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THE EXPERIENCE OF WONDER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL SKETCHING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THERAPY

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

the California School of Professional Psychology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Richard H. Hycner

May 1976

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Approved by:

Chris Downing Chairperson	28 June 1976 Date
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To my parents, who gave me my first birth,

and a chance to be reborn

And to Maury Friedman, who was essential

in my being reborn.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

I am proposing in this dissertation to investigate the experience of wonder. Wonder seems to be a very profound experience in human living, yet remarkably little has been written about it in psychological literature. A large part of the reason why no one has really investigated this experience is because it does not lend itself to being researched from a traditional "empirical" research paradigm. It is difficult to imagine a laboratory situation in which a researcher could create an experiment where a subject would have an experience of wonder, and which the researcher could "objectively" capture its dimensions. For this reason, I propose to investigate the experience of wonder from a phenomenological research perspective. I believe that this methodology will allow me to deal with this phenomenon in a unique and substantive manner. In doing so I hope to avoid the scathing criticism of traditional psychological studies put forward by Brewster Smith (1961) in an editorial for the "Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology":

> It seems to me that a remarkable high proportion of the research reported is clean, stringently conceived, and effectively executed, reflective of rigorous and painstaking thought and experimentation, and remarkably trivial. There are occasions when I have the unpleasant fantasy that psychology has become so enamored of method that techniques become our independent variables and our substantive problems only the dependent ones (p. 461).

It is hoped that this study will not be trivial; that it will help to explicate some fundamental dimensions of the human person through investigating the experience of wonder. This study will be rigorous, in the sense of being rigorously true to the phenomenon being studied, as it unfolds. This is in accordance with the implementation of phenomenological research put forward by Giorgi (1970).

When I speak of the experience of wonder, I am here referring to the experience as defined in Webster's Dictionary (1960), that is, "the feeling of surprise, admiration, and awe aroused by something strange, unexpected, incredible, etc.."

Definition. In choosing this experience to investigate, I am already faced with a dilemma. Wonder stands out as a unique experience, yet it is also intimately interwoven with other human experiences. In many ways wonder bears similarities to other human experiences which makes it difficult at times to differentiate it from these other experiences. Yet, in the phenomenological sense, this is part of the process of "being true to the phenomenon." That is, the phenomenon of wonder itself appears to be interrelated to other human phenomena, though still having a figural constellation of its own. This situatedness of a phenomenon is not to be seen as something negative, but rather as an innate part of human experiencing. Often, our labels such as the term "wonder" bear a clarity which is untrue to the experience. Our verbal labels cannot begin to capture the pre-verbal and non-verbal dimensions of our experience. It is precisely the purpose of phenomenological research to illuminate a phenomenon within its lived context. This is not to deny the value of terms such as "wonder", but rather to underline that the name of an experience is but a shorthand manner of pointing to an

extremely complex and often ambiguous phenomenon.

As the Gestalt psychologists have pointed out (Kohler, 1947), any phenomenon is but a figure within a ground of horizonal possibilities. That is, no phenomenon is totally separate from the ground from which it emerges. Rather, there is a dialectical tension between what emerges, (the figure), and the ground. This applies to human experiencing in general, and to the labeling of these human experiences. Therefore, a phenomenon, such as the experience of wonder, is not by any means totally and unambiguously differentiated from other human experiences. Rather, it is a figural experience emerging from, yet related to, other experiences which form its ground.

However, even by conceptual definition, it is possible to make some differentiation from related experiences. This differentiation cannot be overly precise, yet there do appear to be significant structural differences. For example, the experience of wonder appears to be very closely related to the experience of "awe", yet it also is dissimilar. Webster's (1960) defines awe as:

> a mixed feeling of reverence, fear, and wonder, caused by something majestic, sublime, etc. SYN. awe refers to a feeling of fearful or profound respect or wonder inspired by the greatness, superiority, grandeur, etc. of a person or thing and suggests an immobilizing effect.

Even by definition, it appears clear that some significant dimensions of awe differentiate it from the experience of wonder. For instance, there is a far greater sense of fear and profound respect in the experience of awe than is apparently manifested in the experience of wonder, even though by definition wonder is one possible component of the experience of awe. In the definition of wonder, there appears to be a greater

emphasis on the sense of being amazed at, of marveling at, rather than the profound fear and respect of awe.

That-in-the-face-of-which awe is experienced also seems to be different, at least by definition. That is, awe arises in the face of that which is characterized by majesty, grandeur or superiority. It seems to suggest the presence of something holy (Otto, 1950). Wonder, by contrast, is aroused by something strange, unexpected, or incredible.

Finally, even by definition, the end results of the experience are different. Awe suggests an immobilizing effect. Wonder, on the contrary, seems to suggest an energizing effect.

In the following pages, I will review what has been written on the experience of wonder in the fields of psychology, philosophy, theology, literature, and Eastern thought.

Literature Review

Psychological literature. In terms of the psychological literature, very little has been done with the experience of wonder. As I stated previously, this is largely due to the fact that such a phenomenon does not lend itself to being investigated within the traditional research perspective. The first psychologist even to allude to the experience of wonder was William James. Considering the scope of his interests, this is not surprising. In an essay entitled "The Sentiment of Rationality," (James, 1956) he points out that pure theory can never banish wonder from human experiencing. Quite to the contrary:

> Existence then will be a brute fact to which as a whole the emotion of ontologic wonder shall rightfully cleave, but remain eternally unsatisfied. Then wonderfulness or mysteriousness will be an essential attribute of the nature of things, and the exhibition and emphasizing of it will continue to be

> an ingredient in the philosophic industry of the race (p. 75).

Aside from specific references to wonder, one also gets a flavor of the sense of wonder which permeates James' own writing. He seemed to be a man who approached the world without preset categories. He always seemed to have a sense of amazement at what he found and this was communicated to his audience.

Though no explicit research had been done on the experience of wonder per se, several therapists have directly and indirectly referred to it. For example, a sense of wonder very clearly manifests itself in the therapy of Carl Rogers. Though he does not often directly comment on a sense of wonder, he certainly does give the reader the clear impression of being aware of its importance. This is most clearly seen when he speaks of the greater openness to experience which can be the result of client-centered therapy. He approvingly refers to one of Maslow's comments on self-actualizers as being applicable to the greater openness which his clients experience:

> Maslow might be speaking of clients I have known when he says, "self-actualized people have a wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy, however stale these experiences may be for other people." (Rogers, 1961, p. 174).

He also refers to the wonder, or awe, which the therapist experiences with the client.

> As therapy goes on the therapist's feelings toward the client tends to change to something approaching awe as he sees the valiant and deep struggle of the person to be himself (Rogers, 1961, p. 82).

Another therapist who has referred to the role of wonder in therapy is Alexander Lowen. Lowen is the founder of Bioenergetic therapy. Much

of his work has to do with helping the person experience his/her body in a fresh way. He encourages the person to accept the child within, which still has the capacity to wonder at the world. He states:

> The person who can accept the child within him has the capacity to enjoy life. He has the sense of wonder that opens him to new experiences. He has the excitability to respond with fresh enthusiasm (Lowen, 1970, p. 251).

Abraham Maslow is one of the few research psychologists who has been concerned with the experience of wonder. Though it does not appear that he dealt directly with the phenomenon of wonder, from a research perspective, his research on peak experiences most certainly touches indirectly, yet significantly, on the experience of wonder. The question immediately arises as to whether a peak experience can be equated to an experience of wonder. It appears that it is possible that all experiences of wonder are peak experiences but that not all peak experiences are experiences of wonder. That is, experiences of wonder would be subcategories under the general category of peak experiences, at least for Maslow's purposes. To some degree, this can already be illustrated by the original research question which Maslow asked of eighty individuals and to which he received written responses from one-hundred ninety college students (Maslow, 1968):

> I would like you to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences of your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly 'being hit' by a book or a painting, or from some great creative moment. First list these. And then try to tell me how you feel in such acute moments, how you feel differently from the way you feel at other times, how you are at the moment a different person in some ways (p. 71).

The question was already more inclusive than the research question in

this study which was: "Tell me about an experience of wonder which is most striking for you." In this study, I am restricting the question only to experiences of wonder, not peak experiences as such. It also becomes clear that in discussing the results of his research, Maslow doesn't equate the peak experience with the experience of wonder, since for him wonder is but one possible emotional response to a peak experience (1968).

> The emotional reaction in the peak experience has a special flavor of wonder, of awe, of reverence, of humility and surrender before the experience as before something great (p. 87).

It is thus seen that even in the research work of Abraham Maslow, there is not a direct concern with the experience of wonder as such, but it is rather subsumed under the more general category of peak experiences. One place where Maslow did address the phenomenon of wonder directly, though not from a research perspective, is in a symposium in which he took part entitled: The Changing Image of Man: A Challenge to Psychoanalysis (1966). In that symposium, he states that the scientist should be able to experience wonder at the phenomenon that he is studying, even after many years of researching it.

> But to continue with the parallel, you may spend a lifetime getting to know more and more about your subject and wind up, after fifty years of learning, feeling even more overwhelmed with its mystery and solving the whole business by being amused with it. Of course, this is now an enriched and 'higher' mystery and wonder, different from the blank mystification of the ignorant. The two processes seem to go on simultaneously and in parallel, i.e., knowing more and more and feeling the mystery more and more (p. 154).

Maslow goes on to talk about the need for inculcating the scientist with a sense of wonder for the phenomenon that he is investigating.

Maslow also felt that a sense of wonder was a basic aspect of any fully human person. He believed that some persons, whom he described as self-actualizers, were especially able to experience the world with wonderment (1970). The self-actualizing person has:

> ...the wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy, however stale those experiences may have become to others. Thus for such a person, any sunset may be as beautiful as the first one, any flower may be of breath-taking loveliness, even after he has seen a million flowers (Maslow, 1970, p. 214-215).

Maslow is certainly not the only scientist to be concerned with the need for a sense of wonder in scientific research and in everyday human living. Such eminent scientists as Eienstein, Oppenheimer, and Polayni have also alluded to the necessity of wonder in science and in everyday living. Perhaps this need was phrased best by Rachel Carson, the eminent biologist. She believed that a sense of wonder was essential throughout our life.

> A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength (1956, pp. 42-43).

Philosophical literature. Philosophy has been much more explicitly concerned with the phenomenon of wonder than has psychology. In fact, many philosophers refer to wonder as the beginning of philosophy. I hope that by looking at some of the philosophical investigations of

wonder, psychology can broaden its perspective.

The first written allusion to wonder, in philosophy, appears in Plato's writings. As Boelen states (1968):

> The first allusion to wonder in the history of Western thinking is found in Plato's dialogue Theatetus. Here wonder is hinted at as what we would call today 'cosmic dizziness' or 'oceanic feeling.' The comprehensive universality is given and the comprehensive universality is in suspense. Consciousness steps out of the narrow bounds of the Ego and a transcendent intuition is awakened in which limitless horizons open up and foundations disintegrate, in which everything becomes at the same time infinitely remote and intimately close, and in which one's being is reduced to a drop in the infinite ocean while at the same time the infinite ocean seems to be contained in the drop. Things can no longer be localized in time and space, but seem to be freely floating while they are drawn into a whirlpool of a kind of mysterious omnipresence. Plato was the first thinker who recognized the revelatory power of this primodial experience by calling wonder the beginning of philosophy (p. 46).

Philosophy thus begins in wonder but it seems that all human research including science begins with wonder. That is, the researcher experiences a sense of wonder aroused by something strange, unexpected or incredible. This then leads to the second sense of wonder, that is, to query, to question, to rigorously investigate that which calls him/her. In fact, it appears that this is precisely what Maslow is calling for in an earlier quote; the need for scientists to begin to research in wonder, and not to lose this primordial wonder at the end of their work, but rather that their research should further imbue them with a sense of the wondrous, of the mysterious in human living. However, in science as well as in philosophy, few persons have returned to the radical beginnings of human thought, to wonder. Most have substituted logic and prejudged conceptual systems for the primordial experience of wonder.

There are parallels for this in science as well as in philosophy. Though philosophy may have begun in wonder, it soon became obsessed with logic-tight conceptual systems. This gross, though necessary observation, fairly well describes the general thrust in Western philosophy for almost two-thousand years. There were of course outstanding exceptions to this throughout Western history, but in general there was no movement within philosophy which truly held to the belief and practice that philosophy begins and ends in wonder. One notable exception to this has been the movement of existentialism and phenomenology which began in the nineteenth century. In this movement, wonder was once again placed in a central place in philosophy. This was most formally done in the phenomenological movement. In the research methodology begun by Husserl and carried on by other phenomenologists, much was made of the phenomenological reduction. The reduction was an attempt to step back from the world which the phenomenologist was investigating, in order better to see all the dimensions and structures which he was investigating. For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, one of the most outstanding phenomenologists of this century, and the one most concerned with the psychological dimension of human existence, the reduction can for all intents and purposes be equated to a phenomenological wonder. As he puts it:

> It is because we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world that for us the only way to become aware of the fact is to suspend the resultant activity, to refuse it our complicity (to look at it ohne mitzumachen, as Husserl often says), or yet again, to put it 'out of play.' Not because we reject the certainties of common sense and a natural attitude to things -- they are, on the contrary, the constant theme of philosophy -- but because, being the presupposed basis of any thought, they are taken from granted, and go unnoticed, and because in order to arouse them and bring them to view, we have to suspend for a moment our recognition of them. The

> best formulation of the reduction is probably that given by Eugen Fink, Husserl's assistant, when he spoke of 'wonder' in the face of the world. Reflection does not withdraw from the world toward the unity of consciousness as the world's basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world because it reveals the world as strange and paradoxical (1962, p. xiii).

Reflective wonder steps back to reveal the world as strange and paradoxical. So especially in Merleau-Ponty's formulation, wonder is essential for the phenomenologist. Yet paradoxically, though it is so central to phenomenological research, phenomenologists themselves have never explicitly researched the phenomenon of wonder. This dissertation hopes to redress this oversight.

Verhoeven (1972) in his book The Philosophy of Wonder, systematically looks at the experience of wonder from a philosophical viewpoint. For him, philosophy is really an extension of the wondering attitude. As he states: "This is our thesis. Philosophy is a radicalization of wonder in all directions (p. 11)." The philosopher stands in wonder at the world in order to better perceive it. Wonder helps him see the world always in a fresh manner. Wonder points out that there is always more to reality than that which can be captured by a philosophical system. However, Verhoeven (1972) points out that there is an essential dialectic between wonder and the system:

> There is a constant dialectic in progress between pure wonder and its assimilation in reasoning and systems. Philosophical thought takes place within this dialectic. It is life and self-preservation. Wonder may well be to philosophy what inspiration is to poetry. It is indeed the essential thing but even when this essential thing is present the work that we call philosophy or poetry is only just beginning. Inspiration cannot take the place of work; wonder

> cannot usurp the place of the craftsmanlike thought of which Heidegger speaks. The philosopher cannot speak directly from fascination. Not even the poet can do this, still less those whose work lies in the positive sciences (p. 39).

Verhoeven goes on to discuss the radical nature of wonder. Wonder need not be concerned only with the unusual or the esoteric. It more often is concerned with the very fact that things exist; that they are what they are:

> It is precisely the emerging 'thusness' of the thing that provokes wonder. It emerges thus; it already existed in the background. There is a movement that gives rise to wonder. The recognition of things as they are is no more than a moment in this movement. The fact that they are as they are is immediately localized in a framework of different possibilities. I wonder that a thing is so only because in this form it is different from what I expected or because it impinges upon my nonthinking self as a strange phenomenon and compels me to think. The realization that a thing is so is the shock that moves me (p. 63).

Verhoeven states that Western civilization is usually in too much of a hurry to be able to enjoy a sense of wonder. We are too task-oriented to appreciate the unfolding of the mysterious around us. We pursue our goals with the intensity of madmen.

> Haste is total lack of interest, for interest means precisely to dwell in between. Haste is the pathos of active, arbitrary people and, as such, is in contrast with wonder, which halts and looks. Haste does not look but, like rage, is blind. This blindness is the closed nature of an arbitrary existence desiring to impose its constructions immediately upon reality (1972, p. 184).

He recommends a correction to this attitude. For Verhoeven, we need a ritardando, a gradual slowing down of our mindless hurrying. We need to slacken our pace and deeply perceive and experience all that we are engaged in. We need to have an expectant attitude at the advent of things. We need to learn to celebrate the presence of beings.

> Slowness, a slackening of pace, is the adoption of an expectant and wondering attitude toward things. It is not pure passiveness but a suspension of activity. This is why we are said to 'pause' in wonder. Wonder necessitates a ritardando in which the new can be digested. During this ritardando the mover becomes filled, as it were, by the world through which he moves, and his eyes are opened to it.
>
> The ritardando is not a halt but a movement in which a tendency to halt is discounted. In this tendency the possibilities passed are celebrated. The ritardando has a festive character. A feast is, as we have said, the solemn emphasis of a positive existence, whose goal lies in itself. The festive ritardando is a pausing by possibilities that may never come to pass but nonetheless are too important to be denied in passing, and, in that denial, destroyed and made meaningless. The ritardando is the attitude of a man who travels a road and thus passes along, but in that passing spares and blesses what he passes (1972, p. 193).

Theological literature. Western theologians have also been concerned with wonder. Abraham Heschel is one such theologian who is centrally aware of the importance of wonder. Heschel perceives wonder to be an awakening awareness of the "Ineffable," i.e., God. If the person rigorously pursues his sense of wonder, it leads him to the Holy.

Heschel (1951) begins by stating that the greatest barrier to a genuine knowing is our reliance on conventional ideas and cognitive structures. This radically interferes with our ability to perceive reality as it is. For Heschel, wonder is the basis of all our knowledge:

> The greatest hindrance to knowledge is our adjustment to conventional notions, to mental clichés. Wonder or radical amazement, the state of maladjustment to words and notions, is, therefore, a prerequisite for an authentic awareness of that which is.
>
> Standing eye to eye with being, we realize that we are able to look at the world with two faculties — with reason and with wonder. Through the first we try to explain or to adapt the world to our concepts, through the second we seek to adapt our minds to the world.
>
> Wonder rather than doubt is the root of knowledge (Heschel, 1951, p. 11).

Wonder alone gives us the immediacy of contact which is really necessary for a true and deep understanding of reality. Reason arises out of our need to structure the insights which wonder gives us, but in no way does reason supersede the originary power of wonder.

Heschel sees our age and our Western civilization as being out of contact with a genuine sense of wonder. Our sense of wonder has become atrophied in our pursuit of technological advances. We are so concerned with using something that we have little awareness of what it is we are using. We need to learn to appreciate "what is." We need to start learning to see things as ends in themselves rather than only as means for our purposes:

> As civilization advances, the sense of wonder almost necessarily declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder (Heschel, 1951, p. 37).

The paradox is that in our pursuit of making life easier and in our obsession for "knowing about" things, we are progressively eliminating the very experiences which make life worth living. This attitude even extends to people. We know how to utilize people but we do not really know how to appreciate them, or even ourselves.

Finally, Heschel encourages us to look beneath the rational and cognitive realities which we construct. He believes that we need to return to the sources of our knowing, which precede cognitive knowing. In a long and beautiful quote, he speaks of the amazement which arises when we escape the categories which we have constructed:

> To a mind unwarped by intellectual habit, unbiased by what it already knows; to unmitigated innate surprise,

> there are *no axioms, no dogmas*; there is only wonder, the realization that the world is too incredible, too meaningful for us. The existence of the world is the most unlikely, the most unbelievable fact. Even our ability for surprise is beyond expectation. In our unmitigated wonder, we are like spirits who have never been conscious of outside reality, and to whom the knowledge of the existence of the universe has been brought for the first time. Who could believe it? Who could conceive it? We must learn to overcome the sleek certainty and learn to understand that the existence of the universe is contrary to all reasonable expectations. The mystery is where we start from without presuppositions, without allegations, without doctrines, without dogmas (Heschel, 1951, p. 58).

Sam Keen is another thinker who ascribes great importance to the experience of wonder. In fact he has one of the most in-depth studies of wonder. It would be well for us to look carefully at his study since he has come closest to doing a phenomenological analysis of the characteristics of wonder. However, ultimately his study ends up being more theoretical and theological than rigorously phenomenological.

Wonder, for Keen, is primarily a holy experience. By holy is not meant something arising out of religious doctrine, but rather awareness of the sacred in mundane reality:

> To wonder is to perceive with reverence and love (eros), and in wondering we come close to the feeling that the earth is holy. Historically, the notion of wonder has been closely bound up with a religious mode of being in the world (1969, p. 15).

After this introduction, Keen then goes on to discuss the anatomy of wonder. He states that:

> Our method will be (1) to deal with the types and characteristics of the objects of wonder, then (2) to focus on the subjective aspects of the experience, and finally (3) to compare wonder to its nearest relative — the experience of the holy (1969, pp. 21-22).

For Keen, there are two major kinds of wonder, ontologic and mundane.

Ontologic wonder arises when a person realizes that there is no necessity in what exists. That is, he questions why something exists rather than nothing. Up till that moment this person may have been happily engaged in his unquestioned reality. However, then something happens and all of a sudden this person becomes aware that there is no reason why something should exist rather than nothing. He is filled with a sense of wonder that there are existing beings. He has a very lived sense of the meaning of the verb "to be."

The other pole of wonder is mundane wonder. Rather than arising out of an awareness of the contingency of beings, this wonder is elicited primarily by what a thing is. Keen proposes that mundane wonder is elicited by the sensational and also by the familiar. We are filled with wonderment when we encounter something totally novel. This wonder is elicited by the sensational quality of the object. The familiar also elicits wonder. We may see a person many times but suddenly, for some unknown reason, we are able to penetrate into the depth of that person or object and we perceive totally new dimensions.

Keen goes on to delineate the formal characteristics of the objects of wonder. These are: contingency, mystery and presence (Keen, 1969, pp. 24-27).

> As used here, contingency means that in raw experience the object we apprehend in wonder comes to us without bearing its own explanation. Why it is, or perhaps even what it is, is not immediately obvious. In less philosophical but more modern terminology, wonder-events are happenings, revelatory occurrences which appear, as if by chance, bearing some new meaning (value, promise) which cannot immediately be integrated into a past pattern of understanding and explanation (1969, p. 24).

The second characteristic is the mysteriousness of the wonder-object.

This does not necessarily refer to the vagueness of knowing this particular object, but rather that this wonderous being is unable to be totally conceptualized, totally cognitively known, or totally objectified. It is not something which can be put into a neat conceptual box but rather something whose being reaches into the depths of itself but also reverberates within our own beir ;.

The third characteristic is that of presence. It is closely connected with the sense of the mystery of the object. By presence, Keen is referring to the experience of having an object "speak" to us. In Buber's language, the object becomes a "Thou" for us rather than being an "it." We experience a "dialogue" with it. We experience a personal relationship with this "object."

In this extensive study of wonder, Keen also describes what he perceives to be the subjective aspects of the experience of wonder. The first aspect which the person experiences is that of surprise. We do not expect anything wondrous to occur.

> Wonder begins with the element of surprise. The now almost obsolete word "wonderstruck" suggests that wonder breaks into consciousness with a dramatic suddenness that produces amazement or astonishment. ... Because of the suddenness with which it appears, wonder reduces us momentarily to silence. We associate gaping, breathlessness, bewilderment, and even stupor with wonder, because it jolts us out of the world of common sense in which our language is at home (Keen, 1969, pp. 27-28).

The next aspect is that of puzzlement. We question what it is that we are perceiving. We question why it is happening to us at this time. We are uncertain exactly as to what is happening. We are aware that certainly we are not experiencing an ordinary event.

The third aspect is that of ambivalence. If wonder fascinates, it

also frightens. We appreciate the novelty of the situation but the unknowableness of the occurrence also elicits our fears. We are uncertain as to what is going to happen. We cannot predict the outcome of our encounter with the wondrous.

The fourth aspect is the sense of admiration in the face of the wondrous. The wondrous teaches us to admire things and events for themselves. Keen (1969) says it best when he states:

> To admire is to celebrate or rejoice in the presence of a thing or a person having some desirable grace, strength, dignity, or other positive value. ... Wonder is the foundation of values because a wondering encounter is the basis of a nonutilitarian approach to things and persons. In wonder we experience the other as inexhaustible, as the locus of meanings which are only revealed as we cease to be dominated by the impulse to utilize and possess the other and learn to rejoice in its presence (pp. 29-30).

For Keen, the experience of wonder and the experience of the holy are essentially the same. He believes that what we experience in wonderment is an awareness of the sacredness of existence. He goes on to say:

> I will suggest further that there is no substantial difference between wonder and the experience of the holy. The distinction between these two experiences arises only where the forms (linguistic and institutional) in which religious experience is articulated become rigid and a gulf opens between the sacred and the secular (p. 35).

Finally, Keen points out that there can be pathological approaches to wonder. He believes that the extreme forms of the Apollonian and Dionysian approaches to living can be pathological. In the extreme Apollonian approach, the individual is concerned with protecting the ego from any novel situation. The emphasis is placed on control and cognition. The Dionysian is pathological because he tries to experience everything as wondrous. He works at experiencing wonder. All structure is ignored or dispensed with.

Keen believes that what is needed for a healthy approach to wonder is a sense of oscillation between the Apollonian and Dionysian modes. We must be able to integrate both dimensions in order to be healthy and creative adults.

> Health lies in the both/and (not the either/or): in granting proper reverence to both Dionysus and Apollo. In the mature personality the pendulum is constantly swinging between wonder and action, and the further it swings in one direction, the further it may go in the opposite direction. The more the self is at home in the world it has created by accepting and defining its gifts and limits, the freer it is to wonder and appreciate strangeness (p. 195).

Literary references. But wonder is not the sole province of philosophy or psychology or theology. Other disciplines also speak about wonder, where psychology largely remains silent. Novelists, poets, painters, address themselves to this experience over and over again. Many of them are acutely attuned to the wondrous, to the perception somehow that reality is speaking to them. In fact, this is why Van den Berg states that poets and painters are born phenomenologists (1972, p. 76).

Examples of descriptions of wonder abound in literature. Only a few examples will be given here to illustrate the point. For example, Albert Camus (1955) speaks of the deadening that comes when wonder recedes from our lives and the healing effect it can have when it is present:

> A day comes when, thanks to rigidity, nothing causes wonder any more, everything is known, and life is spent in beginning over again. These are the days of exile, of desiccated life, of dead souls. To come alive again, one needs a special grace, self-forgetfulness, or a homeland. Certain mornings, on turning a corner, a delightful dew falls on the heart and then evaporates. But its coolness remains, and this

is what the heart requires always (p. 141).

D.H. Lawrence, presaging the humanistic psychologists' return to the wonder of the human body, describes the incredible wonder that arises from the radical mystery of the body, especially in human sexuality. In the following quote from Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence describes the wonder Connie has at exploring the body of her lover.

> And now in her heart the queer wonder of him was awakened. A man! the strange potency of manhood upon her! Her hands strayed over him, still a little afraid. Afraid of that strange, hostile, slightly repulsive thing that he had been to her, a man. And now she touched him, and it was the sons of god with the daughters of men. How beautiful he felt, how pure in tissue! How lovely, how lovely, strong, and yet pure and delicate, such stillness of the sensitive body! Such utter stillness of potency and delicate flesh! How beautiful! How beautiful! Her hands came timorously down his back, to the soft, smallish globes of the buttocks. Beauty! What beauty! a sudden little flame of new awareness went through her. How was it possible this beauty here, where she had previously been repelled? The unspeakable beauty to the touch, of the warm, living buttocks! The life within life, the sheer warm, potent loveliness. And the strange weight of the balls between his legs! What a mystery! What a strange heavy weight of mystery, that could lie soft and heavy in one's hand! The roots, root of all that is lovely, the primeval root of all fully beauty.
>
> She clung to him, with a hiss of wonder that was almost awe, terror. ... She crept nearer to him, nearer, only to be near the sensual wonder of him (1957, p. 230).

Numerous other examples of the central importance of wonder in literature could be presented but it would certainly be beyond the confines of this review of pertinent literature.

Eastern literature. The West is not alone in its awareness of the central significance of wonder in human living and in philosophy. Such movements in the East as Taoism and Zen certainly have been acutely aware of the importance of a sense of wonder. Lao Tzu, whose writings

became the bases for Taoism, states that wonder is at the very core of our existence. Our sense of wonder is often obfuscated by language which gives the illusion of capturing and completely categorizing reality. Lao Tzu (1962) protests against the over-simplification which language seduces us into:

> Existence is beyond the power of words
> To define;
> Terms may be used
> But none of them absolute.
> In the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words,
> Words came out of the womb of matter;
> And whether a man dispassionately
> Sees to the core of life
> Or passionately
> Sees the surface,
> The core and the surface
> Are essentially the same,
> Words making them seem different
> Only to express appearance.
> If name be needed, wonder names them both;
> From wonder into wonder
> Existence opens (p. 25).

Zen also has a very deep sense of wonder which is indigenous to its attitude. The whole thrust of Zen is to be able to see things as they are and not through conceptual and linguistic categories. An anonymous Zen author warns that false Zen is a cognitive trick played by the mind on itself:

> Try if you wish. But Zen comes of itself. True Zen shows in everyday living, CONSCIOUSNESS in action. More than any limited awareness, it opens every inner door to our infinite nature. Instantly mind frees. How it frees! False Zen wracks brains as a fiction concocted by priests and salesmen to peddle their own wares.
>
> Look at it this way, inside out and outside in: CONSCIOUSNESS everywhere, inclusive, through you. Then you can't help living humbly, in wonder (Reps, p. 175).

This review of literature makes it quite clear that no one has

approached the experience of wonder in a truly phenomenological manner. It will be the task of this dissertation to do so.

Chapter 2

PSYCHOLOGY AS A HUMAN SCIENCE

Natural Scientific Psychology

The methodology used in the research portion of this dissertation will be a phenomenological one. This methodology has been chosen because in attempting to be rigorous in the study of the phenomenon of wonder it became quite apparent that justice could not be truly done to the phenomenon by traditional statistical methodologies most often used in psychological research.

To even begin to talk about a phenomenological methodology, it seems first necessary to briefly elucidate the broader sense of science that is the context for such a methodology.

The meaning of science. What is science? In this day and age this seems to be a ridiculous question to ask. Yet, it is precisely because the answer to this question is so taken for granted, that it needs to be asked. We presume that we know what science is. Yet, what we know is but one possible answer. The original continental meaning of science, as Giorgi (1968) points out was "... any methodical pursuit of knowledge (p. 106)." However, because of the tremendous influence of the philosophy of empiricism at the advent of many of the sciences, we have now begun to equate science with empiricism or natural science. Psychology in particular has had an interesting history in relation to the above issues. Psychology, as a science, is less than 100 years old. It

was born at a time when the natural sciences, especially physics, were making great strides by utilizing the "scientific method" and the underlying empiricist beliefs. In its attempt to not be viewed as a bastard science, psychology took on the current methodology and beliefs of the natural sciences without careful consideration of the underlying assumptions, nor the unique subject-matter which psychology proposed to study. Giorgi (1968) paraphrasing Sigmund Koch's findings in his monumental Psychology: A Study of a Science states that: "... psychology was unique in the extent to which its institutionalization preceded its content and its methods preceded its problems (p. 104)." What he is trying to underline here is that whereas the natural sciences developed their methodology in response to an attempt to be faithful to the phenomena which they were studying, psychology in its rush to legitimize itself, started using a methodology before it was even certain what its subject-matter was.

Empirical psychology. Science, in psychology, has often been defined in the narrow sense of being only that which can be "empirically" investigated: empirical being delimited most often as that which can be statistically validated. It has been an explicit value of most twentieth century science that the researcher must be as totally objective as possible in order not to invalidate the results of his study. The assumption here is that the more objective the researcher, the more will the researcher be able to allow the phenomenon to emerge and not to interfere with it because of his subjective prejudices. Psychology has, for the most part, followed this approach in its consequent methodology. However, the implicit philosophy of science which this is based on arose out of nineteenth century physics. Modern physics has gone far beyond

this conception of research, but psychology for the most part has not. The irony today is that modern science, by utilizing the scientific methodology, has arrived at the paradoxical position that there is no objectivity, as has often been presumed in the early development of psychology. As Werner Heisenberg (1960), the renowned physicist has stated;

> Profound changes in the foundations of atomic physics occurred in our century which lead away from the reality concept of classical atomism. It has turned out that the hoped for objective reality of the elementary particles represents too rough a simplification of the true state of affairs and must yield to more abstract conceptions. ... it turns out that we can no longer talk of the behavior of the particle apart from the process of observation. In consequence, we are finally led to believe that the laws of nature which we formulate mathematically deal no longer with the particles themselves but with our knowledge of the elementary particles... (p. 59).

This leads to Heisenberg's famous "Principle of Indeterminancy." That is, that which is the object of our observation is in some manner altered, transformed, and affected by the process of observing it. The very process of studying a phenomenon alters that phenomenon and therefore there is no absolute object which is totally separate from my observation of it. What does exist is a relationship between the scientist and the object studied.

Modern physics. Another paradoxical finding in modern physics whose import has yet to filter down to our everyday thinking is Neil Bohr's concept of complementariness. In studying the phenomenon of the electron, physicists for years argued about whether it was a wave or a particle. To state it simplistically, Bohr theorized that it paradoxically can be both. At one time it is a wave, at another time it is a particle, depending on our purposes and methods of observation. This

again violates the atomistic, substantive and dualistic thinking which pervades most of Western thinking. How can the answer to the question "What is the nature of the electron?" be at one time the polar opposite of the answer given at other times? A preview to "answering" this dilemma might be that there is a paradoxical unity to nature which precedes our conceptualization of it. If this is so it requires a radical rethinking of our conception of science and the nature of knowledge. Though illegitimately appropriating a classical scientific methodology of the natural sciences and their philosophical underpinnings, psychology has failed to take into account the radical implications of the paradoxical findings of modern physics.

Psychology as a natural science. Dissatisfaction with psychology as a natural science has been growing for years. Such authors as Allport (1955), Bakan (1965), Bonner (1965), Bugental (1963), Koch (1959), MacLeod (1965), May (1958), Straus (1966) and others have astutely critiqued the shortcomings of psychology's commitment to be a natural science. Psychology, from its very beginnings, seemed to suffer from an inferiority complex. As was previously mentioned, psychology as a discipline emerged at a time when empiricism in the natural sciences was paying great dividends (Giorgi, 1968). Psychology wanted to be "scientific" and seemed to identify science with method. What many of the early psychologists failed to realize is that the methods in the natural sciences grew out of a faithfulness to the phenomena which these sciences were investigating. Psychology in contrast, failed to adequately assess the unique limits of the phenomenon which it was studying, that is, the human being, and essentially skipped a step in the progression of scientific developments and immediately took on the methods

appropriate to other sciences.

Psychology's earliest history, all the way back to the Early Greeks, had also been closely interwoven with philosophy. When psychology was more or less founded as a separate discipline in 1879 (Boring, 1950) these psychologists wanted to be completely dissociated from any philosophical leanings because in the past this collaboration with philosophy had failed to generate the kind of verifiable hypotheses that many of the natural sciences, such as physics, were able to do in the nineteenth century. If I may psychologize a bit, it is almost as if psychology had a reaction formation to any explicit association with philosophy. I purposely use the term "explicit association" because what the early psychologists failed to perceive, and what most of psychology has been blind to since then, was that empiricism was also a philosophy. The early psychologists wanted to be objective and totally value-free, but they failed to realize that to choose to be "objective" is also a value and a certain belief and outlook. To choose to be objective is an exceedingly subjective choice.

Psychology is still a very young science and perhaps, as a young child who is growing up, needed to rebel against and dissociate itself from its parents. However, it now appears that psychology has gotten trapped in its rebellion and has failed to reassess its purpose. In its rush to legitimize itself, psychology failed to examine its philosophical presuppositions. As Giorgi (1968) states: "One has only to read Boring's (1950) History of Experimental Psychology to note the influence of Cartesian philosophy, British empiricism and operationalism, to name but a few (p. 105)." Psychology, as an emerging science, took on the Cartesian split of body and psyche. This philosophy is still prevalent

in psychology today and can be seen in a relatively pure form in the work of someone like Skinner (1971).

Critique of natural scientific psychology. I would now like to rely rather heavily on the critique presented by Giorgi (1970) concerning the inadequacies of traditional approaches to psychology. What he has essentially done in his pioneering work, is to summarize the innumerable criticisms which have arisen from within psychology itself. Together, these criticisms powerfully argue for a new approach in psychology. He finds seven main criticisms:

1) Psychology lacks real unity; each of the various divisions within psychology, such as psychophysics, clinical, experimental, organizational, social, etc., fail to adequately interrelate with other fields within psychology and to have a unified outlook.

2) Psychology lacks direction; what is or are the goals which are the central unifying themes for psychology? What role does psychology wish to play in the development of humankind?

3) Psychology's commitment to being a natural science; Giorgi (1970) emphasizes that; "If one wants to know why psychology is what it is today, the single most comprehensive answer is that psychology developed along the lines of the natural sciences of the nineteenth century (p. 82)." Because of this, psychology ended up being reductionistic and mechanistic. It was and is reductionistic because it kept attempting to reduce the behavior of the human being to its component parts and to show a cause and effect relationship between them. The original stimulus-reflex theory was a clear-cut example of this kind of thinking. Even today, the more sophisticated behaviorism (Dollard and Miller, 1950) ends up with this reductionistic bias.

4) Psychology has not been investigating meaningful phenomena in a meaningful way: because if its strict emulation of the natural sciences psychology has ended up in a form of what some researchers call methodolatry, that is, an irrational worshiping of the efficacy of the so-called scientific method. Because of the primacy of method in psychology, scientific research has tended to investigate relatively microscopic and unimportant dimensions of human living. Giorgi (1970) points out that the emphasis on the method has led to an overstudying in such areas as sensation, perception and memory. Such areas were easily amenable to traditional scientific research, but they also had minimal impact on human living. Psychology has suffered from a severe case of myopia.

5) Psychology lacks holistic methods: A logical consequence of the preceding critique is that psychology lacks methods to study the whole human being. That is, (Giorgi, 1970) "this theme indicates psychology's strength is with part-functions and with details of analysis, and that it does not adequately cope with wholes, frames-of-reference, or syntheses (p. 84)." The methods of psychology need to be expanded to include the above dimensions.

6) Traditional psychology does not do justice to the human person: This has been felt in psychology for a long time as well as cognitively known. Even as recent as the late sixties, when I was an undergraduate studying psychology, I sensed that there was something wrong with a discipline which purported to study the human person, but spent most of its time discussing brain synapses and time differentials in rat experiments. Psychology has had an extremely inadequate image of the human. This is the hidden human image (Friedman, 1974) which psychology fails to confront. Scientific psychology seems to believe that it is not suggesting

a particular human image simply because it fails to consider such an implied image as scientific. Experimental psychologists seem to fail to learn from their clinical colleagues that even though something is suppressed or denied that it does not automatically disappear. Skinner (1971) must be given credit for at least having the perceptiveness to be able to make explicit his presuppositions and the logical consequences of his beliefs. Few researchers have followed his lead.

7) Psychology's relevance to the life-world is deficient: That is, psychology is not yet adequately dealing with the problems of everyday life. Clinical psychology has attempted to do this but it is the responsibility of a scientific psychology to be able to have relevance for everyday human living. I would like to quote at length from Giorgi (1970) on this point:

> However, the point that Sanford and Allport are making, and one that we would also stress, is that no science is completely removed from everyday life, and some kind of dialogue with everyday life must go on. The relationship is not a unilateral one and it is not simply a matter of applying science to the everyday world. That is why applied psychology does not really fill this need - because it deals with everyday problems on its own terms, i.e., by first transmitting the problem into a scientific expression, and then solving it. That is one way, but is mostly a one-way street; scientific psychology imposing on everyday life. Thus there is a gap between psychological facts and everyday-living problems because psychology is not sufficiently receptive to those problems precisely as they exist in everyday life. In other words, a completely different attitude is called for, one that places more of a privileged position on the side of "everyday problems" rather than on the side of the scientific principles of psychology. It calls for more of a dialogue between the two "worlds". It implies that the transformation of these problems into "scientific" terms essentially transforms the problems. Thus, the corrective implied by this theme would assert that it is perfectly legitimate for psychology to deal with those problems that are bothering

> most people in everyday life, but it must be precisely in the way these people experience them - i.e., as unique, living,human beings. Or again, we should be able to cope with problems of the life-world (Lebenswelt) in a better way (P. 86).

All of the preceding critiques center around psychology's attempt to be viewed as a natural science. However, it is suggested that many sciences, in their early developments make inadequate starts (Kuhn, 1962). Perhaps now psychology as a formal science can begin to be more faithful to the phenomenon which it is studying, i.e. the human person, and develop those methods and approaches which are most adequate to studying the human being. Such a view requires that psychology no longer consider itself to be a natural science.

Human Scientific Psychology

Wilhelm Dilthey. Wilhelm Dilthey, even before the formal advent of Wundt's psychology in 1879, strongly advocated the need to differentiate the Naturwissenchaften, the natural sciences, from the Geisteswissenschaften, the human sciences (Hodges, 1944). He believed that the content of the human sciences was radically different from that of the natural sciences and should correspondingly have its own separate method and approach. He argued that it is the content of a science which dictates the appropriate method rather than vice versa as later occurred in psychology. Hodges (1952) states that Dilthey:

> ... points to the dominating position which has been held, in most periods of philosophical history, by the study of the problems presented by mathematics and the natural sciences. The reasons for this predominance are no secret. Pure mathematics in the ancient world, and it and mathematical physics in the modern, have a perenial attraction in that they are to us exact knowledge, and latterly also a growing power over nature, and it is a matter of deep philosophical interest to inquire how this

> achievement is possible and what it implies. For a long period this kind of knowledge held a dominant position among the intellectual interests of the philosopher, and it will always be important. But, says Dilthey, we are now in a position to see that it constitutes only one-half of the globus intellectualis; the other half is composed of the study of man in society and in history. Here we meet with a different type of study. Instead of observing our object directly, we have to approach it indirectly through written testimony and other similar evidence; instead of clearly formulated theories which can be tested by experiment we have an attempt to analyze and describe the concrete complexities of life; instead of explanation of particular events and processes through general laws, we have an appreciative understanding of the meaning and value of the unique individual. There is no reason why the one sphere of knowledge should not be as thoroughly studied by philosophers as the other (pp. xiv-xv).

As a positive direction, Dilthey suggests the need to establish a human science which uses more descriptive methods. He distinguishes this from the explanatory natural sciences (Hodges, 1944);

> All science must analyze its object, seeking to determine its ultimate irreducible units and the laws which express their interrelation. A descriptive science is one whose units and laws are found by empirical analysis, or close examination of what is actually given in experience. An explanatory science is one which takes its units and laws from a methodological assumption which determines their general nature beforehand. Such an assumption, and all that flows from it, is a hypothetical construction. A classic example is modern physics, and it is this influence that has led psychology to adopt its hypothesis of unit sensations and feelings, and other hypotheses which equally go behind the facts of experience. The analytic psychologists thought they were describing the mind and did not realize how far they had strayed from experience (p. 42).

Dilthey argued against simple cause and effect thinking which later came to predominate in psychology. Instead he argued for the need to view the entire human being in its multifarious relations to the world. He suggested the need for a structural approach to studying the human person (Hodges, 1944):

> Mental life is a functional unity which cannot be reduced to or built up theoretically out of non-functional units. ... The real unit of mental life is not a sensation, or a feeling, or even an isolated intentional act with its content, but a total reaction of the whole self to a situation confronting it. Every such reaction (called by Dilthey an Erlebnis) includes elements of three main types: cognitive, affective and conative. ... The relations among the three elements in experience are called the "structure" of the mind, and the possibility of a descriptive psychology rests on the fact that this structural system is not discovered by inference or hypothesis, but is actually experienced, or "given in lived experience" (pp. 42-44).

Without a doubt, Dilthey's program was prophetic for the needs of the later developing psychology. It is no accident that the theme of structural relations becomes the core of such a modern day seminal thinker as Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

William James. But Dilthey was not the only one to be aware of the shortcomings of psychology's commitment to being a natural science. There were several others. Giorgi (1970) points out that even Wundt, to some degree, was aware of the limits of experimental natural science and had some implicit human scientific leanings. Even one of the best known of all American psychologists, William James, advocated positions which implied human scientific attitudes. In fact, James seems to be a classic hybrid. He seemed able to function as a natural scientist and as a human scientist (Linschoten, 1968). In many ways he combined the best of both. Classifying James as a human scientist arises because of the approach and content of his studies. There was an overall openness with which he approached human phenomena. He did not exclude any phenomenon simply because he did not have a method "scientifically" adequate for studying it: even such phenomena as religion and mysticism, and the stream of consciousness, ordinarily taboo subjects, were open to his

examination (James, 1958). He attempted to study these in as rigorous a manner as possible even though his conclusions may not be replicable. Modern psychologists could learn much from this pioneer. He always attempted to deal with the phenomenon under study in a human manner. Barzun, in his introduction to James' Varieties of Religious Experience (1958) emphasizes how James always returned to experience, rather than some theoretical formulation of experience:

> The reader of The Varieties, however, will not find James a conventional "scientist" who uses the facts of physiology or psychology to explain away the facts of the religious life. For in James, analysis always respects experience (p. vi).

As modern psychologists, we need to revitalize psychology and make it more relevant by turning to ordinary human experience. Experience is the true well stream of our science. Analysis can come only after something has been experienced. The scientistic-analytic attitude has become so pervasive that even in ordinary consciousness we start analyzing before we even truly experience something. No wonder our analysis often ends up being vapid. It is devoid of any genuine contact with the flesh of the world. We see only a skeleton. This dissertation will attempt not to fall into this trap and will attempt to return to ordinary human experience.

But how will this be done? How can one not be scientific in the traditional sense and still present systematic and rigorous findings? How can one study the macrocosm of human experience? How can one encompass the ebb and flow of such experience?

Existential Phenomenology

I propose to be human scientific by utilizing the findings of modern day existential-phenomenology. For this reason, it will be necessary

to discuss why human scientific psychology turns to existential phenomenology at this stage of its development.

We turn to existential phenomenology at this point, because it is a philosophical outlook which may give a contextual framework for studying concrete phenomena. This is neither "mere existentialism" nor "pure phenomenology." Even the philosophically unsophisticated seem aware of existentialism. Such names as Kierkegaard, Sartre, Nietzsche and Buber, rather clearly represent this philosophical thrust. They all stand for the primacy of the unique individual person or event. They also attempt to overcome the cleavage between subject and object which was brought about by Cartesian thinking. As Rollo May (1958) summarizes:

> Existentialism, in short, is the endeavor to understand man by cutting below the cleavage between subject and object which has bedeviled Western thought and science since shortly after the Renaissance (p. 11).

They have given us tremendous psychological findings, and have done so more through their searching perceptiveness and insight rather than any rigorous study of many persons or situations.

European phenomenology. Less well known are the European phenomenologists. The phenomenologist tends to be more concerned with the general and the thematic in human behavior. Phenomenology as a formal movement can trace its roots to Edmund Husserl. It is interesting to note that Husserl was a student of Franz Brentano, who began to critique psychology as a natural science but also was formative in developing the notion of intentionality. Husserl however was the one who brought the notion of intentionality to fruition. Succinctly put, the notion of intentionality points out that all consciousness is consciousness of something other than consciousness itself (Spiegelberg, 1971). Lest we fall

into the danger of this being mere intellectual gibberish, it is necessary to momentarily digress. The full import of this notion cannot be appreciated unless one first understands the significance of Cartesian philosophy on modern science. Renée Descartes in the sixteenth century wanted to find an absolute basis for certainty. He subjected everything he knew to methodic doubt. He had even theoretically doubted his existence. He finally came to the conclusion that the only thing he could not doubt was that he doubted. He reasoned from this that he did exist because he was capable of doubt, i.e., thinking. As he cryptically put it; "I think, therefore I am." From this he was able to conclude that absolute certainty was a result of clear and distinct ideas. In his own words:

> And having remarked that there was nothing at all in the statement "I think, therefore I am" which assures me of having thereby made a true assertion, excepting that I see clearly that to think it is necessary to be, I came to the conclusion that I might assume, as a general rule, that the things which we can see very clearly and distinctly are all true - remembering, however, that there is some difficulty in ascertaining which are those that we distinctly can see (p. 102).

This all seems relatively inconsequential until one realizes that this viewpoint entails a radical separation of mind and body. That is, true certainty could only be achieved by our consciousness, by clear and distinct ideas. The body was derogated to a secondary position because the senses were often guilty of deception. This later became translated into the notion of "objectivity." Therefore, much science and especially early psychology was immersed in a Cartesian dualism. Cartesian philosophy postulated consciousness as being separate from the body, and from the world. That is why Husserl's concept of intentionality is

critical. By saying that consciousness is always consciousness of something other than consciousness itself, Husserl was attempting to overcome the mind-body dualism and the person-world dualism. As Merleau-Ponty states in a general way (1962):

> It is a question of recognizing consciousness itself as a project of the world, meant for a world which it neither embraces nor possesses, but towards which it is perpetually directed ... (p. xvii).

Giorgi (1968) gives the following concrete example:

> This means that regardless of the mode in which consciousness presents itself, it always presents itself as intentional; thus, desiring is always desiring something; feeling is always a feeling of something; and imagining is always an imagining of something, and so on. Thus, Husserl, with his notion of intentionality re-establishes the unity between subject and world that was severed by Descartes, because, of its essence, consciousness makes present something that is not consciousness itself (p. 107).

Our consciousness is already in the world. It is only our analytic thought which gives the illusion of this separation. In a sense, intentionality lays the basis for all phenomenological investigations. That is why description, both from the internal viewpoint and the observer viewpoint is so crucial. A person's consciousness (and also presumably general structures of human consciousness) can be understood through description of that person's experience in relation to the way the world appears to them. This moves Van den Berg (1969) to say that: "Who wants to describe man should make an analysis of the 'landscape' within which he demonstrates, explains and reveals himself (p. 32)." However, even Husserl fell into the trap of viewing intentionality as a cognitive notion (Giorgi, 1968). It was the work of Heidegger and later Merleau-Ponty which truly radicalized Husserl's conception of intentionality.

Heidegger stated that we could not speak of the individual without also speaking of the interwovenness with the world. As a consequence, to describe the person, he coined the phrase being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1963). Maurice Merleau-Ponty took intentionality even further and brought in its intersubjective dimension. He took Heidegger's phrase one step further and spoke of the human as a "being-in-the-world-with-others (1962)."

American phenomenologists. However, phenomenology is not restricted to European thinkers. There have been a number of American thinkers, even within psychology, who have espoused this viewpoint. Certainly someone like Kurt Lewin belongs to this category. Lewin's field theory readily lends itself to a phenomenological perspective. For example, he states that behavior is a function of the field of the individual. The field is defined as "the totality of co-existing facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent (Lewin, 1951, p. 240)." Also, two main characteristics of his theory, pertinent to phenomenology state that; "1) behavior is a function of the field which exists at the time the behavior occurs, 2) analysis begins with the situation as a whole from which are differentiated component parts... (p. 210)." These tenets certainly indicate strong leanings towards phenomenological thinking.

Snyggs and Combs (1949) in a more explicit manner espoused phenomenology. They believe that "... all behavior, without exception, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism (p. 15)." That is, they believe that the perspective of the acting individual will be the primary determinant of that individual's behavior. Combs also deals with the difficult question of how can the

self be both an object and a process. In a personal communication to Hall and Lindzey (1970) he states;

> It seems to me that this is quite possible, indeed is characteristic of everything we know of in the world of science; namely, that every organization is both composed of certain parts while at the same time it affects other organizations upon which it infringes. Thus, a rock is made up of certain molecules and is thus a product. It also, by its very existnece, has an effect upon the world around it or upon the world in which it rests, and is thus also a process or a dynamic. In the same way, the self is composed of perceptions concerning the individual and this organization of perceptions in turn has vital and important effects upon the behavior of the individual (p. 518).

Finally, I would like to consider Carl Rogers and his contribution to an American phenomenology. As he himself describes his theories:

> This theory is basically phenomenological in character and relies heavily upon the concept of self as an explanatory concept. It pictures the endpoint of personality development as being a basic congruence between the phenomenal field of experience and the conceptual structure of self - a situation which, if achieved, would represent freedom from internal strain and anxiety, and freedom from potential strain; which would represent maximum and realistically oriented adaptation; which would mean the establishment of an individualized value system having considerable identity with the value system of any other equally well adjusted member of the human race (1951, p. 532).

So we see that phenomenology has not been restricted to European thinkers. However, it is clear that the American investigators have not been as rigorously phenomenological as their European counterparts.

The tenents of phenomenology. What then are the main tenets of phenomenology? Since there has often been much confusion about phenomenological themes, I would like to elucidate the most important ones. This will be important in order to situate the research in this dissertation. First of all, phenomenology is an attitude, a way of approaching

phenomena. Van den Berg (1969) states this with great clarity;

> Phenomenology is before everything a methodical adjustment, an attitude as it were. Its method is a new way of observing, new in science, new for instance in psychology, but in no way new to man in general. On the contrary: the phenomenologist wants to observe as man usually observes. He has a great and unshaken confidence in the usual way of observing things, the body, his fellow man, also of time for this reason that this observing brings about the solution of the problems (p. 62).

At another point (1969) he says;

> Things speak to us, we know - the poet for instance and the painter know this so very well, that is why poets and painters are born phenomenologists - it may even be assumed that by virtue of this being spoken to we handle things to unerringly; that by virtue of our understanding this remarkable language of things, we continually live a solution of the problems which to reflection prove to be so hopelessly unsolvable. The farmer grasps the plow because the plow asks him to be thus grasped, he plows the earth because the early calls for this action. The swimmer entrusts himself to the water as the water tells him in a thousand different ways that it will receive his body kindly. We decide to go and live in a house because already during the viewing the rooms began to tell us what is going to happen there in the future: it tells us of the homecoming there, of its warmth in winter, of freshness there in summer, etc. (pp. 61-62).

I would now like to briefly define some main phenomenological concepts.

Lebenswelt (life-world). As a consequence of the above, the phenomenologist is primarily concerned with the ordinary and everyday world of human experience. He believes that theoretical explanations in science are important, but that the inherent danger is that these theories may become impositions on human reality rather than arising from a rigorous investigation of human experience. The Lebenswelt is the pre-reflective world in which we live, before we know it. It is the taken-for-granted sphere of human actions.

It is essential to return to the Lebenswelt, because as has been

previously mentioned, much of science and especially psychology has been built on philosophical assumptions, such as the Cartesian dualism. This dualism does not arise from ordinary lived experience but rather from a certain kind of philosophical reflection on that experience. As a result, phenomenologists must once again learn to be naive; to experience the world in an almost pre-reflective manner in order to truly be in contact with primordial human experience.

Description. Since the phenomenologist is initially not so much concerned with theoretical explanations of human behavior as with the manner in which people experience themselves and their world in an unreflective manner, there is a great emphasis on description. Description and not explanation is the tool with which the phenomenologist enters into the lived human world. As Husserl (1960) succinctly stated, there is a need to "return to the things themselves." As has been previously mentioned, there is an attempt to let the things (phenomenos) of the world speak (logos) to the investigator. In order to understand a person, we need to perceive the physiognomy of their world.

As a researcher, Giorgi (1968) often speaks of the need for "fidelity to the phenomenon." That is, we must learn to be present at the advent of the phenomenon and allow it to emerge with its own structures. We must not encumber a phenomenon with our theoretical explanation. In our society it seems that we enter experience already with analytic categories (Ornstein, 1972). This destroys the possibility of us being in genuine contact with our experience. That is why Merleau-Ponty (1962) criticizes science for being forgetful of its origins. That is, science is built on lived experience but then forgets its basis. In his own words (1962):

> The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by re-awakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression. Science has not and never will have, by its nature, the same significance qua form of being as the world which we perceive, for the simple reason that it is a rationale or explanation of that world (p. viii).

Science is forgetful that it too constantly uses description. For example, Giorgi (1971) mentions that "measurement is exactly the kind of description that is most suitable for answering the quantitative question which is characteristic of the natural sciences (p. 20)." Description is the first essential step in interrogating the meaning of a phenomenon.

Lived body (body-subject). If there were one central unifying focus of phenomenological research it would probably be the lived body. This theme is prevalent throughout all the phenomenological thinkers but most explicitly in Sartre (1956), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Marcel (1960). The notion of the "lived body" sounds strange to the American ear. To fully understand its significance one needs to contrast the lived body with that of its counterpart, the mechanistic "human" body implied by scientistic analysis. The mechanistic conception of the body once again emanates from Descartes. Descartes divided human experience into thoughts and into extension. The human body was obviously not a thought, and since it extended in space and time it was viewed as a thing. This became the objective body which natural science was able to investigate and view largely in terms of cause and effect relationships. This is the objective body upon which much of behaviorism is based.

For the phenomenologists, the body is neither pure object nor pure

subject. It is rather the unity of both. "Objective" and "subjective" are verbal and rational abstractions which have been loosened from their moorings in the much more ambiguous human body. Substituting the term "spiritual" for subjective, and material for objective, Kwant (1963) states;

> We should not say that the body belongs either to the material or the spiritual order. It belongs to both, but not as their union, no matter how intimate such a union may be, for a union is always a meeting of opposites. The human body is a single reality, which is at the same time both material and spiritual. As soon, however, as we want to express this single reality, we notice that our philosophical terminology is permeated with the dualism that in the past formed part and parcel of philosophy. This means that we are forced to speak in dualistic terms about the body which is the concrete transcendence and negation of dualism. Strictly speaking, we would have to create new words to express the "body-subject" (p. 13).

This has vast implications for psychology and psychotherapy because then there is no separation between psyche and soma. The so-called intrapsychic cannot be dichotimized from the embodied.

> All so-called "purely psychical qualities" are ways in which the body is lived. The voices of the aggressive people are hard, their muscles are bunched, their blood pulses more fiercely through the vessels. The constantly curtailed, restrained aggression, the aggression which must be kept "within bounds" is a quality of the body as well, a quality to which the name of "hypertension" may be given. ... Our sole intention is to give an illustration of the distinction, but too often neglected, between the body as it is described in the medical textbooks (the body that we have) and the body as it plays a part in the non-scientific, not in the first place gnostic, but especially pathical, "pre-reflective" life of man (the body that we are) (Van den Berg, 1969, p. 42).

The human body is not so easily categorized. It cries out to express its freedom, its rich ambiguity, its pre-reflective way of being in the world.

To the phenomenologists, the notion of the lived-body is the Archimedian point of our existence. It is not, as has often been implied in Western culture, disembodied intellect, but rather that we are embodied meaning-giving beings. The very fact that we are embodied means that the whole world is already meaningfully structured by our presence. Our body is in a constant dialogue and dialectic with the world. Van den Berg (1969) in extending a statement of a fellow phenomenologist, says that the body:

> ... Molds itself in close resemblance to the plan of the world in which it finds its task sketched out, and assumes a shape, a form: a worker's form in response to the invitation issuing from a workshop, a warrior's form in response to the appeal of an arena, a lover's form in response to the erotic approach of the beloved. The pre-reflective body and the pre-reflective world are engaged in a continuous dialogue. Both can only be understood from this dialogue. (p. 45).

Our human bodies, before any reflective or conscious thought on our part, ascribe meaning to the world. A sound in a dark alley may frighten us or soothing music may invite us, prior to any reflective awareness on our part. Our body already preconsciously situates itself in order for a certain meaning to be consciously experienced.

> The meaning, then, arises because the body assumes a certain attitude, it situates itself. If the body wants to see something, it has to assume the correct occular position. The research shows, the convergence of the eyes differs according to the distance of the object to be seen; likewise, the pupils have to be dilated according to the darkness of the field of vision. In other words, the body has to situate itself if the meaning in question is to arise. ... The body is more than a mechanism endowed with ready made patterns of activity which would operate as soon as an external stimulus makes itself felt. When the body seeks its way in the world, and in this sense we may say that it "understands" its world provided this term is not conceived as expressing conscious knowledge (Kwant, 1963, pp. 26-27).

Lived space. Since we are embodied beings, space is already fraught with meaning in a pre-reflective manner. We do not experience absolute Newtonian space, rather we experience someone or something as near or far from us bigger than or smaller than us. We experience the homogeneous space of intimacy or the disparate space of isolation. We speak of being-at-home when a place is essentially receptive to us (Buckley, 1971).

Our upright posture, as Straus (1966) points out, irrevocably permeates our consciousness. Even our language is based on the pre-reflective language of the body. We speak of being up-lifted or de-pressed.

Lived space is radically altered by our activities. If we are in a hurry to get to a distant point, we are likely to experience the intervening distance as a barrier, as working against us. If we are dancing, we are likely to feel that the surrounding space has many possibilities for us.

> The dancer's movement is a non-directional motility that resonates to the autonomous movement of the space by which it is pathically induced. ...Dance space is not a part of directed, historical space but is a symbolic region of the world. It is determined not by distance, direction, and magnitude but through the "wide openness," loftiness, profundity and autokinesis of space (Straus, 1966, p. 35).

Space is experienced in a radically different manner when we are physically ill (Van den Berg, 1966). It is also experienced very differently within each of the "pathological" modes of being-in-the-world. The surrounding space is experienced as heavy and oppressive to the depressive. It appears expansive and without barriers to the manic (Van den Berg, 1969). The compulsive feels a contracted and confining space.

Lived time.

Time is too slow

for those who wait
Time is too swift
for those who fear
Time is too long
for those who grieve
Time is too short
for those who laugh.
But for those who love
time is not (anonymous).

This little poem presents the essential meaning of lived time. It points out that our experience with time is radically altered by our psychological state. In our culture we seem much more consciously aware of a sense of lived time than perhaps the other phenomenological "categories." We seem much more acutely aware of the difference between theoretically constructed time, such as clock time, and experiential time. We notice that our personal time does not readily correspond to the mechanical regularity of the clock. We speak of time as dragging or going too fast. This obviously does not refer to clock time since, the clock essentially never deviates from its monotonous regularity. Our sense of time is intricately related to our psychological experience. If a lecture is dull, it seems like the class takes a veritable infinity whereas our watch says that it has only been two hours long. When we are with a loved-one, an entire day may "fly-by" as if it were but a moment. Time is really at the heart of our existence (May, 1958). Each person's sense of lived time is sometimes significantly and at other times only subtly different from others. Clinically then, what becomes absolutely essential is the attempt on the part of the therapist to enter into the lived time of the client.

Also, each psychological disturbance seems to create a relatively typical structure in experience of time. For instance, Ellenberger (1958) points out that;

> One of the main symptoms of depression, from the phenomenological point of view, is the subjective experience of time flowing desperately slowly, stagnating, or even being arrested. Certain schizophrenics feel as if time were fixed at the present moment; hence the delusion that they are immortal, an assertion which is incomprehensible from the point of view of the normal mind, which is quite logical when seen in the perspective of the distortion of the experience of time in these patients. The reverse experience, i.e., the speed of time is increased, is a common experience in mania. According to Martin Gschwind, this is also what senile individuals experience; for them, years may seem to flow as quickly as days for the normal individual. In depressive conditions of old age, however, time seems to flow as slowly as in other depressive individuals (p. 104).

Or as Von Gebsattel (1958) expresses about the experience of time for the anakastic compulsive:

> What may still be mentioned in a preliminary way is the peculiar mixture of dawdling and rushing that marks the temporal structure of anakastic behavior. In the execution of the ritual, time is always "lost" and therefore time must always be made up for. It is in the weaving of the ordered plan of passing time into the present-time of the patient that the slowing down of the anakastic time-events reveals itself as a feeling of "lost time," which is then followed by the necessity for having to make up time, with the feeling of torturing rush. Whoever is not master of time is its slave. In the attitudes of taking one's time and of hurrying, the person's pattern of mastery with regard to time take effect. Both possibilities of freedom are denied to the anakastic. What fails here, however, is the stream of inner happenings that can keep step with passing time; in the anakastic, for some unknown reason, this has fallen into a state of rigidity. At one point it binds the patient without rest to a certain ritual, at another point it makes them race for lost time and delivers him to an even more ceaseless rushing (p. 185).

Whereas in the earlier psychiatric research most of the clinical focus was on the past experience of the patient, the clinical phenomenologists are much more concerned about the patient's sense of future time (May, 1958; Fischer W., 1970). This is not to disparage the past, but rather

to put it more into focus with the ongoing sense of the individual. The phenomenologists emphasize that the individual is always transcending his past and present and is constantly moving towards the future (Heidegger, 1963). In fact, life can have meaning only because there is a future (Frankl, 1959). The future is that dimension of time which allows for the emergence of hope, of new possibilities, in the life of the individual.

The phenomenologists therefore frequently refer to transcendence or becoming as descriptive of the person's unfolding over time. In other words:

> We can understand another human being only as we see what he is moving toward, what he is becoming; and we can know ourselves only as we "project our potentia in action." The significant tense for human beings is thus the future - that is to say, the critical question is what I am pointing toward, becoming, what I will be in the immediate future (May, 1958, p. 41).

This sense of "becoming" has become a cornerstone of many present-day humanistic psychologies. Allport, Rogers, Maslow, to name but a few, have incorporated this concept of "becoming" as one of the central theses in their theories.

Structure. The phenomenologists are united in their criticism of the atomistic bias in psychology. That is, traditional psychology assumes that behavior and experience could best be explained by analyzing behavior into smaller and smaller dimensions. This can be most clearly seen in the constancy hypothesis, whereby there was assumed to be a one to one correspondence between some behavior and some localized point in the brain. However, the investigation of the behavior of people who suffered massive brain damage due to accident or war largely disproved this (Goldstein, 1963; Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

The concept of structure was most explicitly developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1963) though as a theoretical notion it was evident in other existential and phenomenological thinkers such as Binswanger, Boss, Minkowski and Kuhn. Given the essentially ambiguous nature of human behavior and experience it is not easy to clearly define the concept of structure. It seems much easier to clearly state what it is not. Structure is antithetical to the notion of simple causation. Structure is not concerned with explaining a specific behavior by a specific stimulus. The concept of structure is similar to, but far more encompassing and dynamic than, the concepts of Gestalt or context. Merleau-Ponty (1963) defines structures as:

> ... total processes which may be indiscernible from each other while their "parts," compared to each other, differ in absolute size; in other words the systems are defined as transposable wholes. We will say that there is form whenever the properties of a system are modified by every change brought about in a single one of it's parts and, on the contrary, are conserved when they all change while maintaining the same relationship among themselves (p. 47).

In other words "structure" refers to an overall dialectical interrelation of parts of a whole, such that if any one part is altered, the whole is altered. Structure is not merely limited to describing the external world, as the Gestaltists did, but is rather concerned with the co-penetration of "external" behavior in objects and so-called "internal" consciousness. Giorgi (1970) believes that "Consequently, it must be emphasized that the value of structure is in the integration of internal and external viewpoints (p. 182)."

There are many levels to the notion of structure. Structure may be limited to relatively specific phenomena such as the structure of time (Minkowski, 1958) or it may refer to something as encompassing as the

structure of the world of the compulsive (Von Gebsattel, 1958). The concept of structure is an attempt to give some organized delineation and understanding of human behavior. If it appears ambiguous, it is partly because it is a relatively novel concept and needs much further investigation. However, it is also ambiguous because it is intricately faithful to the essential ambiguity of human behavior. Giorgi (1970) states this emphatically when he says:

> Thus, by adopting a descriptive approach, Merleau-Ponty unveils behavior as the ambiguous phenomenon that it is, and he implicitly challenges the criteria of full clarity that we have been taught to expect about phenomena, as well as challenging the "either-or" notions of public and private (p. 183).

Horizon. Horizon refers to the context or background out of which a theme or figure emerges and the interrelation of this horizon and the phenomenon. However, though similar, it cannot be exactly equated to the figure/ground phenomenon of the Gestaltists because they tend to speak of figure and ground as externally related to each other. Horizon on the other hand is concerned with the interpenetration of the figure and ground and how an alteration of the horizon alters the meaning of the theme or figure. Horizon may refer to the context in which a thought appears (inner horizon) or that in which an object or person appears (outer horizon). What Gurwitsch (1964) says about the outer horizon can be also transposed to the realm of the inner horizon.

> Following Husserl, we use the term "outer horizon" to denote the perceptual context enlarged beyond the perceptual field in the narrower and proper sense. The outer horizon comprises things at the moment not actually perceived but referred to as perceivable. They are referred to with greater or lesser distinctness and clearness as to their attributes, properties, and details. In conformity with the distinctly descriptive orientation of phenomenological investigation, we must allow for pointing references exactly

> as, and only to the extent to which, they are actually experienced. With the experience of pointing references to the outer horizon, we are at the phenomenological root and origin of the awareness we have of the world as a universal all-embracing background, context, or horizon at every moment of conscious life. Whatever material object is chosen as our theme, we perceive it within that all-embracing horizon and as pertaining to the world. We are also aware of ourselves as existing within the world and being part of it, not differently in some respect and in a certain sense from a material object (p. 369).

What becomes essential then, in psychological research, is that when trying to make explicit the meanings of a phenomenon, that we understand and be able to make explicit the horizon which forms the context of this phenomenon and its interrelationship with the phenomenon. Giorgi (1971) states this with great clarity in the following manner:

> Whenever a phenomenon appears, it always appears within a certain horizon or context, and the horizon that is implicitly given with the phenomenon is not irrelevant for the understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary the horizon is essential for the understanding of the phenomenon because the role that the phenomenon plays within the context, even if it is only implicitly recognized, is one of the determiners of the meaning of the phenomenon (Gurwitsch, 1964). The implication of this fact for research on human phenomena is that a phenomenon cannot be studied by abstracting it from the context in which it appears, and still have the same phenomenon. Rather the process of description and explicitation must precede the investigation so that the precise situation of the phenomenon is known, and then one is better able to know the precise way the meaning of the phenomenon will change if it is studied in another context (pp. 21-22).

In terms of human phenomena, this leads to the notion of "situated behavior." That is, human behavior is not separable from the situation in which it arises. This is not to say that the behavior is "caused" by the situation, or that the situation is "caused" by the behavior, but rather that there is an interplay between the behavior and the

situation. Since the person co-constitutes (Fischer C., 1971) his/her situation, it is essential to understand the meaning of the situation for the person, in order to fully understand the meaning of his/her behavior.

In at least a theoretical sense, the task of explicitating the horizon is endless since each horizon is related to the horizon which follows it. As in any human endeavor, which could theoretically go on forever, and science is certainly such an endeavor, there is a closure that comes about when the fullness of the phenomenon has been explored. Just as this dissertation could be constantly expanded to encompass greater and greater horizons, there comes a time when it becomes clear to the community of scientists that the significant focus of a particular study has borne its optimal findings.

Phenomenological Methodologies

In the preceding pages, I have attempted to touch on some of the most significant themes in phenomenology. At this point, I would like to briefly describe some of the specific methodologies which arise from a phenomenological basis. Colaizzi (1973) believes that the methodological applications of a phenomenological perspective, within psychology, can be divided into three main categories; the individual phenomenological reflection, the phenomenal study, and the empirical phenomenological reflection. Though there are not absolute demarcations among them, some significant distinctions can be made.

The individual phenomenological reflection. The individual phenomenological reflection refers to the fact that this research is carried out by one investigator. This person utilizes either a formal or

informal phenomenological reflection in order to be "naively" present to the phenomenon which s/he is investigating. An essential component of the reduction is to reflect on the data s/he perceives and be able to delineate some of the essential structures of the phenomenon which s/he is studying. The emphasis in this type of research is often on the pre-reflective structures of existence. The individual phenomenological reflection has had a long and respectable history. Such seminal thinkers as Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Schutz, Straus, James, Marcel, Bachelard, Jaeger and many others have utilized this approach.

The phenomenal study. The second methodological approach is that of the phenomenal study. The explicit considerations of this approach were pioneered and popularized by Van Kaam (1966). What primarily characterizes this methodology is that phenomenological descriptions are gathered from a plurality of participants. There is a minimal of phenomenological reflection on the data. Instead:

> Accordingly, the PS researcher proceeds in only a relatively empirical manner in that, by minimizing - but not entirely avoiding - all reflective activity, he attempts to present his data as nearly as possible at the level that it is originally given to him, "the data as presented by the subjects"; (Colaizzi, 1973, p. 30).

What is essential is that the investigator not deviate in any significant manner from the data as it is presented to him/her by the participants in the study.

The empirical phenomenological reflection. The third phenomenological methodology is the empirical phenomenological reflection. As Colaizzi (1973) describes it:

> ... A third method for describing the existential character of psychological topics readily suggests itself, one which would consist of placing an equal

> emphasis on both empirical and reflective procedures. Such a method would thus involve a phenomenological reflection on data empirically derived from a plurality of subjects, and would be logically termed the method of "empirical phenomenological reflection" (p. 30).

This can logically be seen as utilizing the best features of the preceding two methodological analyses. The research portion of this dissertation will utilize a variation of an empirical phenomenological reflection. Therefore, I will expand on this kind of research in the following chapter.

A final integration of the preceding concepts needs to be made in order to give a comprehensive overview of the direction and meaning of this dissertation. This will especially help to properly contextualize the methodology section.

Approach, method and content. Giorgi (1968) states that any human scientific research must be aware of and make explicit three essential components of the research. These are the approach, the method, and the content. As has been pointed out, in traditional natural scientific psychological research, there is often a primary emphasis placed on the methodology. As a consequence, the phenomenon which is to be studied is often placed on a procrustean methodological bed which readily delimits the human meaning and context of the phenomenon. Even relatively traditional researchers have stated that laboratory research may not be relevant to the concrete lived world of human beings (Smith, 1961).

Human scientific research, in contradistinction, emphasizes the essential need for a dialectics (or trialectics) among the approach taken by the researcher, the type of methodology s/he utilizes, and the concrete phenomenon which s/he is studying. In this kind of research,

no single component has absolute primacy. There is a "relative" primacy in that, at least at this stage of the development of the human scientific research, a certain emphasis is given to the necessity to be faithful to the phenomenon. This emphasis especially arises at this stage as an essential attempt to counterbalance the methodological emphasis of traditional natural scientific research and in order to rigorously follow Husserl's dictum to "return to the things themselves." We need first to be faithful to the human phenomenon we are studying and then later develop, even gropingly, the necessary methodologies to be able to remain true to the human significance of the phenomenon under study.

However, given certain specific phenomena, it is conceivable that the best method to study this phenomenon might be a statistical or psychophysical methodology. This would be decided only after making explicit the phenomenon which would be studied and making it clear that this specific phenomenon best lends itself to being studied by such a methodology. However, even then, a descriptive stance would also have to be taken in order to properly contextualize the methodology/phenomenon dialectics. Giorgi (1970) defines "approach" as follows:

> By approach is meant the fundamental viewpoint toward man and the world that the scientist brings, or adopts, with respect to his work as a scientist, whether his viewpoint is made explicit or remains implicit. We also recognize in a very real sense this task is inexhaustible. That is, no person could ever make completely explicit all the characteristics of his approach (p. 126).

In essence, this is what this researcher has been attempting to do up to this point. I have been trying, as explicitly as possible to make clear what is my fundamental viewpoint toward a) the phenomenon of wonder, b) the human scientific foundation for this research and c) the

phenomenological methodology which arises out of the dialogue among these three. It might be argued this is unnecessary in order to do research. However, this is precisely what is lacking in traditional natural scientific psychological research. The researcher never makes explicit the presuppositions upon which his/her research is based. This then does not allow for his/her findings to be properly contextualized. It might also be argued that since one can never make explicit all of his/her presuppositions, that it is fruitless to begin the task in the first place. Giorgi (1970) argues strongly against this viewpoint;

> We would argue against the position that would say that since one cannot make fully explicit his presuppositions, or his approach, there is no sense in trying at all. The very nature of science, or any human effort for that matter, is that there is this note of incompleteness in its very core. Yet, in spite of this incompleteness we must strive for a knowledge that transcends the particular and the momentary. This is where the social aspect of science comes in. From his limited viewpoint each scientist states the truth as he sees it or understands it and then he lets the rest of his colleagues criticize it or modify it until what is true stands and what is false is shed away (p. 126).

It is therefore seen that since the human is an ambiguous being by nature, and since human endeavors, including science, exhibit a consequent incompleteness, the psychological researcher must learn in the very earliest phases of the research to "make peace" with the essential incompleteness which faces him. The chimera of an absolute truth, a final finding, a complete articulation, must be banished from his/her scientific expectations.

Giorgi (1968) goes on to elucidate the essential aspects of the meaning of "approach" in human scientific research. For him, the first characteristic of approach in human scientific research is the concern

for the foundations of knowledge. In this paradigm, the phenomenological concept of Lebenswelt, (the lived world) is considered the foundation for our knowing. The lived world is the common everyday experience of living as opposed to a scientific-theoretical explanation of our living. The problem with a natural scientific explanation of our living is not that it is scientific, but rather that it is scientific in the narrow sense of that term. That is, it tends to forget that its theoretical understanding is based on the common everyday perception and the language of human living. In that sense it tends to become a second order abstraction, somewhat unrelated to the original phenomena which it was studying. Merleau-Ponty (1962) characterizes this situation in the following manner:

> ... Classical science is a form of perception which loses sight of its origins and believes itself complete. The first step would then appear to be to return to the world of actual experience which is prior to the objective world since it is in it that we shall be able to grasp the theoretical basis no less than the limits of that objective world, restore to things their concrete physiognomy, to organisms their individual ways of dealing with the world, and to subjectivity its inherence in history (p. 57).

The second aspect of approach as defined by Giorgi (1968) is the assumption that knowledge is in the appearance of things and not somehow "behind" them. That is:

> Once again, because of the overwhelming success of the natural sciences we have become accustomed to explaining phenomena in terms of certain hypothetical ideas about reality. Thus we explain physical things in terms of atoms, or behavioral responses in terms of energy stimuli, or certain drives in man as being due to a libido, etc. However, the use of constructs such as these, however fruitful they are for certain limited purposes, often explain away the phenomena instead of interpreting them (p. 110).

That is why in human scientific research there is such an emphasis on description of the everyday lived experience. It is an attempt to escape some of the biases of theoretical constructs by returning to human experience. We need to first be fully present and understand the physiognomies of the human world before we attempt a theoretical explanation of that world.

The third aspect of approach in human scientific research is the concern for the perspectival character of all knowledge, including research findings. That is:

> By perspectivity is meant that our approach to any phenomenon is partial, and therefore it is limited in such a way that at the same time that certain possibilities open up, others are closed off. We never get a complete and total phenomenon by any one stance, and this implies that a multiperspective approach to phenomena is highly desirable (Giorgi, 1968, p. 111).

As has been previously mentioned, this merely acknowledges that any scientific research does not have an absolute standpoint on the subject-matter being researched. There are always other viewpoints and therefore the research is necessarily at least partially incomplete. It can be made more complete through a dialogue with other research and researchers. This does not mean that research is fruitless, but rather that it must not presume that it can be the final word on what is being studied. This is a necessary part of being rigorous with the human phenomenon since one of the insights of existential-phenomenological thought is that the human being is transcendent in its very being, that is, as applies to research, there is always more that can be learned since the human phenomenon is always changing, always becoming, always going beyond the point at which it was studied.

Another aspect of perspectivity is that it underlines the researcher's presence in the research. Whereas in traditional natural scientific research, the researcher tries to be as objective as possible, the human scientific researcher believes that this form of objectivity is a myth as underlined by such postulates as Heisenberg's (1960) principle of indeterminancy. The human scientific researcher maintains that the presence of the researcher is essential and can even helps to further illuminate the phenomenon being studied. Therefore it is necessary for the researcher to make as explicit as possible his presuppositions, in order that the findings of his research can be properly contextualized.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Phenomenology

As was mentioned earlier, the specific methodology used in this research was a phenomenological one. In this section I will attempt to make explicit the procedures which were followed and the rationale behind them. However, it is well to keep in mind the caution presented by Keen (1975). He warns us that:

> Any discussion of research techniques in phenomenological psychology must necessarily be open-ended and suggestive, rather than definitive. ... unlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a 'cookbook' set of instructions. It is more of an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals (p. 41).

This is but a caution that not all dimensions of phenomenological research can be made totally explicit. However, this should certainly not deter us from illuminating as many aspects of the research methodology as possible.

Presuppositions. The first step in the methodology was to make explicit the presuppositions and the approach used by this researcher. This was done in chapter two by specifying the psychological and philosophical presuppositions of this researcher.

I should also mention here why I use the word "participant" or "respondent" or "interviewee" to refer to the persons involved in this study instead of the more commonly used term "subject." A subject in a

psychological study often is one who has no control over the direction of the research or the interview. A subject is often seen as passive and one who has something done to him. I wanted to emphasize that the persons in this study were true participants and were seen as co-researchers. There was an emphasis on dialogical reciprocity between the researcher and the participant. In the words of Von Eckartsberg (1971):

> In an existential-biographical focus, the role of psychological research is changed radically as contrasted to the laboratory approach. First of all, we must engage in a cooperative dialogue with our "person-subject informants." The method is hence dialogical and the researchers enter into a give and take with the person he studies (p. 75).

Participants. The next step was to choose participants for this study who would be willing to be interviewed on their experiences of wonder. It was decided that the total number of participants would not exceed five. I wanted to avoid the dangers inherent in a solely idiographic study or in an individual phenomenological reflection. The danger in such studies being that one may elicit a structure of an experience which is so unique that it is difficult to generalize many significant themes from it. This is not to say that much cannot be learned from such investigations. Literature certainly abounds with them. They are quite prominent in existential thought and in some interpretations of phenomenology. They also have had a long history in psychology, most prominently starting with the case histories of Freud. More recently, there have been exclusively idiographic studies in psychology (e.g. Allport, 1965), individual phenomenological reflections (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Bachelard), and empirical phenomenological studies based on only two participants (Romanyshyn, 1971).

It was felt that thematic structures would be found to be somewhat

more generalizable, though certainly not universally applicable, if several participants were used. By traditional research standards, four or five participants is not considered very large. However, in human scientific research it is not considered necessary to have a large number of participants since it is believed that even though there would be variations in the descriptions if a larger number of participants were used, these would be but minor variations on a basic human theme. Replication of results is not the main focus of human scientific research. There tends to be an inverse relationship in natural scientific research between the ability to replicate results and the significance these results have for human living. Giorgi (1971) addresses this very issue:

> For the human sciences, it is not necessary that a phenomenon to be investigated be duplicated identically (even if that were possible) but simply that its essential theme can be identified through its varying manifestations. To demand that the essential theme of a phenomenon and its manifestation be constant is an unnecessary reduction that not only does violence to the phenomenon, but also prohibits a correct understanding of it because the various ways it manifests itself also sheds light on its essential nature (p. 24).

Therefore, thoroughly investigating a small number of descriptions will give one a reasonably accurate thematic structure for the experience of wonder, though numerous other descriptions would help give a fuller picture, though not a radically different one. It is hoped that this study capitalized on the best features of idiographic and nomothetic methods in phenomenology.

Interviewing procedure. The persons in this study were not chosen from a random sample. They were chosen with two primary criteria in mind. 1) That they be able to give rich and complete descriptions of their experiences and 2) that there was already a trusting relationship

established with the author.

The first criterion conforms to general phenomenological principles of research (Stevick, 1971). If I were asked how I knew that the chosen interviewees would be able to give complete and rich descriptions, I would have to say that I knew this primarily from my lived-knowledge of these persons and some intuitive grasp of their descriptive abilities. This is not said apologetically, but rather underlines the human dimension of engaged research.

The second criterion was important because it was felt that the interviewees would be more willing to explore in depth their experience if there was already a sense of trusting the researcher. This was readily borne out by the statements of all the participants that they would not have been willing to go into their experiences as deeply and as intimately as they had if they had not had an already established trusting relationship with the author. Therefore, rather than interfering with the "objectivity" of the study, it actually helped this researcher be more rigorous by gaining fuller descriptions from the persons involved. This issue is addressed by Sardello (1971) in discussing the various meanings of objectivity:

> The third and most primordial meaning of objectivity however, is an attitude of respectful openness of the whole of our existence which allows, through our involvement in the world, reality to reveal itself the way it is (p. 64).

It is felt that in much traditional research, so-called "objectivity" delimits the scope of the phenomenon under study, that it is shorn from its moorings in the world of everyday human experience.

The total number of participants in the study was four. They ranged in age from twenty-four to thirty-four. All of the interviewees

were Caucasian and from a middle socio-economic background. There were three men and one woman.

The procedure followed was that once I had some initial sense that a person might be an appropriate interviewee I informed him/her that I was doing a phenomenological study on the experience of wonder and asked if s/he would be willing to parti-ipate. The prospective participant was told that this would involve at least one interview and possibly two and that the interview would be taped. I informed this person that the initial research question would be "Would you please describe as fully as possible an experience of wonder which is most striking for you?".

The initial telephone contact was important for two main reasons. It assured me that the person would be a willing and voluntary participant and secondly that this person would know ahead of time what I would be asking of him/her. I specifically did this so that this would give him/her suffucient time to recollect his/her experience and be able to give the fullest description possible. It might be added that many of the participants initially asked this researcher what he meant by an experience of wonder. They were told that that would be left up to them. Therefore their subjective definitions of wonder were utilized rather than any pre-set assumptions about the experience that the researcher might have.

When the person agreed to be interviewed, we set up a date which was mutually acceptable when we could conduct the interview. Most of the interviews took place in the homes of the interviewees. This seemed important because it appeared that they were generally most comfortable talking about their experiences in a place where they figuratively and literally were "at-home."

After some initial conversation, I asked the person to respond to the research question mentioned above, that is, "Would you please describe as fully as possible an experience of wonder which is most striking to you?" There were sometimes some slight modifications of this question, but never deviating from its essential thrust. After asking the initial research question, I tried to be as present as possible to the person speaking. I would liken the process to the kind of listening that a good clinician does during the course of a therapy interview. In fact, I was quite struck by Rogers' (1961) description of how he tries to really hear the person he is with in therapy.

The general tenor of the interview was non-directive. I had no other prepared questions. All the subsequent questions which I did ask, were those which arose out of the context of the information presented by the interviewee and most often these questions were meant more to clarify rather than raise new substantial issues.

Bracketing. There was a conscious effort on my part to be as open as possible to the dimensions and nuances mentioned by the interviewees. That is, I attempted to "bracket" my presuppositions and mental sets and categories so as to be able to really deeply and fully hear what was being said by the participants. I wanted as much as possible to hear what they said and not what my mental set indicated they said. This "bracketing" is one of the first steps in the phenomenological reduction which will be discussed more completely when reviewing the procedure followed in listening to and explicating the tapes.

Such a concept as "bracketing" or "openness" can certainly not be operationally defined to any significant degree. However, it is without a question humanly defined everyday in our lived and common experience.

We "know" when someone is being "open" or "closed" with us. We say that for example, a person has a "closed mind."

Trusting the interviewer. Apparently this openness was communicated since all of the participants either during the interview or immediately afterward commented that this general openness allowed them to more easily unfold their experiences. All of them also commented that trusting the interviewer was essential in allowing them to reveal the deepest and most "intimate" aspects of their experiences. That is, stated negatively, if the participants had not trusted the interviewer to the degree they did, the descriptions would have been disastrously truncated, and we would not be able to adequately understand the structural dimensions of the experience of wonder. Therefore, a trusting relationship becomes an essential aspect of human scientific research. If this trusting relationship does not exist, it is likely that we will be studying mere shadows of true human experience. Keen (1975) summarizes this aspect in the following manner:

> The conclusion of this line of thought is that it is usually possible to persuade people to trust us if we are in fact trustworthy. The crucial "technique" that allows us to do viable research in this way is to be a certain kind of person.
>
> Such a methodological development is not likely to seem convincing when it is stated so simply. It is actually a very complex matter. Doing psychological research ought to be every bit as challenging as doing psychotherapy - challenging not only to our ingenuity in designing the collection of data, but also to our capability to evoke trust from those we wish to understand - and then to justify that trust.
>
> The real test of such strategies is not whether or not they sound convincing when stated here. The test is in the work and the results of researchers (pp. 59-60).

Entering the interviewee's world. There was a conscious effort on my part to enter into the phenomenological world of the interviewee. I

attempted, as much as was possible, to be-with, to dwell with, this person in his or her unique world of experience. Perhaps because at times I believe I was genuinely able to enter into this person's unique experience, I found myself feeling genuinely in contact with this person and greatly touched and warmed by the experience. I felt like I was being allowed to share in something very deep with another human being. Von Eckartsberg (1971) in speaking of the various ways of being with a research participant says that:

> We must remember, however, that in either case the researcher is a co-constititive member of the situation. His presence has an effect on the situation and the experience and action of the person studied, and he is also, in turn, affected by the situation and the person studied (p. 74).

Critical for me was the ability to place myself within the world-view of the interviewee. This helped sensitize me to the richness and nuances of the description being given. It gave me a "viewpoint" and a context from which to ask questions which would help illuminate the phenomenon of living-through an experience of wonder. On the other hand, I needed to also engage in the dialectical movement of returning to my own position as a researcher, yet a researcher-in-dialogue-with-another. This allowed me to get a more "external" perspective on the description and enabled me to ask questions which would make explicit certain facets which were only implicit. As a phenomenological researcher, it appears necessary to maintain a fine balance between these two polarities.

I should also mention that each subsequent interview sensitized me to new dimensions of the experience, so that as time went on, I felt I was able to ask better questions concerning the multitudinous dimensions of the experience. This seemed to elicit fuller descriptions from the participants as the study continued. Therefore, a methodology, like any

human endeavor, is always developing, and given the essential ambiguity of human existence (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), it is difficult to say when one has reached a "final" methodology. I would also like to mention briefly that in this kind of research, especially with this topic, there also needs to be a sense of wonder in the researcher. The findings are greatly enriched when the researcher's own sense of wonder helps to sensitize him/her to what is unfolding in his/her presence (Maslow, 1966).

Phenomenological reduction. Now we come to the procedure which has followed in listening to the recordings of the interviews. First of all, all the recordings were transcribed verbatim. The research data, that is, the recordings and the transcriptions, was approached with an openness to whatever meanings emerged. This is an essential step in following the phenomenological reduction necessary to elicit the meaning units. For example, Keen (1975) states that:

> The phenomenological reduction is a conscious, effortful, ...ing of ourselves to the phenomenon as a phenomenon. ..We want not to see this event as an example of this or that theory that we have; we want to see it as a phenomenon in its own right, with its own meaning and structure. Anybody can hear words that were spoken; to listen for the meanings as they eventually emerged from the event as a whole is to have adopted an attitude of openness to the phenomenon in its inherent meaningfulness. It is to have "bracketed" our responses to separate parts of the conversation and to have let the event emerge as a meaningful whole (p. 38).

However, this does not mean that the phenomenologist is standing in some absolute and totally presuppositionless space. To say this would be to fall into the fallacy that natural science has often been prone to. One fact which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction. In the words of Merleau-Ponty (1962):

> The most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction. ... that radical reflection amounts to: a consciousness of its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all (p. xiv).

In other words, we can make a scientifically disciplined and rigorous attempt to "bracket" our presuppositions, but part of our human research requires us to acknowledge our limitation in this regard.

What this means concretely is that this researcher listened to the recordings and carefully reread the transcriptions several times. This was done with an attitude of "bracketing" as much as possible the presuppositions brought to the situation by the researcher. It seemed apparent that there were certain meaning units which were suggested by the data. These were noted on the right hand side of the margin, parallel to the place in the interview where it appeared thematic. Giorgi (1975) describes this process in the following manner:

> First one reads through the protocol to get the sense of the whole. The first step of the analysis itself is to try to determine the natural "meaning units" as expressed by the subject. The attitude with which this is done is one of maximum openness and the specific aim of the study is not yet taken into account. After the natural units have been delineated, one tries to state as simply as possible the theme that dominates the natural unit within the same attitude that defined the units (p. 87).

The second step was to interrogate the initial meaning units in terms of the specific question involved in this study. This research question was: "What do these meaning units tell me about the structure of the experience of wonder?" The next question which was addressed to these meaning units was: "How are these dimensions contextualized within the larger panorama of human lived experience?" Giorgi (1975) addresses this step in a study he conducted on learning:

> Therefore, the second step of the analysis is to look at the themes and the raw data from which they were taken with the specific attitude that asks "What does this statement tell me about learning?" or "How does this statement reveal significance about the nature of learning?". If there is nothing explicit about learning within a given natural meaning unit, which is possible, then one simply leaves a blank (p. 88).

Phenomenological reflection. The various meaning units from each interview were compared with those from the other interviews. Those themes which were most consistently mentioned and which were most indigenious to the experience of wonder were expanded upon in order to reflectively elicit the pre-reflective and the non-thematic of the lived experience. What is meant here is that our lived experience often operates at a pre-reflective (some would say subconscious) level. That is, we are not thematically aware and conscious of all the constituents of our experience. This is implied by the concept of "intentionality" mentioned earlier. Our whole existence is already a being-in-the-world. The hyphens in the phrase serve to emphasize our interconnectedness with the world. We are so interwoven with the world that we need to reflect on it in order to better perceive and understand it. In the words of Merleau-Ponty (1962):

> It is because we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world that for us the only way to become aware of the fact is to suspend the resultant activity, to refuse it our complicity (to look at it ohne mitzumachen, as Husserl often says), or yet again, to put it "out of play". Not because we reject the certainties of common sense and a natural attitude to things -- they are, on the contrary, the constant theme of philosophy -- but because, being the presupposed basis of any thought, they are taken for granted, and go unnoticed, and because in order to arouse them and bring them to view, we have to suspend for a moment our recognition of them (p. xiii).

Again, it must be emphasized that this reflection is not forgetful of its origins. That is, that it too is grounded in the pre-reflective lived human body and world. The reflective approach used here should not be confused with mere speculation. Giorgi (1973) emphasizes that:

> Reflection should not be confused with speculation; the former stays within the confines of the given, thoughtfully penetrates it and comes up with a deeper understanding; whereas the latter takes off from the given and considers numerous possibilities. In this view method in psychology is a movement from one type of language, naive everyday language, to another type, which is psychological language, a second-order expression mediated by reflection (p. 6).

This kind of reflection can be validated from the findings of other researchers. Certainly, such psychologists as William James and Abraham Maslow have much to say about experiences which have similar constituents to the experience of wonder. This is a form of intersubjective validation. However, human scientific research, since it does focus on lived experience, need not be restricted to only the psychological writings. Further validation can be found in literature, in anthropological studies, in religious writings, and in philosophical reflections.

Evaluating phenomenological research. One of the safeguards against researcher bias is the researcher's attempt to rigorously state his presuppositions (as I have attempted to do) so that his findings can be contextualized within these presuppositions by other researchers. What Keen (1975) says about the phenomenological methodology certainly applies here:

> This procedure obviously requires a great deal of judgement from the investigator at every point. The criterion of such judgments is, as has to be, the lived experience of the investigator, which is as stated before, already an understanding of others' experience, albeit an implicit one. Naturally, the

> routine does not include foolproof safeguards against bias; that, too, must be abjudicated in the court of lived experience (p. 47).

The ultimate judgment in human scientific research depends on the richness of the findings.

> Every psychological theory is an interpretive scheme: a set of concepts used by observers to make intelligible to themselves what they observe. Some theories are richer in interpretive possibilities than are others, but no theory can escape its own limitations. By seeing a phenomenon in one way, we close ourselves to seeing it in another way (Keen, 1975, p. 39).

If a researcher truly illuminates a phenomenon then it will be validated by those who read it. They will be able, from their lived experience to affirm it, to say "Yes, that really describes my experience." That is why literature often contains greater psychological insights and descriptions than so-called scientific psychology. Great writers are able to penetrate to the depth of human experience and illuminate it so that many people can identify with it.

What is being said here about research is merely an extension of the very common experience of being understood. When someone is able to describe to you what they understood of your experience and it corresponds in a significant manner to your experience, then you are able to truly affirm the "findings" of the other person. Certainly this is the basis of much clinical work.

This is not to say that there will not be shortcomings or other perspectives. This is part of the richness of human scientific research. It must expect its limitations to be exposed and other perspectives to illuminate the phenomenon in another way. Giorgi (1975) addresses this issue in the following manner:

> It is even conceivable that another investigator could write a different structure of style, but my experience has shown that it is never wholly different; rather, it is divergent because another investigator is looking at the same data slightly differently. Consequently, the control comes from the researcher's context or perspective of the data. Once the context and intention becomes known, the divergence is usually intelligible to all even if not universally agreeable. Thus, the chief point to be remembered with this type of research is not so much whether another position with respect to the data could be adopted, (this point is granted beforehand), but whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it. That is the key criterion for qualitative research (p. 96).

This is certainly a different viewpoint than that taken by much traditional research. However, it is hoped that this viewpoint can be more meaningful for lived experience. Keen (1975) goes on to say:

> This concept of knowledge is different, to be sure, from the notion of "objective truth" from which the question of verification arose in the first place. Perhaps it is a concept of knowledge that more closely suits our situation as psychologists than does the other one. Or perhaps it is preferable, in view of our answer to the question of what our knowledge is for. When we are reduced to that question, of course, we are thrown back to the people we are, as individuals and as psychologists, facing moral and ontological ambiguities (p. 152).

Human scientific psychology must work to incorporate multiple perspectives in its findings. However, this is still far in the future (at least in any large-scale sense) for human scientific research. We are still at a very rudimentary, though certainly a very fruitful, stage of research.

Limitations. From what has been said above, it is clear that this research does have its limitations. For the most part, I have tried to point out the limitations throughout this methodology section.

Certainly, the results of the study will be limited, at least to some degree, by the number of persons involved in the study, by the quality of their descriptions, by the researcher's perspective, and by the researcher's astuteness in perceiving and delineating meaningful themes, emerging from the descriptions of wonder.

Another researcher might want to use more naive interviewees and persons with whom s/he is totally unacquainted. Hopefully, this would give another perspective on the findings.

There is also the problem of having only descriptions of the meaning, experience and behavior from the participant without the researcher being present at the original situation. In this study participants were describing their own experience. Very likely this could have been enriched by a description also from an "external" viewpoint, i.e. from the researcher's perspective on the participant's experience.

Another possible difficulty that can be conjectured is the time lapse between when the experience occurred for the participant and when s/he was interviewed. In some cases this was a duration of several months. It might be charged that the interviewee forgot much or that s/he unintentionally confabulated some of the description. To the first charge, I can only rejoin that I was struck by the vividness with which the participants recalled their experience. This is of course no guarantee of perfect recall, but then neither is any area of human endeavor free of this difficulty. To the charge of confabulation, that is, that the participant might insert aspects into the situation which did not originally exist, I would say that even this "distortion" is important because it tells us much about the human remembering of experience and particularly the experience of wonder.

In no realistic sense will this be the "last word" on the experience of wonder. However, it is hoped that many of its significant themes emerged in the course of this study. I hope that even the limitations of this study will stimulate other researchers to further investigate the phenomenon. As Colaizzi (1973) astutely states:

> All that an investigator can hope to accomplish is to articulate how a phenomenon fundamentally is revealed to him from his finite perspective and submit this articulation to other concerned investigators who then reject it, modify it, complement it or temporarily accept it, and so on. Thus the endeavors of an individual investigator stimulates a dialogue between his results, a community of scholars and reality. There is no higher court of appeal for establishing a criterion for a fundamental structure than this dialogue. The reason for this is that a fundamental structure is an expression of an aspect of man as a transcendent being; and as a transcendent aspect, that which is expressed by the fundamental structure can never be fully captured by the laws which define, i.e., which definitely establish criteria for, a natural event. In the meantime, during the unending dialectical development and evaluation of the fundamental structure, it can be measured against the criterion of its fruitfulness (p. 98).

Chapter 4

EXPLICATION

This chapter begins with the transcribed interviews along with the meaning units which emerged from an "analysis" of the data. The meaning units are typed in next to the place in the interview where they emerged. Fully cognizant that such "data" is ordinarily placed in an appendix in most psychological research, it was decided to include the verbatim transcripts in the body of the dissertation because of the different thrust indigeneous to human scientific research. It was believed that this would serve two primary purposes: 1) Since so much of human scientific research speaks of the necessity of returning to lived human experience (Giorgi, 1970), it would place this experience in a central focus in this dissertation. It would seem that where one's "data" is placed indicates the meaning or value of the "data" within the context of the research. I believe that the style as well as the content is important in human scientific research. Since rigorous phenomenological methodologies are still in a stage of development, it would seem that placing the original "data" within the body of the dissertation would help other researchers, with greater specificity, to see where the results came from, and stimulate others to further refine the methodology used in this study.

Interview I	Meaning Units
R: The basic research question I am asking, is what is an experience of wonder which is most striking for you. I'd like you to give as complete and full a description of that experience in all the dimensions that you can;	
P: The one was just this year. [1]Just a few months ago. It was in a physiology class. There was a fetus about that big in a little test tube. And I've seen pictures of them before and I've seen bigger ones before but it just [2]struck me with such impact that [3]I wanted to cradle it in my body and I really had a [4]sense of what it would feel like to be pregnant. That's never happened to me, I've never been pregnant. And so [5]a lot of things happened at once. I guess [6] the wonder of it for me was that I was really connected with I guess what you'd call basic nature, you know, something very universal. (pause).	[1]It occurred a few months ago. [2]Struck with such impact. [3]Wanting to cradle it in her body. [4]Felt what it would be like to be pregnant, though not pregnant now. [5]A lot happened at once. [6]The wonder was feeling really connected to basic nature, something universal.
R: Could you go back and describe as much as possible in detail the sequence of events, how it struck you, and how you felt?	
P: [7]That's hard. Ah, I guess the most immediate reaction I had was a feeling of [8]wanting to protect that fetus and it was a bodily reaction, it was really a feeling right here	[7]Hard to describe. [8]Immediate bodily reaction of wanting to protect the fetus.

(pointing to stomach) that I wanted to cradle that fetus, and that it [9]was really important that I do that and I guess in some ways [10]I was relating to its isolation, you know, that total dehumanization of that fetus that could be a child being in a test tube and I'm not sure that I had any sense of death at that time which is kind of strange for me, but [11]I didn't feel like it was a dead thing really, I guess maybe it was the fact that [12]I saw it so clearly as a potential child. There was really [13]a lot of horror involved in what had happened to it, and kind of feeling you know, that it was [14]my responsibility and uh, I really did feel, I'm not sure whether this is an implication or what, [15]I really did feel at one with a lot of things, intangibles, like one with the universe or kind of like [16]it was a very instinctual, a very natural kind of thing, and [17]that surprised me because I never felt a basic connection in that way before. Its almost like [18]it was a new kind of relating with other people that I had never had, because of this kind of experience. R: What occurred for you when you experienced that surprise? How did you feel?	[9]Felt it was really important to protect it. [10]Could relate to its isolation. [11]Didn't feel it was a dead thing. [12]Saw it as a potential child. [13]Felt horror. [14]Felt personal responsibility. [15]Felt at one with the universe. [16]Was very instinctual. [17]Surprised at this basic connection. [18]A new kind of relating.

P: [19]It was a sense of awe. And that's basically what I consider [20]wonder to be, is awe, just wow!; you know. That's really happening to me. Kind of [21]I never would have thought it but look at it. And the neat part of it was that [22]it was such an instinctual thing. It [23]cut across all the intellectual bullshit, you know? Really. It just cut across all this, you know, yeh for abortion, and all that stuff. It made me see how, -that's not meaningless- that's still part of me. I still have a thing about respecting people's rights and women have the right to care for their own bodies. But for me personally it was just, [24]it was saying something to me, that I hadn't had to experience, but maybe someday I will. [25]I know something now that I didn't know before. Which is just [26]really amazing. I think in a lot of ways, [27]I experienced the situation as much afterwards as at the time.

R: Did you experience the wonder at the time?

P: [28]I experienced the wonder at the time and afterwards. [29]I think it was the impact of it was so great, as I think of it, I was in a crowded room of people, a whole lot of hustle and bustle, and talking and laughing, and yet

[19]It was a sense of awe.

[20]Wonder is basically awe.

[21]Never thought it would happen to her.

[22]It was instinctual.

[23]Cut across intellectualism.

[24]Said something personal to her.

[25]Knew something now that didn't know previously.

[26]Really amazing.

[27]Experienced the situation as much afterwards as at the time.

[28]Experienced wonder at the time and afterwards.

[29]Impact was so great.

[30]I was completely in my own world. Completely I stood at that table [31]for the longest time and just looked at it. [32]I couldn't take my eyes off it. I'm not sure now whether I was as much aware as I am now of the bodily reactions, I mean I know that that's what they were. But I'm not sure I was aware then, [33]I just know I had to stay there. I guess that's part of the protection thing. I really had a hard time [34]tearing myself away from that table. [35]I really had a sense of abandoning myself. Or I was participating in my own abandonment.	[30]Completely in her own world. [31]Looked at fetus for longest time. [32]Couldn't take eyes off it. [33]Knew she had to stay there. [34]Couldn't tear herself away. [35]If she left it would be like abandoning herself.
R: Its like this fetus was pulling you towards it?	
P: [36]Yeh. (pause)	[36]Fetus was pulling her towards it.
R: You said that it had an impact on you. Can you describe that impact?	
P: [37]It was a jolt! It shook me. It really did. [38]It reached out and grabbed me. It said [39]"Look, you know here I am. You can't ignore me. You can't pretend that nothing is happening." And I'm basically very good at that. And it always catches up with me. But in terms of immediate experiences, I'm really pretty good at denying its impact, or defusing a crisis situation and that I end up dealing with it	[37]Was jolted and shook. [38]It reached out and grabbed her. [39]It "told" her that she couldn't ignore it.

for years afterward. I couldn't do that. [40]It wouldn't allow me to. I guess too that's saying again reinforcing what I said, [41]it wasn't dead. [42]But if I left it, it would be. I mean if I abandoned that fetus.	[40]It wouldn't allow her to ignore it. [41]It wasn't dead for her. [42]It would be dead if she abandoned it.
R: At that moment, were you aware of any of the things around you?	
P: [43]I was aware of the people, not of any of the individuals. No one person had any impact on me at that time. I was aware of them kind of [44]on the outer edges of my consciousness. I have a really good ability to feel myself distanced from people. Psychologically, if something happens to me to make me feel threatened, or afraid, then I will very suddenly feel physically, as well as emotionally, miles away. That was kind of what was happening with the people. I knew that they were there but, [45]my own experience of it was so compelling that I really wasn't -they weren't impinging on me- they were part of my consciousness. But it was really an outer consciousness versus the inner consciousness of that experience. [46]At the same time feeling the oneness and the sense of awe at feeling a part of something that I had never felt a part of before. [47]At the same	[43]Aware of the people, but not any of the individuals. [44]People were on the outer edge of her consciousness. [45]Her own experience was so compelling that the people were on the fringe of her consciousness. [46]Feeling a oneness and a sense of awe at something that she had never felt a part before. [47]Simultaneously, felt distant from others.

time, I was very distant from all the people in the room which is kind of interesting. It was an abstraction, I guess in a lot of ways that you know, I hear people talking about, what I basically accept, like that there are such things as really powerful religious experiences but I never experienced them. I'm basically a doubting Thomas, and a pragmatist. And here it was, [48]and it was real. [49]I didn't expect it to happen. That's for sure. Like wow! This is really me. [50]Like maybe I am connected in a lot of ways I never thought I was. And maybe there is something like god and I guess in some ways maybe [51]it was kind of a religious experience. You know, all the crap and the bullshit that I thought I had abandoned a long time ago. Its not all crap. The rigidity of the doctrines against abortion that I hate, in some ways is basically very real to me obviously from this experience. Yet I still believe that people have to do what's right for them. It just said something to me like it doesn't matter if I called it God or just some power beyond myself, [52]but it did make me feel in touch with that. I mean I was touched.

R: Could you expand on that feeling of being

[48]It was a powerful religious experience.

[49]Didn't expect it to happen.

[50]Possibly connected in many ways previously unthought of.

[51]In some ways it was a religious experience.

[52]It put her in touch with some power beyond herself.

touched?

P: I guess at the same time, maybe it wasn't at the same time, again, [53]I'm not sure what happened then and what's happening now in a lot of ways. [54]At the same time that I felt the need to cradle that embryo I felt cradled. Or if I didn't feel it then, I feel it now, and that's very real and it fits that. So it doesn't matter when I felt it. [55]It was again the connectedness, being part of some basic flow and a life-force. I guess [56]the connectedness comes in wonder, - it doesn't matter that I've never been pregnant, it doesn't matter that I'm not about to get pregnant, but not only do I have a responsibility to any child, but [57]I have a responsibility to any person. I guess that's something intellectually that I've always felt but again [58]it cuts across all the crap. And, um, [59]it just makes me aware that if I in some way help to diminish another person or fail to enhance that other person, that I am in turn diminished, whether I want to experience that or in fact allow myself to experience that or not, it happens. [60]And I'm not as much in control as I thought I was. There are other things, happening that I can't say

[53]Intermixture of then and now.

[54]Simultaneously cradling and being cradled.

[55]Feeling connected with some basic life-force.

[56]The connectedness comes in wonder.

[57]Feeling responsible to others.

[58]It cuts across intellectualism.

[59]What she does to others is done to her.

[60]Aware that she isn't in as much control.

that I did it but [61]rather that it happened to me. [62]That's scary in some ways but its kind of neat in others. I have to go from the rugged individualism to "we all need one another" basically.	[61]Things happen to her. [62]Its both scary and neat.
R: Sounds like it was transformative, not only in the experience itself but how it affected your relationship to other people afterwards.	
P: Yeh. Although the [63]transformation was really more within myself. [64]I think that there may have been some carryover behaviorally but I think that I pretty much operate that way. I do care about other people and that's important to me but [65]this is kind of more of getting in touch with a deeper level of that, and kind of responding, in some ways [66]it crystallized what my life is about. Basically I wouldn't be here in the place that I am doing the things I am, if I didn't really want to use myself in a way that's enhancing to other people. I just could never feel okay about myself if I were just doing my own thing. Of course you always get into, whenever you're working with other people you're getting something for yourself, but somehow I feel that there's something more. There's really	[63]Transformation occurred within her. [64]Some behavioral carryover. [65]In touch with a deeper level of caring. [66]It crystallized what her life is all about.

something saying to me "This is what you need to do." And maybe in some ways that's my own kind of calling.

R: In terms of this experience are there other dimensions that you might want to talk about? You mentioned your body, and the impact, was there any other awareness of your body?

P: Well, I guess that the only parts of my body that I was aware of was [67]basically my stomach, I suppose not technically my stomach, more technically my uterus, but that area. [68]I was aware of my head to a certain degree. Like again I was [69]somewhat aware of the people around me. The [70]sense of wonder was basically felt in my head. Almost like [71]it came from my stomach to my head and then back again. [72]That's where it hit. I mean its like I saw that and it went "boom" and from then there were reverberations and it was mainly my head saying "Wow, what's happening?" I guess when I think of wonder, I think of it in terms of my head. I definitely think of [73]being open-mouthed.

R: Well, when you say your head, I'm not sure what you mean. Is it just that open-mouthed experience?

[67]Bodily awareness of stomach (uterus).

[68]Also aware of head.

[69]Somewhat aware of people.

[70]Wonder was basically felt in her head.

[71]It went from her stomach to her head and back again.

[72]It hit mainly her head and questioning "what's happening?"

[73]Being open-mouthed.

P: When I say my head, I mean inside my head. I don't mean I'm kind of aware of my face or anything, I just kind of mean what [74]I consider my mind. I'm not sure what else I can say about that. [75]Just inside my head and inside my stomach. I really wasn't aware of anything else, that I can think of now.

R: Did you have any awareness of time?

P: No. Not much. [76]It was distorted. I think that what happened was what I somehow know to be an experience of probably a few minutes length, [77]seemed very long at the same time it seemed timeless. I guess maybe because I associate timelessness with eternity. [78]I mean it really did seem like it could go on and on and on. I don't know what broke it. Maybe in some way its always that thing inside me that says "gotta keep going." [79]My basic survival instinct. At some point it must have taken over. [80]But there was a sense of timelessness about it.

R: By a survival instinct I get the impression of - more a task orientation - is that correct - this was sort of a non-task orientation?

P: [81]Oh, yes very much so.

R: In what way?

[74]It went on inside her head.

[75]Aware of only head and stomach.

[76]Time was distorted.

[77]Simultaneously timeless and very long.

[78]Seemed like it could go on and on and on.

[79]The experience was broken by her "basic survival instinct."

[80]Sense of timelessness.

[81]Very non-task oriented.

P: Well at a time when I was very much into doing all the things in my classes that had to be done - doing them right - really running around trying to learn physiology which I basically don't understand terrib[illegible] well - [82]I couldn't have cared less - I really - in most of my classes when we had labs I was just all over the place and I learned that brain inside out - I did fantastic on the exams - I have to brag - I really did well - but it was a struggle it wasn't easy and there was something inside of me that was driving me to just do the best I possibly could - much more so than any other time of my life and that's been really keeping me going all year - and at this point now [83]I really couldn't have cared if they had gone through the entire course during that time - [84]I couldn't have been drawn away from it and it just didn't matter - [85]it was just so much more important than - I guess in a lot of ways [86]it re-aligned things for me - [87]it put things back into perspective - because I tend to get really carried away into the nitty gritty details and doing everything that I'm supposed to do - any minor detail can become so important to me - just incredibly important and yet going

[82]Couldn't have cared what she was supposed to do.

[83]Couldn't have cared what was happening then.

[84]Couldn't have been drawn away.

[85]So much more important then.

[86]It re-aligned priorities.

[87]It put things into perspective.

through something like this - really [88]wow! - [89]it was just totally different - totally up [90]high - and I guess in a lot of ways [91]it's too bad that experiences like that can't be more a part of life.	[88]A "wow" experience. [89]Totally different. [90]A high. [91]Regret that it isn't more a part of life.
R: It seemed like the phrase - "oh wow" - crystallized the experience for you - again, could you give some details of what that feels like - that experience of - "oh wow."	
P: I guess again it's kind of [92]an open-mouthed feeling of wonder - and [93]a feeling of being very open - in fact [94]I can't imagine feeling closed off - or wanting to protect myself - which I do an awful lot of - I can't imagine doing that in experiencing wonder - I guess [95]it's a totally opening up - and kind of [96]saying here I am - you know - this is me - and first of all I guess it - in this particular case - [97]it was an answering too - that which was calling me which was that embryo - and then I was speaking too - you know [98]it was definitely a dialogue I guess if you can call it something - and [99]that couldn't have happened if I hadn't felt open - [100]like throwing my arms wide and saying "wow" - [101]this is amazing.	[92]Open-mouthed feeling of wonder. [93]Feeling very open. [94]Couldn't imagine being closed or protecting herself. [95]Totally opening up. [96]Saying "Here I am." [97]She was answering the call of the embryo. [98]It was a dialogue. [99]Dialogue couldn't have happened without her feeling open. [100]Like throwing her arms wide and saying "wow". [101]Being amazed.

R: When you do that expression - you looked like you felt very liberated - very free - loose.

P: yah.

R: Is that what that experience was like?

P: [102]It was very free - it was - it was freedom from the shackles, kind of life - I'll have to play you a record if you have time before you leave - there's a song that - like I've been playing it all this year - I heard it like about three years ago - really - it said something to me then - but over and over it's speaking to me now - and I guess in a lot of ways it connects with this - the song is "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free" - and have you heard it? - it's the neatest long record - it's just so neat - it talks about soaring like a bird and that type of thing - and I guess you know - in this - [103]in this experience I was totally free - and in some ways maybe it's too bad because most of the time I'm totally unfree - but I was aware of the - I guess not just expanded but with [104]limitless possibilities of life - and we experience really so little - or I do - maybe I have allowed myself to experience a little of it - I

[102]Felt very free from any shackles.

[103]Totally free.

[104]Aware of limitless possibilities of life.

guess in a lot of ways I really - I protect myself so much in so many things - that to have this kind of [105]shake me and grab me - I don't know I guess - I was about to say to force me to be open - except it didn't seem to be a forcing - I mean I think also forcing is kind of like a punch right to the gut of the matter and getting to all the other things - but maybe it was more of a kind of [106]a striking of a chord within me - that set off reverberations or whatever - I'm just thinking of all the kind of [107]poetic phrases I hear myself using and that's really different - but that's the way it strikes me - you know as I've been talking about this my mind is kind of going in a couple of different - different ways - like on the one hand I'm recognizing - [108]I'm seeing the physical location in which this occurred - but on the other hand I'm sitting all around - on a hill - and I'm surrounded by trees and grass - and it's a very you know - kind of a - just a beautiful - real peaceful place - and maybe when I think of being open I can't conceive of being totally open within a closed place - I was of course but somehow my mind keeps harping on this hill type of thing - I'm not sure just

[105]It shook and grabbed her.

[106]Struck a chord within her that set off reverberations.

[107]She has to describe it poetically.

[108]Though aware of the "real" physical setting, she felt as if in a peaceful setting on a hill.

what that says -

R: So the only image in recalling it is - at least you can use is the sitting on a hill.

P: [109]Yes that's in recalling it - I know I didn't think that when I was having it - it was much more there - but now as I'm talking to you - kind of one part of my mind is seeing this picture.

R: Well you felt free at the time. What did this space feel like or what were you aware of or unaware of?

P: [110](long pause) I think I felt very small - in relation to the vastness of the experience - and the [111]vastness of what I felt the universe to be - in terms of how I [112]felt connected - but realizing what [113]a tiny part of it I am - but at the same time that [114]I felt very small I felt very powerful - because [115]I was the one person who could do this thing - you know - I was the one person that - that child was saying something to - that was just very touching - it wasn't just a feeling of power - but you know feeling very good about myself that I could do this - that maybe I was singled out for something special - something now [116]you are a special person - that was a nice feeling.

[109]The hill setting is related more to the recall.

[110]Felt very small.

[111]Felt the vastness of the universe.

[112]Felt connected.

[113]Felt a tiny part.

[114]Simultaneously felt small and powerful.

[115]Was singled out by the embryo.

[116]Felt special.

R: Were there any other aspects of this experience that you think of?

P: You mean just in terms of being an immediate experience - in hindsight - when I was telling you earlier that I couldn't recall any experiences - like that - as a child - I guess basically that's not true - because when I think of it [117]I had several experiences which later on I was given the words for - basically kind of auras - and again it was that timelessness - distortion of all of the space and time limitations that we know of - the major difference - I mean it was very much like that in that way [118]the major difference was that there was a communication - like with those experiences it was always totally within myself and there was no instance that I can ever remember triggering an aura - or anything outside myself that I was communicating with - it was totally this kind of strange thing - but you know this was definitely that [119]feeling of being in touch - and being, being affirmed just recognition - like somebody out there knows who I am.

R: Is that one of the consequences of the facts of that experience - have there been

[117]Had similar experiences as a child.

[118]Differed from previous experiences because of communication.

[119]Feeling in touch and affirmed.

R: Were there any other aspects of this experience that you think of?

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[117] Had similar experiences as a child.

[118] Differed from previous experiences because of communication.

[119] Feeling in touch and affirmed.

consequences for you?

P: One thing that has happened which isn't a totally new thing - it's kind of been in the past two years but especially since this - [120]I've just become aware of a r al physical longing at times for a child - and to carry a child not just to have a child - but to carry a child in my body - which at one point I don't think I ever - well I guess if someone had given me five children - oh that's nice you know - and I would have loved the children dearly - probably would have been very relieved not to have had to go through the pain - and in a lot of ways I'm a real coward - I don't like pain and very sensitive to it - and I think probably have always kind of been kind of frightened by the idea of childbirth but this again is just above and beyond all that just realizing more and more that that's the thing I really want - that's something really important to me and yet it doesn't fit at all into my life right now - just no way - and there's no way I'm gonna stop for it - which in some ways is probably too bad - [121]I don't think it's had a lot of other consequences.

R: How have you felt talking about it?

[120] Consequently feels a longing to carry a child.

[121] Not many other consequences.

P: [122]It's really neat - initially when I started I guess I got a little bit - [123]initially when I started talking about it I felt myself getting a little nervous which I really hadn't been - not terribly - but I guess somehow I'm kind of aware in a lot of ways - kind of dissociating myself in looking at it from I guess what I imagine is other people's perspectives - that's corny - I mean that's really dumb - but stronger than that was [124]the knowledge that it was real for me - that was the most important part - and also that I don't feel that - [125]I didn't feel that you would react in that way - if you had I would have killed you - no I wouldn't have killed you.	[122]Really neat to talk about it. [123]Initially nervous. [124]Knew that it was real for her. [125]Trusted interviewer.
R: You seemed very happy and at times your eyes seem to light up - at times you seemed very free in talking about it - is that true for your experience?	
P: [126]Yah - [127]I've been amazed that as much has come out of it as has - that doesn't make any grammatical sense - but when I was thinking about it before we were talking - I was thinking gee I'll be through that in five minutes - less - I mean what is there to say about it - I had it and that's it - but [128]your questions	[126]Talking about it created a sense of happiness and freedom. [127]Amazed at how much she was able to say about it. [128]Questions helped her to focus.

have really helped me to focus on it and a lot of the different dimensions - and in some ways I have re-experienced it - and I guess when [129]my eyes lit up it was kind of like when I was finding those words that so totally fit it - part of that was the [130]communication I think between you and I - at the time like I felt it sometimes - at the same time that I felt the click you felt it also - I felt that you felt it - because I saw something in you which said yah - wow - that kind of thing - [131]talking about it is very enhancing.	[129]Her eyes lit up when she would find the right words. [130]Felt a genuine communication with interviewer. [131]Talking about it enhanced it.
R: Do you feel wonder now? P: You know what - [132]I feel very peaceful - and that's something that I don't feel a whole lot - and that is for me - something that I wonder at - it's almost like in a lot of ways [133]wonder is for me being let into the secret - I think everybody else has something that I don't share - and I caught a glimpse in that experience - and also now [134]in sharing it I'm catching glimpses of things within myself - that yeh I do wonder at it - wow - [135]it belies a lot of the - I don't know what to call them - the more surface or the more everyday things that are facts about my life [136]it belies my	[132]Presently feeling peaceful. [133]Wonder is being let into the secret. [134]In sharing the experience, she got glimpses into herself. [135]It belies the surface facts of her life. [136]It belies her self-concept.

self-concept almost totally - I mean it - really - it turns it upside down because maybe that's maybe that's another dimension of the wonder to me - that somehow [137]I don't feel that I could experience the wonder in the same way - if I had a better feeling about myself - because it's wonder in contrast to what my usual experience is - again it's "wow" - almost like [138]being let into something and there's more to it - and you're not such a bad person - and maybe there's something really good about it - and for me - when I experienced that like really as a gut feeling - [139]I have a sense of wonder at it - like [140]there's more to me than I've been told there is - I think that in a lot of ways [141]the wonder has been very much a part of me discussing it - I'm just realizing more and more that really for me what wonder is. I'm just really focusing, after talking about it, how much the wonder is related to my feelings about myself and that the depth of the wonder is just so much related to my normally feeling low - low self-esteem - all my questions, all my doubts - and [142]the wonder just strikes me so much because it is in such contrast. Like ordinarily I don't feel a "wow"

[137] Doesn't feel that she could experience the wonder in the same way.

[138] Being let into something and realizing she's not such a bad person.

[139] Wonder at feeling that goodness.

[140] Believes there's more to her than she's been told.

[141] Wonder at discussing it.

[142] The wonder contrasts with her normal low self-esteem.

about myself at all.

R: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

P: I can't think of anything now. But boy, if I do think of anything later, I'd really want to share it.

R: Certainly.

P: Great, I don't have to feel this is the end.

Interview II	Meaning Units
R: OK, the research question is to tell me about a experience of wonder which is most striking to you. I'd like you to describe it as fully and in as detailed manner as possible.	
P: Well, I think that [1]the most frightening experience - one of the most frightening experiences I ever had - relates to me personally - it was just recently - which holds together something that I don't totally understand and which I think relates somehow to wonder - and I guess [2]experiences of wonder for me are experiences that are hard to really put into words - grappling with words - language - happened during the break - the vacation - and [3]it happened unexpectedly like all my experiences of wonder - it happened - just sort of happened - the prelude to it was being in the mountains - being with the earth - and then also being with a woman - and it's something that I don't understand why - I care about her very much and vice versa - [4]it was like something that I don't understand - we went hiking in the mountains - and two times during the hiking we sort of stopped - look at the trees and sort of touched each other - in play - and just have kind of a nice time - at one point - we stopped	[1]It was a frightening experience. [2]Experiences of wonder are hard to put into words. [3]It happened unexpectedly. [4]He doesn't understand it.

and we were doing that and we were very close - I could feel - I could feel my body and hers just sort of - [5]connected - [6]it was really an incredible thing - I looked up and there was all these trees around and all these fir trees - and I sort of [7]felt like - like a tree - and like I was a leaning tree - I don't know if that makes any sense - but it was like there was - there was life - and there was a living-experience - [8]and yet I'm still a person but - it was kind of like sparks or something - and I closed my eyes right then and there - [9]my body was speaking at that minute - and then we finished hiking and we went into - [10]there was a little river - and took off our shoes and sort of waded - it was cold - it was snow water coming from the mountains - and we could just sort of wade - we just felt - the sun was high - and there was just an earthy kind of feeling and also we were sort of alone too - like there was people around too - it seemed sort of like [11]we didn't want to be bothered - this whole period of time - anyway we went back to the - to camp and I sat down - and I sort of felt really mellow - let me see I'll try to describe it - [12]I felt sort of very peaceful - yet	[5]Feeling connected. [6]An incredible experience. [7]Felt like a tree. [8]Paradoxically, both a tree and a person. [9]His body was speaking. [10]Description of surroundings. [11]Didn't want to be bothered by other people. [12]Felt peaceful yet extremely alive.

extremely alive at the same time and I remember looking at Mary and [13]all of a sudden I knew I was looking at her like I never looked at anybody in my whole life - and [14]my eyes were sort of just kind of staring at her and the reason that [15]I realized that it was tremendous was that she said to me - what are you doing - and I just said I'm looking at you - and so we just sat there and [16]she sort of watched me look at her - and [17]she was getting kind of uncomfortable and yet also kept saying - what's going on but not really wanting to hear - just letting me - having enough sensitivity [18]to let me experience it - a lot was going on - I didn't realize what - what it was - I was just sort of sitting there - [19]I <u>couldn't</u> <u>move</u> - I didn't want to move - [20]I just wanted to watch - then she got up and she was doing something - she went to lay down - and I was going to do some work around the cabin - and [21]I was just watching her - and then I realized that there was [22]another part of me that was looking at her - a part of me - that sort of had been triggered by the whole physicalness - between us and also the physicalness of the earth - and so I was - [23]I was touching something that wasn't physical

[13]Suddenly, he looked at her in a way he had never looked at anyone else in his life.
[14]Eyes wide staring at her.
[15]Realized that it was "tremendous" because of her question.
[16]She watched him look at her.
[17]She got uncomfortable.
[18]She let him experience it.
[19]He couldn't and didn't want to move.
[20]Just wanted to watch.
[21]Continued watching her.
[22]Another part of him was looking at her.
[23]Paradoxically, touching something non-physical because of the physicalness.

- by touching something that was physical - sounds crazy but I mean it was like [24]with all that physicalness there was something else - and [25]my eyes were sort of the means of - seeing something that I had never seen before and also they weren't seeing anything physical - they were seeing something else - [26]that is just incredibly amazing - I was in awe of it - and [27]it wasn't anything overwhelming - like I don't feel like - like in one of my experiences with wonder - the overwhelming quality - like being immersed - it wasn't something coming from outside in - this was - [28]the experience was like inside out - well reflecting back on that experience of looking at Mary and touching - and I think what [29]I was doing was touching something very deep in myself and her by looking at her that way - I was distant - very distant - [30]very into myself but I was also with her - into her - it was a physical thing but it was - [31]it was something that is just impossible to describe - and afterwards we talked about it 'cause she was sort of freaked out by it - and [32]I knew it made an impact on her - and [33]it made an impact on me - and it lasted I guess for about - [34]well the

[24]Awareness of something other than physicalness.

[25]Eyes were means of seeing something he had never seen before.

[26]He was amazed and in awe of it.

[27]It wasn't overwhelming.

[28]It came from inside of him.

[29]Touching something very deep in himself.

[30]Was with her and into himself.

[31]Impossible to describe.

[32]He knew it had had an impact on her.

[33]It made an impact on him.

[34]It lasted for 10 - 15 minutes.

experience itself for about ten minutes - fifteen minutes at the most - but [35]the after effects of it sort of lingered - and in thinking back on it we sort of - I sort of came to [36]the thing of touching my soul - whi[illegible] is sort of needing - [37]needing somebody to bring that out in me - needing somebody to stir that - stir that up - and then also [38]being open to it happening and not trying to fight it and it did happen - and so [39]I kind of felt like it was one of the few times in my life that there had been such a thing as a soul - that I had touched it - [40]it was like my core - everything that I am sort of all wrapped up there - and it was like it's always there but I rarely touched it - there's no one there to really bring that out in me - and I think because of all the [41]experiences we've had together - that was possible that happened - and I never - [42]I never dreamed it would happen - I never - [43]it was nothing I could have planned - it just happened - I think my eyes - I couldn't see myself - but in a way I could because of Mary's response - which was - what are you doing sort of thing - and I was thinking about like your [44]eyes are the gateway to your soul - in

[35]After effects lingered.

[36]In retrospect, felt like he was touching his soul.

[37]Needed somebody to bring that out in him.

[38]Being open and not fighting it.

[39]Felt like he had a soul.

[40]He had touched his core.

[41]Shared experience made it possible.

[42]Never dreamed it would happen.

[43]Not planned, it just happened.

[44]Felt eyes were gateway to his soul.

talking about it now [45]I can feel the emotion in that - the tremendous power - and sort of at times I - since then - especially with her - I can talk to her about it - I can touch it again [46]right now I can feel it and almost touch it - whatever that is - [47]just maybe it's being around redwood trees that have lived for centuries back to the dinasoar times - the longevity of life - and then also feeling the longevity of me - but also me with somebody else - like the first time I met Mary I knew that I had met her before - I had a feeling that I had met her before - and during this experience though - [48]there wasn't anything really cognitive about it - I didn't think about those things - was just sort of very - was just like living and being alive - and also [49]realizing that my living is because of my physicalness but also is beyond my physicalness - and that I was like I said - those redwood trees - and like those redwood trees [50]I needed the nourishment - to grow like those trees - and the faith that I wouldn't be hit by lightning sort of thing - and the tremendous history of those trees - I mean they could tell tremendous stories - they can talk - and the way they do talk

[45]Can now feel the tremendous power of it.

[46]Can feel and touch that experience right now.

[47]Perhaps the surroundings and being with somebody else brought about this feeling.

[48]Wasn't a cognitive experience.

[49]Realizing that his living is because of, yet also beyond his physicalness.

[50]Needed nourishment to grow.

without talking - so I guess that's the way I felt - I was talking without talking - that I too was sort of like those redwood trees - I was - [51]had been around since the dinosoar times too - and it was something - the other thing was something very primitive - and that relates to my other experience too - [52]it was something that was awakened in me that is really at the roots of being - and that's good too the trees - the birds the roots of living - and at the same time [53]it's both physical and non-physical - so I don't think I could have experienced it without having physical experience - and I couldn't - [54]probably couldn't have that kind of experience in the city - maybe now but I couldn't at that point - I don't think I could have - it was like - it was a pure - [55]purity to the experience - there was just like the basicness of it and [56]all the distractions were away - even the distraction of thinking - because while I was looking at her [57]I couldn't think - and I didn't want to - I didn't even have to fight it - I just didn't want to think about it - [58]it was just happening so I was just sitting there - to describe myself must've looked like just a statue -

[51]Felt he had been around from the beginning of history.

[52]Something primitive was awakened in him.

[53]It's both physical and non-physical.

[54]At that point the surroundings were probably important.

[55]A purity and a basicness to the experience.

[56]No distractions, not even thinking.

[57]Couldn't and didn't want to think.

[58]It just happened.

like a tree - I was just standing there - and [59]there was no movement - I was just looking.

R: This experience in the redwood trees - is that what you were doing, exploring?

P: I guess so - yah I think tha for me I guess [60]I need the physical and that's one of our battles - with Mary and I - between the man and the woman - and Mary is not as physical - physical is there - but her roots are different - I can't explain it - but they're more spiritual - by that I mean more un-physical - and yet they're earthy at the same time but I'm not so sure she needs that physicalness - as much as I do - in our relationship that has been true - and that hasn't been true in all my relationships - but with Mary it's really been true - but the physical always sort of - well it's important but it's not really important.

R: So this was a - at least partly - a very physical experience for you?

P: [61]Yah, her descriptions back to me of the whole - she talks about her roots - and they seem more - they're not as body-oriented - they're more natural even like the way she plants plants - they're earthy but they're not - they're earthy but in a different manner -

[59]Didn't move.

[60]Awareness of need for the physical.

[61]The experience was partly very physical.

see how can I - we tryed to describe this last night and she agrees with me and I think it's the basic difference between - at a very primitive level - the basic difference between man and woman - not that women aren't physical - physical things aren't important - but they're somehow their roots are their basic histories - are different - and they experience those things differently - well it's like I was thinking of Jung in terms of the anima, the soul - and that a woman gives a man his soul - and the man gives the women the body - the body in a very physical human body - where to a woman - the whole earth is the body - it's much more non-generalized - it's more general and the man is more specific - I think that's a good way to put it - but in this experience I really felt that - and that's sort of

R: You really felt what?

P: I felt the - [62]that primitive feeling of being a man - and something that is - is historical

[62]Felt the primitive feeling of being a man.

R: Was that part of the sense of wonder?

P: Yah, especially when I was looking at her - like [63]there was a man in me looking at her it wasn't just a person - something very primitive

[63]There was a man in him that was beyond his specific person.

- and something that seems sort of - well at that time it didn't seem scary but I felt that at some point I'd just sort of [64]have to break myself out of it because it was sort of overwhelming - but [65]I didn't feel overwhelmed while it was happening - [66]it was like again touching the root - the primitive - the man - but I couldn't have done that without the opposite, the female or whatever - she sort of did it by her being and I think it was two people very physical - in the same sense it wouldn't have been the same - like it - [67]these are all very hard things to describe but [68]it's like a different way of viewing things or different ways - and I think basically - different - just very different maybe that's what I was touching - and then I was getting the feeling that - of the trees and what it must have been like to be a man in primitive times looking at woman in primitive times - realizing an attraction but even beyond that - [69]a finding of myself - or finding my soul - and without all the words - [70]there aren't words to describe it - [71]and then she could feel that too - and I think the way she touches me - is her way of really getting in touch with that other side - which sort of at a basic level is different for her - for a woman - I can't speak for the woman's side - I mean

[64]Eventually had to break himself out of it because it was overwhelming.

[65]Not overwhelmed at the time.

[66]Needing the polarity to touch the roots.

[67]Very hard to describe.

[68]A different way of viewing.

[69]Finding himself.

[70]No words to describe it.

[71]She could feel it too.

Mary could do better at that - but just talking to her about it - she could feel what I was trying to describe - what I'm trying to describe to you - and makes sense to her - and so I guess it was like [72]the wonder of exploration - [73]me finding my soul and Mary finding her body and they both end up in the same place - I think [74]the way that she touched me was wondrous for me too - to be touched that way - I guess that [75]by looking at her I was touching her in the same way as she touched me physically - with sort of wonder about it - is this right - will I hurt her by looking at her this way - [76]will something come out of me that I don't want to come out of me a primitive wildness - and I guess those two experiences are somehow very similar one to be gradual with her not hurt her - because if I let that primitive out I felt it was aggressive - almost encapsulating - generally I don't see myself as that way - so it's like [77]I've been touching something and I'm sitting here in awe of it and wonder - and like I said they take me back to what man must have felt in primitive times - maybe when I was alive then - I don't know - I won't go that far - just that the whole connected

R: You say you found yourself unaware initially

[72]The wonder of exploration.

[73]He found his soul and she found her body and both end up in the same place.

[74]Wonder of being touched that way.

[75]The looking was a touching with wonder.

[76]Questioning whether something unwanted will emerge.

[77]In awe and wonder at touching something primitive.

that you were looking at her - could you talk about that sense of finding yourself unaware - the transition from what you were doing previously to that sense of being unaware and the sense of time through that.	
P: Well there was no - I guess it wasn't really - (inaudible) - except like I told you being in the woods - experiencing each other there - but in a way we usually experience each other - [78]normal everyday exciting things but nothing that we were touching on - and then I guess just sitting down after it was all over - and then it just came upon me - being in the cabin - and being alone with her - and then sort of - it just came out guess just being alone - so there [79]it just happens - there wasn't any - didn't say now this is going to happen to me so get ready for it it just started happening - and then [80]I just allowed myself to let it happen - like I said - I felt toward the end that [81]I had sort of cut it off - because it had done what it had to do - I don't know if I can control it beyond that point - [82]I needed to get some distance and then - think about it during the time it was happening - P: Like I said [83]I didn't want to - I didn't - I couldn't think - even if I wanted to - it was	[78]Initially, just normal way of being together. [79]It just happened. [80]Allowed it to happen. [81]At the end he had to cut it off because uncertain whether he could control it. [82]Needed some distance to think. [83]Didn't want to and couldn't think.

just - just happened - also during the time the response I was getting from her - which was, you've never looked at me that way before - what's going on and knowing that [84]I couldn't talk about it - being sensitive to that - I think that's part of it too - was sort of knowing this isn't the time to talk - she just tried to go on as normally as she could - and still looking back at me - intrigued - she sort of looked at me and then she'd go on and do her business - then she'd kinda look back - and [85]I'm just sitting there watching her - and then finally she just went and layed down - I just said when you get through working come and lay down with me - so - and then after she layed down I just sat there and started saying [86]"wow" what's happening - what's going on - in order to - think about it - but up to that point I wasn't and I really wasn't - her responses were - were not very verbal so that helped - [87]you know just the way that she would look at me - the way I was looking at her - that was telling me a lot - sort of (inaudible) me - so that that was helping - not to think about it at that - [88]I think thinking about it would have really wrecked it - just enjoy it and then when it was over we could

[84]Couldn't talk about it.

[85]Continued watching.

[86]Questioning, "wow" what's happening?

[87]Non-verbal communication primarily.

[88]Thinking would have destroyed it.

talk about it - can't think of any way to describe it.

R: How did your body feel during this experience?

P: [89]It felt kind of numb - it didn't feel numb in the woods - but it felt numb - felt just sort of peaceful - a combination of being dead and alive it was like you know - I was touching very primitive things - and I [90]could feel them welling up - and also the peacefulness with it - and sort of just numbed me from both sides - keeping me sort of [91]in tension (inaudible) just sort of holding there - and just watching - and [92]my eyes were doing all the work - I can say my eyes felt aroused - in a sense of they were sort of looking and so in essence my eyes were really - [93]I felt I was all eyes - the rest of my body just felt like - didn't feel anything - I never thought of that before but -

R: Is that also your initial response when you first felt a sense of wonder - it first struck you - it happened to you - was that your initial bodily response?

P: My initial response was - I was all eyes - yah [94]it was just sort of an awesome feeling - and I can't think of any other way to describe

[89]Body felt numb and peaceful.

[90]A welling up and a peacefulness.

[91]In suspended tension.

[92]Eyes were aroused and most important.

[93]He was all eyes - not much awareness of rest of body.

[94]Awesome and peaceful feeling.

it - it was just as I say it was peaceful and yet it was also - something very primitive - but my eyes were the vehicle - the focus was like looking - just staring - [95]I was staring - she said I hardly blinked I was just sort of looking - I didn't even think of blinking or not blinking - I don't remember being uncomfortable - not blinking or anything like that - just - I was just looking - [96]and her uncomfortableness didn't wake me out of it - [97]something inside of me said that's good and just stay with it - don't stop it - go with it - so I just kept looking - I just felt so peaceful - [98]it's the most peaceful I ever felt in my whole life

R: Were you aware of your physical surroundings at all?

P: [99]Yah, the room was sort of dark - sort of getting towards sunset - and things just seemed to get darker - but the surroundings were pretty normal - there was the cabin room - kind of a front room - there wasn't anything extremely wondrous about the surroundings - they were just there - and again that was for the good because like my other experience it was a concert lights and all that stuff you know - which is good too - it was a whole different range of wonder - but

[95]Staring.

[96]Not bothered by her uncomfortableness.

[97]Something inside said "that's good" and stay with it.

[98]Most peaceful he ever felt.

[99]Some awareness of basically normal surroundings.

this was just a normal place - normal people - pretty much - it just happened - there was the mountains - the atmosphere around the cabin and being in the mountains sort of that nature thing lent to it.

R: Can you describe how Mary looked to you?

P: Well [100]I guess it was sort of seeing her for what she is - not in an intellectual way but with my eyes and then sensing that I was seeing her - and like [101]touching her in a way that I'd never touched her before - that kind of feeling - and her being bashful and sort of not knowing what to do with me [102]made it more real - 'cause I knew that I was touching her - she was feeling my - whatever was going on with me - but you know if she had just been sitting around probably would have - I guess I wouldn't have felt that I was touching her - because she seemed uncomfortable too - something was really happening - and the bashfulness - her response - said yah something is going on - [103]it's not just staying inside of me - it's moving over there to her - she said she liked it - she didn't understand it - she didn't know what to do with it - she just kept saying you never looked at me that way - she kept saying that - and I said Mary - this was

[100]Seeing her non-intellectually, for what she is.

[101]Touching her in a totally different way.

[102]Her reaction made it more real.

[103]It touched her - she liked it but didn't understand it.

afterwards - she said you've got to talk to me about it because I've got to know what was happening - and this was - we went to dinner afterwards and it sort of - were talking about it - then I sort of got in focus - [104]it was important to verbalize it at that point - but she knew that something was happening - so I think that her bashfulness and shyness about it was good. Well at the end I was sort of seeing that - I was seeing - now that I think back on it - [105]I was seeing her in all her who she is and then below that and like in myself I was doing the same thing all my primitive feelings and I was feeling like I was sort of sitting - without knowing - [106]without intellectually being able to understand it - just knowing that I was - and I seen that in her too - and the feeling hung over me that (inaudible) - sort of like [107]the more womanly she is, the more manly I am sort of thing - in a primitive sense not in a sort of learning cultural sense - but just something very basic - she was bringing that out of me - and I was bringing that out of her - it was like love - between the two and in some ways they're different and maybe for the first time [108]touching the difference that really deep,

[104]Important to verbalize later.

[105]Seeing her and himself in all that they are.

[106]Not intellectually understanding it.

[107]In a primitive way, the more womanly she was the more manly he was.

[108]For the first time, touching the deep difference between a man and a woman.

deep difference between the two.

R: You said the aftereffects lingered. Could you say something about that?

P: Yeh well I think that after that being together and in love with each other - added a different dimension to it - nothing spectacular - but just a different - guess I [109]felt more connected to her - and then sort of wanting to give to her - [110]wanting more of whatever that is to come out in her and myself too - and I guess [111]that night was one of the best nights we spent together - I just thought about it - I never thought about it - I knew it was good but I think it was one of the best - in terms of just again not knowing that would happen - just going to bed and then it happened - and it seems that the whole thing was just unplanned but it could have been planned - and now I look back - there was nothing - the bells didn't ring - the sun didn't stop - and the light just moved on - it was just - there was [112]nothing earth-shaking - not earthquakes - my body didn't shake or anything - but it was just these - maybe [113]just being aware of life - and then also being aware of someone else there - that brings that out in you - and knowing that [114]beyond all the words

[109]Felt more connected to her and wanting to give.

[110]Wanting more of that primitiveness to come out in him and her.

[111]As a result, that night was one of the best for them.

[112]Nothing earth-shaking.

[113]Being aware of life and someone else.

[114]Something beyond words and thought.

and stuff there's something incredible happening that can't be verbalized or even thought of - and that kind of thing - I mean that just - but that just whole body thing is just incredible - and afterwards - well you know the [115]more I think about it now I realize how incredible the experience was - but at those times - I think if I had done that I would have forced it or tryed to get into it - isn't it beautiful like - but none of that happened - and it was sort of all unconscious because [116]it just was happening - and consciously I knew things were good - I was functioning and things were moving along - I mean consciously just functioning - I was functioning - but I [117]was being pushed below all that - not pushed - but things were coming out - they weren't moving me - in different ways - which made it even more exciting - so that - that experience that evening - and then since then you know - we sort - it's interesting - [118]we sort of still talk about it - both of us can't make heads or tails of it - like right now I'm talking and I'm saying the words sound so ridiculous and [119]you just can't describe this - talking last night to her on the phone, - just incredible trying to talk about it - just could

[115]The more he reflects on it, the more incredible it was.

[116]It just happened.

[117]Consciously functioning, yet unconsciously experiences emerged.

[118]Even now, they still can't understand it.

[119]Just can't describe it.

not find the words - and so I think the [120]lingering effects sort of tell me that I never will understand it and why should I? - [121]I just hope that it comes along a few more times - you know - and sort of [122]appreciating that the body and the physical and the non-thinking kind of aspects which again I think she brought out in me - and it can only be someone like that to do that for me - you know we're all - everything's sort of tied together - so I think the after effects are - are just one, trying to describe it to each other - and [123]getting excited again about it with each other - and also realizing on the other side of that - that [124]we cannot understand it or describe it - that's kind of frustrating - I feel sort of frustrated - because it's like - at some level I'm wondering - am [125]I paying justice to this you know - it's like I guess I felt that same way talking about that other experience too - like it's hard to verbally do justice to what it was - and I'm glad at the same time that it helps to give some sort of consciousness about the fact that it did happen - and I didn't miss it sort of thing - it's one of those experiences I think [126]I could have missed - isn't that incredible - I never thought of this

[120]Aftereffect is that he won't understand it and doesn't need to.

[121]Wants it to happen a few more times.

[122]Appreciating the physical and non-thinking.

[123]When they try to describe it they get excited about it again.

[124]Also frustrating that he can't understand it.

[125]Questions whether he's doing justice to the experience.

[126]Could have missed it.

before - I could have missed the whole thing - never, ever, ever thought of anything about it well I mean - you know I could have looked at her and you know and sort of something - somebody would have visited at that point - I probably would have forgot about it - or if there had been a distraction - maybe I would have just not realized the importance of it - [127]there weren't any distractions - it was very peaceful atmosphere - very peaceful place - nobody else around - I couldn't leave it - it was there - there was no distractions - but I could see other times in my life - I could - maybe I have and that's what I thought too - [128]one of the after-effects - maybe - is that I - maybe I've missed a lot of these experiences - because of all the distractions - thinking too much or - you know just the normal physical distractions of this or that probably - whatever - so I was thinking, God you know this could have happened before and in a different way - different manner - but I missed it - so and also I feel that whatever that was - that soul or whatever - it's still there - and it's always been there - [129]and it can be touched again - but again it's something you can't say - which is to be aware - and to [130]be

[127]No distractions.

[128]Aftereffect is awareness that he has missed similar experiences because of distractions.

[129]Feels it can be touched again.

[130]Can be more open to it.

open to you want to do it - to be a little bit more conscious when things like that do happen but again not too conscious - so I never - never thought about the fact that I could have been in other situations and other environments and completely missed it - and I could have	
R: From what you described it sounds like it was a very positive experience.	
P: [131]Positive, yah - well I think that one level that [132]deepened my understanding of Mary - deepened my understanding of myself - and it brought us closer together - those are pretty positive experiences	[131]Positive experience. [132]Deepened understanding of her and himself and brought them closer.
R: Would it be accurate to use the term healing?	
P: Healing - it's a tough question you know - in some sense - every positive experience is some healing of some deep wounds and I have some deep wounds - in some senses it was - I never thought about it - I don't know in what ways - I feel like it could have been - but I guess I didn't look at it so much as a healing thing - maybe I looked at it [133]more as a returning rather than healing - maybe that's what healing is it's returning to life - what is or the roots - that's a good question - I never put those words on it - what do you mean by healing?	[133]More of a return.

R: Well I don't mean to oppose that - I was

P: I guess I wouldn't on the top of my head look at it as a healing experience - but now that you bring it up - [134]I mean it could be - I could see - I could see where it did sort of close up some wounds

R: Would there be better words to describe it

P: Well I think perhaps primitive - [135]and going back to the roots I guess that maybe that is the - getting back to what is - what the roots are - which could be without all the distractions - without all the stimulus - get's you away from everything. Primitive is the best was to describe it.

R: Seems like we've covered a lot

P: Healing - there is probably that aspect but I haven't thought about it - I guess I look at healing as - there's some sickness so you have to be healed - and that whole experience it didn't remind me of sickness - it's related to the primitive, basic, the return of the experience - and [136]I didn't feel at that point any wounds to be healed - or anything like that

R: You said a couple of times you wanted - sounded like you wanted to go back and have more experiences like this - you sound very affirmative.

[134] Could have been a healing experience.

[135] Primitive returning to the roots away from distractions.

[136] Didn't feel any wounds at that point.

P: [137]Yah, not going back in the sense of trying to recapture that one but just being aware that I could have missed that - and hopefully the next time I'll sort of be there more - I'll never have an experience like that again - but I may have similar kinds of experiences - next time I'll be more [138]aware that those things are there.

R: Seems like we pretty well covered the experience. How do you feel talking about it?

P: Well [139]it's difficult to talk about - I feel sort of worn out - trying to describe it - I felt that way the first time - I feel that way again - I keep thinking - hoping that each time I talk about it - it will become clear - [140]but the reverse is happening each time I talk about it I find there aren't the words to describe it and I feel a little bit frustrated by it - it's just hard to describe - like a worn out frustrated - but by talking about it [141]one good thing is - it's like I can go back and sort of see myself back there - through that whole thing and so - in that sense it's good - you're not there so there is some frustration - that you know like

R: You also got excited about it

[137]Wanting to have similar experiences.

[138]More aware next time.

[139]Difficult and exhausting to talk about it.

[140]Talking makes it less understandable and frustrating.

[141]In talking about it he re-experiences it.

P: Oh, yah - it was kind of [142]exciting in a very kind of unexciting way - just a normal experience - I could probably - maybe have it right now but I could be missing something else I think it would be in a different way - nothing like that but I guess that's what [143]it taught me - and there could be a lot of wonder which I just miss consistently because of all the - driving in the car with the radio on - possibly distracted from everything in some shape or form - getting back to the old redwoods - trees quite nature - you just can't really describe it - nature doesn't let you be distracted - it's too peaceful to be distracted - and you wouldn't want to be - that's probably the most important thing - even though you never could've - so I think with all those factors - it was just in a nice place - myself - just being myself you know - and it happened.

R: I kind of had a similar experience - feel warmed listening to you talk - just kind of a nice experience to hear about.

P: Well, then that's one good reason for talking about it - I may end up frustrated - but other people end up being warmed - the story of my life.

[142]Exciting yet non-exciting.

[143]It taught him that there is much wonder if you eliminate the distractions.

Interview III	Meaning Units
Note: The introduction to the following statements was a detailed discussion of visiting his parents. The specifically relevant experience was as follows:	
P: And then I talked to my mother - I listened to my mother - and I realized it was the first time - and like this was - this wasn't anything that I had wanted to do or thought about doing - [1]it was the first time I ever listed to my mother - and she said - she said what's going to happen when your father dies - because I know he's going to die first - and I knew that what she was asking was - are you going to take care of me like I'm taking care of my mother?- I told her that I certainly would come and do anything I could to help her through the crisis - but not only because of my situation but just because of the kind of things I wanted - I'm not going to take care of her - and I told her - you know - that I'd held her through the crisis - and help her in any way that I could but that I wasn't going to take care of her for a long period of time - and she'd never asked me that before though I'm sure she wondered about it - and they're all the kind of things that I realize I'm up against - all the subtle	[1]First time he ever really listed to his mother.

expectations that I've always had - that I would do that 'cause I was the oldest child and the one that - just sort of the one that was marked by the family - the oldest son - given my father's name - a lot of family traditions - a lot of southern traditions tied up in all of that - and I realized that it I was like she said - you know, you're the son that we can count on and that's always been the way it's been - it was real important for her to hear that I'm not gonna do that - it really felt good - [2]I surprised myself when I said it - and then the next thing that surprised me in talking with her was like I realized - like before I've always been so caught up in thinking - wow, what a - what a shitty life - you're living, you know - and I hate the kind of things that I do that remind me of the kind of things that you do - but this time it wasn't - it wasn't like that - I really - [3]I really realized she's very calm - very lovely - and it's like her life - her life is the way that it is because it's all she knows - you know, she really - she said something else - she said something I don't think she said that I feel lonely - but it was something like that and I realized that yah, she	[2]He surprised himself. [3]Saw his mother really differently.

really does - and it's like her life is her making in a way - but she really has - has had no other options and she'll follow it through - and no, it's not the kind of thing I want - yet - there are parts of it I'm sure that - that she hates and there are probably parts of it that she can accept that much better than I could in her position because she's been brought up to accept them - she's come to expect to accept them after all these years - and the kind of relationship that my mother and my father have with each other - they'll be together forever - I would hope that if I had the same - you know, if I related in the same way to a woman - I hope that I'd have the courage to split after awhile - but they don't want to do that - they really don't - they - like it's really - I know why she's said - it's like she and dad have been arguing and she was a little bit embarassed - she hadn't seen me in a year - and here I come and they're arguing and she turned to me and she said - you know, your father and I fight a lot and we like it - and I thought she does - it's like - it's like it's safe for them - and it's the way that they're used to relating - it's what they have and it's all they have - and it

was like it's - it was a whole different perspective of my mother - suddenly she - she was no longer the - this woman that was angry and pounded pillows in therapy about - it was like - [4]it was like she was another person	[4]She was like another person.
R: How did that feel for you when you realized that?	
P: Well, it was like -	
R: Was that a moment of wonder for you?	
P: [5]Yah, yah.	[5]The realization was a moment of wonder.
R: And what did that feel like?	
P: [6]It was like a real release - yah, like just in that one sort of moment - and I had the experience of like - like I realized this - even now [7]it's difficult to put parts of it into words - it's like I realized that - it's like the words begin to come later - like, but [8]the realization was sort of preverbal and it was like - was like there was a distance - like I was - like I was listening and I was watching my mother and I was watching myself with her - in, in a way - yah, it was like - not a distance that's - not a distance that separates people - [9]but a distance that gives perspective that let me be closer - yah, [10]it was like a different perspective - it was like - was like a quantum jump - like just a	[6]It was a real release. [7]Difficult to describe. [8]The realization was preverbal. [9]A distance that gives perspective. [10]A very different perspective that occurred in just a moment.

whole shift - but it happened in just a moment.	
R: The world shifted?	
P: Yah,	
R: What did that feel like?	
P: Well, my world or [11]my relation to my mother shifted - there was no - you know, like I didn't see it coming - there was [12]no warning - so like there was no preparation involved - there was no anxiety about it involved - it was like things were going along and then it happened - and then it was a different - was [13]a good feeling - was a light, lighter feeling - wasn't as burdened - here before [14]I had been an angry child talking to his sick mother and now it was two people - wow - it's hard to put into words and I - [15]I can still feel you know like what it's like - I don't know - wow - don't know much to say - [16]it was quick - [17]I was surprised - I felt very - [18]it was very pleasant kind of feeling - very mellow - very mellow	[11]Relationship to mother shifted. [12]No warning. [13]Felt good and unburdened. [14]Shift from angry child and sick mother to just two people. [15]Can still feel it. [16]It was quick. [17]Surprised. [18]Very pleasant and mellow.
R: How did your body feel?	
P: [19]Much more relaxed - much more relaxed - and [20]I realized my relation with my mother would never be quite the same again.	[19]Body felt relaxed. [20]Realized that relationship would be forever different.
R: How did she look to you at that moment?	
P: [21]I realized at that moment that I never - you know really looked at her before - you know	[21]Realized that he had never really looked at her before.

and then all of a sudden here was - here was a woman - a very scared woman - very lonely - and [22]I never saw that in my mother before - I never associated that with my mother - not really - here was - here was - it was [23]like here was another human - I never saw her for that before - she was never another person - she's my mother - I never really saw this scaredness - the loneliness - they a - yah, yah I love her - I started to say - I didn't feel pity for her - it [24]was more of an understanding - but understanding implies words and there weren't words - it was like - like an empathy - like all of a sudden I knew what - what her life was like and where she was coming from in a way that I have not before - after that I took a long walk - [25]just decided just to walk and let things settle a little - all that was - I was mauling over in my head and my talk with my grandmother - just all the things that had happened going back to the - to the old times - it's like [26]I realized that - that it would take time before it would all come together and all be sort of integrated or - it was like I was on - on edge in a way.

R: You were feeling unintegrated?

[22]First time he saw this.

[23]She was like a different person to him.

[24]A non-verbal understanding.

[25]Walk helped to settle things.

[26]Realized it would take time to integrate.

P: [27]Yah, yah, yah exactly, and I took a long walk and - and [28]decided not to try to think through the things - or try to put words to them or think through them analytically what had happened or my reactions to them - but just to walk and see what happened as I walked - I guess that wasn't something I planned either but it was like - was like just a sense - that like it would take time for things to kind of settle down like - like mud and leaves in a stream - toward the bottom just takes time - like [29]I could feel it settling in my stomach	[27]Feeling unintegrated. [28]Avoided thinking, analyzing or verbalizing. [29]Could feel it settling in his stomach.
R: So previously it felt very unsettled?	
P: At the moment that I realized a new relationship with my mother - it wasn't - wasn't unsettling - I didn't feel edgy - like it was just - it was like - how the picture that - that I've got now it's like two plates - not dinner plates but like maybe geological plates or something - plates of land or something - two land plates slipping along side of each other like in an earthquake and [30]suddenly they found - the right spot.	[30]Suddenly felt in the right spot with his mother.
R: So you felt like you found the right spot with your mother?	
P: Yah, it's like - like just all of a sudden	

the two plates had been running against each other - then all of a sudden there was the spot - it's like the spot has a very short time continuum - very short time span - then they're interlocked - yah, they're interlocked and its different from there on - and then [31]my walk was a getting used to the - to the different way that the land was - yah, that's what I - I meant by a feeling of - not integrating - afterwards - was actually a feeling of unfamiliarity - not being used to - to what had happened or just to the way things suddenly were - and then I knew that - that it would just take time - and that [32]the intensity of the experience would - would diminish in its province - but [33]that that change would continue - and that over a long period of time I would get more and more used to - to where the plates now fitted together - as I become used to where the plates fit together - at some point when I least expect it probably - there will be another shift - yah, and when I think back I realize so much of my life has been like this - sometimes there are three or four earthquakes in a row - sometimes its months before there's any kind of shift - sometimes there's a lot of - lot of depression - a lot of pain - before things	[31]The walk was a way of getting used to what had happened. [32]The intensity would diminish eventually. [33]Change would continue.

shift - sometimes like this time [34]it's just a total surprise - and [35]it left me with a very sad mellow feeling but it's a good feeling - it was like - it was like [36]I knew that on many fronts - on many fronts things would never be the same - there was a change - and there was some [37]sadness and I - but also some excitement - was just [38]really realizing what Thomas Wolfe said - you can never go home again - and knowing that there was no need to go - its different now - I left the walk feeling much more mellow - being outside - being with trees - the sky - it was just a - just a good way for me to let things out - I think the experience of my grandmother and my mother - [39]the rest of the setting is still going on

R: When you felt the shift where the plates came together - your mother and you came together - you spoke about being both sad and excited - was that felt in your body - was there anything specific you noticed about your body?

P: Okay right at the moment?

R: Right at the moment, yes.

P: Yah, now that I think about it, I didn't think about it at the time - it was like a - [40]almost like being out of my body - yet still

[34]It was a total surprise.

[35]Left him with sad, mellow, yet good feeling.

[36]Realized that changes were on many fronts.

[37]Sadness but excitement.

[38]Realized that it would never be the same.

[39]The settling is still going on.

[40]Paradoxically in and out of his body.

in my body - [41]a lightness in a way but - it's really hard to put words to it - [42]like watching myself - like realizing what was going on and at the same time taking part of it - taking part in it - and [43]my body being more relaxed and my body letting - just letting things flow - my body able to watch - there really not words that fit - [44]a transcendence in a way and a relapse - [45]it was a good feeling - it was like grinding for so long and then all of a sudden things are as they should be in this area - it's very much like - like being tense in some part of your body or your whole body - almost a subliminal tension - [46]just a quick release - so yah	[41]Felt a lightness. [42]Watching himself yet taking part. [43]Relaxed body letting things flow. [44]A transcendence. [45]Good feeling. [46]A quick release after much tension.
R: You spoke of your mother's - being aware of your mother's feelings of anger and frustration in her life - was there anything you were aware of - looking at her physically - did you notice anything especially?	
P: Yah, it was like it's sort of a pucker - and she - she turned - like she was facing me - she turned sort of to the side right at that moment - it wasn't experienced as a - a - now we can be close - it wasn't experienced like that - it was experienced as a now - strangers passing in the night - was like [47]there was a choice - a lot	[47]Awareness of choice because of mother's appearance.

closer to my mother - she'd always - she'd always say I love you - there'd be a question mark at the end - do you love me to? - I used to hate that - it was like at that moment there was a choice - or the realization that I'm able to choose - I don't know what she experienced - she looked sad and scared to me - and yet I don't think it was a bad experience at all for her I'm sure it wasn't because I think for once she knew what she was doing - and [48]she must have sensed that something was different with me - like after the plates slip for me they get, as time goes by - like a fissure, covered with vines and grasses and - so that I would imagine that - if I go to visit my mother my expectations is that I probably still get angry at her - some of the [49]old feelings will come up - and yet that new place will always be there too

R: What was your awareness of time during this experience?

P: Wow, wow, it was almost like [50]time didn't have anything to do with it - almost like - like time stopped - like it stopped for the moment - I just thought of the cliche - timeless moment - but in a very real sense it's like it really didn't have anything to do with time - it was

[48]Other person senses difference.

[49]Old feelings will arise but new ones too.

[50]Time stopped.

like it was out of time - it's hard to make sense with it - it's hard to put it to words

R: What about your surroundings - was there any awareness of your surroundings at the time?

P: [51]Not so much really - we were sitting on the couch - I think my father might have been sitting across the room - there wasn't much awareness of that - [52]most of my awareness was on my mother and on myself - between the two of us - seeing her sitting there and turning like I told you - and she was kind of leaning over this coffee table - it was like the focus was - was like on the two of us - between us.

R: Is there anything else about this experience it would be helpful to talk about?

P: No, except it seems very - to me - [53]it's unique and yet it's common - I think my life changes - not usually in this big of a slippage - but in many smaller ways similar kind of experiences, similar kinds of feelings - and yet that doesn't have anything to do with surprise each time - doesn't have anything to do with the uniqueness of it each time - but it's like the fact that it happens like this for me - just the whole uneven process is common.

R: So it felt both very unique and very common?

[51]Not much awareness of surroundings.

[52]Mostly aware of mother and himself.

[53]Seems unique yet common.

P: Exactly, and [54]this was a much larger slippage than usual.

R: How does it feel to talk about it?

P: [55]I feel comfortable talking about it - it's a [56]struggle to find words because I can't find the words to fit what it is that I want to say - and I've enjoyed it because of the things you asked - you asked some things that I haven't thought about - it's like a lot of those things are there but still part of the non-verbal part of the experience - it's like as time goes on part of that getting used to the surroundings for me - is to be able to put it into verbal terms for people - its all part of getting used to the surroundings.

R: Is there anything else you want to add?

P: No, I don't think so.

[54]This was a much bigger change than usual.

[55]Feels comfortable talking about it.

[56]Hard to find right words.

Interview IV	Meaning Units
P: The one that struck me just as you were talking except that generally I talk about camping - that really struck me was a fifteen mile river trip I took about two years ago - with a club - it culminated a season of river running - and this was the most advanced river I'd ever done - and one that ran behind my house - so that I had watched it for ten years - and had never been able to go on it because it was too - too difficult and I didn't have the skills - and so [1]I was kind of finally ready - and went down I was in my kayak - and the river was - it wasn't in flood stage but it was in high water - because it had rained - so it was even more powerful that I anticipated - there was real fear and excitement - so I remember specifically that I had made part - of the trip - but I had made it by myself - it's what's called class II rapids but it's not really - it's kind of a beginning rapids which aren't really that difficult - which I could handle - and then as you get down towards a bend in the river you turn and all of a sudden within forty or fifty yards it's just really tumultuous I remember going with the group and my wife was stopped at	[1]After much anticipation finally going to run the river.

that point because she felt this part was too difficult for her - so there were I guess two or three canoes or so - and I was bringing up the rear which is always kind of exciting because there's no one to pick me up if I go - I was kind of the sweep boy - the rescuer - I remember just immediately hitting these big waves and kind of being thrown - and I'd never been in anything so difficult before - and it was just sort of [2]an all-absorbing sort of challenge - water breaking over my boat - fighting with my paddle - and almost tipping over and it was just a [3]real excitement of whether or not I could handle this and also a real fear and real excitement that [4]I was doing something I hadn't done before [5]pushing my body in terms of - my skills and this went on for maybe a mile - just fighting this and gradually I kind of adjusted to it and saw that I was really [6]making it - was kind of a real high experience I was really feeling on top of the world. Very rarely for me do I get [7]that totally involved - usually I'm hanging back and observing what's going on with myself - it's hard for me to be fully involved - in my entirety and I really feel that this is just so furious that it kind of forces you to get	[2]All-absorbing challenge. [3]Excitement and fear of challenge. [4]Doing something he hadn't done before. [5]Pushing his bodily skills. [6]A real high to accomplish it. [7]Totally involved.

into it - you would really kind of have to get out of it - and it's really good for people like me - it's good for anyone - but I think particularly for me - I can go back - generally as the trip went on I just got more confident and at first I was kind of avoiding difficult spots - like I'd try to take the easy way because I wasn't sure of myself and after a while I just got confident and was like going right at - this river - there's like a lot of big waves and fast currents and it was maybe 50 feet or 75 feet wide - and there were often kind of rocks - little drops - you could kind of take the easy way and go through where most of the water went - you could try to cut in between the rocks or drops - the danger with that is if you didn't cut right you would smash against a rock - so the first part of the trip I was avoiding the rocks and after awhile just heading toward them kind of cutting in and out - going over drops and really getting confident in the boat - so [8]I remembered that sort of phychological high - emotional high - its a very pretty kind of wilderness setting - there's no one around just the birds and wildlife and it's very pretty - I also remember it was in the first part of

[8]A psychological high.

June - so it was warm - foilage was out - and I remember the water was very cold - we had to wear wetsuits because it was from melting snow - water washing over the boat hitting me in the face - if you get sweaty you just stick your arm over the boat and the water comes up your wetsuit - then I remember at one point we came down to a very difficult drop - I think it was most difficult one in this part of the river - and one of the canoes didn't make it - went over broadside and bent around a rock - the guys went swimming down - so I came down and I saw them and I cut around some rocks and made it safely - so we had to get out and spend about a half an hour getting their canoe out of the rocks - luckily it was a waterlux canoe which is a rubbery kind of material and once you get it off the rock it snaps back into shape - but another thing [9]I guess that was significant - I had kind of taken the role of rescuer in the club because I was the only one in a kayak and I was wearing a wetsuit so I'd always be the one who would go pull the canoes off the rocks and stuff like that and that was kind of [10]exciting - and then I just stopped for lunch there - kind of continued on for two more miles in a fairly easy

[9]Significant that he was the rescuer.

[10]Exciting.

section of river and then there was this guy leading us - kind of older man - who was in some way not very responsible - a big thing on these canoe trips is safety and not going into places where certain members can't go - he just barged in - we came to a dam on the other side of the dam very difficult kind of rapids - high water level - just kind of dragged his boat and went on - some people didn't go so I decided what the hell - we took kind of a chickens route on the right hand side because the water was just too strong and even that was only about three feet wide it was only a little channel - and even that was like real fast and furious - and then we went down - it was - that point in my life was the fastest water I'd even been in - I was just [11]reflexes - water was busting around me and I came around a corner and the canoe tipped over again and I kind of dodged them and quickly was able to get over to the side - and got them out again - I just remembered that as [12]being incredibly fulfilling experience in terms of drama and excitement - you're always on the edge of tipping and not tipping and mastering and it's just really an incredibly exciting experience

R: Is this the experience of wonder for you? You said it was like a psychological high - can

[11]Just reflexes.

[12]Incredibly fulfilling and exciting.

you describe what that is for you and how you felt?

P: I don't know - I think a [13]feeling of intense stimulation - [14]real just happiness [15]bracketing anxiety - just kind of told myself - [16]kind of charge - throughout my body - [17]very physical. It was really great. Really great - really like a total lightness - [18]I really felt kind of tuned and sharpened - cold water and - [19]intensely aware of everything - and people - [20]just very outgoing with people - and [21]no kind of fear - really a [22]feeling of totalness a real merging kind of with nature - and the water - it really feels as the waters breaking over your boat and everything - you're really kind of in it - really kind of high - and the people on the trip really enjoy the experience - somewhat like skiing all day then driving home in your car - and it's like you're still skiing - I used to drive home down from the mountains and it was like going over the hills - the feeling of skiing for six hours doesn't leave you - it's like it's still in your system even though you're not on a hill - [23]it's like when you get out of your boat - the feeling of the water stays with you for awhile it's like it must be like taking

[13]Feeling intense stimulation.
[14]Happiness.
[15]No anxiety.
[16]A charge throughout his body.
[17]Very physical.
[18]Felt tuned.
[19]Intensely aware of everything.
[20]Very outgoing with people.
[21]No fear.
[22]A feeling of total merging with nature.
[23]Felt high afterwards too.

some drug or something -	
R: You said you had a certain merging with the water and	
P: Right - yah, I really feel it's a - you're in the water - the water's busting over you - it's cold it's really - you know you use the water and in kayaking can really use the currents to turn on - the whole thing is why it's not a strength sport - you have to coordinate and use the currents to turn so it's really you have to - and not be afraid of it - but kind of use it to your advantage -	
R: So you felt very sure of yourself and also felt high.	
P: [24]Right - and I remember just kind of sunshine - I remember that rivers often go in - because they have cut down and go into valleys - and I remember in this one part of the river if you looked to either side you were kind of down - trees and stuff and you looked up and saw the blue sky - and I really remember that it was like going through a corridor - I remember really being surrounded by trees and sky and the water - and [25]I really felt powerful - and then there's a feeling that you are doing something that's masterful - that you respect - for ten years I watched this river - I read about	[24]Felt confident and high. [25]Felt powerful and masterful in these surroundings.

it - it was written up in all the journals as the classic kind of boat trip - the club wouldn't let you go on it until you reached a certain level of expertise so this was something that was very appealing - it's the water and you and it's kind of real - so I really kind of respected the challenge and doing [26]it was really important to me

R: Sort of breakthrough for you?

P: [27]It was a real breakthrough, right - now it might not be the same because I've gone on harder rivers and then it was like just a total thing and it really fitted into what I wanted to do at the time - it combined qualities that I thought were important - I very much kind of remember part of the experience being - [28]at first being very frightening - just having to fight all the time gradually though becoming accustomed to it - and [29]seeking out the challenges themselves rather than and getting more control over my boat.

R: You mentioned merging several times - what did that - can you describe that a little more fully - like what did that feel for you when you saw the sky and the trees - how did you experience it bodily?

[26]Very important to him.

[27]It was a breakthrough.

[28]At first, very frightened.

[29]Later seeking out challenges.

P: I think the sky is filling up - [30]a feeling of wholeness - kind of intense - [31]joyous - not an intellectual - it was an emotional experience and I remember just [32]feeling there was nothing else in the world I wanted to be doing more than this at that time - just enjoying myself - I was really [33]fulfilling myself - that thought often hit me - this is really what I wanted to be doing - it felt great and I really felt - and I think this is another important thing - [34]it was really an individual experience - though I was with these other people and I often did this - my wife joined us at various points in the trip - but I really felt good about being with the people that I really felt good about - myself being there in my own boat - I think the intensity of the experience - individually I was not aware of that part - I remember seeing the trees and the sky and the water and the rapids that was very much there and it was very pretty - this was in New Hampshire - and the water was just ice cold - riding my boat [35]I felt kind of oneness with the whole environment - climbed all the mountains many times hiked up there to this pool and I'd canoed parts of this river - this river flows down through the mountains down into

[30]An intense feeling of wholeness.
[31]A non-intellectual joyousness.
[32]Feeling there was nothing else he wanted to do.
[33]Fulfilling himself.
[34]Was a very individual experience.
[35]Felt at one with the environment.

the Connecticut river which flows down to the ocean - one of my thoughts is that I'd like to make the whole trip portage certain towns -	
R: During this experience what was your sense of time?	
P: [36]I wasn't even thinking in terms of time - everything was just going on - it was like a continuous roller coaster - [37]time was suspended - I was unaware of it - I didn't even want to stop - they wanted to stop and I wanted to keep going a couple of more miles and I couldn't get anyone else to go with me - and I didn't want it to end and we had gone fifteen miles - it was just a very long trip for this kind of activity - very exhausting - though I'm in good shape - [38]I was very - really tired but I just didn't want to stop. I wanted to continue because I was so high.	[36]Wasn't aware of time. [37]Time was suspended. [38]Physically tired but wanted to go on because he was so high.
R: What did your body feel like?	
P: What I remember most is [39]fullness and tingling sensation and real kind of joyous - occasionally I think I would just yell - I feel it skiing sometimes - skiing with a bunch of people - often I start yelling - it's really kind of tingling - I keep saying that - [40]excitement - it's something I wanted to do for a long time -	[39]Feeling a fullness, a tingling and a joy. [40]Exciting.

I could handle it - and it was so much fun - I spent two years preparing for it - and I was really much higher than other people on the trip - you go through these stretches - this is another part of the experience - and then you hit fast moving flat water in which you just sit - I remember sitting and I had my head down resting and let the water kind of just push me along and I kind of looked to either side of me - occasionally throw my paddle out just swing around - go over the rocks backwards - [41]these were times of just kind of calmness and tiredness and real warm feeling like relaxed kind of letting the sun beat down on me and the water dripping off your face - I was enjoying the summer - just the kind of real relaxed - you know you've gone through some hard stuff - there's more hard stuff ahead so you're kind of getting ready for it - [42]a real peace - that's also a kind of intensity - those times you can almost enjoy the scenery - relaxed kind of [43]tranquility - a real inner experience - I wanted to do it again the next day - the club didn't want to - they wanted to go to a different river so we did - it's something I think back to a lot - I was going to write an article about it

[41]Times of calmness and tiredness and relaxation.

[42]Peaceful, yet intense.

[43]A tranquil inner experience.

submit it to a magazine but at that time unfortunately, I just didn't feel like writing - I didn't have enough confidence in myself - I didn't feel I knew enough kayak lingo - or didn't have enough experience to put it into perspective - it's interesting - I own this house on the river - I put it up for sale before coming out here and when it was almost ready to sell I couldn't do it - where else can you get a house that has a river - 30 ft from my back door is a class II rapid - that trip was part of that it was such a beautiful experience I decided I'd keep the house - there's no question that I want to go back to that river - I want to do it alone this time - I guess the immediate [44]aftereffects were feeling extremely good about things - very at home with people - feeling after leaving that and going back to Boston - [45]a certain dissatisfaction with not being able to share it - my wife was at that time particularly afraid of all this for her it was always something a good part of her didn't want to do - and she didn't want to talk about it so much - was always the feeling of -

R: It sort of needed to be shared.

P. [46]Yah, it's funny, the turning point with my

[44]Aftereffect of feeling extremely good, and very at home with people.

[45]Dissatisfaction with not being able to share it.

[46]It needed to be shared.

present therapist was when we spent a whole session talking about kayaking. I felt the trip was a turning point because [47]it expressed a healthy, productive side of me - creative, a turned-on side. It made me feel comfortable. That trip was just before I came out here to California - so it was sort of a finale for my relationship with Northern New Hampshire. So it had many meanings for me. I guess that's all I can say.

R: There's nothing else you want to say about this experience?

P: No, I think that's it.

R: How do you feel about this interview?

P: Well, I feel very good. It makes me feel good. [48]I feel kind of alive just talking about it - so it brings it back.

[47]It expressed a healthy, productive, creative, turned-on side of him.

[48]Feeling alive in recounting the experience.

Chapter 5

RESULTS

Explication

The following section contains an expanded explication of the dimensions of wonder which emerged from the interviews. I will try to contextualize these dimensions within a larger human and psychological framework. I will look at each dimension more or less in the sequence in which it chronologically appeared for most of the persons in this study. This sequence seems to be fairly clear and consistent for the beginning and the ending of the experience. The middle part of the experience seemed to have no strictly consistent sequence of events. However they all tended to contain most of the same constituents.

Looking at the "separate" dimensions is experientially unfaithful to how the experience occurs. Yet, this is true of all descriptions of the flow of human experience. It must be remembered that every aspect that is to be mentioned is of course intimately interwoven with other dimensions of the experience. However, I needed to separate them for the sake of clarity and exposition. In fact it was very clear in looking at the experience of wonder that the various dimensions flowed into each other. Our labels of various aspects are convenient categories of linguistic communication. However they give the illusion of a separateness from other aspects and other emotions which is not experientially true.

The same problem occurs when we speak of emotions such as anger, anxiety, happiness, etc., as if they were totally separate from each other. The linguistic labels we give to these emotions are but convenient ways to speak about that which is far more complex and interwoven with other emotions than the specific label indicates.

Before I go into the specific dimensions of the experience, I need to mention that this explication focuses primarily on the content of the interviews, that is, the actual words used by the interviewees. However, this is somewhat problematic because much is lost from the human communicative process when we only listen to a tape of a dialogue (as opposed to being present to the dialogue), and when that tape is transcribed into print. In the first case, in listening to the tapes, and sometimes in the very dialogue itself I was acutely aware of how much more was being communicated to me through non-verbal modes, especially hand and facial gestures. There is no real way to adequately capture, in the transcribed tapes, the excitement or the depth of feeling that was communicated by a facial expression or a body gesture.

Furthermore, in looking over the transcriptions, I became aware of how the words alone failed to communicate the quality of voice which was apparent during the dialogue. There is no adequate way in which a reader can sense, for example, the truly reverential tone with which some respondents in this study spoke, when discussing their wonderment at some experience. Nor do the words alone truly communicate the excitement and wonder which was so present in the speaking of the respondents in this study.

Ground of normal experience. The first dimension that emerged though perhaps an obvious one, is that the experience of wonder arises out of a

ground of taken-for-granted ordinary daily experience. This is, the interviewees all mentioned that they were involved in ordinary activities in which they did not expect to have an experience of wonder. The flow of their experience was such as to rule out anything extraordinary happining.

This is by no means an unimportant aspect of the experience. As the Gestalt psychologists have shown us (Kohler, 1947) a thematic experience always arises out a non-thematic ground. Giorgi (1971) also addresses himself to the issue of ground or context;

> Whenever a phenomenon appears, it always appears within a certain horizon or context, and the horizon that implicitly is given with the phenomenon is not irrelevant for the understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary the horizon is essential for the understanding of the phenomenon because the role that the phenomenon plays within the context, even if it is only implicitly recognized, is one of the determiners of the meaning of the phenomenon (Gurwitsch, 1964). The implication of this fact for research on human phenomena is that a phenomenon cannot be studied by abstracting it from the context in which it appears, and still have the same phenomenon (pp. 21-22).

Mundane reality does not hold forth, in any explicit manner, the promise of anything like a wondrous experience occurring. Rather, the stream of consciousness of the person was focused on accomplishing the task at hand in a matter of fact manner.

However, this rather mundane context for the wondrous experience points out the interpenetrating quality of ordinary experience and the experience of wonder. It is likely that each needs the other. There is a dialectical relationship between mundane experience and the wondrous experience. We cannot live in an incessant state of wonder, as Maslow (1968) points out concerning his findings with peak-experiences. We need the ground of mundane experience in order for a wondrous experience

to emerge, but we also need to return to this more mundane reality. The wondrous experience is often so powerful that the interviewees spoke of the need to return to a normal state of consciousness and ordinary activities in order to allow them an opportunity to integrate the wondrous experience.

Ordinary experience is almost literally the ground of experience which gives security and stability and allows a person to be present to a wondrous experience. It is as if we can more freely explore the dizzying heights of a wondrous experience if we know that we can once again place our feet on the ground of stable mundane reality.

Unexpected. Related to the first aspect, yet significantly different from it, was the fact that for all the respondents the experience was completely unexpected. As one person simply put it; "... it happened unexpectedly." In the cases described in this research, the respondents mentioned that they did not feel that in any manner were they primed for or expecting a wondrous experience to occur. Their expectation was that what they were doing would continue to be experienced in their taken-for-granted way of being. They were busily going about their ordinary state of affairs when all of a sudden, either "internally" or "externally" something happened which pulled them out of their ordinary world. The ordinary state of affairs is somehow shattered. The world where this person usually experiences him/herself as being-at-home, is suddenly left behind. The person is thrust into a new world. I refer to the person's "world" as changing because it appears that it is not just one aspect of the person's living which is transformed, but rather his/her entire being-in-the-world is transformed.

This finding is especially interesting when one considers the psychological concept of "mind-set", through which a person tends to perceive or experience what they expect to occur. There seems to be a certain psychological inertia involved in most human experience. However, in the wondrous experience the person is not in a "set" to experience wonder and is therefore struck all the more because it occurs unexpectedly.

The "object" of wonder. The "object" of wonder, that is, that-in-the-face-of-which the person experiences wonder, may be virtually anything. It may be a person, a thing, a place, an event. It may be an "external" event or a fantasy or imagined experience. The possibilities of experiencing "something" as full-of-wonder are virtually limitless. It may be something very ordinary and familiar which may have been experienced thousands of times or something literally never seen before. If it does happen to be something which has been experienced many times before, there is something about the interaction of the person, the object, and the situation which calls forth a totally new response to the object of wonder. The object or some facet of it, is seen as if for the first time. There is a sense of amazement that this exists at all.

Because of the limited number of interviews and the singular nature of the research question, it could not be determined whether there are definite situations which consistently trigger an experience of wonder either in any one person or consistently among most humans. A highly tentative statement can be made more from my preliminary conversations with the interviewees rather than from the interview proper. It seems that there are certain situations, such as going around the bend of a road and being wonder-struck at the presence of a breathtaking view, which consistently affect certain people. This seems to refer to a

certain openness on their part to this experience.

On the other hand, a very definite finding of this research is that any object, situation, or person, may be a "trigger" for experiencing a sense of wonder. The object, per se, does not seem to be critical, but rather the manner in which this object is experienced.

Radical otherness. Another dimension of the object of wonder, is the person's acute awareness of perceiving something (someone, etc.) as radically other and separate from him/herself. There seems to be a shattering of conceptual categories which had previously encapsulated this object. The person seems to be seeing it in its own uniqueness rather than as some aspect of this person's world. In Buber's language (1958) it becomes a "Thou" for the person perceiving this object. The awareness of the uniqueness and separateness is not an alienating experience but is rather the unifying experience of the I-Thou relationship.

Fascination. Another component of this unique experience is that the person is virtually mesmerized by the wondrous object or situation. One respondent described this as; "I couldn't take my eyes off it. I couldn't leave it ... It wouldn't allow me to ignore it." The person is totally involved and focused on this one "perception" and everything else becomes peripheral.

In their fascination with what they are perceiving, it seems that new facets are continually shown to them. This sounds strikingly similar to Maslow's (1968) description of Being-cognition. That is:

> One difference between B-cognition and average cognition which is now emerging in my studies, but of which I am as yet uncertain, is that repeated B-cognizing seems to make the perception richer. The repeated, fascinated, experiencing of a face that we love or a painting that

> we admire makes us like it more, and permits us to see more and more of it in various senses (p. 77).

Being-taken. One of the most striking findings is that all the participants in this study spoke of how the experience happened to them. All the persons in this study reported that while engaged in ordinary activities, they were somehow "t[illegible]ken" out of their everyday world and thrust into a different world. The contrast between their ordinary experience and the experience of wonder is apparent. In their ordinary experience the person feels in control of what s/he perceives and does. In the experience of wonder, the respondents consistently mentioned that they were taken out of their ordinary experience. It was not something that they chose to do. It was something that happened to them. It is as if the object of wonder seemed to have a power of its own over the person. It is not absolutely clear in the description whether the person could have resisted this "call". As one person described it; "My own experience was so compelling." At least with the persons I spoke to, there was no thought of resistance. Rather than a thoughtful response, there seems to have been an entire bodily response to the "call".

It cannot be emphasized enough that one of the most significant dimensions of the experience of wonder is that the person does not control what happens, but rather the experience happens to the person. The person is more passive and receptive. He allows the experience to take its own course aside from any intention or control on his/her part. One respondent summarized this feeling as follows:

> And I'm not as much in control as I thought I was. There are other things happening that I can't say that I did it but rather that it happened to me. That's scary in some ways but its kind of neat in others.

Another interviewee succinctly stated; "I never dreamed it would happen - I never - it was nothing I could have planned - it just happened."

Powerful impact. An essential initial component of the experience of wonder tends (though obviously not always) to have a powerful impact on the person. This was most frequently experienced at the onset of wonder. As one respondent put it, "It was a jolt. It shook me. It really did. It reached out and grabbed me."

This sort of experience does not allow itself to be ignored and passed over. Again, it is as if the experience "seizes" the person out of his/her ordinary consciousness. The same person cited above spoke of being open-mouthed. It is literally something which takes away our breath because of its impact. Our ordinary flow of give and take with the world around us is temporarily disrupted. It almost literally shakes the person out of his/her ordinary way of being-in-the-world.

Openness. Most of the respondents mentioned that there was some peripheral conscious awareness of allowing the experience to unfold. I describe it as peripheral, because it did not seem to be a real focus for the person. Usually, it was mentioned in retrospect, rather than being consciously aware of it at the time. There was some awareness that they could have closed themselves off to the experience if they had wanted to, but no one actually desired to do so. As one person stated, it was allowing himself to be "open to it happening and not trying to fight it." Many of the interviewees mentioned that they have probably missed similar experiences because they did not allow themselves to be open to the wondrous possibilities of these experiences. They seemed resolved to try to be more open to such experiences in the future.

Overwhelming. Related to the above, but also a distinctly separate component, was the sense of virtually being overwhelmed by the wondrous. The "powerful impact" was consistently felt at the onset of wonder whereas the sense of being overwhelmed was usually experienced nearer the end of the experience. It is as if the ego or the person's sense of self was unable to integrate the radical powerfulness of the experience. It is an awareness of how powerless the individual is in relation to the power-fullness of the wondrous. It appears to be a recognition of something larger than this individual person. There is also an awareness of the vastness of this world compared to his/her being. The individual is truly small in comparison. The individual and the ego virtually are dissolved in the vastness of the experience.

Ineffable. All of the participants in this study mentioned that they were unable to truly describe what they experienced. This might seem paradoxical since they all spent over an hour talking about their experiences. However, they seemed to be saying that though words could point to the experience, there were no words to accurately capture the experience. As one person said; "... that beyond all the words and stuff there's something incredible happening that can't be verbalized or even thought of." Words fail at this point. The experience of wonder is sonehow beyond language. DeRopp (1968) alludes to this kind of experience when he states "... and speech had to be content to wheel in circles around the bare fact (p. 33)."

Non-cognitive. The respondents in this research consistently mentioned that the experience of wonder cuts across intellectualism. As one person stated "There really wasn't anything cognitive about it. I didn't think about those things." or as he stated later "... I couldn't think and I didn't want to. I didn't even have to fight it. I just didn't want to

think about it." It was more of a holistic non-cognitive response. There was no attempt to conceptually analyze the experience while it was occurring. In fact, the analytic consciousness of these persons seems to have been suspended during the duration of the experience. There seems to have been a simple non-critical presence to the unfolding of the wondrous.

This appears to be in stark contrast to the emphasis on cognition in our society. In fact, the total suspension of cognitive activity appears all the more remarkable when viewed against the backdrop of our "thought-full" society.

It is interesting that recent research (Ornstein, 1972) on the right and left hemispheres of the brain focuses on the difference between cognitive and non-cognitive awareness. The right side of the brain is more concerned with non-conceptual awareness. It may well be that the experience of wonder is closely tied in with the functioning of the right hemisphere. I do not mean this in a cause and effect manner but rather to point out that even brain research substantiates the different kind of consciousness which is present in the wondrous experience.

Non-attached being. A very surprising finding was that the respondents consistently mentioned that at some point in their experience, it seemed that they personally were not responding but rather "someone" beyond themselves was responding to the wondrous object. For want of a better term, I have called this "non-attached being". They were personally involved, but at least for a moment, it seemed like they were viewing their actions from a totally non-personal perspective. There was a transcendence of their personal being. This was most aptly described as:

> I didn't think about it at the time - it was like a - almost like being out of my body - yet still in my body - a lightness in a way but - it's really hard to put words to it - like watching myself - like realizing what was going on and at the same time taking part of it - taking part in it - and my body being more relaxed and my body letting - just letting things flow - my body able to watch - they're really not words that fit - a transcendence in a way.

Another interviewee spoke of transcending his individual being and feeling;

> I felt the - that primitive feeling of being a man - and something that is - is historical ... Yah, especially when I was looking at her - like there was a man in me looking at her it wasn't just a person - something very primitive - and something that seems sort of - well at that time it didn't seem scary but I felt that at some point I'd just sort of have to break myself out of it because it was sort of over-whelming - but I didn't feel overwhelmed while it was happening - it was like again touching the root - the primitive.

This sense of non-attached being sounds strikingly similar to descriptions of some experiences in the Zen and Yoga traditions.

Paradoxes. It was quite apparent that in the experience of wonder the persons in this study were able to experience many paradoxes without feeling any contradiction. They did not seem to need to reconcile the paradoxes with which they were faced. They accepted each polarity of the paradox in its own uniqueness. This differs considerably from our usual state of awareness.

The interviewees spoke of being simultaneously very special yet tiny in relation to the universe, personally involved in the situation but also beyond that specific situation, frightened and excited, feeling separate from, yet also a part of the object of wonder, and so forth. These paradoxes did not create any tension for the person but were rather accepted for what they were.

Non-task orientation. All of the persons in the study stated that during their experience of wonder, there was not the ordinary sense of task-orientation which usually seemed to rule their lives. They were not concerned with accomplishing some specific chore or being with someone for a specific reason. There was essentially a lack of "purpose" as we ordinarily use the term. There was no purpose or goal for which the person was aiming. Their presence was not goal-oriented as such. The moment just happened and they were "taken" by the experience. They had not entered it expecting to get anything from it. They had not even expected to have the experience.

There seemed to be an intrinsic purpose to the experience of wonder itself. Everyone seemed contented to be involved in the experience and didn't even think of extricating some external goal from it. There was nothing to achieve in this experience, nothing to seek. There was more of a sense of just being. Being in the way that one is, was valued in and of itself. The experience of wonderment is an end-in-itself.

Lived space. The lived space of the individual is expanded both "internally" and "externally". Participants in this study spoke of touching something very deep within themselves. One person described it as;

> ... I kind of felt like it was one of the few times that there had been such a thing as a soul - that I had touched it - it was like my core - everything that I am sort of all wrapped up there but I rarely touched it.

In the experience of wonder new depths of the person are discovered.

Externally, the lived space of the person expands beyond its normal constrictions. The body is not held in but instead seems to be able to expand

beyond its physical limits and unite with the "object" of wonder or with some force greater than it. The physical space around the person is not sensed as a barrier but rather as an "invitation".

Sense of unity. Consistent among all the reports was the sense of being connected or united with some "power" beyond the individual. This was experienced as either a unit ng with some "internal" force such as a soul, or with some "external" force. One person stated; "I guess the wonder of it for me was that I was really connected with I guess what you'd call basic nature, you know, something very universal." Another respondent described it as "really a feeling of totalness - a real merging kind of with nature." This was paradoxically both frightening and exciting. The person experienced both being very small and very powerful.

Peacefulness. At some point in the experience of wonder, often after feeling united with a "power beyond", there was a peacefulness, a generalized contentment, a tranquility, which became focal. It was felt that nothing further need be accomplished. There was more a sense of "be-ing" instead of being-for-some-purpose. Everything appeared as it should be. The person felt no lack. There was a marked absence of anxiety and fear. There was an intrinsic goodness to the experience.

The moment just is. There is no reason to go beyond that moment. It just seems right. The person's body is very relaxed and peaceful. One participant described it as; "... times of just kind of calmness and tiredness and real warm feeling like relaxed kind of letting the sun beat down on me and the water dripping off your face."

Interpersonal. Two of the reported experiences were specifically interpersonal. The experience of wonder in those situations directly arose out of an interaction with another person. Both of these interviewees

reported seeing the other person in a new way despite having known this person for years. The other person was viewed differently and the person experiencing the wonderment also changed his/her relationship to the other person. In that moment of wonderment, there was a radical transformation of the relationship. In one of the experiences the respondent described how this shift also involved a shift in relation to other people. This person aptly stated; "... in some ways, it crystallized what my life is about."

However, during the experience, there was a marked lack of awareness of people other than the one other person involved. In all the reported experiences, there were people around but all the interviewees were struck, in retrospect, with how little they noticed other people.

Lived time. Before experiencing a sense of wonder, most of the persons were in an ordinary task-oriented sense of time. In the experience of wonder there seems to be no time lag between when the person leaves what may be termed "ordinary" consciousness and when they are "thrust" into the wondrous experience. It is totally unplanned for and is therefore an immediate, spontaneous transformation of the person's consciousness. One moment the person is engaged in a mundane world and the next moment, without consciously choosing it, the person's world is significantly altered.

There seems to be a totally present-oriented consciousness. The person is neither aware of previous activities nor is there any concern for the future. There is no need to rush to something else; rather the person seems to want to be present only to whatever unfolds.

However, this present-orientedness, or here-and-now time-awareness is not experienced at the time of wonder. The persons in my study

consistently reported that they were completely unaware of time. Only in retrospect were these persons able to report for example, "Time was distorted. It seemed timeless." or "Time was suspended - I was unaware of it." or finally,

> Wow, wow, it was almost like time didn't have anything to do with it - almost like - like time stopped - like it stopped for the moment - I just thought of the cliche - timeless moment - but in a very real sense it's like it really didn't have anything to do with time - it was like it was out of time - it's hard to make sense with it - it's hard to put it into words.

The person was totally involved in what was happening. There was a sense of unitary moment, whether the experience took seconds, minutes, or even hours. There was an inherent flowing connection of the moment. There were really no separate temporal parts of the experience. This is a radically different sense of time from our ordinary linear mode of consciousness.

When the respondents spoke of "coming out" of the wondrous experience, they spoke of being startled, as if reentering another world. Ordinary clock time had continued on, while personal time had been suspended. Yet, there is an intensity to the experience which seems to limit its extent in terms of personal time.

Ending of the experience. Most of the participants in this study mentioned that their experience of wonder ended because of its great intensity. They felt that the experience had run its course but also that they could not bear the intensity much longer. One respondent described it in the following manner; "Well at the time it didn't seem scary but I felt that at some point I'd just sort of have to break myself out of it because it was sort of overwhelming."

Because of the influx of new stimuli during this experience, they all mentioned that they felt unintegrated. Their way of being-in-the-world had been significantly altered. They needed time to fall back into a more relaxed, less intense, level of consciousness and experience. They all spoke of needing time to integrate their experience. For all of them, the dialogue with the interviewer was a way of attempting to integrate the experience.

Aftereffects. All of the participants reported that their experiences of wonder had significant effects on their lives. For at least two of the people there were major transformations in their experience of themselves. One person stated; "I guess in a lot of ways it realigned things for me - it put things back into perspective." All of the participants felt that they had been greatly enriched by the experience.

All the participants reported a desire to have similar experiences in the future. They all looked forward to this occurring again. They seemed more sensitized to the possibility of future experiences of wonder. For example, one interviewee stated;

> Yah, not going back in the sense of trying to recapture that one but just being aware that I could have missed that - and hopefully the next time I'll sort of be there more - I'll never have an experience like that again - but I may have similar kinds of experiences - next time I'll be more aware that those things are there.

There also seemed to be a certain existential humility which resulted from the experience. The interviewees appeared to be more aware of some "power" beyond their individual lives. They felt "small" in relation to this "power". One interviewee described it in the following words; "I think I felt very small - in relation to the vastness of the experience - and the vastness of what I felt the universe to be - in terms of how I felt connected."

Though not an inherent part of the experience of wonder itself, I would like to note some dimensions which arose out of the interview situations.

Recall of wonder is wondrous. All of the interviewees mentioned that in talking about their wondrous experiences, they were able to start reexperiencing that wonder. It was very obvious to this researcher that they were once again in touch with something wondrous. Their eyes often "lit up", their faces became more animated, their voices often had a reverential tone. They seemed to become more alive.

They also mentioned that sharing the experience with the researcher was important to them. It was as if the experience was too much for them to bear alone; "it wanted" to be shared with another human being.

An apparent aftereffect of a wondrous experience is that it is shared only with someone considered trustworthy. In other words, for those participants in this study there seems to be a dimension of the experience which contains within it a degree of intimacy and vulnerability. It is something which is not ordinarily shared with another human being. Often, a respondent would mention that s/he would not have gone into such depth in his/her description if there were not the trust between us. The interviewees all mentioned that the openness of the researcher was important. It allowed them to go on and describe some very intimate details of their experiences. It also gave them a sense of being accepted no matter how unusual their experiences might be.

Effect on researcher. Another facet of this kind of research is the effect that it has on the researcher. As I have mentioned in the preceding methodology section, this researcher does not believe that there is anything like absolute objectivity in human scientific research. In

other words, the researcher affects, and is affected by, the phenomenon under study. It would be untrue to say that I have not been significantly affected by my dialogical participation in this study. Although difficult to describe, I do know I have come to appreciate far more than before the complexity and depth of human experience. I feel privileged to have shared these intimate human experiences with the participants in this study.

I have learned how easy it is to categorize human experience, and what little justice this categorization does to the variegated dimensions of human experience. I have learned that verbalizations are necessary, but often inadequate means of communicating depthful human experiences.

This research has helped me in another way. It has helped me to integrate my own sense of wonder. It has helped put me more in touch with this experience in my own life. I believe that it has opened me up to many new possibilities.

Chapter 6

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THERAPY

In this section, I'd like to present some very brief sketchings of how the results of this research may be contextualized within a broader theoretical spectrum of human experience and how this research may be applicable to the field of psychotherapy.

Background. I believe that the major reason why awareness of the wondrous is becoming a figural issue in therapy, is that the background is one of blatant non-wondrousness. By this, I am referring to the technocratic consciousness which so permeates our society. I am here using the term technocratic in the sense that Roszak (1968) uses it:

> By the technocracy, I mean that social form in which an individual society reaches the peak of its organizational integration. It is the ideal that men usually have in mind when they speak of modernizing, up-dating, rationalizing, planning. Drawing upon such unquestionable imperatives as the demand for efficiency, for social security, for large-scale co-ordination of men and resources, for ever higher levels of affluence and ever more impressive manifestations of collective human power, the technocracy works to knit together the anachronistic gaps and fissures of the industrial society. ...Politics, education, leisure, entertainment, culture as a whole, the unconscious drives, and even, as we shall see, protest against the technocracy itself; all these become the subjects of purely technical manipulation. The effort is to create a new social organism whose health depends upon its capacity to keep the technological heart beating regularly (p. 5).

This viewpoint is further substantiated by Jacques Ellul:

> Technique requires predictability and no less, exactness of prediction. It is necessary, then, that technique prevail over the human being. For technique, this is a matter of life and death. Technique must reduce man to a technical animal, the king of the slaves of technique. Human caprice crumbles before this necessity; there can be no human autonomy in the face of technical autonomy. The individual must be fashioned by techniques, either negatively (by the tech iques of understanding man) or positively (by the adaptation of man to the technical framework), in order to wipe out the blots his personal determination introduces into the perfect design of the organization (1964, p. 138).

A technocratic consciousness is not concerned with the advent of the wondrous or of the beautiful. Everything, including the human being is measured against the criterion of how efficient one is, and how one fits into the technological plan. Just as in technology, where parts are interchangeable, in technocracy persons are interchangeable and there is a suppression of the unique. Everything becomes quantified. There is a lovely quote in The Little Prince which exemplifies the contrast between a technocratic and non-technocratic consciousness.

> Grownups love figures. When you tell them that you have made a new friend, they never ask you any questions about essential matters. They never say to you, 'What does his voice sound like? What games does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?' Instead, they demand: 'How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much money does his father make?' Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.
>
> If you were to say to the grown-ups: 'I saw a beautiful house made of rosy brick, with geraniums in the windows and doves on the roof,' they would not be able to get any idea of that house at all. You would have to say to them: 'I saw a house that cost $20,000.' Then they would exclaim: 'Oh, what a pretty house that is!' (Saint Exupery, 1971, p. 16).

Modes of consciousness, other than the technocratic mode, must be suppressed (Marcuse, 1964; Leonard, 1972), lest they interfere with the functioning of a technocratic society.

A schizoid society. Rollo May (1969) refers to our society as a schizoid society. For him, we are suppressing not only the sense of wonder (1953, pp. 180-183), but any real passion, any genuine eroticism. He believes that we are, for the most part, cut off from our feelings.

> My term 'schizoid', in the title of this chapter, means out of touch; avoiding close relationship; the inability to feel. I do not use he term as a reference to psychopathology, but rather as a general condition of our culture and the tendencies of people which make it up. ...The schizoid man is the natural product of the technological man. ...Whereas other cultures pushed schizoid persons toward being creative, our culture pushes people toward being more detached and mechanical (1969, pp. 16-17).

Being detached and mechanical becomes the normal state of alienation. As Laing (1965) succinctly states: "Thus I would wish to emphasize that our 'normal' 'adjusted' state is too often the abdication of ectasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities, that many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities (p. 12)." This so truncates the human being that he asks if it is even possible today for human beings to be persons:

> Can human beings be persons today? Can a man be his actual self with another man or woman? Before we ask such an optimistic question as 'What is a personal relationship?', we have to ask if a personal relationship is possible, or, are persons possible in our present situation (1967, p. 23)?

Underlying many symptomatic issues, it seems that many people show up for therapy because of some kind of realization, "unconscious" or otherwise, that their life is not full or meaningful. Today, this is more and more frequently the outcome of our technocratic society. Most of us are so inculcated with the technocratic mode of consciousness, which so permeates our society, that we are unable to experience any wonder at some sort of radical otherness (Friedman, 1972). Instead, everything that we come into

contact with is "understood" and explained away by some sort of natural scientific theory. The mysteriousness of life seems to be dispelled. This even applies in most modern psychology to the most mysterious and wondrous of all human phenomena, human interpersonal experience. Most of psychology and most of therapy is concerned with understanding and explaining away the mysterious dimensions of human interpersonal living. Pushed to the extreme, it becomes the "psychologizing of the world" which Friedman (1972) speaks of. The psychological explanation becomes primary and the unique concrete event but a medium for that explanation. Here, we are not in contact with the concrete, but rather with an abstract conceptual understanding of an event. I do not mean to infer here that any conceptualization is wrong, but rather that the conceptualization must not become primary to the detriment of the concrete situation. What is lacking in such therapy, as well as in the societal consciousness at large, is some sense of reverence, some sense of attunement, some sort of acceptance of the wondrous dimension of human living.

If this is the present state of our society, what is the avenue out of this schizoid living? What is the "goal" of therapy in such a situation? What is the place of wonder in such a therapy?

Therapy and wonder. Those therapies which took wonder into account would not be concerned with making it the primary focus of the therapy, but rather being aware of it as a significant dimension which threads its way through the therapy. Such therapies would be concerned with the rhythm of living. The purpose would not be to have the person wonder-struck at every moment of their life. Neither would they be satisfied with the other pole of human experience where people compulsively constrict themselves to

only an awareness of the drab mundane. However, there is here a danger of "aiming at wonder" in the sense which Friedman (1974) criticizes some so-called humanistic psychologists for aiming at self-actualization. That is, the very attempt to achieve it as a goal paradoxically seems to make it impossible to achieve. You cannot aim at it, yet you can prepare a ground for it to happen and this is where therapies which take wonder into account would come in.

"Mystery" vs. problem. Such a therapy would be concerned with helping to sensitize people to be in contact with the mystery and radical otherness of what surrounds them. It would be concerned with becoming aware of the uniqueness of the concrete here and now. So often in our society the unique becomes subsumed by some general category or conceptual abstraction. We tend to see everything in terms of a problem orientation. Marcel (1960) makes the distinction between a problem and a mystery.

> A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I myself am involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as "a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity". A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique. It is, no doubt, always possible (logically and psychologically) to degrade a mystery so as to turn it into a problem. But this is a fundamentally vicious proceeding whose springs might perhaps be discovered in a kind of corruption of the intelligence (p. 260).

Uniqueness. Rarely do we see the uniqueness of something in and of itself. Most often it seems that we are more concerned with how we can "use" this unique event for some other purpose. The latter kind of awareness is what Maslow refers to as a "deficiency motivation". This is opposed to what he calls "Being-cognition". That is:

> In B-cognition the experience or the object tends to be seen as a whole, as a complete unit, detached from relations, from possible usefulness, from expediency, and from purpose (Maslow, 1968, p. 74).

A therapy concerned with wonder would be concerned with sensitizing a person more to "being-cognition". Such an awareness cannot be used for some other purpose. There seems to be an innate value in the experience itself. Wonder seems to be such an experience. It is not a means to an end, nor is it some technique. It appears to have an innate value for human living in and of itself. Again, as Maslow puts it:

> I think is is possible to think of the peak experience, the experience of awe, mystery, wonder, or of perfect completion, as the goal and reward of learning as well, its end as well as its beginning (1971, p. 190).

Wonder and healing. The experience of wonder seems to be innately healing. People seem to feel more whole and appear to seek it out for its own sake. It seems to give a person a sense, as prosaic as it might sound, that life is worth living. Maslow refers to this experience when he speaks of the "goals" of education:

> Another goal of education is to refreshen consciousness so that we are continually aware of the beauty and wonder of life. Too often in this culture we become desensitized so that we never really see the things we look at or hear the things we listen to (1971, p. 190).

This refreshened consciousness is innately life-affirming and energizing. Or stated negatively, "The deprivation of beauty can cause illness (Maslow, 1971, p. 1973)."

Wonder and preconceptions. However, to have one's consciousness be refreshed, to be amazed, to experience wonderment, one needs to give up one's preconceptions. So often we go into an experience knowing what we expect to happen. There is then no room for surprise, no possibility of being taken by the experience. We are more in contact with what we expect to occur than

this unique event that may open us up to new possibilities. Wonder seems to require an openness to new possibilities and a trusting in whatever may emerge from our being truly present to this unique situation. It means giving up the security of our preconceptions, of what we expect to happen, and almost certainly means constantly giving up the smug security of a comprehensive world-view or system. As Friedman aptly describes it:

> In our search for meaning, for touchstones of reality, we sometimes confuse two quite different things -- a comprehensive world-view that gives us a sense of security and the meaning that arises moment by moment through our meeting with a reality that we cannot embrace. ...Perhaps one of the most important witnesses that can be made in our day is that it is not necessary to have a Weltanschauung, a comprehensive world-view, in order to be able to live as a man. What is more, our "world-view" may get in the way of our confrontation with the concrete at any given point and just thereby rob us of the real world. ...No intellectual construction, not even the philosophy of dialogue, can ever include the real otherness of the other. In meeting the other, I come up against something absurd in the root meaning of the term -- something irreducible that I cannot get may arms around or register in my categories (1972, p. 332).

Gestalt Therapy. There are already some therapies which are aware of the danger of having a comprehensive world-view which subsumes and obscures the radical otherness of the here and now concrete event. Gestalt therapy seems to be one such therapy which easily lends itself to incorporating a sense of wonder into it. In this therapy, abstract conceptualizations, projections, and fantasies which interfere with a genuine contact with the unique are deemphasized. As Peris addresses this point:

> And the aim in therapy, the growth aim, is to lose more and more of your "mind" and come more to your senses. To be more and more in touch, to be in touch with yourself and in touch with the world, instead of only in touch with the fantasies, prejudices, apprehensions, and so on (1969, p. 53).

An example, of how the giving up of fantasies and projections can lead to the emergence of a sense of wonder and amazement in therapy, occurred in an

adolescent group I was co-facilitating. Two friends had recently become aware that outside of the group they had been growing further apart. I had them sit, face to face, knee to knee on the floor (to accentuate contact in the Gestalt sense) and to say to each other how distant they felt from the other. In doing this, many emotions emerged which had previously been suppressed. The started to realize how much of their anger was a result of their fantasies and projections of the other. They started to become aware of how little they were really in contact with the other. After some of the initial anger was expressed, they began to recognize just how much they still cared for each other. One of the girls, Trish, said that she wanted to hug Dorothy. In the process of doing this, they both started crying and there was obviously a lot of caring. At that moment, after they had stopped crying, Trish was looking wide-eyed at Dorothy and said "Dorothy, I don't think I've ever really seen your face this way. Its like I've never really seen it before. Its just amazing." It was obvious in the look in Trish's face that something totally new and fresh was seen in her friend's face. She was seeing Dorothy in a fresh and wondrous way, as if she had never really seen Dorothy before. It seemed that it was not just the intimacy with this specific person which was involved, but also the sense of wonder about the event which was healing. She was learning that genuine contact with another (and not with her projection) can be inherently fulfilling and amazing. Such contact has an effervescent quality about it which makes it inherently exciting and healing. This effervescence, this sense of wonder, could clearly be seen in Trish's face. Perls refers to this phenomena of getting people to give up their fantasies and move into genuine contact with their environment:

> Now, if we want to make a person whole, we have first to understand what is merely fantasy and irrationality, and we have to discover where one is in touch, and with what. And very often if we work, and we empty out this middle zone of fantasy, this maya, then there is the experience of satori, of waking up. Suddenly the world is there. You wake up from a trance like you wake up from a dream (Perls, 1969, p. 53).

Giving up security. A therapy attuned to wonder would be concerned with helping the person give up their fantasies, their projections, their conceptual systems, which cut off contact with new possibilities. There would be an attunement to what Watts (1951), calls "the wisdom of insecurity". That is, a therapy concerned with wonder would deemphasize the need for control and security and recognize that the greatest certainty is that we do not genuinely know what will happen next in our lives. Such a therapy would deemphasize attempting to control what would happen next, or what we would perceive next. As Sam Keen describes this state of affairs:

> This obsession with controlling which characterizes technological culture blinds us to the necessity for alternative styles of perception and life. If we are unable to surrender control, to appreciate, to welcome, to wonder, to allow things and persons to speak with their own voice, to listen, we are condemned to perpetual aggression, to an unrelaxing Promethean effort to master the environment. No doubt there is a time for speaking, for dialectic, for control. But there is also a time for silence, for wonder, for surrender (1970, p. 44).

Keen suggests "an education for serendipity (1970, p. 38)." In other words, a therapy truly consonant with allowing a sense of wonder to emerge would emphasize the need to be genuinely present to the emergence of the unexpected instead of prejudging what will occur. There is here a great stress on the sense of discovery, on exploring that which is unknown. There is here an awareness of the need to view education and therapy as a wholistic exploration of that which personally addresses this unique individual.

Hasidism. This education for serendipity, and instilling a sense of wonder into living appears to be very similar to an outlook which arises out of Hasidism (an eighteenth and nineteenth century communal "mystical" movement) and which Martin Buber (1958) describes as "hallowing the everyday".

It would appear to be helpful at this point to briefly expand on Hasidism and some aspects of "hallowing the everyday". This is because it was and is an outlook which places wonder centrally within a comprehensive view of life. Hasidism used the Kabbalistic myth of the "holy sparks" to explain why all things deserved man's genuine presentness. That is:

> With the 'breaking of the world-vessels,' which in the era before creation could not withstand the creative overflow, sparks have fallen into all things and are not imprisioned in them until ever again a man uses a thing in holiness and thus liberates the sparks that it conceals. "All that man possesses," says the founder of Hasidism, the Baal-Shem, "conceals sparks which belong to the root of his soul and wish to be elevated by him to their origin (Buber, 1958, p. 32)."

What is being expressed here mythically is that all things contain within them untold possibilities. Each object of our perception has much to give us if we but truly attend to it. However, for the most part, we allow habit, preconception, and close-mindedness to obscure the unique wonder of what is. As the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism said: "Alas! the world is full of enormous lights and mysteries, and man shuts them from himself with one small hand (Buber, 1947, p. 74)." It seems much easier and safer to ward off the wonder of the "enormous lights and mysteries" than to be open to the emergence of new and exciting but unpredictable possibilities. Our "ego" is often threatened by being open to too many possibilities. Therefore, we close our eyes to the kaleidoscopic and many-faceted nature of things and substitute stability and sameness.

A therapy concerned with wonder would therefore have to develop a different sense of "self" and "ego" whereby the person would not be so easily threatened by being more attuned to the kaleidoscopic nature of things (Watts, 1961; Maslow, 1971; Sampson, 1975). Sterility and drabness is the price we pay for this delicate "ego".

Hasidism, though initially and primarily a religious movement, is especially appropriate for even a more "profane" therapy. That is, Hasidism did not really separate the sacred from the profane. Quite to the contrary, as Friedman (1972) points out, it was concerned with the wondrous everyday:

> Revelation, to the Hasidim, did not mean the incursion of the supernatural, but openness to the wonder of the everyday -- "the enormous lights and miracles" with which the world is filled. ...'Miracle' is simply the wonder of the unique that points us back to the wonder of the everyday. ...The true opposite of "the habitual" is not the extraordinary or the unusual but the fresh, the open, the ever-new of the man who hallows the everyday (p. 167).

Openness to the "undisclosed". A therapy attuned to wonderment and hallowing the everyday would be cognizant that each object, that each person, that each event, is somehow significantly unique and set apart from all our previous experiences and that this uniqueness, which truly addresses us, requires of us a genuine meeting and response. Such a therapeutic approach would be interested in developing a sense of "meeting" as a life stance. In fact, Buber's outlook exemplified this very point:

> I have occasionally described my standpoint to my friends as the 'narrow ridge'. I wanted by this to express that I did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed (1965, p. 184).

In the same manner, a therapy concerned with instilling a sense of wonder in a "client" would not try to pass on some secure and absolute system of beliefs to this person, but would emphasize the meeting with the undisclosed. Here "meeting" is an exceedingly appropriate word, for it is not somehow that this experience takes place within the person. Instead there is more of a sense of meet ng with a real otherness. It is not that we "have" an experience which can be conceptually encapsulated, but rather that there is a constant openness to being surprised, to being taken, to being amazed at what simply is. Friedman states it so well when he points out that:

> The very notion of having experience, whether it be psychedelic, mystical, sexual, travel, or adventure, robs us of what experience once meant -- something which can catch us up, take us outside of ourselves, and bring us into relationship with the surprising, the unique, the other (1974, p. 280).

We cannot really "possess" any experience. To attempt to do so deadens us to new possibilities.

A therapy consonant with an awareness of the wondrous would recognize that there are no final and complete experiences which we "have", no final and complete perceptions, no final answers. Instead, we must constantly return to the point we began from, deepened perhaps, yet amazed that what previously concealed itself to us, now grants to reveal itself to us in a greater fullness. In the words of T.S. Eliot:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time
> (1965, p. 145).

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ABSTRACT

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The Experience of Wonder: A Phenomenological Sketching and its Implications for Therapy

In this study, an argument was made for researching the experience of wonder from a phenomenological perspective. Four persons were extensively interviewed on their experiences of wonder. Themes which were most inherent to the experience as described by the participants were explicated. These themes were: the object of wonder, the ground of normal experience, unexpected, fascination, radical otherness, powerful impact, being taken, openness, overwhelming, ineffable, non-cognitive, non-attached being, paradoxes, non-task orientation, alteration of lived time, alteration of lived space, sense of unity, interpersonal dimension, peacefulness, ending of experience, after-effects, recall of wonder is wondrous, effect on researcher.

Also discussed were the implications of the experience for therapy. An argument was made for the need to instill a sense of wonder in clients. This was contrasted with the technocratic consciousness which pervades the culture. The need for the therapist to be in contact with his own sense of wonder, especially in working with clients, was discussed.