with psychic processes and states, but referred to them under the name of the corresponding substances” (p. 493). Jung described the example of the process of the creation of the *caelum*:

The production of the *caelum* was a symbolic rite performed in the laboratory. Its purpose was to create, in the form of a substance, that “truth,” the celestial balsam or life principle, which is identical with the God-image. Psychologically, it was a representation of the individuation process by means of chemical substance and procedures, or what we today call active imagination. (p. 494)

Through active imagination and confrontation of the shadow, the possibility of a third, a medium between the conscious and unconscious, is created. The shadow “presents a fundamental contrast to the conscious personality. This contrast is the prerequisite for the difference of potential from which psychic energy arises” (p. 497). “The ‘solvent’ can only be of an irrational nature. In nature the resolution of opposites is always an energetic process: she acts *symbolically* . . . doing something that expresses both sides” (p. 495). Jung gave the example of a waterfall, which “visibly mediates between above and below. The waterfall itself is then the incommensurable third” (p. 495). In this sort of conflict between the conscious and unconscious, “the logic of the intellect usually fails, for in the logical antithesis there is no third,” but only through the “solvent” of the symbolic action

is the third created (p. 495). The shadow is in opposition to consciousness, but is “mitigated by complementary and compensatory processes in the unconscious. Their impact on consciousness finally produces the uniting symbols” (p. 497). The second stage of the coniunctio comes to completion with the “union of the *unio mentalis* with the body” (p. 497). The *unio mentalis* means “knowledge of oneself . . . the self as a substance incommensurable with the ego, hidden in the body, and identical with the image of God . . . the Indian idea of *purusha-atman*,” free from the opposites (p. 499).

Third Coniunctio

The ultimate goal of the alchemists was to produce the “mysterious substance” of the third coniunctio (Jung, 1956/1963, p. 525). This substance, known to the adepts by a variety of names, was always

something transcendental, which, in contrast to the perishability of all known matter, was incorruptible, inert as a metal or a stone, and yet alive, like an organic being, and at the same time a universal medicament. Such a “body” was quite obviously not to be met with in experience. The tenacity with which the adepts pursued this goal for at least seventeen hundred years can be explained only by the numinosity of this idea. (p. 525)

Jung and Dorn alike described the goal of the third coniunctio as more than just the “production of the lapis,” which “denoted only the completion of the second stage of conjunction” (p. 533). In psychological terms, the formation of the lapis is the “representation of the idea of the self in actual and visible form,” which is a mere “*rite d’entrée* . . . a propaedeutic action and mere anticipation of its realization” (p. 533). The creation of this substance by no means guaranteed its stability or constancy to “withstand the disturbing or hostile influences of the environment” (p. 533). Jung doubted the plausibility of the creation of the third coniunctio: “Just as a lapis Philosophorum, with its miraculous powers, was never produced, so psychic wholeness will never be attained

empirically, as consciousness is too narrow and too one-sided to comprehend the full inventory of the psyche” (p. 533). One always has to begin again, and again, from the start. The work requires the greatest “simplicity . . . but simple things are always the most difficult” (p. 534). For Dorn, the “*unus mundus*” united with the “whole man” was the third and final coniunctio (p. 534). This union, is with the world, “not with the world of multiplicity as we see it but with a potential world, the eternal Ground of all empirical being, just as the self is the ground and origin of the individual personality past, present, and future” (p. 534). Dorn “hoped and expected,” through the third coniunctio, to create “a self known by meditation and produced by alchemical means,” that was united with the *unus mundus* (p. 534). The third coniunctio is “universal: it is the relation or identity of the personal with the suprapersonal atman, and of the individual tao with the universal tao” (p. 535). Jung validated Dorn’s description of the third coniunctio and urged the “critical reader” to “put aside his prejudices and for once try to experience on himself the effects of the process I have described, or else to suspend judgment and admit that he understands nothing” (p. 535). In support of Dorn’s description, Jung cited his credentials of 30 years of studying the psychic processes, despite possible critique by the reader: “It is chiefly our ignorance of the psyche if these experiences appear ‘mystic’” (p. 535). What he was describing was a “window into eternity,” possible through the goal of the opus which could “spiritualize the body” (p. 535). Jung cited the example of the “air-coloured liquid that floats to the surface” of the alchemical vessel, as representing the “*corpus glorificationis*,” the resurrected body “whose relation to eternity is self-evident” (p. 535). The alchemist “elevated the body into the proximity with the spirit while at the same time drawing the spirit down into matter” (p. 536). The effects of the alchemical

procedures created a change in both the physical and spiritual. “All effects are mutual, and nothing changes anything else without itself being changed... at the Creation, at least a little bit of the divinity, the *anima mundi*, entered into material things and was caught there” (p. 536). For the alchemist, and for Jung, “matter had a divine aspect” (p. 537).

The third coniunctio was “not a compromise but something new”; it moved beyond the tension of the opposites of “spirit and matter, conscious and unconscious, bright and dark, and so on” (Jung, 1956/1963, p. 536). For Dorn, the third coniunctio or *mysterium coniunctionis* was “the union of the alchemically produced *caelum* with the *unus mundus*, he expressly meant not a fusion of the individual with his environment, or even his adaptation to it, but a *unio mystica* with the potential world” (p. 537).

Psychologically, this is a blending of the conscious with the unconscious; “the result of this conjunction or equation is theoretically inconceivable, since a known quantity is combined with an unknown one” (p. 539). The nature of the changes created through the final coniunctio “can be established only indirectly from the symbolism used by the adepts” to describe the *caelum* (p. 539). The *caelum* was a “symbolic prefiguration of the self . . . a universal medicine” which could heal all “organic and psychic ills” (p. 539). It was the “balsam and elixir of life, as a life-prolonging, strengthening, and rejuvenating magical potion . . . a living stone” (p. 539). Most important was its “incorruptibility” throughout all time:

It radiates magic power and transforms the perishable into the imperishable and the impure into the pure, it multiplies itself indefinitely; it is simple and therefore universal, the union of all opposites . . . the *anima mundi* in matter, and the truth itself. (p. 539)

Jung compared the experience of this *caelum*, or stone to experiences of the divine in various other cultures and religions: “the *unio mystica*, or *tao*, or the content of *samadhi*,

or the experience of *satori* in Zen” (p. 540). But the experience remained an “empirical one,” as such experiences were corroborated by both Eastern and Western cultures “both from the present and from the distant past, which confirm its unsurpassable subjective significance” (p. 540). At the same time, it was a “psychic experience” that could be “understood only as a numinous event, whose actuality, nevertheless, cannot be doubted” (p. 540). The final processes of the coniunctio can be summarized as: the preparation of the body by “extracting a quintessence,” or the “physical equivalent of heaven, of the potential world,” also called the *caelum*. This was “the very essence of the body, an incorruptible and therefore pure and eternal substance, a *corpus glorificatum*, capable and worthy of being united with the *unio mentalis*” (p. 542). The part of the body left over, the “*terra damnata*” had to “be abandoned to its fate” (p. 543). The production of the *caelum*, the “pure, incorrupt, original stuff of the world . . . therefore, permitted the alchemist to ‘hope and expect’ the conjunction with the *unus mundus*” (p. 543). However, “the procedure did not take place in the real object at all but was a fruitless projection, since the *caelum* could never be fabricated in reality. It was a hope that was extinguished with alchemy and then, it seems, was struck off the agenda for ever” (p. 543). The lapis or final coniunctio is a description of the archetype of the self. In alchemy the aspects of the self are “projected into matter,” whereas psychologically they are “understood as symbols” (p. 544).

Mandala Consciousness

According to Jung’s lecture on Kundalini yoga, only through continued analysis “does the analogy with yoga set in, in that consciousness is severed from its object” (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 83). This process is connected to the process of individuation,

“which begins with the self severing itself as unique from the objects and the ego” (p. 83). There is a detachment of consciousness as it is “separated from the objects and from the ego” and moves to the place of the “non-ego to the other center, to the foreign yet originally own” (p. 83). Jung (1961) gave the example of mandalas as “cryptograms... in them I saw the self—that is, my whole being—actively at work” (p.196). He described the mandala as “the self, the wholeness of the personality,” and a “living conception of the self” (p. 196). Psychologically, the self is “a union of conscious (masculine) and unconscious (feminine)” (Jung, 1959, p. 268). Empirically, “the self appears spontaneously in the shape of specific symbols, and its totality is discernible above all in the mandala” (p. 268). Historically, “these symbols are authenticated as God-images” (p. 268). Jung described the experience of the self through the mandala as something that cannot be proven “philosophically any further,” because it is a “psychical experience, which in practice is expressed as a feeling of deliverance” (Shamdasani, 1996, p. 83):

What has caused one to be previously seized with panic is not a panic any more; one is capable of seeing the tension of opposites of the world without agitation. One does not become apathetic but is freed from entanglement. Consciousness is removed to a sphere of objectlessness. This experience has its effects in practical life, and indeed in the most palpable way. (p. 83)

The described experience was “palpable” and applicable to “practical life,” as opposed to being solely a mystical, spiritual experience. As an integratable experience, it had the potential to affect one’s entire life in a meaningful, practical way. Through Jung’s synchronistic experience of painting mandalas, he realized that “everything, all the paths I had been following, all the steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point—namely, to the mid-point . . . the mandala is the center” (Jung, 19xx/1961, p. 196). The mandala is “the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation” (p.

196). It is the self, the “goal of psychic development”(p. 196). The evolution of which is “circumambulatory” in nature, “there is no linear evolution” of the self or rationally sequential individuation process (p. 196).

Above my desk is a hand-painted mandala that I found in Dharamsala while on my yatra through India. On the back is written “Kalachakra.” I had no idea what that meant at the time. I did not choose it; it seems to have chosen me. Some of my fellow yatra travelers, none of whom did I know very well, came and found me to tell me that they had found the “perfect” mandala for me. I went and met them at the little shop where they had put the mandala aside. I was not particularly fond of it initially. The colors were not my favorite and it did not move me in any particular way. It was interesting to me, however, how passionate everyone else seemed to be about the painting. I was not convinced, but decided to buy it because they loved it and I felt flattered that they picked it out especially for me. Once home, I did not frame it. It continued to lie on a shelf, rolled up inside a cardboard tube for over a year. Now framed and on the wall in front of my writing desk, it is truly a favorite—one of the most inspiring items I own. It carries with it a certain high vibrational energy from my time in India. Mandala, literally translated from the original Sanskrit means “circle.” Kalachakra comes from Tantric Buddhist tradition meaning “time-cycles” or “wheel.” The Kalachakra is related to the cycles of time and moving towards liberation through these different lifetime cycles. This symbol is particularly fitting; synchronistically it found its way to hang above my desk. The mandala is the expression of Self, “everything points toward the center,” to the undivided, the one. (Jung, 1961, p. 197).

Symbols of the Self

Jung (1956/1963) wrote about the nature of self-knowledge through the symbolic processes of alchemy. Jung described the unio mentalis, Philosophers' Stone, or opus as having so "volatile" an essence sealed within the Hermeneutic vessel that "this elusive Mercurius would then escape and return to its former nature," which according to the alchemists, happened not infrequently (p. 522). Jung cast doubt that the final opus can be obtained permanently, because the unio mentalis required constant monitoring, else it "slip back into its former unconsciousness without taking with it anything of the light of the spirit into the darkness of the body. For this reason the reunion with the body was something of a problem" (p. 522). Psychologically, this meant that the "insight gained by the withdrawal of projections could not stand the clash with reality . . . its truth could not be realized in fact" (p. 522). Odajnyk (1993) discussed the question of permanence of the lapis or psychic wholeness. Jung is "skeptical about the permanence and extent of this union of the conscious with the unconscious; yet the existence of the Self is a more or less permanent and distinct psychological entity" (p.163). Odajnyk noted that instead of continuing along the same lines of interpretation that he does with the first two coniunctios, in the third coniunctio Jung "suddenly changes his orientation and interprets this union as an actual mystical experience" instead of as "an imaginative grasp of the common transcendental ground of the psychophysical universe" (p. 163). In order to be consistent with his description of the first two coniunctios in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung would have argued that "Dorn's notion" of the third coniunctio is "an imaginative grasp of the common transcendental ground of the psychophysical universe" (p. 163).

Instead Jung (1956/63) described it as a “mystical” experience of “*unio mystica*, or *tao*, or the content of *samadhi*, or the experience of *satori* in Zen” (p. 540).

Jung (1956/1963) discussed *Mercurius* as “the soul of the gold and of the silver,” and “the prima materia” that must be “dissolved at the beginning of the work” through the nigredo, blackening, or death (p. 501). *Mercurius* is “not only the lapis as *prima* materia but the lapis as *ultima* materia, the goal of the opus” (p. 501). As to the nature of this substance, “Unequivocal statements can be made only in regard to immanent objects; transcendental ones can be expressed only by paradox. Thus, they are and they are not (that is to say, not to be found in our experience)” (p. 501). Jung defined *Mercurius*, or the opus as an experience not to be experienced in reality, as with the example of quicksilver as a “symbol for a transcendental idea,” which is “alleged to become manifest” (p. 502). Jung cast doubt on the possibility of the “reality” of the opus beyond a purely symbolic interpretation, through the chosen rhetoric in his essays. Therein lies the conflict between the possibilities Jung ascribed to the Philosophers’ Stone, and his description of the actualities of the Stone. Jung (1961) described his experience of Philemon as “quite real, as if he were a living personality” (p. 183). He would walk through the garden with Philemon, and described him as “what the Indians call a guru” (p.183). Philemon was not a “symbol” or “idea” to Jung, but “quite real” (p. 183). Jung acknowledged “that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce” (p. 183). Philemon was an example of that. Jung cited numerous personal examples of similar experiences when he experienced the “*mysterium coniunctionis*” and it was “not a product of imagination,” but “utterly real . . . nothing subjective about them; they had the quality of absolute objectivity” (p. 295). He described one such experience of

“detachment from valuations and from what we call emotional ties,” as “part of a completed individuation. . . . Only through objective cognition is the real *coniunctio* possible” (p. 296). Jung’s choice of language here is interestingly counter to his own descriptions of the nature of the *coniunctio*. Jung uses eloquent, poetically descriptive rhetoric to describe his experience of the “odor of sanctity,” and the “sweet smell” of the Holy Ghost as a manifestation of the *mysterium coniunctionis*, and in the same few paragraphs refers the reader to “objective cognition” as the pathway to the ultimate manifestation of the *coniunctio* or Philosophers’ Stone (p. 296). It was “objective” only in the sense that it was real, it happened; it was not “cognition” with which he experienced the “odor of sanctity.” What he described is an event of the *numinosum*, of the third realm of the imaginal, the Philosophers’ Stone. He did not experience it with “cognition” but experiences it with the other perceptive senses.

Imago Dei

Odajnyk (1993) described the final stage of individuation, according to Jung, as “the production of the *lapis*—psychologically, the establishment of the archetype of the personal Self as the unifying center of the personality” (p. 164). This is the “final goal of Western alchemy” (p. 164). However, “Western spirituality and Eastern alchemy . . . posit a further goal—the union of the personal Self with the transpersonal Self” (p. 164). He defined the personal Self as “an aspect of the *imago Dei* and potentially possesses the attributes of the universal *imago Dei*” (p. 164). The Self, described in Eastern alchemy and Western spirituality, is a “union of the two,” which “gives the person a complete experience of the power and extent of the universal Self” (p. 164). The “crystallization of the archetype of the universal Self” becomes a “permanent part of the individual’s

psyche” (p. 164). According to Odajnyk, this union “of the personal Self with the transpersonal Self” is made permanent through “the creation of a psychic energy field,” which is “the ultimate goal of meditation, both in the East and West (p. 164). In meditative terms, the production of the lapis or Philosophers’ stone has to do with the “establishment of a psychic structure that specifically embodies and functions with the energy of the Self. Prior to that structure, the Self must function through the various instincts and complexes and is affected by their characteristics” (p. 163). This achievement expresses the highest psychological and spiritual development of which human beings are capable. Such a development is a rare and unique event” (p. 166). It is not “wholly dependent upon good will, skill, and effort of the practitioner” but the “Self determines the rest. . . . *Deo concedente*, ‘God willing’” (p. 166).

Chapter 6

Findings: Kundalini Yoga and Depth Psychology, A Comparison and Contrasting

The in-between realm, between the conscious and unconscious, between the real and unreal, and between the physical and psychical is where Jung's depth psychology and Kundalini yogic philosophy meet. This is the realm of the reality of the soul and subtle body. The soul is "only partly confined to the body, just as God is only partly enclosed in the body of the world"; in psychological terms, "the psyche is only partly identical with our empirical conscious being" (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 282). Jung's reference to the soul as partially outside the body "refers to the alchemical *opus*" (p. 282). *Imaginatio* is the "key that opens the door to the secret of the *opus*" (p. 283), and the "imaginative faculty of the soul" (p. 279). Yogi Bhajan (2003) discussed prana, the breath, a "subtle life force of the body and mind," as an example of the "two-sided nature of perception and experience. The breath is both gross and subtle. It is both 'mine' and 'not mine.' It is both automatic and conscious" (p. 90). Breath "shares the nature of both the earthly and the heavenly... . The breath and the Word interact to create the matrix of our life and consciousness" in the physical realm and in the etheric, psychical realm (p. 90). The soul is a "concentrated extract of the life forces, both physical and psychic" (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 278). The processes of the imagination are "not as the immaterial phantoms we readily take fantasy-pictures to be," but are "something corporeal, a 'subtle body', semi-spiritual in nature" (p. 277). *Imaginatio vera*, then, "opens us to the invisible in things and makes visionary experience possible" through the "focused concentration of both physical and psychic life forces" (Goodchild, 2006, p. 80). This is the "*mundus imaginalis*, the semi-spiritual realm of the soul, of the celestial I" (p. 80). *Imaginatio* crosses between the realms and connects

them as something of the in-between. This is the place where the opus is possibly realized:

The place or the medium of realization is neither mind nor matter, but that intermediate realm of subtle reality which can be adequately expressed only by the symbol. The symbol is neither abstract nor concrete, neither rational nor irrational, neither real nor unreal. It is always both. (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 283)

Von Franz (1986) wrote about the creation of symbolic meaning: “For whenever man is confronted with something mysterious, unknown . . . his unconscious produces symbolic, mythical, that is, archetypal, models, which appear projected into the void” (p. xiii). She goes on to say that “such symbols—and they *are* symbols,” are “not to be understood as concrete statements” (p. xiii). Von Franz discussed the subtle body as “a form of the psyche that would indeed remain close to the body but would also still possess a certain minimal mass and extension in time-space, a form of appearance,” which would no longer be “understood as physical in the ordinary sense of the word” (p. 144).

Soul and Subtle Bodies

Goodchild (2006) described the nature of the subtle body, which “often involves intense levels of experience of a psychophysical nature, and has implications not only for embodiment processes but also for direct experiences of another world in this one” (p. 64). Such numinous experiences are “marked by profound levels of feeling and often bring about deep transformation and transmutation” (p. 64). Missing from von Franz’s description of symbolic meaning, is the possibility of the physical *and* psychical reality of the symbol (Goodchild, 2006). In the creation of symbolic meaning, the “metaphor conceals a true event,” which is the “ontological reality” of the “*mundus imaginalis*” (p. 65). Jung (1956/1963) wrote that “it is chiefly our ignorance of the psyche if these experiences appear ‘mystic’” (p. 535). The symbolic can “no longer be regarded only as

metaphorical and symbolic but rather... ‘both symbolic and nonsymbolic simultaneously’” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 65). This is the space “between waking and sleeping” (p. 70). The current shift in consciousness is taking place through the transition from the Piscean Age to the Aquarian Age:

According to both quantum physics and synchronicity, the new coordinates of reality . . . include the reunion of psyche and matter as a One world, the erosion of ordinary time and space, the participation of the individual in creating reality . . . the notion of *creatio continua*, continuing creation, that arises out of a reciprocal, ongoing relationship between the individual and the *unus mundus* . . . and the breakthrough of Eros awareness to a sense of oneness that does not sacrifice differentiation and distinctness. (p. 65)

Jung (1956/1963) described the “unity of the soul,” which “rests empirically on the basic psychic structure common to all souls . . . though not visible and tangible like the anatomical structure, is just as evident” (p. 535). In Kundalini yoga, the yogis believe that one’s meditation not only affects one’s own consciousness, but the group consciousness, the world, and the cosmos (Bhajan, 1997, 2003). In this current time-space reality, one is more able than in previous ages to affect one’s own consciousness and by doing so, shift the cosmos. Goodchild (2006) wrote that the path for the alchemists was through “*imaginatio vera*” or “true imagination,” which included “experimenting with meditation,” as a means of eroding the “barrier between the seen and unseen worlds to arrive at the mysteries of the unitary background world, a third domain comprised of a subtle psychophysical reality and its inhabitants” (p. 66). In the Aquarian age, “‘extraordinary,’ and ‘non-ordinary’ experiences link individuals to the cosmos, to time as deep time, to knowledge from the Source” (p. 66). This has been suggested by “alchemists, mystics, and shamans of all time cross-culturally,” that we are connected to the “broader cosmic field” (p. 66). Through the process of individuation,

there is “the creation and establishment of the subtle body as the *telos* of the opus” (p. 67). This is the “creation of the third body, a subtle body made of spirit *and* matter that is symbolized by various images such as the *filius*, the divine or golden child, the philosophers’ stone, the elixir, the golden germ” (p. 67).

Paramahansa Yogananda (1946) quoted his Master and teacher, Swami Sri Yukteswar who spoke of a “science of the soul,” that went beyond “physiology” (p. 136). Yukteswar said, “A subtle spiritual structure is hidden just behind the bodily mechanism” (p. 136). Yogi Bhajan (2003) spoke of the Subtle Body and Soul Body as distinguishable, yet intimately connected, as two of the ten bodies possessed by a human being; “There is a direct relationship between the Subtle Body and the Soul Body. They never leave each other” (p. 203). The soul is “encapsulated by the subtle body. . . . If the soul did not have the enclosure of a subtle body, it would melt into the Universal Being” (p. 229). The Subtle Body is associated with a “powerful calmness,” mastery, and intuitive knowing (p. 203). To strengthen the Subtle Body, one can do any meditation, kriya, or yoga set for one-thousand days. In yogic philosophy, 1,000 is the number of days that it is believed to take to have “mastered” a new habit (p. 136). The Subtle Body carries one’s “developed and undeveloped unique abilities or patterns. . . . When the subtle body contains many limiting patterns, our soul cannot radiate brightly and direct the self” (p. 229). The “Universal Mind” similar to the concept of the unconscious, “records and holds the patterns of the psyche” (p. 229). The Soul is the infinite “True Self” and connected to the “Universal Soul” (p. 229). The Soul Body chooses to be born and is reincarnated with the Subtle Body, lifetime after lifetime (p. 229). The Soul Body is the first body and is associated with humility, creativity and heart-centeredness over intellect (p. 201). It

“connects you to your inner infinity. It is the experience of the flow of spirit within. . . .

When your Soul Body is strong, you live by your heart instead of your head, your creativity flows in a simple, pure way” (p. 201). The Soul is “the individual expression of spirit; it contains the basic nuclear energy of you, your foundational self” (p. 201).

Similar to the personal aspect of the collective unconscious, the Soul Body is the individual element of the Universal Soul. The key to balancing the Soul Body is through methods that “raise the Kundalini” and “open the heart” (p. 201).

Alchemical and Kundalini Symbolism

Serpent circolare.

Jung’s (1944/1953) idea that the imagination creates a space that is “always both” psychical and physical and at the same time creates the space in between, relates to the circular, cyclical nature of the opus and re-turning to the beginning (p. 282). Like the individuation process, it is a “circumambulation . . . not something that is fixed, linear, or determined from the beginning” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 82). This circular nature relates to the Indian, Hindu, and Sikh idea of reincarnation. There is a cycling in nature: the end is not the end, but also a beginning. Jung (1944/1953) described the circular nature of the opus:

Time and again the alchemists reiterate that the *opus* proceeds from the one and leads back to the one, that it is a sort of circle like a dragon biting its own tail. For this reason the *opus* was often called *circulare* (circular) or else *rota* (the wheel). (p. 293)

Jung (1959) related the “circle and quaternity motif” to the “geometrically formed crystal and the wonder-working stone,” or Philosophers’ stone (p. 224). The *rota circolare*, or wheel “emphasizes the rotation which also appears as a ritual circumambulation” (p. 224). Psychologically, the *rota* “denotes concentration on and preoccupation with a

centre, conceived as the centre of a circle and thus formulated as a point” (p. 224). The circular form parallels the image of “the heavenly Pole and the starry bowl of heaven rotating around it” (p. 224). It is also the “horoscope as the ‘wheel of birth’” (p. 224).

In Kundalini yoga, the circular dragon image is the Kundalini snake or serpent, and the wheel is a description of the chakra energy centers within the body. The symbol of the dragon or serpent is the creative Kundalini energy at the base of the spine carrying the energy of Shakti, the Divine feminine. In Kundalini yoga the energy spirals up the three central channels or nadis along the spine up to the third eye, or mid-point of the brow and to the top of the head or crown chakra, which is the equivalent of the alchemical opus, or the experience of the divine feminine and pure consciousness (Bhajan, 2003). The nadis are the central channels for prana, “the subtle life force, the sub-atomic energy . . . the motion and coding of life energies through the realms of the mind and body” (p. 174). The energy makes its way back down the same pathway and returns to its resting place at the base of the spine. It has come full circle, seemingly to the very same place from which it began, but one’s consciousness is different. The circle is not just a circle, but there is a spiraling upwards that occurs, similar to the alchemical hermeneutic spiral (Romanyshyn, 2007). The return to the beginning is to the same place, and not the same place. The Kundalini energy has affected and changed the subtle body, soul body, and the eight other bodies. The energy itself is changed in the process.

Erich Neumann (1955) described the symbol of an “ascending snake” as the “alchemistic principle of growth,” taken from a 16th-century, French alchemical plate depiction (p. 328). In the image, the “transformative process rising from the vessel is represented by the pillar-tree, round which is twined the double snake of the opposites

that are to be united” (p. 328). Atop the pillar-tree is the “Mercury-Queen with a scepter in her hand”; the scepter was “the snake-entwined healing staff of Hermes and Asclepius” (p. 328). The staff and snake appear in myths as “the often ambiguous but always numinous and divine spirit of a process of growth whose purpose is inaccessible to the intelligence” (p. 328). The image of the snake has a “hybrid nature” and often appears as feminine (p. 144). The feminine vessel, “as vessel of rebirth and higher transformation becomes Sophia” (p. 329). The womb is the “sacred precinct” of the creative feminine vessel and is the “truly numinous feature in body symbolism, and like everything that is numinous it is ambivalent and ambiguous” (p. 144).

Sophia.

In India the snake is “an attribute of the female deity, and is at the same time her male-phallic companion,” the joining of the opposites (Neumann, 1955, p. 144). Sophia is the “highest feminine wisdom” (p. 326) or deity, and representative of the “Indian World Mother” (p. 330). She is the “pure feminine spirit. . . a spiritual whole. . . her spirit always remains attached to the earthly foundation of reality” as a “vessel of transformation” (p. 325). The experience of Sophia is like that of modern man as he discovers “what primordial man experienced through an overpowering intuition” (p. 330). Neumann (1955) writes further:

In the generating and nourishing, protective and transformative, feminine power of the unconscious, a wisdom is at work that is infinitely superior to the wisdom of man’s waking consciousness, and that, as source of vision and symbol, of ritual and law, poetry and vision, intervenes, summoned or unsummoned, to save man and give direction to this life. (p. 330)

The Sophianic maternal wisdom is not an abstract “disinterested knowledge, but a wisdom of loving participation” (p. 330). She is embodied wisdom, “living and present

and near, a godhead that can always be summoned and is always ready to intervene, and not a deity living inaccessible to man in numinous remoteness and alienated seclusion” (p. 331). The alchemists attempted to “heal the fracture” between the physical and spiritual, and between the “dissociated” spirit and matter, “but this attempt at embodiment was not realized on a collective level” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 87). Society continues to experience “the effects of this takeover, this logos consciousness without the wisdom and eros of Sophia, without the wisdom of the body,” which also means the “loss of psyche with its transpersonal values of imagination, vision, and dream that endow meaning” (p. 87). Sophia is a “spiritual creative force,” as well as “a subtle organ of visions and new creations” (Goodchild, 2006, p.70). She is connected to *imaginatio*, which Jung (1944/1953) considered to be “the most important key to the understanding of the opus” (p. 279). *Imaginatio* and *meditatio*, or “active imagination” both are “required in taking synchronicities seriously” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 70). In the realm of *imaginatio*, one is “no longer *anywhere*; rather, the *where*, usually related to sensory space, is an *everywhere*, the non-local topography of the mystical or emerald cities of the soul” (p. 70). It is “neither dreaming nor waking,” but “as ontologically real as the world of the senses and intellect” (p. 70).

Sophia is one of many representations of the Great Mother in which “God the father, and God the son . . . raise up the humble, earth-bound mother to abide with them,” and they “prove to be contained in her; proved to be ‘contents’ of her all-sheltering body” (Neumann, 1955, p. 331). She is the alchemical container or vessel in which transformation occurs. Examples in India of Sophia are the Tantric Shakti and the Hindu god Kali in her “positive and non-terrible aspect” as a “spiritual figure that for freedom

and independence has no equal in the West” (p. 332). Shakti is the Divine feminine goddess; Shiva is her male counterpart. In Kundalini yoga, White Tantric yoga, and Sikhism, the *Adi Shakti* symbol is a protective symbol of the infinite powers of the Divine Feminine. The Shakti force is a name sometimes given to the Kundalini energy, which activates the universal feminine through mantra and meditation and allows one to “merge with the power of the Divine Mother” (Khalsa, G. K., 2009, p. 317). In yogic philosophy, “A woman is sixteen times stronger than a man,” as far as the power of her projection, prayer, and meditative connection to Divine Consciousness (Bhajan, 1977, p. 29). Yogi Bhajan (2003) talked about the *Adi Shakti* mantra as a devotional mantra that “invokes the primary Creative Power, which is manifest as the feminine. It calls upon the Mother Power” (p. 82). The mantra helps to free oneself of “insecurities which block freedom of action” (p. 82). Through the mantra, one can “obtain a deeper understanding of the constant interplay between the manifest and the unmanifest qualities of the cosmos and consciousness” (p. 82).

Mercurius.

In this cyclical, alchemical process, “Mercurius stands at the beginning and the end of the work: his is the *prima materia*, the *caput corvi*, the *nigredo*” (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 293). In alchemical texts, Mercurius is used to cover a vast spectrum of meaning, it denotes “not only the chemical element mercury or quicksilver, Mercury (Hermes) the god, and Mercury the planet, but also—and primarily—the secret ‘transforming substance’ which is at the same time the ‘spirit’ in-dwelling in all living creatures” (p. 26). In Kundalini yoga, Mercury is related to certain energies in the body. The little finger is related to Mercury and is associated with “quickness and the mental power of

communication” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 105). The *buddhi mudra* is a hand posture used during meditation where the tip of the thumb and tip of the Mercury finger touch and are rested on the knees. The posture is also called the “seal of clarity” (p. 106). When used during meditation it helps to “open the capacity to communicate clearly and intuitively” and “stimulates psychic development” (p. 106). Jung (1944/1953) described Mercurius in the alchemical process: “as dragon he devours himself and as dragon he dies, to rise again as the *lapis*” (p. 293). This is the circular, transformative nature of the opus, a re-returning to the beginning to recover that which was left behind and integrate it in a new way. The dragon is possibly the “oldest pictorial symbol in alchemy of which we have documentary evidence” (p. 293). Jung gave other examples of the pairs of opposites such as the “hermaphrodite,” the “four elements,” and the “classical brother-sister duality,” that are then “reunited in the *coniunctio*, to appear once again at the end in the radiant form of the *lumen novum*, the stone . . . metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison and yet healing draught- a symbol uniting all opposites” (p. 295).

Duality pairs and quaternities.

Jung (1944/1953) discussed with particular interest the pairs of opposites of the four elements and the numinosity of the number four. A similar conception of the elements is discussed in the Kundalini yogic philosophy. Jung described the four elements as a “quaternity” symbolizing wholeness, which is also the goal of the analytic individuation process (p. 26). Edinger (1972) described the significance of the configuration of four: “the structuring pattern of fourness can emerge in a variety of contexts to bring order and differentiation to experience . . . it carries the implications of fulfillment or completion” (p. 265). Alchemists often describe the Philosophers’ stone as

four stones: “the Mineral Stone, the Vegetable Stone, the Magical Stone and the Angelica Stone” (p. 264). Here, “fourness is the basic ordering principle of matter” that came out of the undifferentiated *prima materia* (p. 264). In the act of creation, the four elements were “imposed on the *prima materia* giving it order and structure and bringing cosmos out of chaos” (p. 264). The number four, is the “minimum number of determinants in a whole,” and in alchemy there is generally a “vacillation between three and four which comes out over and over again” (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 26). Of the four elements, “often three of them are grouped together, with the fourth in a special position” (p. 26). Mercurius is “*quadratus*” containing the four elements, but at the same time is often depicted as “a three-headed snake or simply a triunity” (p. 26). Mercurius’ duplicitous nature, moving between three and four, relates to the “wavering between the spiritual and the physical” (p. 26). Four signifies “the feminine, motherly, physical; three the masculine, fatherly, spiritual” (p. 26). Jung (1960/1971) described the four opposite pairs of the basic psychological function-types: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuitive types. Thinking and feeling types are polarities of “rational” functions; sensation and intuitive types are polarities of “irrational” functions, which together make up the spectrum of the four personality types (p. 482).

Chakras.

In Kundalini yoga there are the four main elements: earth, water, fire, air, and then there is a fifth element added, ether. The elements are the same as those known in alchemy, science, and Chinese medicine (Bhajan, 2003). These elements are called the *tattvas* and are associated with various organs, glands, and regions of the body, and with the first five chakras, or energy centers within the body (p. 210). The five *tattvas* are the

“densest of the levels of separateness,” which “we experience as qualities in the body and in all matter” (p. 210). There are no elements associated with the sixth, seventh, and eighth chakras, which “correspond to more subtle realms, therefore there is no correlation with the *tattvas*” (p. 184). Each of the eight chakras is associated with different colors, qualities, shadow elements, and yogic exercises. There are yoga sets and meditations designed specifically to balance each of the chakras. The chakras are often portrayed in a column that corresponds with the different energy centers along the spine. However, they are not hierarchical in nature. For example, living mostly from the seventh, or crown chakra located at the top of the head, to the exclusion of the other chakras is not considered to be more elevated of a position, than living primarily from the third chakra, the navel point. Balancing the flow of energy through the chakras, is of utmost importance. The chakras are cyclical and circular in nature. The progression does not move in a linear manner, from the first chakra up through the eighth chakra. Yogi Bhajan (2003) writes:

When you practice Kundalini yoga, the kundalini energy mixes below the Navel at the seat of the Kundalini, descends to the Root Chakra, spirals up the *sushmuna* (the central column of the spine) to the pineal and pituitary glands in the brain, makes a double loop at the Throat Chakra, goes down through the Heart Center, Navel, and Root Chakra, and returns to its starting point. (p. 195)

There is a continual flow of the energy through the ten bodies. “The chakras are all part of a larger cycle of evolution and devolution, manifestation and sublimation” (p. 184).

Yogi Bhajan (2003) referred to the first, second, and third chakras as the “Lower Triangle,” which focuses on “elimination and reduction” (p.184). They are balanced by the Upper Triangle, which is comprised of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chakras. The Upper Triangle chakras “accumulate, create and refine” (p. 184). The fourth chakra, or

heart center, is the balance point between the two triangles (p. 184). There is shift in consciousness at the fourth chakra from “me to Thee,” or from “me to we” (p. 184). The fourth chakra, *anahata*, or heart center is the fulcrum that mediates between the upper and lower; it the turning point in consciousness. It is associated with the element air, and is the center of compassion and the beginnings of the awakening to a spiritual awareness (p. 186). The first seven chakras “correspond to areas of the endocrine system or to nerve plexes in the physical body, and the eighth corresponds to the aura or magnetic field of the body” (p. 184). The Aura, or electromagnetic field appears as a circle or oval above and around the body and is visible to some. It is associated with the color white, and “combines the effects of all the chakras and constitutes their total projection. The aura projects and protects” (p. 186). It is the “circumvent field or circumvent force, the strength of the energy shell that surrounds all the other chakras . . . a circle, a vortex of energy, a place to focus the flows of universal energy” (p. 187). The quality of the Aura or magnetic field “generated by a human being that surrounds him or her up to nine feet in every direction . . . reveals the personality in the projection of power or the depression of defeat” (p. 196). When one is ill, the Aura will have “various dimples and pockets in it where there is less radiance” (p. 195). When the Auric field is strong and all the chakras are well aligned, one’s “presence alone seems to work and direct many of the forces in the universe” (p. 195). The Soul Body will “associate, dwell and operate through the Fourth Chakra or through the Eighth, with a sense of balance and compassion and love or with a sense of vastness and impersonal reality” (p. 195). The chakras are holistic in nature. In yogic anatomy, all of the energy centers work in unison: “opening and balancing the chakras opens the senses, and integrates them into a responsive network

that can relate to the larger source field of energy” (p. 184). This is done through the prana, which is also the breath or life force. The prana clears the blocks that affect the flow of energy. “Conscious relationship with *prana* is the conscious relationship with (Divine) Consciousness” (Khalsa, 2006, p. 54).

Shuniya

Shuniya is the experience of pure Consciousness, the zero point (Bhajan, 2003). On the suspended breath one can experience shuniya. It is a “deep stillness” into which one can “create a new rhythm or pattern of being” (p. 93). Yogi Bhajan said:

The moment you become zero, then all powers will prevail through you. The power of a teacher of Kundalini Yoga is in his zero, his shuniya. In shuniya you become zero, you reduce everything to nothing: “I am nothing. Everything is nothing. There’s nothing to be nothing.” The moment you become that, then everything radiates from you. (p. 93)

The benefit of finding the shuniya point is in the “gradual reconditioning of the nervous system” (p. 93). The breath suspension “allows for integration of the body systems” (p. 93). The suspension of the breath in can temporarily raise the blood pressure, and “impacts the sympathetic nervous system” (p. 93). Temporarily holding one’s breath out decreases the blood pressure and “impacts the parasympathetic nervous system” (p. 93). Suspending the breath allows for a “centering” and reintegration of the various systems within and around the body (p. 93). The “mind follows the breath”; breath is both the “gross physical” breath, as well as the “subtle life force,” or prana (p. 90). Shuniya is a one-pointedness, an intense clarity and ability to focus. Everything else drops away and you are left with you. There are no adequate words or language to describe this state, and that is the loss, and the mourning of the work (Romanyshyn, 2007). Jung (1944/1953, 1956/1963, 1961), Yogi Bhajan (1977, 2003) and others have attempted to put into words

such an experience, but ultimately there is loss in that. Yogic experiences are meant to be just that, experienced in an embodied way. As much as I can say here on the experience of shuniya, there remains that gap between what is said and what must remain unsaid.

Simran is an aspect of shuniya, which is the goal of meditation. It is “a continuous, meditative, longingly creative feeling” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 134). In simran, “life is experienced as a spiritual flow” (p. 126). When one’s state of consciousness reaches simran, the “Infinite” or “Universal Power” serves the individual (p. 134). There is a “deep flow of spirituality” that continues endlessly (p. 134). In this state, “the *naam* of the Infinite is remembered and dwelled in without conscious effort” (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 198). *Naam* is the “manifested identity of the essence” and gives identity and form to “that which was only essence or subtle before” (p.197). There is a “merging into the Infinite, of God” (p.197). Simran can “penetrate your heart” (p. 69). “*Sat nam*” is the most commonly used mantras in Kundalini yoga (Bhajan, 2003, p. 86). *Sat* means “truth-the reality of one’s existence”; *nam* means “identity” (p. 86). *Sat nam* is a bij or “seed mantra,” meaning “within the seed is contained all the knowledge of the fully grown tree. The essence or seed is the identity of truth embodied in condensed form” (p. 86). In the bij mantra, “the seed of the sound is planted in the unconscious” (p. 68). *Sat nam* is one such mantra; there are many others with similar properties. Chanting this mantra “awakens the soul and gives you your destiny” (p. 86). *Sat nam* is also a pranayam, or breath pattern. One mentally says “sat” on the inhale, and mentally says “nam” on the exhale, which balances the five elements, or tattvas in the body and brings a stillness and balance. Eventually this breath pattern becomes automatic and the mantra breathes you.

Moments of shuniya in my life have varied drastically, from the subtle to the feeling of enormous waves of energy passing over and through my body. One such experience happened recently. I was in a Kundalini yoga workshop centered around the purification of the energetic current through the chakras and ten bodies. The process involved using specific mantras, postures, and the sound current to lift unnecessary blockage to the energy flow, and to amplify the creative vibration of pure Consciousness. As the group energy builds, there is often a moment in the workshop when a sudden shift takes place, and the energy is amplified and the entire group is elevated to a higher, more ethereal vibratory level. In this single moment during the workshop, I felt an intense vibration and heat running through my body. I felt as if I was traveling through an altered space that was very different from this time-space dimension. Then I saw and felt layers lifting from my body, like veils or waves of sheer energy. They just lifted away. It was a subtle shift; I felt lighter, clear. I could feel that some of the layers had left. And then there was nothing. I felt the shuniya, stillness. I just *was*. There was nothing more to it; everything was, as it was. And then there was a great heart-opening flood of pure bliss, joy. There was nothing but heart and stillness. Over the next few days I felt myself increasingly intuitive and sensitive. I felt more aligned and tuned in to my-Self. There was a lifting, an opening; the space was filled with silence, stillness, and then heart-opening and pure oneness, bliss.

Timelessness-Spacelessness

Von Franz (1986) described a “certain part of the psyche,” which is “not bound to the space-time category” (p. 149). Once a “certain threshold in the increase of frequency” has been crossed, the “psychic functions which produce our perception of time and space

seem to cease functioning” (p. 149). Edinger (1972) wrote that “experiences of the Self are often accompanied by an aura of antiquity. A specific aspect of the phenomenology of the Self is its essentially timeless, eternal and hence ancient quality” (p. 272). Such experiences convey the sense that “one is participating in a process of the ages which relativizes the vicissitudes of the here and now” (p. 272). Jung (1961) described an experience of seeing an “ancient green carriage from the Black Forest” that looked as if it were from the 18th century (p. 34). He felt sure that it was similar to his own carriage: “That’s it! Sure enough, that comes from *my* times” (p. 34). He described “a longing, a nostalgia, or a recognition that kept saying, ‘Yes, that’s how it was! Yes, that’s how it was!’” (p. 34). Similarly, Jung described recognizing a statuette of an old doctor with buckled shoes, “which in a strange way,” he recognized the shoes as his own (p. 34). “I could still feel those shoes on my feet, and yet I could not explain where this crazy feeling came from” (p. 35). Yogananda (1964) said that the “consciousness of a perfected yogi is effortlessly identified not with a narrow body but with the universal structure” (p. 303). Therefore, one who “knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space” (p. 303). He gave an example showing that a master is not governed by the laws of matter: “Gravitation, whether the ‘force’ of Newton or the Einsteinian ‘manifestation of inertia,’ is powerless to *compel* a master to exhibit the property of weight” (p. 303). The key to accessing this realm is through the six energy bodies discussed in earlier chapters. This experience of timelessness and spacelessness is a quality of the Subtle and Soul Bodies that Yogi Bhanjan (1977, 1997, 2003) talked about, and a quality of the Soul that Jung (1973) wrote about in his *Letters*:

It is clear that timeless and spaceless perceptions are possible only because the perceiving psyche is similarly constituted. Timelessness and spacelessness must

therefore be somehow inherent in its nature, and this in itself permits us to doubt the exclusive temporality of the soul. (p. 117)

The boundaries are blurred at the intersection of consciousness and the unconscious. The awareness of the deeper layers of the psyche lead to a new understanding of the reality of other realms. Jung went even further to say that “we know that a door exists to a quite different order of things from the one we encounter in our empirical world of consciousness” (p. 117). In his *Letters*, Jung (1975) wrote about the “seeming incommensurability between the physical world and the psychic” which is bridged “from the physical side by means of mathematical equations, and from the psychological side by means of empirically derived postulates—archetypes” (p. 108). The nature of the archetypes “cannot with certainty be designated as psychic” (p. 108). Stein (1998) noted that the archetypes are “psychoid rather than purely psychic” (p. 208).

Goodchild (2006) described Jung’s concept of synchronicity as not tied to the notion of time and space. The experience of synchronicity is pointing “not only to the sequential unfolding of reality but also to the possibility for quantum leaps that bypass conditioned reality and go directly to deep resources of inspiration and renewal” (p. 82). The synchronistic event unites the timeless with the spaceless in an in-between realm. Synchronicity and quantum physics “opened up” this realm, which is “the possibility of another domain of reality that is not ‘of us’ in any way” (p. 87). This realm is “beyond the confines of the time/space continuum” and “requires our participation to bring it into reality” through the “*imaginatio vera*” (p. 87). The alchemical *imaginatio vera* “is to be understood as ‘the real and literal power to create images,’” which is in contrast to “*phantasia*, which means a mere conceit in the sense of insubstantial thought” (p. 79). *Imaginatio vera* is “quite real and not ‘just imagination,’ more like a visionary experience

that is ‘really real’” (p. 79). Such an event that unites the “time and timeless realms” is able to “temporarily takes us out of history, out of past and future, and opens our hearts to the numinous” (p. 82). Such an experience is comparable to Jung’s visions, and to experiences of the Kundalini energy.

Jung (1975) wrote that “in the light of physical findings” he came to “doubt the exclusively psychic nature of the archetypes” (p. 108). “Psyche and physical” lie on a “continuum” (p. 108). Archetypes are “no longer psychic” (Stein, 1998, p. 209). “Both dissolve into pure energy” (p. 209). Stein described the psyche and the material world as “two parallel realities . . . they are synchronistically related and coordinated” (p. 209). An example of the unity of psyche and matter is in Jung’s “unthought thoughts” or “unconscious a priori knowledge” (Stein, 1998, p. 212). If one knows things that are beyond one’s “conscious possibility of knowing,” there is an “unknown knower” or “aspect of the psyche that transcends the categories of time and space and is simultaneously present here and there, now and then. This would be the self” (p. 212). This is the in-between subtle realm of the psychoid archetype, the third coniunctio, and the reality of the opus. In his second volume of *Letters*, Jung (1975) wrote, “we ourselves may simultaneously exist in both worlds, and occasionally we do have intimations of a twofold existence. But what is outside time is, according to our understanding, outside change. It possesses relative eternity” (p. 551). Von Franz (1986) wrote about the “single energy” that “physically appears to be unfolded in space-time, but coexists psychically as pure spaceless-timeless (enfolded) intensity” (p. 153). The “psychic universe is timeless, is spread throughout space and also contains a transpersonal knowledge” (p. 153). This is Jung’s collective unconscious. Von Franz described the relationship between the physical

and psychical realities as “tendencies” that “cannot be regarded today as certainties” (p. 153). In the “psychic and material world background . . . cosmic matter and the collective unconscious would be two aspects of one and the same world foundation” (p. 153).

Jung’s “new hypothesis” suggested that “the transformation of the coarse material body (and its energetic manifestation) would continue gradually into the psyche . . . what we call physical energy and psychic energy today could . . . be two aspects of one and the same energy” (p. 144). Goodchild (2006) takes it a step further in describing “anomalous experiences,” which are a “more intensely felt subtle body reality that the true imagination experiences and the body registers as at once both psychical and physical” (p. 84). Here, what is created is “not only predominantly spiritual through meaning (as in a synchronicity), it is psychophysical, even psycho-cosmic,” moving toward “an intensified and potentially transformed reality” that is closer to a “transmutation” (p. 84).

In such an experience, “past, present, and future are known as one,” and one experiences a “moving or shifting into a different and heightened sense of space, a *topos* that feels intensely real, even ‘hyperreal,’ but is definitely not a dream experience” (p. 84). In the “*mundus imaginalis*” there is “a break or discontinuity with ordinary space and time, and at the same time, though the beholder of this realm returns, and he or she *knows* they have been elsewhere, it is impossible to describe” (p. 73). One is left with “intense feelings of beauty that stir the imagination toward a deep pathos and an opening of the heart” (p. 73). It is an experience of “Presence, a moving out of history . . . out of time as flow into deep or aeonic time . . . a psychocosmic landscape, ‘celestial earth’” (p. 84).

Vibration

Von Franz (1986) and Jung (1973, 1975) tentatively hypothesized about the nature of the relationship between “frequency” and “intensity,” as it relates to the physical and psychical. Their ideas run parallel to thousands of years of Kundalini yogic philosophy on the nature of the human being. Yogi Bhanjan (2003) described the human being: *hu* means “ray,” or “radiance,” or “halo,” *man* means “the mind” or “mental” (p. 228). Hence, *hu-man* means the “radiance of the mind,” or a mental halo (p. 228).

Through the sound current, or mantra, one is able to re-connect into the vibratory pattern of pure Consciousness. Yogi Bhanjan talked about the nature and purpose of the sound current: “We live in a sea of energy. Energy vibrates. Everything in the manifest creation is vibrating. Even seemingly solid, inanimate objects are constantly vibrating, simply vibrating at a slower or lower frequency than animate objects” (p. 66). The increase in frequency directly correlates to increased ephemeral, animate qualities, which parallels Jung’s description of crossing over from the physical, lower-frequency, to the psychical, higher-frequency world, which is ultimately the merging of both. Yogi Bhanjan discussed mantra:

Some vibrations are audible; sounds we can hear with our ears. Thoughts are silent sounds, electromagnetic vibrations. The higher the frequency, the less dense, and the more etheric the quality of the vibration we hear and speak, the more our own vibrational frequency is raised. (p. 66)

Raising one’s own vibration brings one “closer to experiencing and merging with the highest vibration of all . . . the original creativity of the universe (p. 66). *Naad* is the “inner sound” current and subtle vibration that is “all-present. It is the direct expression of the Absolute. Meditated upon, it leads into a sound current that pulls the consciousness into expansion” (Bhanjan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 197). *Naad* is “an energetic template formed

in the root elements of a language” which makes “sound penetrate, creates deep shifts in feeling, and opens intuition” (p. 140). It has the power to penetrate the heart and the unconscious. The electromagnetic field is associated with the Auric Body, the seventh body. This vibrational field, or Aura “surrounds your body in the same way the Earth’s Magnetic field envelopes the Earth” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 202). The electromagnetic field is a protective force that can be developed into a subtle radiance or “container” that allows one’s “very presence” to uplift others (p. 202). It is strengthened through the meditative spoken word, or mantra that resonates with the cosmos and higher frequencies (p. 202). The Aura and electromagnetic field is the entry point of all potential illness before manifestation in the physical, or fifth body. Mantra and the sound current adjust the electromagnetic field to prevent and clear any dis-ease subtly before it manifests in the physical body: “You can heal yourself aurically and keep your Aura strong, then illness cannot penetrate” (p. 202). It is important that the spine be straight to allow the vibratory mantras to penetrate. The spine acts as “a central channel” for the energy of the nervous system (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 142). Yogis often wear all white, natural-fiber clothing during meditation as an additional protective, meditative tool to elevate their vibrational frequency; this practice is called “*satamber*” (p. 31). “White combines all colors and enhances the magnetic field and auric strength” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 138). The same is true for the practice of wearing a white turban made from natural fibers: cotton, silk, or wool. The head is covered, partly to protect the sensitivity of the hair and the crown chakra, or solar center, from the powerful rays of the sun (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 31). When the head is covered, especially during sadhana, or morning meditation, “the amount of energy that goes downward from the Seventh Chakra increases tremendously”

(Bhajan, 2003, p. 151). The Kundalini energy is “activated” by the solar plexus, between the navel and the heart center, and “moves upward in response to the solar energy coming down . . . the hair regulates the inflow of sun energy into the body system” (p. 151). A strong Aura or “radiance” around the body is the “protective shield” that vibrates “powerful impulses” that connect one directly to the “universal impulse,” and “expanded consciousness of the universe” (Khalsa, G. K., 2009, p. 316).

Heart

Experiences such as the awakening of the Kundalini energy, synchronistic events, and experiences of pure Consciousness or the Divine all point to “an opening of the heart chakra” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 85). Such an experience “unites us with all creation and leads us to live a creative life devoted to the harmony of the whole” (p. 85). The event of the “irruption of the *unus mundus* world into this one, a moment that supplements ordinary reality with the *irrational and impossible* . . . transforms us by direct contact with eros awareness from the collective unconscious or beyond” (p. 82). The heart is opened to the “numinous” through dwelling in the “union” of the in-between realms of consciousness (p. 82). “The atmosphere ripples around us, and we are deepened into a mystery” of the Divine (p. 82). Such a numinous experience requires “language that is beyond our rational thinking towards a poetic sensibility that can try to capture the presence of the invisible in the visible” (p. 82). It leads to a “*cardiognosis*, or heart knowledge” (p. 76). This is “eros consciousness” (p. 75). The joining of “logos and eros” is felt as “a healing balm for the embodied soul and has an all-around deepening effect on our nature that penetrates to the core of our being (p. 76). It is a feeling of “being initiated into a cosmic secret or divine disclosure,” which “endows our life with a sense of worth

and meaning beyond the finite limitations of everyday reality” (p. 76). One is granted a new sense of “gratitude at having been granted such an insight . . . for a moment we no longer feel so alone, but united with the forces of creation as one note in a cosmic symphony” (p. 76). What comes through in “mystical or visionary or imaginal” events, is the “conscious recovery of the *a priori* unified world, the *unus mundus*, a subtle world behind and infusing this one, held together by the numinous energies of love” (p. 75).

Yogi Bhanjan (2003) described the Soul Body as intimately connected to the process of raising one’s Kundalini energy, which opens the heart chakra (p. 201). One can only feel the heart chakra if it is open (p. 192). There is a transition as the energy moves from the lower chakras up to the heart center, from the seen to the unseen: “For the first time we no longer see the chakra; it becomes completely subtle” (p. 192). The symbol for the heart center is two overlapping triangles, which form a six-pointed star, representing “the balance point in the body between the flow of the upper energies of the Heavens and the lower energy flows of the Earth” (p. 192). The heart is the link between the upper and lower realms, “inner and outer merge in a sense of glow and spontaneous action” (p. 193). The heart chakra is associated with prana, or the life-force, and when one chants from the heart center, “it is empowered with the subtlety of air through the use of the mind, to create a subtle or silent” effect in all of the bodies (p. 193). The experience of the Kundalini energy is one of “relating the mantra to the Infinite Being and the finite, and creating that direct connection,” which ultimately “opens up the heart magically” (Bhanjan, 1977, p. 182). In the transition to the Aquarian Age, it is the experience of the heart that is most important; “your experience” of the Kundalini energy “goes right into your heart. No words can replace that experience” (p. 20). The energy

must be experienced first hand. Yogi Bhanan defined the “fulfilled human being,” according to the “qualities of your mind and heart” (p. 4). In Tibetan Buddhism, the symbol of the vajra, which looks like two circular orbs joined together in the middle, often appears at the center of mandalas as a reminder that “in the very heart of the person meditating, the whole cosmos is reflected”; enlightenment consists in knowing one’s own heart (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969, p. 1058).

My personal experience of yoga has included a series of heart-opening experiences from the very beginning. Years ago, when I began with practicing Anusara yoga, I experienced profound physical, emotional, and psychical shifts in consciousness. I would often find myself in tears for seemingly no reason in the middle of a yoga class. I have found that this is quite a common experience; I will often notice or hear others in the room having an emotional experience. Over the years, as I increased my Kundalini yoga practice, the shifts began to happen with more frequency and on a much deeper level. Initially, there was a period of settling into my Kundalini yoga practice when a lot of layers were lifting. Meditation did not become a part of my practice until later, but once added, it has exponentially deepened my practice and in turn, affected the rest of my life in profound and subtle ways. But, my first heart-opening experiences were in Anusara yoga, and were a very physical experience. One such experience happened as the teacher was taking her time getting everyone in the class settled into and properly aligned in a somewhat challenging pose. Suddenly, I felt and heard a “pop,” or “cracking” noise coming from the center of my chest, and unexpectedly I felt this enormous release, an opening. Tears poured down my face. I was not sad, mostly surprised and stunned by my reaction. It was as if someone or something else had control

over my body and my emotions. Taking the time to find the exact posture and slowly, letting myself be led, intuitively by my own body and by a greater Knowing into the pose, shifted my consciousness and created a space where there was not one a moment before. It was a very simple and loving experience. It has led to many other, deeper openings and experiences of feeling merged with Consciousness or the Divine that have since occurred more frequently through meditation. This meditative realm is readily accessible, not always consciously, but through meditative and “in-between” states of consciousness. There is a purity and lovingness that has changed me on all layers and levels of consciousness, and continues to do so.

Merging with Consciousness

Gopi Krishna (2009) spoke to an anonymous journalist in an interview in the late 1970s in New Delhi, India about the goal of consciousness. He described the current state of human consciousness as an “existence in two worlds, the world of matter and the world of mind” (p. 284). He described a “more rational and more comprehensive philosophy of Creation . . . one in which matter and mind figure as two aspects of one incomprehensible Reality” (p. 291). In this consciousness the polarity between mind and matter does not exist. “Firsthand experience” is required in order to know this consciousness: “Like the exploration of the sky, intellectual exercise can carry us only a short distance. After that, the use of the telescope becomes absolutely necessary for correct knowledge of the position” (p. 293). In the same way, “for the study of the inner firmament, a dive into the depths of one’s being is essential to know the reality” (p. 293). Mantra, as “music and poetry,” provides a “better language for expressing the

profundities of consciousness than logic. This is the reason why prayers are sung” (p.

293). Krishna described the evolution of the mind:

Human consciousness is evolving towards a predetermined target . . . this target is the mystical or illuminated state attained by thousands of mystics and enlightened human beings in the past . . . the religious scriptures of mankind are a harvest of the revelations received from a Higher Intelligence in this state of exalted being . . . the human brain is evolving towards this state of transhuman perception, through the activity of an organic mechanism, named Kundalini by the ancients, whose existence can be demonstrated with the methods known to science. (p. 289)

The states of consciousness that Krishna described are “commonly known abnormal and paranormal states of mind,” which all proceed “from the working of the evolutionary mechanism” (p. 290). With “advanced knowledge of this lever the aforesaid evils, resulting from its malfunctioning, can be cured or obviated and the latter highly precious attributes cultivated at will” (p. 290). Krishna acknowledged that the ideas he spoke of were new and “diametrically opposite to prevailing conceptions” (p. 292). Krishna himself questioned, how the “erudite” of science or religion could accept his ideas given that he proclaimed:

Matter is a mirage, Darwin was wrong, Freud mistaken, consciousness is All—that humanity is on her way to this awareness in the beatific state, that the great illuminees were not and could not be the favorites of the Almighty, and that mystical experience does not represent an encounter with God but only a vision of the divinity in man. (p. 291)

The ideas, therefore, “need time to take root in the common mind,” because they “strongly militate against some of the current conceptions or misconception of both orthodox science and religion” (p. 290).

Krishna (2009) lived in what he called “a more extended dimension of the perceptual faculty toward which mankind is evolving irresistibly through the operation of an evolutionary mechanism in the body, designated as Kundalini by the Indian sages of

the past” (p. 284). Krishna’s description of his constant state of consciousness for the last 40 years is worth including here. He prefaced it by carefully stating: “In describing this experience, I always thoroughly weigh every word that I use, because I feel myself under a solemn obligation to give expression to what is the strictest truth” (p. 294). There is a weight of the ethical responsibility to authentically and accurately portray an experience of Consciousness. Here is Gopi Krishna’s truth:

Every moment of my life I live in two worlds. One is the sensory world which we all share together—the world of sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound. My reactions to this world are the same as of other human beings. The other is an amazing supersensory world to which I first found entrance in 1937. . . . I am always conscious of a luminous glow, not only in my interior but pervading the whole field of my vision during the hours of my wakefulness. I literally live in a world of light. . . . In fact, it is the normal state of my perception now. Light, both within and without, and a distinct music in my ears, are the two prominent feature of my transformed being. . . . The enchanting light I perceive both internally and outside, is alive. It pulsates with life and intelligence. It is like an infinite Ocean of Awareness pervading my own small pool of consciousness within and the whole universe I perceive with my senses outside. (p. 295)

This is Divine Consciousness, an experience of the Universal Oneness, but as one’s *constant* state of awareness. For Krishna, “the universe is alive: a stupendous Intelligence that I can sense but never fathom, looms behind every object and every event in the universe, silent, still, serene, and immovable like a mountain. It is a staggering spectacle” (p. 296). This experience of the “cerebral Temple and the Divine Light within,” has been the “aim of every spiritual and occult discipline ever practiced on the earth” (p. 296).

There is a lack of words to accurately depict such state of being: “Much as I wish to do so, it is extremely difficult for me to draw a clear picture of this aspect of my experience” (p. 296). The singularity of his experience has the feel of longing for others to experience the same. Krishna said that his experience, “to the best of my knowledge, I share alone or, perhaps with extremely few others unknown to me” (p. 295). He further explained, “I

do not say this to claim singularity but only as a statement of fact, because to this day I have not come across any individual claiming the same peculiarity” (p. 295). Krishna said, “the only class of human beings in whom I find a parallel of this experience are the mystics of the East and West, but here, too, there are differences which I am trying my best to resolve” (p. 294).

Paramahansa Yogananda (1946) spoke of his personal experiences and that of his Master and Guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar: “His every utterance was chiseled by wisdom His thoughts were weighed in a delicate balance of discrimination before he permitted them the outward garb of speech” (p. 125). A common quality of enlightened Indian Gurus and yogis alike is seemingly a poverty of words, but the words that are spoken, are laden with meaning. Yogananda said of Yukteswar: “The essence of truth, all-pervasive with even a physiological aspect, came from him like a fragrant exudation of the soul. I was conscious always that I was in the presence of a living manifestation of God” (p.125). Yukteswar’s silence was “caused by his deep perceptions of the Infinite. No time remained for the interminable ‘revelations’ that occupy the days of teachers without Self-realization” (p. 133). Yogananda quoted a Hindu scripture: “In shallow men the fish of little thoughts cause much commotion. In oceanic minds the whales of inspiration make hardly a ruffle” (p. 133). According to Yogananda, his Master had achieved “identity with the Ruler of time and space,” and “found no insuperable obstacle to the mergence of human and Divine. No such barrier exists” (p. 133).

Chapter 7 **Implications for Methodology, Clinical, and Depth Psychology**

A significant development in the evolution of this process has been the overwhelming feeling of being led into and through the work. There has been a guiding presence distinct from myself that has been the creative function behind, and woven into the work. During the process of writing down the research, I felt unsure about which of many possible directions to explore. When I would tune into the greater Awareness through meditation and mantra, the answer was easily right there. It was given in seconds. The close relationship I have had with the work has been a surprising source of fulfillment and inspiration. I intended to simply write a dissertation, and instead what grew out of this process was a clearer, more loving perspective from which I am now able to relate to the work and to my own consciousness. From its beginnings, the vast majority of this process has been filtered through the yogic, alchemical, and depth psychological methods of *meditatio* and *imaginatio*. It has developed as “an inner dialogue” and a “living relationship to the answering voice of the ‘other’ in ourselves, i.e., of the unconscious” (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 274). *Meditatio* is “an ongoing act of meditation, which extends our sense of method beyond the notion of the application of procedures” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 271). It is the turning inward to tune into the connection to the universal Consciousness and the Divine leading presence. Yogi Bhanjan (1977) said that in meditation, the “active mind becomes still” and the “passive mind becomes active,” which leads to a “state of bliss” (p. 86).

The creative, meditative process of the work has been written down in measured, timed, 62-, and 31-minute segments. It has developed as a daily ritual of sitting, listening to the silence, tuning in to the Golden chain of teachers, and finally, beginning the writing

process in this space of reverie. Yogi Bhajan (2003) spoke about 62 minutes as the amount of time required in which a meditation “changes the gray matter in the brain. The subconscious ‘shadow mind’ and the outer projection are integrated” (p. 136). Thirty-one minutes of meditation “allows the glands, breath, and concentration to affect all the cells and rhythms of the body. It lets the psyche of the meditation affect the three *gunas*, all 31 *tattvas*, and all layers of the mind’s projections” (p. 136). Of the *tattvas*, the “five densest of the levels of separateness” are “experienced as the earthly elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether” (p. 210). The amounts of time given to the space of meditation or reverie signifies a mutual respect for the Others in the work for whom the work is being done, as well as acknowledges the Kundalini tradition as the quintessence of this work. The specified amounts of time are yogic mathematical calculation related to the cosmos and angle of the earth to various planets, signifying the ideal amount of time to align the elements within and without, with the ten bodies and chakras. At the same time that I was creating or allowing the work to come through, I was being worked on by the work itself, and by the Others from whom the work was being done (Romanyshyn, 2007). It has been an act of co-creation and re-creation, a “*creatio continua*, a way of working that, when it is finished, is not done, a way of working that is ceaselessly occurring” (p. 271). There is a “reciprocity between the researcher and the ancestors,” and a taking up of the “unfinished business in the soul of the work” (p. 271). Through the interaction of this vocation, or topic, and the ritual space, the “*mundus imaginalis*” of the work, I have been “both deepened by the work . . . and worked over and transformed by the work, even becoming the work and living it in an embodied way” (p. 272).

An example of this occurred midway through the writing process. I was feeling particularly stuck and unsure of where the work was headed. Creatively I felt insipidly flat, as if nearing a possible dead-end in the writing. Then I had a dream: There was a square wooden table in a room and I was standing alone at the opposite end of the room looking at the table. I felt extremely anxious and concerned that the table was missing a leg and only had three legs and was therefore about to topple over. I approached the table to inspect it, and upon closer inspection realized that it was fine; it had all four legs. I felt that to be curious, because I was sure that something was missing. It then dawned on me, the table was missing the chairs. A wave of relief came over me to realize it only needed chairs. The dream was enormously helpful in dislodging the stuck parts of the work. I had previously felt that the dissertation was possibly critically flawed, missing something vital, like a leg perhaps. The dream confirmed for me that I was only missing the final chapters and allowed the writing to move forward. The missing parts were not part of the table at all. The key elements were already there. I just needed to create or write the chairs into the storyline. The dream gave me the confirmation the direction of the work and gave me the confidence to move forward.

Methodology Implications

Reciprocal, reverie, receptivity.

The research has been done in an attitude of reverie and devotion: “There in front of his fire, with no conscious plan or intention, the alchemist is neither dreaming nor fully awake, and in this condition he is drawn into matter through the images of the unconscious” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 143). There is a reciprocal relationship that develops between the researcher and the work, and the others in the work, for whom the

work is being done. This relationship, through an attitude of reverie, is “something one falls into. Reverie happens to us” (p. 142). It is the “pathway into the unconscious depths of the moment,” that lead more deeply and fully into the work (p. 143). Like the Kundalini yogic energy that is meant to be experienced in the body, so too there is an embodied, lived relationship to the work, not merely based upon a theoretical understanding. “Literature, in short, is not conceptual knowledge but experience” (Palmer, 1969, p. 252). There is a historicity to the experience of writing down the work; such an experience “is not to be grasped in the spatial, static, nontemporal categories of conceptual knowledge, for it has the character of event” (p. 252). There is no “once and for all” correct interpretation or perception of a text, or experience as text, “each age reinterprets” (p. 252). The researcher’s relationship to the work is “dynamic, temporal, personal. In conceptual knowing, only a part of one’s mind is really involved, but in understanding literature one’s self-understanding must come into play. The work addresses one as a person” (p. 252). Through the event of authentic interaction, one is moved, touched, and shifted.

This research has been done with an attitude of openness to being led by the work. Through the experience, the researcher maintains an attitude of receptivity and listening; “It takes a great listener to hear what is actually said, a greater one to hear what was not said but what comes to light in the speaking,” or writing down of the work (Palmer, 1969, p. 234). Any text can be seen, not as “an assertion” that is an “independent and discrete entity,” but as “the response to a question, as something whose meaning stands within a certain horizon of thinking” (p. 235). Interpretation is not “a matter of simply finding out the author’s intentions” (p. 235). The voice that is “speaking in the text is the subject-

matter about which it was written, the question that called it into being and to which it is an answer” (p. 235). The dialogue between researcher and the work, “that a metaphoric sensibility invites begins in the ear and not on the tongue. It is a sensibility that is steeped in the art of listening” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 340). This capacity to listen allows “the words that the other speaks” to “enter the ear and sink down to the heart before they rise to the brain” (p. 340). The capacity to listen is “heart work” that “requires a change of heart, and this change of heart involves an emotional aspect in one’s confrontation with the other” (p. 340). The “other’s perspective speaks to the other within oneself,” or the unconscious, shadow elements (p. 340). One can “enable a work to speak by knowing how to listen,” and developing an “I-thou” relationship to the work, not as “an it that is at my disposal but as a thou who addresses me” (Palmer, 1969, p. 226). It is “necessary to go behind the text to find what the text did not, and perhaps could not, say” (p. 234). The hermeneutical task is in “hearing deeply into the ‘what’ behind the explicitness of the text” (p. 235). Therefore, “what is said can be understood... only in terms of what is *not* said,” what is lost or forgotten (p. 235). The researcher must hear “in the text what it says today- to hear, in other words, what it did not and could not say” (p. 235). There is a Sophianic, receptive wisdom and connection to the Divine feminine, or *Adi Shakti* that is inherent in alchemical hermeneutic research, “allowing the critical mind to become virginal for a moment, free of its preconceptions, plans, and intentions, so that it might be inseminated by the soul of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 231). Through this openness to receive what is beyond one’s own horizon, the horizon of the work and the others in the work can be included and given a space of expression.

Intersubjectivity.

The question that has been asked throughout this process has not been regarding, “what we do or what we should do, but what happens beyond our willing and doing” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xi). A relationship of “intersubjectivity” is created through the process of relating to the work in such a way (p. xii). In the ongoing, unfolding process, what I have looked for is not the “reality” of the reciprocal relationship between Kundalini yoga and depth psychology, but the “comprehensiveness, comprehensibility, intelligibility, credibility, meaningfulness, significance, and fruitfulness for opening up new possibilities” (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 55). In hermeneutic research, “truth is seen as an ongoing and unfolding process, where each successive interpretation has the possibility of uncovering or opening up new possibilities” (p. 56). Palmer (1969) wrote of the hermeneutical method:

Method is an effort of measure and control from the side of the interpreter; it is the opposite of letting the phenomenon lead. The openness of “experience”—which alters the interpreter himself from the side of the text—is antithetical to method. (p. 247)

Early in the process came the realization that “logic cannot fully account for the workings of understanding. Somehow, a kind of ‘leap’ into the hermeneutical circle occurs and we understand the whole and the parts together” (p. 87). Goodchild (2006) described synchronicities that make possible “quantum leaps that bypass conditioned reality and go directly to deep sources of inspiration and renewal” (p. 82). In order to make this leap there must be an understanding, which is “partly a comparative and partly an intuitive and divinatory matter. To operate at all, the hermeneutical circle assumes an element of intuition” and a deeper knowing (p. 87). In this intersubjective relationship, there is a reflexive knowledge, or “shared understanding” that “what is to be understood must

already be known” (p. 87). This enables a shared understanding and shared meaning to develop through the reciprocal relationship between researcher and work. In this shared meaning, there remains that which has not or cannot be spoken. The Others in the work “disclose themselves, but they withdraw from us as well and are never fully manifest, for what is spoken has about it the circle of the unsaid” (Gadamer, 1976, p. lv). There is a “disclosing” and a “concealing power of language” functioning in conversation with the texts (p. lv). One must “bring to language the possibilities that are suggested but remain unspoken in what the tradition speaks to us. This task is not only universal—present wherever language is present—but it is also never finished” (p. lv). Through the imaginal approach, the hermeneutic circle has become the alchemical hermeneutic spiral, which deepens and re-connects the work to its origins, “making a place for those other subtle unconscious connections between a researcher and his or her work” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 222). This is the “alchemical vessel in which the complex researcher and the unfinished business in the soul of the work are mixed” (p. 228). In this process, the “complex wounds of the researcher are transformed into a work that comes through the researcher but is not about him or her” (p. 228).

Dialectical relationship.

Palmer (1969) wrote, “every true hermeneutical experience is a new creation, a new disclosure of being; it stands in a firm relationship to the present, and historically could not have happened before” (p. 244). What is created comes through the “fusion of horizons . . . some elements of one’s own horizon are negated and others affirmed; some elements in the horizon of the text recede and others come forward” (p. 244). The hermeneutical experience is an event, a “*language event*,” which happens “outside of all

time and temporality,” and has an aspect of timelessness and spacelessness (p. 243). It is an event outside of historicity. As such, it “requires language that is beyond our rational thinking towards a poetic sensibility that can try to capture the presence of the invisible in the visible” (Goodchild, 2006, p. 82). There is a historicity to language, where each “historical situation elicits new attempts to render the world into language. Each makes its contribution to the tradition, but is itself inevitably charged with new unspoken possibilities that drive our thinking further and constitute the radical creativity of tradition” (Gadamer, 1976, p. lv). We are therefore always “on the way to language” (p. lv). The hermeneutical experience “should be led by the text” and the language of the text (Palmer, 1969, p. 244). Like the mystics or alchemist’s experience of a greater Consciousness or the third coniunctio, they “either are reduced to silence” or “say it is indescribable,” and cannot find the language to describe the experience (Odajnyk, 1993, p. 166). In this dissertation, personal experience as “text” required a certain receptivity and way of listening to the embodied experience so as to give it “language.” Embodied experience as text, like the actual texts of interpretation “must be helped to speak” (Palmer, 1969, p. 244). The researcher does not come from the perspective of “self-sufficient grasping of consciousness,” but from an understanding that is open to “being seized,” and a “willingness to risk” one’s own horizon of understanding “in a free opening of oneself” (p. 244). One is “caught up in the inner movement of the thing that is unfolding” (p. 248).

Psychological writing attends “to the rhythms of language if it is to write down the soul” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 327). Romanyshyn described his experience of such writing: “I feel the words, sentences, and at times an entire paragraph before I have a

sense of the meaning. I feel the rhythm of the language, its temp, pace, its beat, before I have a sense of the writing” (p. 327). There is a “flow” to the work, “the meaning is there, carried” not by the researcher, “but by the rhythm of the words” (p. 328). Reading one’s work aloud, allows for a slowing of the work. There is a “dialectical rhythm of the soul . . . a circumambulating exchange of idea, a rhythm that flows between and among and around one’s thoughts” (p. 329). In writing down the soul, “meaning is a matter of rhythm” (p. 329). In yogic mantra, the vibrational sound current, tone, pitch and rhythm of chanting is similarly vital to the quality and effectiveness of the mantra, which allows one to connect to the greater Universal rhythms of Consciousness. In my own writing process I have often felt swept up by the rhythm of the material that is coming through. Because the entirety of the writing has been done through the meditative process, I have trusted that what comes through is not of my Self but what needs to come through from the work. Throughout this process, I have had a layering of multiple mantras playing simultaneously in the background near my writing space at my desk as a way of staying connected to the sound current. Some of the mantras having been played continually in my home, in some cases for years. The sound current brings a sense of historicity that affects the writing through the repetitive power of the mantra’s vibratory frequency, which changes and transforms the energy. In the “*psychology of the gap*” between what is said and what remains unsaid through the rhythms of the text, reading one’s work aloud attempts to give language to the gap (p. 329). The gap is between what the researcher knows and wants from the work, and “what the soul of the work wants and knows” (p. 335). Perhaps the question to ask, regarding whether the soul is enlivened through the writing is: “Does it take you as the reader up in its tempo and move you, and,

like a piece of music, lead you into its dance? Does it resonate with your body and not just make sense to your mind” (p. 330). It would be impossible or impractical to “sustain” such “rhetorical flourish” throughout an entire work (p. 330). However, “there are moments when the soul of the work does take over from the author and ask to sing, and in those moments the rhythm of the work is different” (p. 330).

Ethical epistemology.

The result of such a relationship to the text is an ethical way of being and a receptivity to and willingness to allow what is wanting to come through the work. In the imaginal approach to research, “the researcher is ethically obligated to consider the other(s) within himself or herself who constitute his or her unconscious complex presence to the work” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 341). The researcher is also “ethically obligated to make a place for the strangers in the work, those others who carry the unfinished business in the soul of the work” (p. 341). They are the “ancestors for whom the work is done... We owe them our attention if we are to keep the soul of the work in mind. We have an ethical responsibility to lend them an ear” (p. 341). The ancestors in the work are the “great extended family who line the corridors of history” (p. 341). They “gather around the writing table, their questions waiting to be heard. We owe them our attention if we are to keep the soul of the work in mind” (p. 342). Having an “ethical epistemology,” means that the researcher “accepts responsibility” and “acknowledges the work that has been made, knowing fully that the work that has been made was not fully of his or her making” (p. 344). There is always a “shadow side” to such work; “all the bodies of knowledge we create, like the bodies of those who create them, cast a shadow” (p. 336). “Failure to take into account the presence of the unconscious takes the shape of our epistemologies,

becoming one-sided, fixed truths and ideological exercises of power” (p. 336). The researcher must recognize and “come to terms with the shadow side of our ways of knowing and constructing the world” (p. 336). Thus, at the end of this work, we come back to the first ethical question one must ask in research that would keep soul in mind, “whether he or she has been faithful to the call of the work, to what those others who carry the soul of the work have asked” (p. 344). In my own process, the others are given a place in the work through the ongoing transference dialogues, which are filtered through my daily sadhana as a meditation. By continually re-creating a ritual, meditative space of reverie, day-after-day, the others are given the consistent opportunity, a space to make themselves known and to have their voice be heard in the work. It has become a work filtered through me, but not about me.

Implications for Clinical and Depth Psychology

Any act of interpretation “involves an ‘application’ to the present” (Palmer, 1969, p. 245). The interpreter must “render explicit a work’s meaning today” to “bridge the historical distance between his horizon and that of the text” (p. 245). Kundalini yoga and meditation are distinctively applicable to the present time and space that we are currently in. As society transitions from the Piscean Age into the Aquarian Age, the Kundalini yogic technology has become increasingly vital in navigating one’s own consciousness, and as a means of connecting to a greater Awareness. What is needed for this day and age is a “new relationship to intuition, emotion and instinct” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 4.) Knowledge and “information” is “not enough. . . . We need wisdom” (p. 4). One’s sense of “personal identity and its foundation is shifting. This is an age of paradox—more global and more individual” (p. 4). What is called for is “far more love and unity, for we have more fear

and tremendous insecurity” (p. 5). Goodchild (2006) wrote that the “individual’s link with the greater universe is also a characteristic of the Aquarian age” (p. 86). We are currently on the cusp of that Age. What is required to bring this Age into being is a “reconciliation and integration of the spiritual . . . with the technological and material,” where one’s actions are “considered ecologically, and globally” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 5). Through the use of mantra and the vibratory sound current, one can access the Divine, or pure Consciousness, and move beyond where Jung’s depth psychology left off, beyond the opus, the Philosophers’ stone, and beyond the third coniunctio. The experience of shuniya or simran, the stillness at the center of the sound current, has the power to penetrate one’s heart, lift the veils of maya and karma, so that one is able to see the reality of the pure Self through Divine consciousness.

Aquarian age shift in consciousness.

For depth psychology and clinical psychology as a whole, the implications of this shift are enormously important. As increasingly more is demanded of us, more is required to keep up with the current pace of the evolution of consciousness (Bhajan, 2003). Questions arise as to where this might leave psychology, regarding its continued, ongoing usefulness and applicability. I have no doubt that many have and will continue to benefit not only from clinical psychology as a whole, but from the vast tradition of alchemical symbolism and the pathway that Jung mapped out toward increasing levels of differentiation moving toward individuation. Stein (1998) wrote: “It is possible to fail in the task of individuation. One can remain divided, unintegrated, inwardly multiple into deep old age and still be considered to have lived a socially and collectively successful, albeit superficial, life” (p. 175). Jung’s conception of the individuation drive is a

“psychological one,” not primarily a “biological imperative” (p. 175). “Deep inner unity on a conscious level is in fact a rare achievement, although it is undoubtedly supported by a very strong innate impulse” (p. 175). Kundalini yoga and meditation as was taught by Yogi Bhajan, offers a different path that moves beyond individuation. Neither the depth psychological path nor that of the Kundalini yogi will be right for all. The Kundalini yogic and meditative energy has led me to realms in my own consciousness that were not previously accessible through depth psychology or personal analysis alone. I have experienced many subtle and some drastic shifts in consciousness that have led to a deepening and broadening of awareness. There is an overwhelming feeling of devotion, reverence, and connectedness through the mantric sound current to a greater Consciousness, to the Divine feminine, and to the cosmos. I feel solidly grounded in the earth and beingness through my morning sadhana practice, which is the link through the golden chain or aurea catena, to what could synonymously be called Guru, higher Consciousness, or the Divine within. The physical practice of sadhana is the center through which one is able to experience the mantra or vibratory sound current and connect to the greater cosmic sound current and experience shuniya or oneness.

Moving forward, depth psychology will continue to influence and contribute to the collective movement of society toward individuation. Beyond individuation, there is infinite space that remains inaccessible to depth psychology. The technology of how to manage and direct one’s own Kundalini energy is designed for this time and space, to change ones consciousness exponentially faster than has ever been previously possible at any time on this planet. Yogi Bhajan (2003) said: “This change is radical, not incremental. It is a simultaneous change in both the outer and inner worlds. The mind is

changing its sensitivity, its basic frequency and functioning . . . changing its sense of time, space, relatedness, and relevancy” (p. 4). The change “is on all levels of life at once. It is not sequential and orderly” (p. 4). According to the yogic teachings, we are currently in a space where in order for one to consciously link to the greater Awareness or pure Consciousness, one needs the meditative tools, specifically mantra that will link one to the *Adi Shakti*, or the Divine feminine, through the vibrational sound current. Kundalini yoga and meditation is “a potent and practical technology to generate the inner energy needed to survive and excel under this pressure” (p. 5). What is required now and what we are coming upon in the imminent future is a “quantum leap” in consciousness, which Goodchild (2006) described as a synchronistic or other anomalous event (p. 82). This massive shift of consciousness is a potentially radical, heart-opening experience of eros consciousness, and a fully embodied realization of one’s personal connection to the Divine. Such sweeping transformations can cause tumultuous, uprooting effects in one’s life as one prepares to let go of what is no longer needed, making room for the unknown to enter. Ultimately this is what is required to usher in this drastically ethical way of being, in the forthcoming Age of Aquarius.

Prana.

Everything in consciousness relates back to the prana, the universal life force or breath. It is the vibrational “psychophysical energy,” the subtle breath of purusha, the “transcendental self, soul, *atma*, or spirit. It is the first contained embodiment of the unlimited consciousness and is formed with the subtle body. It is the consciousness and witness of the spirit that indwells in the body” (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p.1 98). The Pranic body moves one’s consciousness from “finite to Infinite” and links one to the

sound current and to the golden chain of teachers and gurus (Bhajan, 2003, p. 202). The value of Kundalini yoga and meditation for depth psychology and clinical psychology as a whole, is in the re-connecting to the breath, to the word, to shuniya, stillness. It is a turning inward and tuning-in to the greater Consciousness, always present and often overlooked. It is a re-membering and re-embodying the parts of oneself that were cast off or forgotten. One comes to a new place of fullness, completeness, and wholeness, carrying the zero point of shuniya, the inner stillness. Contrary to popular culture belief, meditation does not take time out of one's day, it "generates time" and "gives you time back in multiples of what you put into it" (Bhajan & Khalsa, 1998, p. 141). It "hones" one's focus, "clears" unconscious distractions and "unintentional thoughts," and quite simply "lets you be present to what you are doing" in each moment (p. 141). It creates space in one's life. Through the meditative process of clearing the central energy channels along the spine, all of the various systems in the body are synchronized and integrated, from the chakras, to the ten bodies. Everything begins to work together effectively.

When the pranic channels are clear, there is a direct link between the third chakra, the navel point and mantra, which carries a specific pranayam, or breath pattern with it. Yogi Bhajan (2003) said: "When you speak a mantra and vibrate the tip of the tongue" and "vibrate the Navel Point at the same time. . . that extra pulse of energy that comes from the navel moves the words into the realm of *anahat*" (p. 192). In *anahat*, "the mantra resounds in every atom and fiber of your being. Its vibration becomes a part of you" (p. 68). *Anahat* means "without boundary," and is a "powerful projection" whereby the "action of speaking becomes infused" with the "will of a warrior," or warrior

archetype (p. 192). The energetic force “is vibrated without speaking out loud. Each cell vibrates the energy that is released from the Navel Point” (p. 192). Using the tip of the tongue and the navel point “triggers the higher glands to produce what is referred to as amrit, the sweet nectar of ecstasy” (p. 68). In this subtle shift, one is able to access and connect to the Infinite.

Soul’s teacher.

Yogi Bhajan (2003) spoke about the process of the development of the Soul body, which is closely linked with the Subtle body, incarnation after incarnation: “There is no human without the inborn temperament for awareness. Some have higher blocks to it, some have lower blocks. With some it takes a long time to break these blocks, with others it is quick” (p. 29). He gave the analogy: “Just as someone prefers to go from New York to Los Angeles in an airplane or on a donkey. Both will arrive; it is a question of time” (p. 29). According to yogic scripture, “twelve years of Hatha Yoga, plus six years of Raja Yoga, plus three years of Mantra Yoga, plus one year of Laya Yoga is equal to the effect of just one complete year of Kundalini Yoga (p. 29). It is a “matter of choice” (p. 29). Kundalini yoga is taught through the psyche of the teacher, “It cannot be learned from books. . . . It is passed down from one person to the next,” as in the Golden chain of teachers, or the aurea catena, in alchemical terms (p. 29). The Golden chain is “the channel through which the energy, the wisdom and the protection of the tradition flow” (p. 54). Yogi Bhajan said:

It is my personal belief that there are certain souls which have to study from certain other souls. They have earned that destiny. The contact of the psychomagnetic field is already arranged. Once in a life, each soul must come across the orbit of the soul from whom he has the opportunity to learn. It is the law of consciousness. By virtue of your previous incarnation, you always meet your teacher. Either you surrender your ego to the teacher or you run away from him.

The law is that you will meet the opportunity, not that you will recognize it or sustain a commitment to it. (p. 29)

The practice of Kundalini yoga is the *option* to “reside now in the timeless beauty of the soul” (p. 29). Yogi Bhajan said: “The opportunity doesn’t come back again. Remember, no Master ever comes back again . . . nobody comes to the Guru’s gate if it is not earned already. But it is still yourself who must have the will to enter the gate or not” (p. 55).

Those who come to this practice generally “already have the momentum within them to be given a choice to move toward higher consciousness” (p. 29). “You have the illusion of choosing. You are chosen by the teaching and the path. If your past actions have polished you enough that you shine, consciousness will pick you up” (p. 55). Somehow, “you will meet teachers to guide you to the choices that can elevate you to the Truth” (p.55). Kundalini yoga “rapidly makes you what you already are, and brings you to the practical experience of Infinity” (p. 29). “When the soul opens up to the heart, a human being becomes Divine” (p. 29).

Meditatio, imaginatio.

The benefit of meditation in alchemical, depth psychological terms is ultimately the resulting “crystallization of the purified and united psychic energy of the opposites into the golden flower,” which is the “production of the *lapis*” (Odajnyk, 1993, p. 163). It is the “establishment of a psychic structure that specifically embodies and functions with the energy of the Self. Prior to the existence of this structure, the Self must function through the various instincts and complexes and is affected by their characteristics” (p. 163). Meditation gives one a new “psychic structure” from which to operate and navigate one’s life. It is the union of the opposites into something entirely new, accompanied by a new perspective from which to view one’s created reality. Odajnyk described Jung’s

notion of the alchemical *caelum* as “an image of the Self, but it is *also* a phenomenological experience” (p. 163). It is an “actual experience,” not merely a “representation” of the individuation process; it is an embodied lived experience (p. 162). The *caelum* in alchemy is the “appearance of a transparent, shining sky” (p. 162). For the meditator, it is also an embodied, physical experience: “I felt as though I were looking at the vast, utterly transparent sky” (p. 163). Such an experience is “far more than an alchemical metaphor, the phenomenon appears after a certain amount of psychic energy has been cleansed and consciousness held empty” (p. 162). Jung (1956/1963) wrote about the alchemical process: “In short, the alchemical operation seems to us the equivalent of the psychological process of active imagination,” or *meditatio* (p. 526). Goodchild (2006) wrote: “The use of *imaginatio*, together with the *meditatio* . . . were the two faculties needed in the alchemical *processus* for the establishment of the subtle body” (p. 70). Jung later “updated the *meditatio* in his technique of active imagination” (p. 70). It is possible to “see the *coniunctio* stages and goal as descriptions of actual psychological experiences that take place during meditation. These experiences do need to be discussed in psychological terms, but not only in the terms in which Jung dealt with them” (Odajnyk, 1993, p. 158).

Amor Perfectissimus

Throughout this process, there has been an attitude of “*amor perfectissimus*,” a reference or devotion to the work (Jung, 1944/1953, p. 274). This term used to describe the adepts of alchemy is fitting for this dissertation. The alchemist’s “unusual concentration, and indeed religious fervour,” helped to create and endow the alchemical vessel of the work, with a certain sanctity and awe-inspiring reverence (p. 274). In *amor*

perfectissimus, “such devotion would naturally serve to project values and meanings into the object of all this passionate research and to fill it with forms and figures that have their origin primarily in the unconscious of the investigator” (p. 274). Palmer (1969) referred to the existential philosopher and theologian, Paul Tillich’s definition of “love as the overcoming of separation” (p. 244). The union “of text and interpreter overcomes the historical estrangement of the text, a union made possible by a common ground in being” (p. 244). The common ground of language and history creates the reciprocal relationship between researcher and text. In this “loving union,” there “brings to stand the full potentialities of interpreter and text, the partners in the hermeneutical dialogue” (p. 244). Palmer gave the analogy: “Just as decking out a poodle to furnish ‘aesthetic delight’ may be an act of egotism unconnected with any deeper love for the animal himself, so also the view of literature as mere play” or as part of one’s “conceptual mastery,” shows “no true understanding of literature” or interpretation (p. 248).

Romanyshyn (2007) described alchemical hermeneutics as an “*erotic method*” (p. 271). As such, it “follows a path of love, where love is the mode of knowledge whereby one being knows another” (p. 271). The work is the “vessel” of containment for the researcher and ancestors, or Others in the work. The relationship is one of “erotic mutual seduction, a loving engagement with one’s topic” (p. 271). In the final stage of the alchemical hermeneutic process, the researcher enters the “ritual space” or mundus imaginalis, in which, “by the fires of love, and in the presence of a guide—he or she is bother deepened by the work . . . worked over and transformed by the work, even becoming the work and living it in an embodied way” (p. 272). As I completed a session of writing about amor perfectissimus, having done some meditative work on the Adi

Shakti or Divine feminine earlier in the say, I chanted “sat nam” to close, as I do at the end of every writing session, and I heard a voice, separate from my own. It was a female voice. She said “sat nam” along with me, and then there was silence. I sat in the stillness, the shuniya, with my eyes closed for a few moments. I felt it to be a supportive, loving gesture and an acknowledgement of the guiding presence of the Other, and her attention to the work and to me. This research process has been an act of love that contains parts of my-self, conscious and unconscious, as well as conscious and unconscious aspects of the Others and the Ancestors in the work.

Taking Leave

The further I have delved into the research, the less I have felt that it was my own. There has been an increasingly powerful sense of being led into and through the work. As the alchemical hermeneutic process deepened, there has been the sense of a foundation being built, carefully, layer upon layer, very deliberately, yet completely out of my personal control. Contrary to what one might expect upon reaching the end of the research process, I now feel that I am less a part of the creative aspect of the work and more of a spectator; I feel increasingly pushed to the sidelines and out of the boundaries of the work. Like the *prana* or breath, I feel it as “both ‘mine’ and ‘not mine.’ It is both automatic and conscious” (Bhajan, 2003, p. 90). At times it is incredibly overwhelming to witness the enormity of what has been done, and what remains for future doing. The image often comes to me of a great sea extending as far as one can see in all directions; I find myself in the middle of the boundariless, never-ending depths of this body of water. There is a feeling of grandeur and awe for the vastness, enormity, and weight of it. The weight of the work and creative source behind it, is not of my Self, but the Others in the

work (Romanyshyn, 2007). They have most clearly and synchronistically made themselves known and pieced together this patchwork, as they saw fit. I have been led and carried throughout this process by a number of the Gurus, teachers, and anonymous helpers invested in the production of this work. It has been a loving, heart-opening experience for me. I feel as if I have received this work as a gift, and at times, wish I could have given more in return. As with all endings there is nostalgia and a bit of regret as I look back. I might wish for something to be different, and in the same moment I feel complete with it, as it is. It is with an attitude of reverence, devotion, and gratitude that I now prepare to let go of this work. Creatively, it has been fulfilling to watch the work grow, and to grow along with it. There have been many openings in my conscious awareness through the writing process and through my morning sadhana. I feel more connected and complete now than perhaps I have felt at any other time in my life. Things are as they should be. I feel complete, at peace, balanced. It astounds me to think back on this process and the places I have been through the course of this work, and where I leave it now. I will miss it; at the same time I know I can do no more, for now. So I take leave of it here, as an offering, to the Gurus and teachers in the work, and the Others for whom this work was done. You have my heart and my gratitude. Many blessings. Sat nam.

“Meditation is the creative control of the self where the Infinite can talk to you”
(Yogi Bajan, 1977, p. 85).

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