BODY OF KNOWLEDGE:

self-organisation in a gentle bodywork practice

Allison Baensch

A thesis presented to the University of Western Sydney
toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2009
University of Western Sydney

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I want to thank members of my extended family who have given me love, support and patience throughout the years of postgraduate research and writing. Jim, my husband, gave me an exceptional gift in listening, making space, keeping the home fires burning, and providing loving administrative support. Daughters Liz and Kate, and their families, shared their extensive practical wisdom and buoyed my spirits. Our grandchildren gave inspiration and joy. Liz also designed the thesis layout and produced the Gebser section of the DVD.

My supervisor, Dr Debbie Horsfall, deserves appreciation for her encouragement, practical help and nerves of steel. Dr Sheridan Linnell, joined the team at the eleventh hour. Her generous and prompt critiquing and suggestions inspired me. Jeannie Roberts helped enormously by accurately typing any number of handwritten pages and emailing them back with great alacrity.

To the eight fieldwork participants who set aside five days of their lives to join in the research so good heartedly, and to past bodywork students, my thanks are due. Also I appreciate the involvement of those who undertook individual sessions as clients in my practice, as family members and friends, some as part of the fieldwork.

Since 1984, I have been introduced to Ortho-Bionomy, Bowen Technique, Process Work and Open Space Technology, and I feel very grateful to the founders of those ways of working, their colleagues, and my fellow students, for their many new perspectives, effective practical skills, and encouragement. Thanks to Dr Bernie Neville for linking me with Jean Gebser’s writing, and to Dr Susan Hatch for her steady friendship and process support. Robbie Lloyd inspired me with his research project and his capacity for loving networking.

Over the years, I could always rely on Mary Krone for peerless guidance on administrative matters. The University of Western Sydney made my postgraduate studies possible by enrolling me in 1995, in my first degree, and later awarding me a PhD scholarship. I appreciated the guidance of supervisors Dr Mike Clear and Dr Ione Lewis in the early months of my candidature.

Dr David Smith worked on the DVD’s videography, contributing footage he shot for the thesis as well as the Open Space materials he produced following the 2002 ‘OS on OS in Oz’ Conference in Marysville. His great skill, enthusiasm and
patience were most supportive. Artwork and words from Wagner and Brooks (1990) were reproduced in the thesis, and accompanying DVD, with permission from Penguin Group (Australia).

Thanks also to you, the reader, for reading and influencing what I wrote through your prospective engagement in the process.

Our two Maremma sheep guardians Rose and Romeo contributed their loyalty, coaching and generosity. I owe them both quite a few missed walks.
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except where acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

_______________________________ (Signature)

Allison Lyndon Baensch
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PREFACE

My Practice

Whenever …

"Whenever it starts is the right time" (Owen, 1994, p. 68).

Figure 1: Are you ready to start?

This chapter exists to build a feel for and a picture of my practice, on which this research has been based, in order to provide context for the research. It takes the form of a bricolage or patchwork quilt (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a, p. 5) of impressions I have formed over the last quarter century of my practice. It brings together stories of stakeholders in the practice, from clients (Baensch, 1985 to 2004) to my family, especially my husband Jim (my life and research partner), and to my other teachers including Kath Kain (1997) Luann Overmyer (1993) and Bruce Stark (2007), Arnold (1982) and Amy (1995a) Mindell and Harrison Owen (1994). As well as contributing some context for other parts of the research, such as the five-day residential fieldwork project I conducted to consider some ramifications of gentle bodywork with eight other participants in 2004, the chapter sets up an initial, impressionistic and informal case study of my bodywork practice.
Before writing this PhD thesis, I completed a Master of Science degree. My Masters thesis employed self-portraiture and described my experience of becoming more present in parts of my body. From being rather dreamy, disconnected from myself and depressed as a child and young adult, I became more aware of my self in relation to time, space and physical embodiment during my mid to late thirties. Self-awareness brought with it a greater sence of personal power. I could still dream if I had the urge, but could choose to be focussed and present when circumstances called for my attention. The examiners of my Masters thesis recommended that I widen my study of embodiment to include other people. Considering clients in my practice and participants in the research Fieldwork are two of the ways I have broadened my view to include others. Another way is through searching the literature in order to expand my understanding of the principles and concepts behind my practice.

A single chapter has room for limited information. My practice has been ebbing and flowing in its local and wider communities since before 1984, and many hundreds of clients and students have passed through its various doors. Now it is coming of age, because it has been running for about 25 years, and because it is evolving from a private practice to one also concerned with research, which is, in some ways, a less private practice.

In the absence of inviting you physically in the door as a client, student or observer, I hope to move you through the practice’s processes and built environments as if you could be here. I will consider its physical and organisational design, daily goings on, and some of its outcomes, through stories and descriptions. If my skills are equal to my hopes, you will not only walk through the spaces in virtual time, but also have a vicarious experience of the practice and some glances behind the scenes.

The DVD (to be found in a pocket inside the back cover of the thesis) was designed to facilitate this process. Video is vital to this thesis, not just as a visual representation of what I describe in words, but also a way to link you to the senses of movement, balance and life (Soesman, 1990): all important facets of the practice. The sound track introduces tone, timing and emphasis, and is redolent with meaning that written words cannot convey as succinctly. Yet written words play an important part too. They can carry you imaginatively into resourceful dreams that my limited video experience can only partially evoke, even with David Smith’s able videographic assistance and Jim’s camera contributions. The first section of the DVD describes my practice and I created it
to flesh out and form part of this Preface. Other sections refer to chapters with similar names, so the Praxis section.

I introduce you to my practice, in a personal way, by means of words, images, movement and dreaming. My aim is to help you build a vibrant, sensual feel for how the practice has been. This will be created from a miscellany of experiences and expressions, shared with you by clients, students and me, in the form of practice notes. The first practice note consists of stories about clients I have seen over the years. These people guided my learning and co-created the practice with me, through their trust and generosity, requests, discomforts and conundra. Without each client, my practice would have developed in quite different ways. The building and location where the practice is based are also central to my work and will be described shortly.

Through the stories contained in the practice notes, you can dream into why and where people come to see me, what I do before and during a session, and how these clients responded to the work. As I later explain, clients differ so much from each other that I cannot describe a typical client. Because I have a general practice, people of all ages come to see me about a wide range of issues. These are mainly physical, but clients also raise emotional, social, intellectual and even spiritual concerns during sessions of bodywork. The relevance of my work to these other aspects of living will also be shown to some extent, especially in the Fieldwork chapter. I begin with clients’ stories’. Clients have shown me that “Whoever comes is the right person” (Heft, 2005a, p. 2). I think the first story, below, is a particularly clear example of that principle from Open Space Technology, since Ron taught me so much through his conviction, and the challenges he offered me.

---

1 Many client and participant names in this thesis are fictitious. Personal details of clients, peripheral to the issues described, have been changed to prevent identification. At the start of the fieldwork, I offered fieldwork participants the opportunity to choose an alias in order to hide their identity for the thesis and DVD. They all declined my invitation, with some expressing a strong inclination towards the use of their own names in preference to the use of an alias. I have attempted to steer a course between the university’s ethics requirement for participants to remain anonymous, and the participants’ then wish to be named, by generally using initials, which may or may not accurately suggest a specific participant. This was a difficult issue for me to resolve, since I was concerned that participants may change their mind about being identified in future, after publication, by which time it would be too late. Equally, I did not want to be overly dogmatic about traditional research conduct ahead of participants’ wishes.
Practice Note 1: Stories of clients

Ron

When I began my practice, I rented rooms underneath the health food shop in Healesville for eight years, doing massage for the first year or so, until I was introduced to Ortho-Bionomy, a form of gentle and respectful bodywork. After my initial Ortho-Bionomy class, I would describe both massage and Ortho-Bionomy to first-time clients, so they could choose the type of work they preferred. My practice transformed from massage to Ortho-Bionomy almost overnight, because nearly all clients chose Ortho-Bionomy for their session.

One instigator of this transformation was a client called ‘Ron’, who lived in Yarra Junction, near Healesville. His first session had been a massage that I gave him before I flew to Hobart for my first training workshop in Ortho-Bionomy. During his first appointment, Ron told me his story. He had worked at a sawmill near his home in the Yarra Valley. While he was operating a large, circular mill saw one day, the saw caught a huge tree trunk, and propelled it off the bench. The tree struck Ron forcefully in the pelvis. The tree’s momentum picked him up, and slammed him into the ground, some distance from the mill where he had been working. When Ron recovered consciousness, he was taken to a doctor, who told him to ‘go on light duties’ for the rest of the day. The work he was given that afternoon involved sweeping the yard. Sweeping required a twisting action of his torso, which he and I later established to be very harmful for his injured back.

Within a day or two of his injury, Ron’s pelvis had turned a deep black colour, with bruising right through from front to back. Soon, he was in severe pain, and so incapacitated that he was unable to work for about eight years. Even while resting at home, he experienced constant pain. All he felt able to do was to sit all day. His only escape from the pain was to drink alcohol. He told me he had bought a gun and stored it at home. If I could not relieve his pain with massage, Ron said he intended to shoot himself, to end his misery.

Hearing his story, I felt indignant at the treatment Ron described being given by his employer, both regarding the lack of safety precautions to prevent such accidents happening, and his apparently unsympathetic attitude after Ron’s injury. I was also shocked to hear what Ron told me about his medical treatment, or the want of it. Additionally, I felt sorry about the severity of his pain, his lack of mobility, and his depression, and quite pressured by Ron’s ultimatum to me.
The first session’s massage went well, and I felt relieved. Then I flew to Hobart, attended three days of Ortho-Bionomy training and flew back to Melbourne. When I returned to my practice, Ron was my first client. He knew I had been away for training, and greeted me with the words: “do that new stuff with me”; meaning Ortho-Bionomy. I was horrified, since I felt very unsure about remembering what I had learned during my course. When I initially refused to use Ortho-Bionomy, explaining that I was hazy about the techniques, Ron insisted that he wanted to experience it, so I agreed.

I spread out the pages of notes I had taken during class on his chest, as he lay on the massage table, and followed them as if they were a recipe. Without the notes, I could only remember one simple release for the iliopsoas group of muscles (amazing long muscles traversing the pelvic bowl, linking spine and pelvis to thigh bones). Aided by my notes and Ron’s encouragement, I cobbled together a bodywork session of sorts. At the conclusion of the session, Ron climbed off the table in great excitement. He recognised he was able to move around much more freely than before. I could see the change in his posture, from stooped to upright, and in his movements from slow, shuffling, and halting steps to more free and confident walking.

Ron made another appointment for the following week, and went home. On arrival for his third appointment with me (his second experience of Ortho-Bionomy), Ron looked sore and restricted again and rather rueful. He told me that, on his way home from that first Ortho-Bionomy session, he had driven through an unexpectedly deep, water-disguised pothole in the road, and his back had been severely jolted. His symptoms had immediately returned, and were almost as bad as they had been before his last session. I felt terribly discouraged.

On the contrary, Ron said he was not disheartened. He was pleased to know relief was possible, and wanted to have some more sessions. This time, relieving Ron’s pain and restriction was slower. It took several sessions to regain the comfort and freedom resulting from his first Ortho-Bionomy experience. He had about six sessions with me, until his pain felt “bearable”, then stopped coming to see me for about a year. He returned for another six sessions until he felt only “a baby pain”, and stopped again. I would have preferred him to continue with sessions until his pain had completely gone, because I thought that would speed his recovery and help his back and pelvis to become stronger and more resilient.

2 Quotes from clients and participants in this research are signified by “quotation marks”.

5
but I did not say so. After three rounds of sessions, which were spaced over a period of five or six years, Ron’s pain reduced until it was almost unnoticeable. He said he drank far less alcohol, and was conducting his own successful landscaping business in Warburton and Yarra Junction. This was remarkable since he had been mostly confined to a chair for about eight years prior to his first visit. In his new business, he needed to lift, twist and climb: movements he had been completely unable to carry out, without severe pain and incapacitation, since his injury.

Fleur

Fleur, an eight-week old baby came to see me with her parents, who both looked exhausted. They told me they could not put their baby down to sleep. As soon as she was placed in a horizontal position, she would continuously “scream hysterically” until they picked her up again. Consequently, they had found it necessary to hold her constantly upright. They had passed her back and forth between them continuously since her birth, which had involved a forceps delivery and foetal distress. She had been prescribed the drugs phenobarb and atropin to help ameliorate her suffering, and to allow her parents some rest, but the drugs had not proved to be satisfactory.

While her mother held her upright, I began working with Fleur, initially using Bowen Technique very gently, so Fleur could relax. Once she was comfortable enough to lie on her back, I checked and found that her left leg appeared to be shorter than her right. I used Ortho-Bionomy, holding her body in a curve towards her left to shorten and thus release her contracted psoas muscles. Then I was able to lay Fleur across my massage table and lightly work with the bones of her head. When she became restless, possibly thirsty, I asked her mother if she would feed Fleur so I could continue doing cranial work.

At her next appointment a week later, Fleur and her parents seemed relaxed, calm and rested. They had been shocked when they awoke on the morning after her first session. They had put Fleur to bed, anticipating that she would cry in response to lying down. Instead, she settled, so they went to bed too, expecting to be aroused several times by Fleur’s crying, as usual. The following morning, when they looked at their clock, they realised they had slept for seven hours. They rushed into Fleur’s bedroom, fearing she had died during the night, to find her still peacefully sleeping. During her second session, I worked on Fleur’s spine, pelvis and head. Her mother told me, several months later, that Fleur had been far more relaxed and responsive, settling and sleeping for some hours in a
row. She was grateful to be able to rest and enjoy her baby, without the exhaustion of the first eight weeks of Fleur’s life.

Sunny

A 61 year-old grandmother called ‘Sunny’ came to see me because of sciatic pain she had suffered for eight years. She cared full-time for her two grandchildren: a pre-schooler and a toddler. The soreness from her sciatica was severe and depressing, to the point of her saying that, without the love and responsibility she felt towards her grandchildren, she would choose not to live any longer.

Sunny felt the pain along her left side, in her lower back, and down her left leg. On the day of her first session, Sunny’s pain was very bad. She was unable to sit at all, or to stand still long enough for me to take full case notes, so I asked minimal questions, filling in more detail as the session progressed. I used only Ortho-Bionomy during the first session, because of its gentleness, beginning with her pelvis and lower back, which were out of balance. Her left leg appeared to be much shorter than her right leg. This was almost completely resolved after Sunny’s first session via work with her iliopsoas group of muscles, and with a forward rotation of her right ilium (or pelvic bone). When I compared her legs again at the end of her first session, they were almost even in length.

By her second session, a week later, Sunny looked to be at ease and said she felt more relaxed. She was suffering quite a bit less pain, saying her sciatic pain had become “90 percent better than it was”. Her discomfort was, by then, only along her lower back, and had improved in that location as well. Her legs and pelvis had retained their new-found balance, and became even during the second session. She said she now had hope for the future.

Thomas

Thomas was brought to see me when he was a few days old. He had been born prematurely and, according to his mother, had received something like 50 pricks of a needle into his heel, in order to obtain daily blood samples during his stay in hospital. When he came for his first of two sessions, I noted that he was bunched up and tense, with his knees drawn up to his chest. Because his muscles were so tight, it was difficult for me to check what was going on. For example, he was not willing to relax and straighten his legs to let me to check his leg length and see whether one or both of his psoas groups of muscles were contracted. Rather than trying to encourage him to straighten his legs when he
preferred to be curled, I held him softly into his preferred curve and suggested working with this baby during a breast feed. He was happy to drink, and his mother said she felt fine about having me work with him while he breastfed. I did some cranial work, then moved to his feet. By then, Thomas had relaxed his legs enough for me to access his left foot. I held it in my hand and began to take it sensitively in the flowing movements of Phase 5 Ortho-Bionomy\(^3\) while making sure I did not disturb his drinking rhythms. After a few seconds, a visible wave of relaxation rippled through the baby's body, going up his leg and into his torso.

When she arrived, seven days later, for his second session, his mother told me that Thomas had been “a different baby” during the preceding week. He had settled to drink and sleep with much less trouble. His body had lost its tightness, and he was able to relax into his mother's arms for a cuddle. Thomas was also more outward looking and related more easily to her. These were all new experiences for her. She felt much more at ease too, because it had been difficult for her to cope with Thomas' obvious tension and distress. After the session, she had been able to rest with some confidence that Thomas would sleep long enough, even during the day, for her to be able to put her feet up and rest too.

**Practice Note 2: Facilitation of Learning**

Facilitation of learning has formed a large proportion of my practice, both in the form of workshops/classes and individual sessions. However, since the fieldwork project consisted of a five-day workshop, I have limited my description of group learning facilitation to the Fieldwork chapter, except for the inclusion of the following passage, quoted from the April 2008 Society of Ortho-Bionomy International Newsletter. It describes a weekend workshop experienced by its anonymous author, and reminds me of my own experience of learning Ortho-Bionomy, and of past students' descriptions of classes.

**A Personal Experience**

*As we lie down on tables to practice, the murmur of chatter begins to subside. The excited energy begins to settle into a channel or current that while electric is not chaotic... More like lying on the warm white sands of a tropical island as the warm, blue waters gentle embrace and engulf the body. There are moments of intense heat, as if the sun is*

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\(^3\) See Appendix 1 for a description of Phase 5 Ortho-Bionomy.
penetrating one’s body and then the cool of the water laps over the body again to bring the temperature to a more neutral place. The first hands are placed on my shoulders. I sigh a breath of relief. My shoulders drop, my body relaxes. Like a puppet on tight strings, my puppet master has let out the slack and my body is able to relax and at times perhaps even go totally limp. What an exquisite sensation to not have to hold anything...not one muscle has to stay tight if I choose to let it go. I keep my eyes closed and just allow this angel whose hands are on me to follow my lead or guide me to a place of release and healing. I am floating through dark spaces as if totally submerged in an ocean dark, yet totally safe; able to completely let go and let the energy, like water, carry me safely/securely to places of comfort and warmth...

I come back to this more earthly plane and am somewhat hesitant to accept that I am back in “this” space. It takes some time (sometimes minutes and sometimes hours) before I am able to return sufficiently to participate in the group again. But whether minutes or hours, I am grateful for the gift of release and love that has been shared with me. It is incredible what our bodies hold onto for years and how quickly it can be released when the right time, the right moment, the true belief, the leap of faith, the right hands all juxtapose to present the absolutely perfect second for a new birth of me. My gratitude to all who were there is immense and immeasurable. This weekend could not have happened with anyone else except those who were there and the perfection that was experienced could not have been without each of you (Anonymous, 2008, p. 4).

Practice Note 3: Place

In keeping with the style of this chapter, I want to provide impressions of place in my country practice. First, the word ‘country’ has significance in several senses. I have conducted most of my classes in the country of the Wurundjeri people, who are the traditional custodians of the land where I generally work and live. I am appreciative of their care of the land and for my being able, as a white woman of Australian, Irish and English heritage to live and work on Wurundjeri land. A second sense of the word country has to do with my deliberate location of the practice away from a city. I chose to establish both home and work in the country, because the area is so beautiful and often quiet, and because no services like mine were then available in Healesville, a semi-rural area outside Melbourne.
Choosing to locate my practice outside Melbourne has had consequences.

Most clients and students have said that they benefit from coming to the beauty and tranquility of Healesville, and others are pleased because they can attend sessions or classes near their rural home in the region. For some students however, the travel to Healesville is a burden, which co-teachers, fellow students and I try to relieve where possible. Students help each other by carpooling from Melbourne, and at times I have arranged sessions, tutorials or supervision appointments immediately after workshops for those who have travelled a long way, to save their needing to repeat the trip. Where possible, I sometimes accommodate distance students at my home or arrange accommodation nearby during workshops, to reduce their travel costs. When I set up consulting rooms in Melbourne, I had more clients and students than I did after I returned my main practice to Healesville, but that situation changed with time as clients and classes increased in number again. Individual sessions are still more popular than classes in Healesville, perhaps because spending a whole weekend (the usual workshop format), so far away from the family, is a big commitment.

**Practice Note 4: Practice History**

In Tasmania, between 1973 and 1983 I had set up and conducted a home, a family, three playgroups, a neighbourhood house, a primary school, and a learning centre, where massage and personal development workshops were facilitated by leaders such as Steve Biddulph (see Biddulph, 1984, 2006) and Danny Spijier. Until I just made this list tonight, 20 years after returning from Tasmania to Victoria, I had no idea I had established so many ‘enterprises’ in those years. The pace of my 10 years in Tasmania seemed quite leisurely. Yet it sounds as if I was quite busy, and I suppose I was. Most of these organisations were reasonably short-lived, lasting for less than two years, because I moved four times, during those years. At the time I saw this ‘fluidity’ as a sign of failure, but grew to realise nearly all of the groups served their purpose for the people involved.

When I was 34, I moved to Healesville, in the Yarra Valley, Victoria, with our two children. Since Jim had stayed temporarily in Tasmania, it was up to me to handle housekeeping and childcare. I took in a boarder to help with finances and soon found I could not manage the set hours of my full-time teaching job and travel, as well as arranging childcare before and after school. So I decided to set
up a massage practice in 1985. I found rooms below the local health food shop, and with Jim's contribution, I earned enough to resign from my job. My income was low, but the hours were more flexible than working full-time for a wage. Over time, I rented consulting rooms in several locations around Melbourne, but realised I really wanted to focus on working in Healesville. In time we built rooms onto our house so I could work from home. I designed the rooms, and helped build them to house my practice, because I was determined that they should suit the needs of my clients and me. The practice venue is described in Practice Note 6.

Practice Note 5: Whenever it Starts

A Session Begins

The phone rings.

A woman's voice asks for me.

"Speaking," I answer.

"My friend Ruby told me to ring you about my neck (or it might be her or his back / arm / ankle / child / partner). Nothing we have tried so far has helped. Is that the sort of work you do?"

"The main work I practise is called Ortho-Bionomy. I also do some Bowen Technique. They are both quite gentle ways of working with the body. What do you know about my work already? Then I can fill in the gaps so you can see whether my work might suit you."

"Ruby said you fixed her knee. She had been afraid to go out of the house in case her knee locked up or gave way. Even going to hospital did not seem to help her much. Now she feels really confident to walk anywhere. Can you stop the pain and tightness in my neck? It really gets to me, day and night. It is even hard to turn my head while I am driving."

"I am sorry to hear that. I do work with people's necks."

"Good, then I would like to make a time for you to fix mine."

"Well, I would be delighted to work with your neck. But I can't guarantee to 'fix' it. In fact, the fixing of your neck is up to your body. What I can do is to offer Ortho-"
Bionomy: gently supporting your body in some positions of comfort. By your
telling me what feels most comfortable, we can work together to encourage your
body to let go of uncomfortable or tight spots. This work might help to relieve the
pain in your neck, but I can’t be sure.”

“I would like to try it. When can I come?”

“I have an appointment available in six weeks and I recommend that you arrange
for two sessions. I find that having two sessions, about a week apart, leads to
more lasting results. You are welcome to later cancel the second appointment if
you wish, but if you don’t arrange both now, you’re unlikely to find a second time
a week away. Please wear loose, comfortable clothes when you come. Do you
have any questions? This is how to get to my rooms…..”

Practice Note 6: The Practice Venue

Consulting Rooms

By the time I was ready to build rooms for my practice, I knew what sized room
would be suitable for sessions, and for teaching, since I was setting up
workshops in Ortho-Bionomy by then.

I planned the rooms so that four consulting rooms open off a central area, each
with external access. It was my hope that those rooms might provide a transition
space for Ortho-Bionomy trainees. What I had found, when learning Ortho-
Bionomy, was that the step from being a student to becoming a practitioner was
big. When working with a client, I would sometimes have appreciated some
guidance from an experienced teacher or practitioner, but could not check with
anyone because I was already the most qualified Ortho-Bionomy person in
Australia. My new rooms were designed to let a traineeship-style arrangement
happen: a gentle bodywork clinic could be set up, with a Senior practitioner
available to offer suggestions to students. Each student could work in one of the
four individual consulting rooms, with easy access to an experienced practitioner,
in case they needed help. So far, I have only used the multiple rooms for clients
to rest in, or for me to conduct simultaneous Bowen Technique sessions, or for
other health practitioners to use for their clients. My energy for practical
innovations in my practice has been diverted, for many years, into postgraduate
studies. Once I finish this thesis, I hope to use the premises again for teaching
purposes.
Sustainable Building

Jim built the consulting rooms for me at our home, with help from other tradespeople. We wanted the building to be as comfortable and sustainable as possible. Our building materials were mainly local, and second hand where practicable. The building faces North, with big glass doors or windows that admit winter sun, and with wide eaves and verandas to prevent summer sun from entering. West and South have limited glass exposure, for more even internal temperatures through the year.

The rooms are heavily insulated using wool batts, or rockwool where sound insulation was also needed, such as in the walls between the consulting and waiting rooms. We painted with Biopaints, made of naturally grown plant oils in South Australia, to minimise allergies, and because we prefer to use fairly small and local manufacturers. The exterior design of the building takes the garden into account and is a little quirky, with a small verandah wrapping around a large, existing, liquid-amber tree. The building is closely surrounded by trees, which look beautiful, and help moderate the microclimate of the house and garden. Their protection means that we have not needed an air conditioner burring away as white noise, and drawing power.

Figure 2: View of path to practice, from front gate

Entry to the rooms is gained via a winding path, through a crowded garden, planted by my mother and me. The gravel path meanders along under 60 year
old trees: silver birch, pin-oak, liquid-amber, grevillea and flowering cherry, flanked by tea trees, azaleas and camellias. Masses of ferns, perfumed flowers and shrubs fill in the lower storey, and spill onto the path. Why write about the built and natural environment of my practice? I do so because it forms an integral part. The building and garden are structures clients see first as they enter for sessions, so the initial view needs to make a congruent statement of welcome and consideration.

Practice Note 7: This Particular Practice

One of a Kind

I have been conducting a practice that evolved in its own way. The work I was doing differed from the work of any other practitioner in the world because:

It combined four modalities that no-one else in the world used in combination. I know that because I am active in training Ortho-Bionomy practitioners in Australia, being a member of the Society of Ortho-Bionomy Australia (SOBA) Practitioner Review Committee, and keep abreast of developments in the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International (SOBI, 2006). Very few people throughout the world, at the time of my commencing research, had studied and were using Ortho-Bionomy and Bowen Technique together. Through familiarity with Process Work training, I knew most of the people who combined Process Work with Ortho-Bionomy or Open Space Technology. None had studied all four modalities.

Basic cranial work, which carries the essence of my individual sessions has not yet been fully taught. I know this because I developed the work and only gave one short international class during the Ortho-Bionomy Conference in Austin, Texas from October 2nd to 5th 1997, plus two weekend workshops in the techniques involved to different groups, in Victoria and Queensland. Then I realised I wanted to gain more insight into the work I do, and I stopped teaching cranial work, in order to embark on postgraduate study.

My work is idiosyncratic. When I work, I respond to feedback happening in the moment. I make plenty of space for processes to unfold, and am prepared to be surprised about the directions sessions take, so all sessions are different from any other.
The geographic location of my practice was chosen for its beauty, sense of place and ease. Instead of continuing my thriving business in two main Melbourne locations, I decided to conduct sessions and classes on the fringe of Melbourne in Healesville, located in the foothills of the Yarra Valley. After a session there are restful activities for families to do in the area near my rooms, such as visiting several large parks and an Australian animal sanctuary and for adults in the form of many wineries and beauty spots nearby.

The venue for my practice was purpose-built to be friendly to clients and the environment and is almost ideally designed for both sessions and training. My main consulting room is surrounded with beautiful trees and birdsong. The classroom is also in a peaceful garden located with plenty of withdrawal spaces for reflection or creative expression.

Consequently, on many counts, my practice and the research into it, are both unique.
INTRODUCTION: Researching a Practice

Like many parts of my research and thesis, the preface that you have just been reading is a ‘bricolage’: “that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b, p. 5). Rather than using Levi-Strauss’ (1966, p. 17) explanation of bricoleur as a: “Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person”, (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b, p. 5), I prefer a different twist to the term. My research process and thesis are reminiscent of an aspect of past agricultural shows held in many country towns around Australia. At these shows, the women in the local community would proudly enter a competition category called “One Woman’s Work”. Whilst walking through a show’s arts and crafts hall with my mother when I was a child, I would discover these labours of love, perhaps grouped together between the rich, baked fruit cake competition display and the decorated dolls exhibition. The entries I hark back to now inspired me to imagine the characters, effort, and stories behind them. From memory, each entry in this special category consisted of three items created by one competitor, and each entry would differ.

One woman might have entered a cross-stitched apron; a plate of three assorted scones (pumpkin, fruit and plain), and a jar of clear quince jelly. Another woman might have offered a light-as-a-feather passionfruit cream sponge, a floral arrangement (from her own garden) and a crocheted doily. Or perhaps there would be a plate of lamingtons, a basket of eggs and a set of drawn-thread tablemats. There could be a smoothly knitted matinee set of baby’s bonnet, jacket, and booties in palest lemon 3-ply wool, a massive, dark green, home-grown, Queensland Blue pumpkin and a plate of pikelets (drop scones) with generous, gleaming dollops of tart, red, cherry-plum jam and piled with softly whipped cream. Each woman’s offering displayed her talents and the breadth of her interests and skills. I used to wonder how the judges managed to weigh up those disparate offerings, just as I wonder how a thesis, such as the one I have written, can be assessed. I await the result with interest.

My ‘cross-stitched apron’ may be represented by the description I offer of my practice’s philosophy and praxis. My ‘plate of three assorted scones’ puts me in mind of the main modalities I use when I work, and my ‘jar of clear quince jelly’ could be the translucent fieldwork participants and I conducted. No one component entered in the local agricultural show’s “One Woman’s Work”
competition was likely to be as impeccably finished as a single entry in a distinct
category such as the “Decorated Cake” or the “Embroidered Scene in Long-
stitch” might be. Because the skills required to prepare a manifold entry needed
to be wide-ranging, as they did for this transdisciplinary thesis, circumstances
allowed insufficient opportunity to finesse each aspect of a presentation. This
lack of refinement need not only be seen as a drawback. Overall I hope that my
offering allows for breadth, individuality and interest, because of its stretch
across disciplines. The research and thesis are far from being “one woman’s
work” in any case, since many women, men, some children, and even animals
have taken an active role in their development and implementation.

Several types of bricolage appear in small and large iterations throughout the
thesis to form a fractal effect. For example, the preface, itself an interpretive
bricolage of practice interactions, influenced by my personal history and so on,
contains vignettes of narrative bricolage: stories of people and situations I have
experienced. The preface antecedes and relates to the thesis, which can be
seen as a larger fractal expression. Here I, as interpretive bricoleur, have
assembled:

... a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations.
This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a
sequence of representations connecting the parts to the
whole (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b, p. 9).

Other chapters and parts display different facets of the bricoleur’s craft, and
although no part can clearly be categorised as representing only one facet and
not another, I can give rough examples. The DVD that accompanies the thesis
can be described as a “montage” because it consists of a blending together of
footage, photography and sound to produce “a new creation” (Denzin and
Lincoln, 2003b, p. 6). The videos invite viewers to draw on layers of imagery and
sound to build their own interpretation of the materials provided, so they can also
be seen as an example of political bricolage (p. 9). An impression of montage
may also be present in the written text of this thesis, assuming that you, the
reader, continue the palimpsest effect on page 190, which I created when
editing, by adding further interpretations as you read. As Denzin & Lincoln say,
when describing:

texts based on metaphors of montage ... many different
things are going on at the same time – different voices,
different perspectives, points of view, angles of vision ...
They move from the personal to the political, the local to the
historical and the cultural. These are dialogical texts. They
presume an active audience. They create spaces for give-
and-take between reader and writer (Denzin and Lincoln,
2003b, pp 7-8).

Other roles of bricoleur emerge during different parts of the thesis, in such parts
as methodology, (methodological bricoleur) and praxis (theoretical bricoleur):

… [t]he researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist works between and
within competing and overlapping perspectives and
paradigms (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b, p 9).

By bringing together different theorists and perspectives in the following
chapters, plus your various interpretations, we have opportunities for the co-
creation of a patchwork quilt that offers space for emergent views.

What is this Research (1)?

The thesis, and the research it describes, privileges the body, clarifying its role
as the sentient site of an individual’s psyche, and social interactions. Trusting the
body’s process and guidance is the rub of ethics, decision-making, emotional
and interpersonal life. The body speaks, in an utterly simple language, of our
place here in the cosmos. It teaches us to befriend ourselves. Too few of us
listen. I want everyone to wake up to the body’s wisdom, and learn from the
dreams, symptoms, relationships and world events that happen to them as well
as the other ways in which they see themselves. This might be your only
opportunity. You are here, now, in this body. Every moment you live is unique.
Even if you believe in reincarnation, you are unlikely to ever live this moment
again. Make the most of it. In particular I am addressing these words to myself.

Rather than locating my research purely in its theoretical context, I prefer to
consider where it is situated as a praxis (linking practice and theory together).
Initially, then, I discuss the importance of practice as it flows together with theory.
Another important aspect of research context is the style of writing. In keeping
with Pauls’ preference for oral teaching of Ortho-Bionomy (Pauls, 1993), I have
generally chosen a conversational and informal approach and style that include
stories and creative aspects (see Higgs and Titchen, 2001a; Neville, 2000a). The
theory nesting this research is embodied, emergent, inclusive and
transdisciplinary. It visits and partially inhabits the integral structure of
consciousness (Gebser, 1991). My research is not so much complex (although it
often feels that way to me) as widely spread. It dips into many disciplines and
endeavours.
I wanted to investigate my practice, and my role as practitioner-teacher, and to discover how to research practice knowledge (see Higgs and Titchen, 2001b) and expertise. The study considers the theoretical (such as Gusdorf, 1980; Welton, 1998), practical (Kain and Berns, 1992), historical (refer to Combs, 2005; Mitchell, 2001), geographical (placed in Angier, 1999; Tacey, 1995), personal (shared by Anonymous, 2008; Polanyi, 1958) and methodological (see Colquoun and Kelleheear, 1993) context of the practice and its research.

Praxis Substance

To say that I am researching my practice might suggest I am making a dispassionate and disciplined excursion through a logical series of self-evident steps. In order to research a topic I need to devise and follow a system within a structure (Higgs, 1998, p. 137). So far so good. The system is devised, the structure in place (described in the Structure chapter) and deemed satisfactory by me.

Further to learning more about my practice through collaboration with research participants, I consider how my practice might be improved and what it offers to the field of practice knowledge and expertise (Higgs, Titchen, and Neville, 2001). This aspect of my research stands philosophically in realism and is located in the critical research paradigm, where I use interviews, case studies, stories, texts and reflection (Higgs, 2001, p. 54). The data analysis combines the paradigms of realism, idealism and media in a spiral of personal and scholarly reflection and analysis (Higgs, 2001, p. 54). At its heart, my practice has to do with respect for the wisdom of the body, put into practice through noticing and following physical feedback especially concerning comfort. So phenomenology fits naturally as an approach (Merleau-Ponty, 2004).

This focus of my research on the body is not to do with just one aspect of existence, but with the ground or matrix of being, so the body is central to my practice and to researching it. This centrality of the body, to human existence, my practice, and this research, should not suggest that the body is an easy topic to write about. In fact, there are several reasons for the difficulty I experienced in doing my research. Most basic, perhaps, is my relationship with my own body. Writing my thesis has been a painful struggle for me. It was my teleological belief that, pain being a sign of something being amiss, I should explore its causes in order to be writing and researching ‘appropriately.’
What is this Research (2)?

This research enquires into my practice, which is based on a form of gentle bodywork called Ortho-Bionomy and includes Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology. These three modalities, which are described in some detail in the Modalities chapter are at the heart of both my practice and my research. Here I am using the word ‘practice’ to indicate both the customary way of working and being that I practise and the small business that I established in 1995 called The Fernshaw Centre. When I say ‘business’, I include many aspects such as the organisation, sociology and design elements of my practice. I use that word business to differentiate these elements from the process of practising my hands-on work. Both my business and the way I practise were defined in some detail in the Preface.

Huff studied Weber’s ideas about organisational change from “charismatic authority” to a “routinized and bureaucratic organisational structure” (Huff, 2002, p. iv). He used Ortho-Bionomy (OB) as an organisational example on which to apply Weberian theory. His empirical case study of Ortho-Bionomy involved 30 qualitative interviews relating to a 20 to 25 year period in the history of Ortho-Bionomy. Huff looked at how Ortho-Bionomy gradually developed its present organisational structure, work and philosophy from its early days with a charismatic founder Arthur Lincoln Pauls. He considered the issue of Ortho-Bionomy developing legitimation as an alternative health care system. He discussed the ramifications of Weber’s work relating the tensions between charisma and bureaucracy to sociology. He found that his study of Ortho-Bionomy was representative of “a range of alternative organizations” (Huff, 2002, p. 240). He claimed that in his study: “(t)he generalized nature of Ortho-Bionomy made it an outstanding choice to test Weber’s ideas empirically” (Huff, 2002, p. 241).

So, although Huff and I both based our organisational case study research on Ortho-Bionomy and although Huff used interviews and stories about Ortho-Bionomy and I did that too, there are basic differences. Huff used Weber’s theory as a yardstick against which he measured Ortho-Bionomy. He analysed his findings using: “a five variable model: Biography, Relation to the Founder, Professional Development, Social Forces - the Social Institutions, and Work and Philosophy to delineate the evolvement of the organisation” (Huff, 2002, p. iv). I find his research quite formal and structured whereas mine is more chaotic and informal in tone. This was contributed to by my use of first person writing and following a serendipitous process rather than guiding the research. Huff’s is the
type of research I originally tried to set up, but could not manage because the
process kept tugging me away. His research seems solid, valid, real and
dependable. All the same, when I come away after reading Huff’s thesis, I feel a
bit uncertain, unsure about what it teaches me regarding Ortho-Bionomy, or
Weber’s relevance to my practice. There is certainly useful information for me,
especially from excerpts embedded in the data, such as the founder’s dream
(Huff, 2002, p. 42). I also take heart from reading excerpts such as:

Excerpt 2.6

My wife had taken the previous course, she came and did it
on me after one course, and I was completely sold. I said oh
wow; this is so much better (structural work) I am just going to
do this!

(Taken from Interview 12-14-94A) (Huff, 2002, p. 49).

This quote is from an early student of Ortho-Bionomy, who was convinced to
learn Ortho-Bionomy after his wife demonstrated what she had learned of it
during a class. His words show similarities to stories I am hearing now, told by
present clients and students of Ortho-Bionomy. For example, at a class recently
conducted by Bruce Stark (Stark, 2007), I met a participant who was introduced
to Ortho-Bionomy by her cousin (Rizzo, 2007). She was given a session of the
work by this cousin, who had received just one session of Ortho-Bionomy from a
practitioner, and had never attended any training. A client of mine also taught his
physiotherapist how to do some Ortho-Bionomy, on the basis of having received
several sessions, but no classes, from me (Moulder, 2006). I am utterly delighted
to hear that Ortho-Bionomy is so easy to pick up. Since it is safe to use, this
gives me pleasure. It reflects what appealed to me in the founder’s words – that
he hoped Ortho-Bionomy would be something for the person in the street to
exchange with ‘friends’, family members and neighbours (Pauls, 1993) not only
used by professionals.

Research Praxis

This research locates my work in a theoretical and practical context, exemplified
by a five-day intensive fieldwork project with a group of eight participants at my
home and consulting rooms. My practice is based on two main ways of working
with the body: Ortho-Bionomy (SOBI, 2006); and Bowen Technique (Navratil,
2003), especially the former, which is the focal modality (or method) of my work
and this research. Ortho-Bionomy is a respectful way to attend to aspects of the
body’s self-organising ability, also known as emergence. Self-organisation can be defined as the:

\[\text{ability of a system to spontaneously arrange its components or elements in a purposeful (non-random) manner, under appropriate conditions but without the help of an external agency. It is as if the system knows how to 'do its own thing'. Many natural systems such as cells, chemical compounds, galaxies, organisms and planets show this property. (n.a., 2009).}\]

The work basically involves taking the body into positions of comfort, allowing time and space for the easing of pain and tension.

In the research I have also explored two other modalities: Open Space Technology, designed by Harrison Owen (1994) for group meetings, and Process Work (sometimes known as Process Oriented Psychology), developed by Arnold Mindell and colleagues in Switzerland and USA (Mindell, 1982). Like Ortho-Bionomy (Kain and Berns, 1992), these two ways of working also provide time, space and structure for issues of concern to be resolved. All are described in the Modalities chapter.

This research follows on from my Masters research (Baensch, 2002b) about the effects of my learning, life experiences and work, on my body. This time my focus is on researching my practices using two meanings of the word ‘practice’. One meaning relates to the hands-on work I carry out and the principles and concepts behind that, which I will generally call my ‘work’. As well, I touch on aspects of my practice as an enterprise in the community.

The main research ‘method’ I drew on was a series of nested case studies (referring to materials written by Laing, 1965; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). This nest of studies considered the researcher, and research process, as an enquiry in itself, and as a context for other parts of the process. The results of that study can be seen in the theoretical sections of the thesis that describe the context for my work, which I believed to be most important for this research. Discovering and representing the philosophical basis for gentle bodywork, especially Ortho-Bionomy, is still virtually new to academia, and it needs to be laid out in the most faithful way possible. Although I realise and hope that the research material will be interpreted in countless ways, its context needs to provide some subtle and exact conditions. For example, I think this study needs to set Ortho-Bionomy out in plain words, as close to the cadences and free spirited presence of story and
spoken word as possible, and to demonstrate my particular emphases and biases: to make plain the way I employ Ortho-Bionomy and other modalities in my work. I think I have managed to do that. It needs to provide conditions, and communicate skills for the reader’s further development of self-trust and love, as personally and attentively as I know how. I feel shy about taking up this eldership role and writing in such a bold way about it. You may well be streets ahead of me in the arena of self-care and love. If so, then: “Woof” (exclaimed quite often by Arnold Mindell with the Process Work Community, 2006)!

Nested in the research undergirding is a description of my work and bodywork practice as a unique, ‘intrinsic case study’ as defined by Stake (1995). Within that case study are other studies of individual clients and a group. All eight research participants in the five-day, residential, group project, conducted in my home in Healesville, carried out an informal, personal case study based on the questions “Who am I?” and “Who am I now?” (after Wagner, 1990 p. 5). When the bunyip of Berkeleys Creek went in search of his identity, along the way he was confronted with entrenched beliefs and challenges. He sought and tested several ways of carrying out his personal research. For instance, he encountered and tested the usefulness of a methodology of stereotypical experimental, scientific persuasion. He found it empty for him. He continued his search, settling on a method of cooperative qualitative enquiry (along the lines of Heron, 1996) and peer review, which satisfied his needs more fully, at that time and place.

My research experiences have been similar to those of the bunyip. For example, early in the process, I discussed my plans with a medical researcher (Littlejohn, 1996) who told me that bodywork cannot be rigorously researched because it cannot be set up as a double blind experiment. This had a similar effect on me to the effect the scientist had on the bunyip: I felt rather empty, inadequate and set back by such a comment. Perhaps Littlejohn had no such intention, but I faltered in my quest for ways to set up my research. When I met someone who seemed like me, (for example Lloyd, 2005; Plasto, 2005) however, I gained impetus and inspiration for my task, just as I did from my supervisor, Dr. Debbie Horsfall’s, constructive criticism of my writing (Horsfall, 2008).

The methodology for this research is evolving (Ciny, 1999) heuristic (Ameisen, 1997; Teilhard de Chardin, 1961; Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1996), and process oriented (Anzieu, 1984; Daly, 1992; Gebser, 1970; Hatch, 2003; Mindell, 2000b; Schupbach and Vikkelsoe, 1994). For a long time, it did not have a name. I could describe it, but not label it succinctly.
Having arrived at almost the final moments of my research and writing, I now see that one meta-label for my methodological approach is relatively accurate, that of ‘bricolage’, inserted retrospectively, early in the Preface as well as in the Introduction and Methods chapters. When I first wrote this Introduction chapter several years ago, bricolage had not seemed as relevant as it became when I neared the end of the journey and looked back. I did not see the similarity then between the bricolage described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) and Tierney (1997) and the ‘One Woman’s Work at the local agricultural show’ style of methodology I had used. Once Debbie suggested I had “bricoloured” the research, I looked further (for example Cartledge, 2004; Kincheloe, 2001, 2005) and liked what I saw. So I returned to several points in the thesis and added the contribution of bricolage (appearing here in blue font) to illuminate the earlier parts of the research from this late vantage point.

Autobiographical elements

The research incorporates autobiography (portrayed in Cavarero, 2000; Friedeman, 2001; Olney, 1980), reflexivity (spoken of in Herz, 1997; Tierney and Lincoln, 1997; Whiteford, 2005), aporia (defined in Macklin and Whiteford, 2006; Shawver, n.d.), and phenomenology (enlivened for me by Abram, 1997; Merleau-Ponty, 1992). It is personal, and as a consequence naturally autobiographical. More accurately, I should say it involves self-portraiture: glimpses rather than an attempt to tell the whole story of a life, but I use both of those terms somewhat interchangeably. I reflect on personal aspects of my life, and it is central to the methodology that participants do too, as much as they are willing. Throughout the research, and this report of it, are snapshots of moments in the lived experience of participants.

Why did I choose a partly autobiographical methodology? Whatever methodology is chosen or designed, research is personal. The researcher exerts enormous influence on research processes and results through inclusions, exclusions, emphases and so on. Even experimental design cannot be entirely objective or exactly replicable, only relatively so (see Shepherd, 1993). Since the researcher invariably wields influence, I think personal beliefs and background should be transparent in the research and incorporated into the report. This research project is particularly personal, for all participants, dealing with an intimate subject in a reflexive way, so encouraging participants to consider their
own embodied relativity within the context of their personal lives was vital. The report could not be written at arms’ length.

There are now multiple forms of reflexivity...writers make their ontologies and theories of existence explicit...constantly working against the sting of memory, the new writer uses personal troubles and lived biography as the starting place for critical ethnography (Denzin, 1997, p. 268).

Another word for critical ethnography is autoethnography (see Ellis, 1997), which is a term I use later in the thesis.

Self-trust and the Body’s Wisdom

As a child I lived in a dream, or nightmare, often experiencing long periods of terror. Although (or maybe because) I competed successfully in many different sports, I had no sense of being present and comfortable in my body. I was encouraged to extract the highest possible performance from my body in the interests of school team success. For example, when competing in a high jump event during an interschool athletics carnival, I slashed my calf muscle on the spiked shoes I was wearing each time I jumped. It was raining and my run-up was muddy and slippery, so I needed to wear the spikes in order to stay on my feet as I ran. Despite blood running down my leg from the long slashes, I continued to compete. It had been drummed into me that the good of the school came before my own comfort. I still bear scars on my leg from that event. It was impossible for me to pull out of the competition for several reasons: I was so cold there was little pain from the cuts and I could not give myself the space to consider what was happening, in case I was labelled a wimp or worse, someone who was unwilling to put the good of the school first. I was at the bottom of the pecking order at school and wanted to earn respect in any way I could. Injury was a small price to pay.

Finally, my body was a painful and embarrassing impediment that I dragged around with me. I felt ugly, useless, and as if I presumptuously took up space on earth that someone of greater worth could have more appropriately inhabited. In year 12, my attitude was reflected back to me by an experienced and respected teacher at the competitive school I attended, who told me my mid-year results

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4 I loosely define ‘embodied relativity’ as a sense of being relatively present in the physical body. As I detail shortly, while growing up, I was mostly at odds with my body, as if beside, or distant from, myself. No amount of physical activity helped me to feel embodied. In fact, striving in sport may have even driven me away from myself and further from self-awareness. Learning about Ortho-Bionomy and other natural health care methods helped me to feel at home and present in my body (as described in Baensch, 2002b).
were inadequate. She firmly informed me that the school I attended had limited places available, and that I was occupying the space of someone who deserved to study there at year 12 level. As it happened, at Matriculation I received honours in three subjects, including the one she taught me, perhaps to ‘get my own back’. But good results did nothing to lift me from a deepening despondency. Many years passed before I began to feel as if I was worthy of being alive. The change did not come about through appreciating my own good deeds, but rather through beginning to feel at home and comfortable in my own body. As a child and young adult, I was always too busy or distracted to notice and appreciate the magnificence of my fellow human beings and me.

Once I began to pay attention, I started to experience a great deal of wonderment about the incredible capacities of living (and later non-living) beings. Like Abram (as in, 2005) even rocks and planets and grains of sand provide me with a certain amount of inspiration, along with plants and animals, and especially humans. I live in awe of the body’s wisdom and everyday self-organising capacity. I am surprised at societal attitudes, such as disrespect and toughness, towards the body. I would love everybody to appreciate and celebrate their miraculous existence. That is one of my reasons for continuing, developing and researching my practice of gentle bodywork.

**My primary aim** in doing this research was to learn how to research my practice. As far as I can tell, both the way I work and my practice are fairly unusual. In Australia, I was the first basic practitioner, senior practitioner and teacher of Ortho-Bionomy. At every step, especially because I was isolated by distance from the international community of Ortho-Bionomy, itself limited in number at that time in the 1980s and 1990s, I had no role models at hand. My response was to develop my work according to principles that felt right to me. I was privileged since I rarely needed to compromise. For example, my husband Jim was a plumber. We found that when my practice had few clients, Jim’s plumbing business went well, whereas when little plumbing work was forthcoming, my bodywork was always in demand. We always had enough income for our needs, so I was not forced to advertise for clients, try to rush my business, or borrow money to set up the practice. In hindsight I can say that I went along at what seemed to be a slow but natural pace, doing my work in a way that felt right to me. At the time though, not having a crystal ball meant that I often felt nervous that my business would not support us when required. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, until I moved into postgraduate study, I had the opposite problem, with all available sessions booked some three months ahead.
Then if someone wanted a session urgently, it was difficult to arrange time, and I began to feel a little locked in.

When it came time to embark on research, again I have been fortunate enough to be able to let the research find its own way. When a method felt to me as if it went against the grain, I was able to drop it and try something else, so the research emerged and more or less organised itself. Of course I influenced what happened through my involvement in and observation of the process, but, for instance, being granted a scholarship for several years let me relax into the research process more than if I had needed to support myself during that time. In this way, I could ‘muck around’ with ideas and methods until they felt appropriate and so I think I have gradually learned to ‘conduct’ something approaching integral research (Gebser, 1991; Neville, 1999).

My biggest lessons in research were often somewhat incidental or synchronous, with fascinating conversations, books and television or radio programs turning up at just the appropriate moment, or when my mind was going in another direction. Later in the thesis, I give an example of discovering apposite resources in the form of Th’ L’zy G’tl’s M’t’h’d, which seems to me exemplary of self-organisation (Owen, 2005a; Owen, 2007), expressing itself. I learned a lot through reading widely around and beyond bodywork to discover where my ways of working fit in disciplines such as philosophy, areas of psychology, science, language and visual arts, education and so on. I applied that learning by conducting fieldwork while continuing to read, and presenting papers at various conferences and colloquia. Through a spiral of immersion in theoretical and practical experiences, my research methodology and findings emerged.

I know a great deal more about research methods and the context of my work now. That has helped me, through reading and fieldwork, to find factors I consider important in my practice, such as ways of teaching, and discovering how to design (or allow the evolution of) an appropriate methodology for researching the practice.

The secondary aim of my research was to learn more about how to communicate my ‘work’ to the general public so people can share it with their families and friends and for their own comfort and health. When I say work, I am not restricting myself to Ortho-Bionomy. I also include the metaskills (Mindell, 1995a), the theoretical and practical and the amount of ‘teaching’ I need to use. Whether I am capable of changing my behaviour to my satisfaction in applying my findings to my practice or not remains to be seen. The research has already
changed me by giving me multiple, theoretical and practical perspectives, the space to observe myself at work, and the opportunity to try new approaches to sharing learning. For example, I had the chance to incorporate Open Space Technology, and some Process Oriented Psychology exercises, into a workshop and see how participants respond to them.

Why Have I Conducted This Research?

There are several parts to that question.

The first is: why do research? To my knowledge, the applied use of Ortho-Bionomy has not yet been researched in a formal or academic way anywhere in the world except in my Masters study (Baensch, 2002b). Michael Huff (2002) conducted the only other academic research of Ortho-Bionomy I have so far been able to locate. My focus has been different from that of Huff’s enquiry into the professional organisation. My aim has been to begin to make the principles and practice of Ortho-Bionomy more readily available to people, in a valid and rigorous way.

Why was this one of my research aims? I believe Ortho-Bionomy made a huge difference to my life. From being uncomfortable, depressed and out of contact with my body and environment, I was able to settle, be present and feel much more alive. Other people who encounter Ortho-Bionomy tell similar stories (Baensch, 1985 to 2004). The work is safe and relatively easy to learn, and is available as self-care. I want other people to find relief from pain, greater flexibility, and an ability to be embodied, like I did. So far Ortho-Bionomy is not widely known around the world and I hope my research might make it available to others. My use of Ortho-Bionomy led to my establishing and conducting a certain type of practice. In order to know more about my practice, with a view to improving it appropriately and making it available to others, I needed to study it. A first step was to find out how to aptly research my practice.

Secondly: why have I conducted this research? As I grew older, I realised that some of the attitudes and methods of working that I have developed in my practice might be lost if I did not record them in a methodical way. Clients have reported major changes in their lives after having two or three sessions of bodywork with me (please see preface for examples). I wanted other people to learn these ways of working while I am alive to share them. A small number of clients have told me, after their sessions, that they had been ready to commit suicide because their pain was so strong and unrelenting and that relief from the
pain after receiving gentle bodywork gave them a new lease of life. I would like others to experience that relief as well. This research aims to help me share my work with others.

In 1992, when I heard a course in Social Ecology was being offered at the University of Western Sydney, I was motivated to apply. I wanted support and guidance with learning how to conduct research and I had an abiding interest in Process Work, which was an optional part of the postgraduate Social Ecology degree at the time. Hearing about the course at a Process Work intensive and having the chance to discuss prerequisites and what was involved in it with people I had met at the intensive was important to me. My distant interest in further study was catalysed by that human link to the university and news of the course content. Once I had completed my coursework Masters degree in Social Ecology, I remained keen to deepen my research learning. As I learned more about research and delved further into the philosophy and history behind my work, I felt unsatisfied. New questions arose and I became intolerant of superficial answers. I wanted to have the time and space to gather a wider and deeper understanding of what I do and how to communicate that developing knowledge to others in a simple and graspable way. Before engaging with this PhD I felt hungry for more engagement. My fear was that I might devote further years to yet another study and come away feeling even less satisfied than I did after my Masters candidature. Luckily for me I feel, at least partially, that my gamble has paid off in the end, as I hope to explain in this thesis.

This leads me onto a third aspect of my original question: why this research? The answer to this part is given throughout the thesis. In short, I would say that I needed to design research that fitted my ontology, epistemology, and therefore the principles behind my practice and life, such as following a fluid process, observing and responding to embodied signals. I tried various methodologies only to find they led me away from my purpose or were foreign to my beliefs and assumptions. During the research process I explored several methods, such as experimental methods, that did not suit my ability or topic.

Once I realised positivist, reductionist and mainly quantitative research were unlikely to suit my needs, I read a large number of books and attended a conference to learn more about qualitative methods. Aspects I thought would contribute to the way I wanted to conduct my research emerged as I read and listened. Here I provide some examples, since a comprehensive list would be too involved. Although I was told by Henk Bak (1999) that the way I approached my
gentle bodywork practice was phenomenological and that this ‘attitude’ might also suit my research, I did not take up his suggestion immediately. First I wanted to be sure I could not feel at home with quantitative research, by reading more about science (Bauer, 1992; Capra, 1983; Gleick, 1987; Kuhn, 1970; Shepherd, 1993) and research methods (for example Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a; Graziano and Raulins, 1993; Kellehear, 1993). I considered using mixed methods (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Reinharz, 1992) and have kept that option open throughout my research. Statistics have rarely engaged me. I get distracted from them by wondering how they were obtained and whether they can be interpreted in other, even opposite ways. I feel more at ease and informed by stories and contextual details. Debbie Horsfall suggested reading Strauss and Corbin (1990) in order to consider grounded theory. Several themes in this book interested me, such as developing a strong theoretical context through ‘literature’, ‘professional’ and ‘personal experience’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, pp. 42-43); balancing creativity with science through asking questions and ‘maintaining … scepticism’ (p.45). The coding procedures, however, were too complex for me at the time when I first read the book, so I continued my search.

The idea of ‘Do It Yourself Social Research’ (Wadsworth, 1984), appealed to me, since it seemed democratic and accessible. I wanted my research to be simple, ‘understandable’ and ‘manageable’ (Wadsworth, 1984, p. 1). I believed that:

Research is something that anyone can do, and everyone ought to do. It is, simply, collecting information and thinking systematically about it … Useful research on many problems can be done with small resources, and should be a regular part of the life of any thoughtful person engaged in social action (Connell in Wadsworth, 1984, p. 5).

Then I came to “the first rule … [w]ork out what are your questions” (p. 7). At that stage I did not know what my questions were, despite agonising over deciding, so I moved on, keeping participatory action research in the back of my mind and returning to it from time to time. My next foray involved Co-operative Inquiry (Heron, 1996). Much of this methodology suited my needs and I wanted to use it. I was somewhat familiar with co-counselling (Jackins, 1972) which influenced the development of co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1996, p. 5) and I liked Heron’s holistic approach to research “the interplay within the co-inquirers of thought and experience …” (Heron, 1996, p. 16) and education. Then I began to feel uncomfortable about sharing responses to bodywork in a group. By this stage of my process I had decided to offer some days of bodywork to a group of
participants. I wanted them each to have space to respond to the bodywork before sharing. I did not know if I could be sensitive enough to sense a participant’s possible discomfort during a group session. The work I do is both personal and public. It was important to me that no participant’s thoughts or experiences should be made public or risk being critiqued during the research project (Heron, 1996, p. 6). On reading Heron’s book again now, I see the stages of inquiry in a new light, noticing passages I overlooked in the early stages of designing my research. For example, Heron states:

I do not consider that adopting these stages, explicitly or tacitly, is the way to do a co-operative inquiry; it is only a way. There cannot be in this field such a thing as the one and only right, proper or correct method (p. 49).

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I can imagine tailoring co-operative inquiry to suit my own and the group’s needs.

The process of engaging in flesh and blood research has taught me a little about what to expect when conducting such a project. Each time I had read about co-operative inquiry or action research (Bawden, 1989; Dick, 1991; Reason, 1995) before I had gathered sufficient experience to ‘make the methods my own’. I had a big task, which was to train myself to do research and simultaneously be very sensitive to developing a methodology that allowed and indeed strenuously supported fluidity. I was mindful of Pauls’³ injunction (Pauls, 1993) to keep Ortho-Bionomy malleable: free to evolve and shift, and of his preference for Ortho-Bionomy to be passed on by word of mouth rather than being frozen into a textual form. The attitudes of fluidity and nothingness were at the forefront of my mind as I progressed. In my sensitivity to those metaskills, on the one hand, I probably overlooked possibilities I could have used. On the other hand, “whatever happened is the only thing that could have happened” (Owen, 1994) for the research I conducted with my co-researchers.

With greater research experience (such as I am beginning to develop now) I might have had the confidence to adapt co-operative inquiry to suit the needs of the project. As it was, I used aspects of co-operative inquiry in my methodology. For instance, Heron describes the conversion of “(4) four kinds of belief” into “well-founded knowledge” (Heron, 1996, p. 53). He speaks of:

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³ Arthur Lincoln Pauls was the Founder of Ortho-Bionomy. He was a Judo teacher in England who learned Osteopathy and developed Ortho-Bionomy as a way of drawing his understanding about energy together with osteopathy to create a homoeopathic and subtle health care system.
... propositional belief in some statement ... presentational belief as a hunch about, rather than a full intuition of, significant pattern ... practical belief as the process of acquiring a skill rather than knowing how to do it ... experiential belief as the inchoate participation in the presence of something rather than a richly fulfilled resonance with it (Heron, 1996, p. 53).

During this research, I used “conceptual, propositional knowing” (Heron, 1996, p.170) for planning and validation through asking questions. One of those questions I asked myself about sharing my knowledge was: “Is this form of the practice (of sharing) the most effective?” (Heron, 1996, p. 171) I used presentational knowing, expressed through art-forms. This was evident as I demonstrated Ortho-Bionomy releases to participants during the project. Taking and supporting the ‘model’s’ body into a position of comfort can be seen as a type of fluid, co-operative ‘sculpture’ between the observations, postures, expressions and questions of both the model and me.

Practical knowing (knowing how) is evident in the research as participants and I developed our bodywork skills. We immersed ourselves in hands-on learning through demonstration and practice, as well as feedback from a variety of models and observers and from what felt right in our own bodies as we learned. Experiential knowing was also present. During the five days of the project: “... direct, lived being-in-the-world” (Heron, 1996, p. 33) gave all participants an embodied grounding for their other ways of knowing. We all balanced the knowledge we gained, avoiding the common bias of a great deal of research towards propositional knowledge, which is often “... regarded both as pre-eminent and self-sufficient” (Heron, 1996, p. 33).

I have needed to struggle with my own history and education to allow myself to value other forms of knowledge as equal partners with and contributors to propositional knowledge. To help me focus on keeping a balance in the research and my reporting of it in this thesis, I have needed to remind myself of Heron’s words regarding the bias towards intellectual, Aristotelian knowledge.

This bias has a huge influence on both the quantitative and qualitative research coming out of universities. This research rests on the unquestioned assumption that intellectual knowledge is the only valid and respectable outcome of systematic inquiry. This one-dimensional account of research outcomes offends a fundamental principle of systemic logic, the logic of whole systems, which is that the relative
autonomy of the part is interdependent with the mutual interaction of parts within the whole (Heron, 1996, p. 33).

The design of the fieldwork project acknowledged more than propositional knowledge, described by Heron as: “... a set of intellectual statements published in systematic form” (p. 31).

Intellectual statements are included in the thesis, and balanced by other forms of knowledge emanating from the body: creativity, emotions, dreaming and so on. Propositional knowledge appears as "... theoretical ... knowledge ... formal and explicit ..." (Higgs et al., 2001, p. 5). This type of knowledge may be found represented in the Modalities chapter when I give a description of the main modalities I use in my practice. In this research, propositional knowledge forms a team with presentational knowledge such as that which developed during the fieldwork video interviews, when participants showed and spoke about their art, employing creativity and intuition. Presentational knowledge is:

... evident in intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns as expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical and verbal art-forms ... (Heron, 1996, p. 33).

An example of presentational knowledge, seen during the fieldwork came about at the end of the five-day project, when participants collected their various forms of expression together and ordered them, ready to talk about their self-research process on video. Propositional knowledge is also supported by experiential knowledge: “... evident only in actually meeting and feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing” (Heron, 1996, p. 33).

To Heron, experiential knowledge is central to research and forms: “... the bedrock, the touchstone of the inquiry process ...” (Heron, 1996, p. 54) that is gained from “... deep immersion in the action phase ...” (Heron, 1996, p. 54) of research. Experiential knowledge could be found in the fieldwork project when participants became involved in such processes as bodywork, creative expression, reflection and discussion, and made unplanned and unexpected discoveries about themselves. Of this type of knowledge, Heron writes: “I know what is present when it declares itself to me through my participative compresence with it” (1996, p. 54). This is not pre-rehearsed, dogmatic learning, but rather “... tentative, provisional participation, the first inchoate declarations of attunement and resonance, and of deeper imaginal enactment” (Heron, 1996, p. 54). Participants in the fieldwork had an opportunity to develop experiential
knowledge because, for five days, they could immerse themselves in learning, giving and receiving bodywork and choosing whether to express their experience in whatever form they liked. This culminated in:

... practical knowledge, that is evident in knowing how to exercise a skill ... knowing how is the consummation, the fulfilment, of the knowledge quest. It is grounded on and empowered by all the prior forms of knowing ... (Heron, 1996, pp. 33 to 34).

In other words, participants did not develop experiential knowledge by testing a specific thesis, but rather this type of knowledge emerged as participants gave and received bodywork or produced art. Here I would like to share two examples of the development of experiential knowledge. One is an experience of painting with the feet, the other of creating three-dimensional tissue paper sculpture by a participant (HG) She said, when interviewed at the end of the five-day fieldwork project:

“On day 4, the 19th, Allison suggested that ... the next activity is painting with our feet
And somehow I got very excited
And I couldn’t wait to do that
so, it was very pleasurable to put your feet in paint and fiddle around.
Yeah, making little patterns and play.
So that it’s obviously reminded me of something from my childhood, I guess,
I wondered why I was so excited about it
I didn’t go too deeply to find out.”

This was not an intellectual experience. It predominantly elicited a rich, dynamic, practical, and emotional response rather than the limited testing of a concept. This experience of feeling the paint between the toes and smearing it onto the paper, with delighted exclamations and occasional bumps against other feet engaged in the same activity could not be fitted into the confines of a theory.

“... today I had a cranial, session which was wonderful…”

I’ve been looking at this beautiful coloured tissue paper in the hallway and thinking:

Oh I love that, I love that.
So, after the cranial, I was inspired to work with this tissue paper.

To me it seems soft, colourful, light.

It was just the texture I needed or just the feel I needed.

It just felt exactly what I felt …

And, yeah, I felt quite pleased with that one.

To be allowed the chance to explore yourself without any pressure whatsoever, it’s magic.

I feel more centred I think, more comfortable, certainly more comfortable in my body. Just a sense of peace and somewhere there a little bit of joy,

a little bit of joy, yeah, I feel happy”.

Similarly here, in this experience of cranial work and the collage it inspired, many senses are represented. The experience is clearly engaging but not necessarily in a way that required the use of language usually associated with propositional learning. This experience involved receiving touch, during the cranial session, as well as when working with the tissue paper. It involved proprioception during self-exploration, leading to a sense of peace and greater comfort, plus emotions like joy and happiness.

The research has been exploratory and heuristic, especially influenced by creativity and writing as active ways to learn. Clearly this project was not the research anyone else would do: it was my responsibility and it was flavoured by my preferences, tendencies and abilities.

Can this research be described as valid and rigorous?

I think so, because it consistently follows its own internal ‘laws’. These ‘laws’ that I have discovered through involvement in my practice and research are:

to allow space,

to do less,

to trust self (myself and yourself) and the process,

to be aware,

to celebrate the body,
and to appreciate chaos.

Allowing space includes stepping back, with awareness, from the process of research to invite reflexivity and chaos in. Doing less is practical. In organisational design it means trying to think of one less thing to do (described in Owen, 1994); in learning it involves letting go of one more past learning or set of rules (as advised by Pauls, 1993), in my personal development, it shows up as knowing and then loosening my attachment to my personal history so I can go forward in a new way (exemplified by Mindell, 1993a). In my hands-on work doing less emerges in a “less is more” approach and lack of intention or interference in a client’s process. Self trust says that you and I are pretty darned good at living our lives and deserve to be listened to, as does the process of life (more later in this thesis). One way self trust is acted on is through paying attention to preferences (illustrated in Lehrer, 1997) that emerge in the body, mind, emotions or the world around us. To be aware is to notice what is happening now, to be present. To celebrate the body takes our ‘carnal container’ into account, helping us to appreciate its service in keeping us alive and to wonder at its momentary miracles. Appreciation of chaos is the challenge (for me at least) to make space: for impossible questions, as well as answers; for not knowing and uncertainty; for mess, change and fluidity.

Validity and rigour come about in research when its conduct and report are congruent. That means that it needs to ‘practise what it preaches’ or ‘walk the talk’ (portrayed by Kaufman-Hall, 1996).

Like Ortho-Bionomy, this thesis tries to follow natural laws. It tends towards holism, including you, its reader, and counselling you to both continuously seek comfort and to trust the process. Its messiness and eccentricities should not distract from its rigour. “Necessarily, within all value judgements lies the need for self-trust” (Lehrer, 1997). Without self-trust you and I are missing the keystone that holds together the building of reason. Unless we can believe in ourselves, we have no basis on which to judge validity or truth.

Introducing Ourselves

I am a woman, in my late fifties and of Anglo-Saxon appearance, living in Victoria, Australia with my husband, Jim, and two dogs. We live quite near our two daughters, their partners and our three grandchildren. My family is important to me, as are our two dogs, both herd guardians from an Italian breed, known as the Maremma. When I was little, my family and I lived with my grandfather and
great aunt, who were very influential in my life. They both loved me unreservedly. I feel flabbergasted at the love I feel for my family and they come ahead of anything else in my life. Spending time with my grandchildren brings me enormous pleasure. I want to arrange my life so I can be with my family as much as possible, without impeding each person’s independent aspirations, including mine. I also want to contribute my talents to the community. Consequently I have put all my efforts into researching my work with a view to sharing my skills as widely and freely as I can. I would like to think my friends, family and wider community of people and animals are able to resolve difficulties such as discomfort, loneliness and conflict with ease, hence this research and thesis.

As a result of my own sense of inadequacy as a child and young adult, I have searched throughout my life for skills that might help others and me to experience ease and comfort. The gentle bodywork cranial methods I developed in the 1980s and 1990s, and used successfully with clients in my practice, resulted from curiosity inspired by my own need for relaxing work with the bones of my head. I am keen to share my methods and metaskills (Mindell, 1995a) with others so they become as freely available as required. Being unable to access the remedial cranial work I needed following a car accident when I was about 50 years of age has been a great frustration to me and I think it led to many of my difficulties with focussing on researching and writing this thesis. I have been torn between completing my candidature and returning to full-time teaching and practising. Why do I connect my cranial work and bodywork with being able to concentrate, focus and apply myself to a task? The answer to this question comes from personal experience. One example of that experience concerned feeling inadequate following criticism by my teachers and parents when I was restless and dreamy as a child in class, despite getting good exam results at school. This contrasted with how I felt after sessions of bodywork and homoeopathy in my mid to late forties. Suddenly, for the first time in my life, I could think clearly and function easily. My body felt comfortable and I could move freely. Several years later I had the car smash I alluded to earlier. I suffered a whiplash injury resulting in moderate upper back pain for many years. It was difficult to avail myself of appropriate remedial work for my injuries and I still carry some physical problems related to that car smash. This research may be one step towards making the work more accessible.

A second area of experience that indicated to me that my ways of working might be related to the above question came from my work with clients. At the time I was developing my cranial methods, I became unwell and consulted Helma Bak,
a women who trained in Holland as a medical doctor and Anthroposophical practitioner. Her approach to health care was homoeopathic and based on Rudolf Steiner’s (1923) teaching. She also worked with children attending Steiner schools and helped to train their teachers in Victoria and New South Wales. Helma helped me to become healthy for the first time in my life through her sessions and remedies and we had many conversations. I told her about my work and she began to refer clients to me as part of the Extra Lesson Program devised by Audrey McAllen (1986, 1992).

When parents or teachers noticed that a child was experiencing difficulties at school, the child might be referred to Margaret Wilson, an Extra Lesson specialist teacher, for assessment as to whether they might benefit from the Extra Lesson Program. Depending on their results, children were often referred to Helma Bak for health care, and sometimes for nutritional baths, and to me for bodywork. Typical symptoms experienced by these children were restlessness or disruptive behaviour in class, inability to complete schoolwork, clumsiness, lack of physical balance or a need for greater concentration. The children who came to see me for bodywork normally attended my rooms for two sessions. After their child’s first session, parents regularly reported that the child could now focus on their schoolwork, were less restless, and had better co-ordination, which was frequently demonstrated by their new ability to skip, catch balls, run faster and so on. Other reports were that children who had found it difficult to make friends, and had felt isolated, were now approached by others in the playground and asked to play or join a team.

I wondered how my bodywork might affect social ease and have no answer, but several hypotheses. One possibility has to do with facial balance (for a research project, see Ribowski and Grammer, 1999); another concerns embodiment, confidence and ‘composure’: a gradually developing sense of self-trust, leading to an increased ability to be present in class and in life as desired; a third involves absence of discomfort as a distraction; and finally greater relaxation and more free energy to invest in friendship. These hypotheses are some I play with in my mind. I have not intended this research to specifically prove or disprove any of them. My research is more general than that. It considers me, my practice, bodywork, and context, as well as development and improvement. I will start with the context of my research and me.

My family, our dogs, the land and its flora and fauna all have a vital role in this thesis. I appreciate having the opportunity to live and work in an area that has
been tended by its traditional caretakers, the Wurrundjeri people, since the history of this land began. This land and its stories have had more effect on me and my work than I can put into words, although I try to express a little of that influence later in the thesis. You, the reader, also affect my research, from your location in the future, though your influence and contribution are rather mysterious, because I don’t know exactly who you are.

Ahead of all other influences in this research has been the body. For that reason, I intend to break with academic tradition by discussing the body’s role as an ally in life, ahead of bringing you the ideas around which the research is constellated. They are described and discussed in the chapter entitled Core Concepts, after the body stars in its own chapter. At this point I would like you to imagine a fanfare of trumpets as the body strides, crawls, or dances out onto the red carpet of this thesis. I would like to present … THE BODY!
BODY AS ALLY

Preamble

The body speaks simply, directly and personally to us in a language of preference based on comfort. Many people do not consciously hear or heed their body’s voice. This is not surprising in a culture with a catch-cry like: ‘no pain, no gain’. Despite having accessed this inner language via the respectful and gentle bodywork called Ortho-Bionomy, and despite having written my Master of Science thesis (Baensch, 2002b) basing the methodology and praxis on awareness of my body’s signals and story as a basis for research and life, I began writing this chapter without clearly listening to them. My mind, in a manner of speaking, galloped after thoughts without checking how my body felt about them, and ended up stuck in a cul-de-sac. I regrouped, ‘processed’ my ‘computer-assisted backache’, until it eased, and rested. On my return to the keyboard, I deleted some dead-end ideas and now proceed, hopefully with greater awareness of my body’s wise counsel.

Reading these words, I imagine you may be sneering with disdain, sparking with recognition, or sagging with boredom at my suggestion that the body should be given a say. Whatever your response, I assume it involves your body, an integral part of you. Everything we do is mediated through the body. This practical and theoretical thesis presents a key to accessing the body’s inner voice as a radical foundation and ally for education and research. From reading this chapter, I hope you will experience my praxis for ethical, integral research, incorporating a ‘hands-on’ example of the body’s capacity to communicate its preferences as a basis for self-trust and identity.

The ideas and stories of this essay are concerned with the location of the body in the productions of our discourse. Our various discourses of power and control do in fact locate the body within symbolic, mythic worlds that dislocate the body and its ownership from the self. The consequences of this phenomenon are a central concern of contemporary feminist, ideological, and ethical research (Payne, 1996, p. 49).

Introduction

My main aim in this chapter is to describe the physical body’s role as an ally in life and research*. I use the term ‘ally’ to denote a helper, a representation of the

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* The ideas contained in this chapter were originally presented at the second RIPPLE Qualitative Research as Interpretive Practice Conference (Baensch, 2005).
Tao (see Capra, 1989; LaoTzu, 1990), or a dreamlike spirit that supports, goads, or challenges you to step into your full being or potential.

Allies are a part of your personal psychology, but they seem to exist outside you as well. Allies may appear in dreams, fantasies, and body symptoms (Mindell, 1993c, p. 97).

Although I do not see the physical body as an entity that can be separated from the psyche and so on, I do want to distinguish and privilege it now, for reasons I will share later. The purpose of this chapter echoes the assumption behind my PhD studies. The motivation for this specific PhD research arose because, for about 20 years, I have been intrigued about an aspect of my gentle bodywork practice. I have been interested in the way babies, children, adults, and even animals respond to Ortho-Bionomy (see for example Kain and Berns, 1992; Pauls, 2003), the principal form of bodywork I practise. Now I want to briefly introduce you to Ortho-Bionomy, and the way I use it.

Ortho-Bionomy

A Canadian judo instructor and osteopath called Arthur Lincoln Pauls developed the gentle bodywork of Ortho-Bionomy in England in the 1970s. By observing and supporting the body’s preferred positions and movements, he found that his clients could release tension and pain naturally, without any force being required. Ortho-Bionomy is sometimes described as the ‘homeopathy of bodywork’.

Homeopathy is:

... a system of medicine founded on a definite law ‘Similia Similibus Curantur’ which means ‘like cures like’. The word Homeopathy is a Greek derivation where ‘homeos’ means ‘similar and pathos means ‘suffering’. So Homeopathy may be defined as the therapeutic method of symptom-similarity. The recognition of this law was there even before Hahnemann. Paracelsus, Hippocrates, and ancient ayurvedic texts have on occasions mentioned this law. But it was Hahnemann who recognized the universality of this law and lifted it from oblivion to make it the basis of a complete system of medicine (Bhatia, 2006, p. 1).

Homeopathy, like Ortho-Bionomy, follows the body’s natural inclinations, rather than trying to impose a judgment or intention on how the body should be. Both modalities follow the body’s expert lead rather than trying to correct or guide the body or to quell symptoms. Given appropriate circumstances, such as the skilled use of homeopathy or Ortho-Bionomy, the evolving body deals with its own
symptoms in the most appropriate way possible, considering its particular situation. Pauls enigmatically described Ortho-Bionomy as “the evolvement of the original concept” (Pauls, 1993, 2003). Some say that, by those words, he meant the emergence (or self-organising ability) of the body as it evolves to realise its potential. Others think Pauls was referring to the ‘original concept’ as the principles expressed in A. T. Still’s (2005) work, on which Pauls partly based Ortho-Bionomy. The Ortho-Bionomy practitioner’s main role is to observe what is happening in the body, and to ever so slightly amplify whatever has been noticed, in a sustainable and comfortable manner: comfortable for both practitioner and client; and sustainable through training in correct lifting, minimal use of effort, and ‘going with the flow’.

A bumper sticker sold in the United States of America describes Ortho-Bionomy as ‘the art of doing nothing better’. Clients are sometimes surprised after their first session. They comment that it seemed to them as if I was doing almost nothing as I worked, and yet their body felt quite transformed when they got off my table following their session. The body has an ability to rise to the occasion and release pain and tension when favourable conditions are provided in a minimal way. My main role as I see it, when practising bodywork, is to offer confirmation and support for how a client is during a session. During that process, I take their body into positions that feel comfortable to them. I provide physical support to their body and follow both their verbal and physical feedback. My job is to give the body time and space to sort out what it needs, in the general region where the client and I are focussed, such as the lower back, wrist or knee, and allow that area of the body to undo some of its past damage and to increase its resilience in the event of future stresses and strains.

Clients, from many ages and arenas of life, as well as their families and teachers, report numerous changes following sessions of Ortho-Bionomy. Anecdotal evidence from my 20 years of practice suggests that after one or two sessions, babies who walk early without experiencing crawling, stop walking, begin to crawl, and go back to walking at a later date. Children who could not skip, might pick up a skipping rope after a session of Ortho-Bionomy, and skip quite freely. Adults, who have been low in energy, including some who report feeling fairly depressed, often comment that they are energised and more buoyant after one or two sessions. Others, who were extremely active, restless and unable to sleep easily prior to their visit, find they can relax, rest and sleep peacefully after coming to see me. People of all ages, who suffer from pain and restriction, often say that their soreness and tension have eased somewhat or
absolutely melted away after sessions. As I work, I do very little that might explain these results. What then, is happening to bring about this sense of ease and settling into the body that so often seems to occur after a couple of sessions of Ortho-Bionomy? The subsequent paragraphs partially address that question experientially through a practical exercise based in theory.

Listen to the Body’s Voice

In this chapter I could have written about the theory of being embodied, but that is unlikely to give you a whole or rich experience of what I am discussing and researching. Instead, I want to invite you to join me in a few minutes of hands-on body awareness using Ortho-Bionomy (Baensch, 2002b). You are already ‘doing Ortho-Bionomy’ naturally, often unconsciously, by shifting your position slightly when you feel uncomfortable, for example. I simply want to suggest that you notice what you are doing and invite you to do it more. But first some ‘strict rules’:

1. Everything you do during this ‘exercise’ needs to help you feel at least as comfortable as you are now.

2. Please only do what you are keen to do.

3. For me, ‘shortening is the new stretching’. If you want to stretch your muscles, please do so in your own time, or secretly, and with great care. If a muscle feels tight and short, I prefer to passively shorten it a little more and allow the body to choose whether to respond by lengthening the tissues that seen tight. A reflex in the body takes charge of lengthening shortened tissue, just as a reflex, known as the ‘stretch reflex’ (Appleton, 1993; Taylor and Durbaba, 2003) stimulates the contraction of tissues that have been overstretched, for example in the case of a sprained ankle, when supporting tissues become tight.

Now that you know the ‘rules’, hopefully anyone who feels eager to participate will do so, and others who are less eager will just observe until their eagerness rating ‘ramps up’, if that happens. Pay attention to how comfortable you feel in each moment and focus on the possibility of increasing your comfort by being generous and kind to all parts of your body and self. (Since I think doubts are useful in a learning process, feel free to be as sceptical as you wish throughout this personal experiment.) Even people from the ‘no pain: no gain’ school of thinking may be interested to try this outlandishly gentle way of attending to the body. As I said earlier, I want us to have a common basis of practical, physical experience in order to share a sense of some of the assumptions behind this
research. Since the wrist is usually fairly accessible, it is a good part of the body to start with, but if your wrist is quite sore or restricted or if you have the slightest injury there, please choose another part of your body for this exercise. Or just observe. Quantum physics says that not only do observers have an effect on what they observe but that this process also affects the observer. Mindell (2000b) predicts:

*If physics … goes back to its authentic purpose, which was to comprehend the nature of the experienced as well as the measurable world, physicists will not only observe the river but also enter it* (p. 210).

This exercise provides one way for you to enter the river of this research rather than observing it from a distance.

Wrist Exercise

Now I will describe some simple Ortho-Bionomy moves for your wrist. See Figure 1(a). The moves are gentle and less strenuous than the normal, everyday movements you are likely to make. Please note that these suggestions are not intended to replace professional care. Ortho-Bionomy involves finding what feels right and placing the body in positions of comfort. A feeling of ease, and relief from tension or pain, can be experienced when tight tissues in a stressed part of the body are allowed to shorten. This is quite the opposite of many forms of therapy that advocate the stretching of tight muscles.

Ortho-Bionomy is very gentle and usually feels quite pleasant. So, if you begin to feel any discomfort or unpleasantness, change your position until you feel more comfortable, or else stop. Ortho-Bionomy is not a technique where any force is used at all, but rather a way of trusting your body to show you what you need. When you notice and follow what feels pleasant to you, this gives the body a chance to begin resolving issues caused by past injuries or stress.

Ortho-Bionomy Wrist Moves

Begin by sitting in a comfortable position. Notice how your wrist feels now by moving your hand around and noticing any stiff or sore areas. Stay within the bounds of what feels okay. There is no need to create pain in Ortho-Bionomy. **Remember to stop if you feel any discomfort.** Prop your elbow on your lap or on a padded table, so that your wrist can move in all directions.
Figure 3: Bending forwards and backwards
Allow your hand to flop forwards [see Figure 1(a)], then backwards [see Figure 1(b)]. Check which direction you prefer by especially searching for feelings of comfort, but also notice any easing of tension, as well as the way your entire body feels when your wrist is in each position. Hold your hand gently in that preferred position for about 10 to 60 seconds, with optional support or light compression, pressing very softly along the long bones of your hand towards your wrist. Remember to rest your elbow on a firm, but preferably slightly padded surface to assist this very gentle compression to occur. Then sensitively move through positions 1(a) and 1(b) again. Notice if there is a change in comfort or flexibility at your wrist joint when you make those movements.

Figure 4: Side bending
Allow your hand to flop to each side at the wrist, like a regal wave (see Figure 2). Follow the above steps, as given for Figures 1(a) and 1(b), supporting your hand into its most pleasantly comfortable side bend position.
You can proceed similarly by gently rotating or twisting your hand each way at your wrist. Hold your hand delicately into the rotated position that you prefer.

With all of the moves, if neither or both positions feel comfortable when you check for your preference, you can hold your hand in a neutral position. That means you do not twist or bend your wrist at all, but simply hold it supported in a neutral, comfortable position, with the slightest compression, if that feels soothing, along the length of the hand bones towards the wrist and arm joint. Because wrist problems can stem from a difficulty in other parts of the body such as elbows, shoulders or the spine, some people may not notice an easing of wrist tightness or discomfort from this wrist exercise alone. Please err on the side of scepticism rather than trying to convince yourself that the exercise was helpful. If a change doesn’t happen or is too subtle to notice, try again at another time if you like.

You can translate the movements I have explained here, to other parts of the body. Pay close attention if any discomfort occurs, and change your approach or stop. Use no force at all, and please seek help if you need it. Ortho-Bionomy was initially designed for people to use with their families and friends. As long as you slowly and gently follow your body’s preferences and insist on comfort, Ortho-Bionomy is really safe and confirming to use.

**Teleological Hint**

I included this exercise here to provide a common basis of experience about how preference based on comfort is one way to observe and respect the messages we are given by our body. This acknowledgement allows us to dream into the meanings of messages we receive in research and life, imagining they may be significant teleological hints from allies on our life journey. By noticing and believing in these ‘hints from our allies’, whether they come from our physical body, our experiences, our relationships or the wider environment, we have access to new possibilities. Various authors have their own opinions about how we might attend to these “flirts” (Mindell, 2004 p. 36) or nudges from our body or
environment. For example, Abram (1997) speaks from an interest in phenomenology and magic. He tells of having a series of encounters with wild animals, while staying in Java, as his awareness of his environment deepened:

*It was as if my body in its actions was suddenly being motivated by a wisdom older than my thinking mind, as though it was held and moved by a logos, deeper than words, spoken by the Other's body, the trees, and the stony ground on which we stood* (p. 21).

Abram's experience of living close to nature and learning from the local indigenous people sharpened his awareness of the environment and called his body to pay attention in a new way to what had been there all along. Our bodies and the environment constantly make information available to us. One method the body uses to inform us is through comfort and pain. Comfort often indicates that all is well, whereas pain is a hint of a possible impending problem or danger. If we sit too close to a fire, our skin hurts, warning us to move away from the flames before our flesh burns. If we are tired and snuggled up in a cozy bed, the comfort we experience tempts us to stay and rest a little longer. Comfort is one sign of the body's preferences.

Awareness of hints from the inner and outer environment, known as shamanism, is one aspect of Process Work, which also includes Taoism and teleology, and which guides Amy Mindell (1995a). She contributes: “The process paradigm would say that it is only through hindrances, that we learn to follow ourselves and the Tao” (p. 170). Sometimes people think of body symptoms, for example, as pointless or offensive hindrances in their lives, to be eradicated or ignored if at all possible. A more process-oriented approach to symptoms is to view them as signals from the body that give us valuable information to investigate. Susan Hatch expressed a similar idea in her doctoral dissertation: “If we would only pay attention, we would know that our whole life stalks us at every turn” (Hatch, 2006, p. 59). In other words, everything that happens to us gives us hints about how to live. To learn from those hints, we can make space for greater awareness, by developing an open mind. The body's intimations bestow a useful, often accessible, starting place for this learning, and Ortho-Bionomy can act as a mediator.

Students of Ortho-Bionomy, whether in the role of practitioner or client, focus attention specifically on the body, picking up signals as indications of new possibilities, which they can choose to follow or not. Perhaps a practitioner
observes that a client’s head leans a little to one side? That excentric posture might show that the iliopsoas, a group of muscles connecting the lower back and pelvis with the inner thighbone, is tight on one side. The practitioner can check for an iliopsoas contraction, using one of the simple tests available. The next step could be to go with this postural hint by gently taking the client’s torso, neck and head the tiniest amount further into the curve that their body is already describing. Within a few seconds, the iliopsoas and other related muscles will most likely release their tension, and resume their most fitting length. This allows the client’s head to rediscover a more relaxed and balanced position, in line with the spinal column. The client’s excentric posture, rather than being seen as a symptom to be eradicated or corrected, can be taken as the body’s attempt to lure or woo us into addressing a situation that requires our attention.

This way of following hints and learning from them, applies not only to body symptoms, like discomforts or illness, but also to hints from the environment for instance dreams, traffic jams, relationship dramas and so on. Dreams, while we are asleep or awake (as in daydreams) provide us with a rich source of imagery and other sensory material. Sometimes we can unfold this dream material to help us map out our path ahead, as I discovered when I finally listened to the words of a dream in the early 1990s (Baensch, 2002b) telling me to take what I had been writing seriously and publish it in some way. Without paying attention to that dream, I doubt I would have embarked on postgraduate study. A traffic jam might be a clue to take life more slowly. A stormy fight with a friend could be intimidating for us to engage more ferociously with life. Most of my attention, however, especially in this chapter, centres on body signals and ways to support learning from them.

Instead of simply trying to eradicate or overlook disturbances such as sensations, symptoms, shocks and surprises, we can value the messages that these disturbances bring. Certainly we can seek assistance to remedy symptoms, illnesses and issues as well. Choice is available. For instance, it may be possible to choose between relieving back pain by using analgesics, gentle bodywork, surgery, exercise or rest. Discovering the value and the stories in disturbances should not stop us from consulting health carers and others with wisdom to share.

Both dreaming and the consensus reality of rational minds contribute to our lives if we are open to their messages. Dreams can help us understand our everyday
realtime. Arnold Mindell (2001) has written extensively about the value of learning from body symptoms and dreams.

When you know the Dreaming behind everyday life, problems no longer seem like frozen states, but are experienced as streams of creative power. You feel rooted in an awesome, unfathomable, but deeply enriching universe (p. 7).

Mindell does not provide recipes or formulae for interpreting dreams. Instead, he encourages people to discover the meaning that fits for their specific situation. This is my preference too, since it fits with the way I work when following the client's process. I prefer to take on the role of apprentice or learner in favour of trying to lead a client, as if I could be the expert in their life, which is an impossible role for me, an outsider, to perform. My role, as I see it, is to offer possibilities and watch for feedback. I would compare my role to that of a doula or midwife at a birth, offering companionship and comfort as well as noticing carefully how the situation is progressing. I could be called an expert in Ortho-Bionomy, after over two decades of training in, experiencing and teaching the work, plus at least 12 years of postgraduate study centred on the topic of Ortho-Bionomy. Even so, I do not believe that study and experience give me a right to offer advice or to consider that I know what is most appropriate for another person. I defer to the expertise of clients and trust them to know what they need, and how to interpret their own dreaming and process. Like me, each client is a self-organising individual, and simultaneously part of the earth’s emergent systems. Recognising our concurrent autonomy and interrelatedness help me to value and respect feedback from clients, as well as from the environment, and from my own body, which mediates between ‘me’ and that which gives me the impression of being ‘not me’ (Process Work Community, 2006). Paradoxically, being both separate from and part of everything around me, clients and I seem able to make ‘independent’ decisions, yet exist as a miniscule part of the universe, absolutely dependent on other people and our built and natural environment.

Inner Work – Following a Process

Body awareness is one way to learn what we need in life and how we can expand our options. Another way comes from thought processes. For example, I notice that I am labouring over my words. I feel rather stilted. I suspect myself of being a little doctrinaire or didactic. My writing is not flowing easily. To
exaggerate that lack of flow, I can stop trying to proceed in my present direction and pay attention to the issue of feeling stilted. Voices or inner roles are emerging in my mind as I stop trying to force myself to write the paragraph. I recognise a critical voice, which does sound a little doctrinaire, and another role that I shall call voice two. These voices are having a battle in my thoughts. I will use my interpretation of Process Work, (as portrayed by Goodbread, 1987; Mindell, 1990, 2004) in order to learn more about the message behind the voices. Process Work is a way of respecting and working with life’s disturbances, such as this issue I am presently experiencing to do with feeling stilted when trying to write and, like Ortho-Bioniomy, it values symptoms and other disruptions in a homoeopathic way (Hahnemann, 1994) by learning from them through the use of awareness and slight amplification of their patterns or fundamental nature.

The critical voice: “You shouldn’t write about these issues. Although you have studied Process Work since 1991, you are not a qualified therapist. Someone might read these words and get hurt”.

Voice two: “You are right in saying I have not sat the Process Work exams yet. Process Work is something I have mainly studied for my own benefit as a person and health carer since 1991. That’s why I’m not giving advice in this thesis, but rather presenting possibilities with plenty of references for readers to consult if they want to proceed further”.

The critic: “Why do it at all?”

Voice two: “Well, I have gained a great deal of pleasure and fulfilment from considering the role of disturbances in my life. Without that I might still be stalked and frightened by unexpected influences or symptoms such as the depression, back pain, anxiety, sprained ankles or writer’s block that plagued me and got me down when I was younger. Nowadays I have choices. I can consult a homoeopath for a remedy, have a session of Ortho-Bioniomy, Feldenkrais (as described by Rywerant, 2003) or Bowen Technique (as described by Stammers, 1996). I can also visit an allopathic practitioner such as a doctor or masseur. In parallel with one or all of those possibilities, I can ring up for a phone consultation or go somewhere to have a face-to-face session of Process Work. You can see I don’t need to restrict what I am doing just because I have learned some new skills. Remember how low we ‘both’ felt while we were depressed and before we explored Ortho-Bioniomy, Process Work and other modalities? We had few choices. Now we have a smorgasbord”.

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The critic: “I do remember how difficult and limited life was then. As long as readers of these words can access help, I do think it is useful to talk about options. What about people who are not as privileged as we are; those who can’t afford to pay for sessions or have no suitable therapist to contact?”

Voice two: “Yes, that is a problem. But it’s not likely to be made worse by having some basic skills and access to resources. Those people still have the same level of access to the health carers they could call on before reading this, except now there are some extra possibilities in the mix to choose from”.

The relationship between these two voices in me seems clearer now and I notice that my attention has moved on to thinking about writing further. So I think my inner conflict about writing this part of my thesis has been somewhat resolved, for now. Once I stopped defending myself against my inner critic, and accommodated its views a little, that part of me become more fluid and able to listen in its turn. Now I can move on.

Voices

Research is communicated by many voices, which together contribute to the identity of the researcher, the researched and the richness of the research (explained in Lincoln, 1997). Even each aspect of research can have many voices. Some of these voices are articulated clearly, some are present but murky or faint, while others are ignored as a project is written up. I propose that a voice which is frequently overlooked is that of the main instrument of all research; the voice(s) of the body. I do not speak of the body as one voice, because that would be like proposing that women, or the elderly, or white people and so on speak with one voice. Generally we know that is not the case. Individuals sing, speak or in some way indicate their own particular songs and voices (for example, read Mindell, 1993b). One such ‘song’, which each of us has in common, though each with our own styles of expression, is the voice of the body. Our bodies speak in languages that many of us can access, to a certain degree when we are young, but that we repress or set aside as we experience the vicissitudes of life (see Anzieu, 1990; Berman, 1990; Kurtz, 1990; Neville, 2000a; Roomy, 1990; Todd, 1959; Weiss, 1999). Here, I only have the space to touch on some of the ways this apparent loss of bodily connection or awareness that occurs has been represented, through quoting a selected collage of writers’ expressions around the topic.

Direct psychoanalytic investigation of children through drawing and play and reconstruction during the treatment of
adults of damage suffered by the child’s mind allow us to understand how skin-to-skin, body-to-body contact between the young baby and his (sic) mother (as well as with people in his close environment) conveys elementary forms of meaning that each sense organ, in proportion to its degree of maturity, can then pick up and develop in its own register. Connections are made between these different registers, always related to what people around him show the child that they have understood of his desires, needs, and anxieties. This twofold network of stimulation that is agreeable and reinforces energy, and of mutual meanings, produce the first version of the ego, the skin ego… The tactile envelope, which is also an envelope of warmth, softness, and firm holding (but also of cold, roughness, and slackness), articulates with the sonorous envelope (the bath of words, music, and the melody of the mother’s voice) with the envelope of tastes and smells, and later with the envelope of colours … (Anzieu, 1990 p. 65).

These words suggest the important role played by the body’s skin in forming and retaining a sense of self. Additional important facets of early experience such as the effects of hormones and the birth situation on the lives of a newborn child and its mother are described by Odent (1999; Odent, 2004, p. 45) when discussing some effects of the medicalisation of childbirth. Odent believes that “industrialised” birthing practices might influence the levels of aggression exhibited by a culture, through an “impaired capacity to love” (Odent, 2004, p. 46). He cites at least ten studies of birth to support his claims such as Leboyer

7 I list some studies here to show that I place importance on a birth process that receives as little interference as possible, and to show that aspects of medicalised childbirth have been studied and indicate possible, significant, long-term ill effects on babies. I have copied the references as cited by Odent (2004, p. 143).


How sad I feel that the easy and potent presence many of us appear to have as babies gets lost or reduced with age, or experiences such as unnecessarily medicalised childbirth practices. While I appreciate the need for emergency interventions at times, I think these can come about through the lack of provision of an appropriate situation for unassisted birth. I am concerned about the use of elective procedures such as caesarean birth. It is my belief that supporting natural processes, through the use of Ortho-Bionomy, normal childbirth, homoeopathy, and so on, whenever possible, is more likely to provide for a healthier, happier population than interference from experts, except when such


involvement is absolutely essential. When I am with a baby who is healthy, I notice a strong and compelling sense of aliveness and being present.

**Granddaughter**

My granddaughter is 12 weeks old and now I will share my impression of her bodily presence that I noted when I cared for her at four weeks of age. She communicates a sense of integral life and embodiment from which I think many of us become somewhat disconnected during the course of our lives. I believe that this disconnection and the reduced awareness that ensues affects our ability to heal after injury or trauma and to respond with ease and fluidity to life’s challenges. When I work with a client who has little conscious awareness of the body, I notice that during an Ortho-Bionomy session, these clients become much more in tune with their present physical situation. I observe them resolving symptoms, which have limited their lives for some time, as they develop embodied awareness. This word sketch of my granddaughter is included here as a glimpse of relative presence and embodiment, from my point of view:

![Granddaughter](image)

**Figure 6:** Granddaughter

My new granddaughter is sleeping across my lap. I had no idea what to expect from grandparenting. It has been an experience that has shaken me to the core and turned my life upside down. What relevance does grandparenting have to my PhD research and this writing? Because I have children and grandchildren I want them to be (and to live surrounded by) people who deeply trust themselves.
This characteristic, termed embodied self-trust (see Baensch, 2002b; Diprose, 1994; Sutherland, 1997) forms the core of my research. Getting my message about the importance of embodied self-trust out into the world seems vital. To complete my PhD I have had to compromise between spending time with my family and studying. Like Ken, a PhD student described by Mulligan (2001), I incorporate my family life into my PhD research. Hence I sit here, writing, with my four-week old granddaughter sighing her little bursts of warm, moist breath into my chest, snuffling, smiling and twitching in her dreams. When trying to think of a word to write, I look down at the back of her dimpled hand in an embodied reverie. Why did I choose to use the word embodied just then? This baby is dense with life. She feels heavy and humid on my torso, smells of breast milk, sighs and snuffles as she sleeps, and purses her lips. Her tummy gurgles, her toes twitch against me and she sinks again into a steady, still sleep. She teaches me fluently about being because she is right there in her body. While I feel, hear and smell her here, I feel my presence in my own body more strongly, as well as my connection with her. She just smacked her lips, grimaced and grinned. Something is constantly happening – an expression flickers across her face, her breathing rhythm changes. So much occurs that I can sense and participate in. The signs of life I notice are riveting enough for me – already huge – but under this surface ‘sensorium’ is another level of living process. Cells are growing and reproducing hair, fingernails, bone, muscle, and connective tissue, and organs are actively working away at respiring, digesting and creating. Now who could say this baby is not highly skilled? She is carrying out tasks and routines beyond the ability of the most sophisticated of our machines and technologies. They cannot duplicate their cells and components with such finesse. Nor can they approach her beauty or interactive genius. Her call cuts through space and mobilises her family like no fire siren can do. Her smile attracts admiration in all who see it. She is a tiny, power-packed dynamo who still manages to sleep and dream with relaxed abandon as she recharges her power source. Her body mediates her experience and that is plain to sense.

My point in sharing this is to remind you and me of our inherent talent and drive for regeneration and emergence. In the face of illness, restriction or pain we sometimes forget our self-healing abilities and defer to experts, despite the fact that, although they might provide useful information to add to our knowledge, no external authority can know us as well as we know ourselves. Irigaray describes how outside expertise can be used to limit the object of focus through the use of labels, instead of the ‘expert’s’ speaking from their own knowledge of self, and remaining in relationship:
Once again, it is on the other that he is going to impose limits. Marking her with his names, instead of naming and thus delimiting his own territory.

The limitless lies in relationship (Irigaray, 1992, p. 53).

In Process Work thinking, labelling can be a way to assume power, or privilege over another. It can create a distance and reduce the need for relationship. If, as a teacher, for example, I label a student a troublemaker, this obviates my need to seek my responsibility in the situation or the role of the education and other social systems in contributing to and continuing the student's behaviour. If I just 'point the finger', I need not consider or admit my rank as a white, middle-class adult and a teacher with a job and community standing. Use of this label means I have no need to tell the student that I feel rattled or embarrassed or frightened in the face of his behaviour. He has no information to help him decide whether to continue the behaviour in question. We are each the only true expert about us, the only ones who should give ourselves a label.

Call yourself. Give, yourself, names.

Recall yourself once more: I insist, into the air.

Seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, living, all these wait to be made fecund by an innocent potency (Irigaray, 1992 p. 7 and 8).

Names and labels are so potent that they should not be used carelessly or inappropriately. We 'drink in' information about ourselves, and can be hypnotised or deeply affected by naming (as demonstrated by Satir in Biddulph, 1984). As babies, we spend our time learning about our bodies and environment from birth and even before birth. We learn the basics of 'spontaneous research', using our senses as a way of gathering and interpreting data about our world, in order to survive. As living beings, we grow to adulthood, learning about ourselves, and our surroundings, from inside and out. We hone our ability, while both asleep and awake, to perceive and relate. Watching my granddaughter reminds me of how thoroughly and constantly she is training herself to do informal, everyday research. She might not 'do research' as a job, but she is familiarising herself with the main instrument she will use in case she does - her body. Through her embodied awareness she can discern sights, sounds, movement, life sense, tastes, smells, temperature, balance and much more (see Soesman, 1990).
Instruments of Research

If the body is the instrument through which our research is mediated, as researchers should we not at least declare our relationship to the body in research reports (Baensch, 2002b)? In the past it was possible to do research that minimised or obliterated the voice of the researched and the impact of the researcher. Such research was termed objective (Graziano and Raulins, 1993). Nowadays qualitative researchers bring forward many voices in order to elucidate their influence on the research (depicted by Cartledge, 2004; Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Pinn, 2001; Tierney, 1997). Reflexive processes and conversation are made transparent in research reports to show how parts of the research field relate to each other (Becker, 1998; Stake, 1995). Sometimes the environment or history or rationality or emotions are encouraged to ‘speak’ during research (Abram, 1997; Goldberg, 1991). As commendable as that may be, Anzieu (1990) asked: what about the physical body? Just because its voice is not heard does not mean the body is not trying to communicate. There is a great deal of quantitative research that deals with the body. Researchers measure blood pressure, check eyesight, feel for knots in muscles, test for virus particles in tissue, assess flexibility, time reflexes, watch behaviours and report on responses to foods (considered by Achterberg, 1985; Brobeck, 1979; Fulder, 1989; Illich, 1977; Knight, 1980). In this list of research topics, I see possible parallels to the type of research carried out by the fictional scientist who decided that the Bunyip of Berkeleys Creek (Wagner, 1990) did not exist, despite the fact that readers of this children’s book can see the bunyip reclining on an examination couch in the scientist’s laboratory. There is also a correlation with research once performed on minority groups by anthropologists (described in Behar, 1996; Mead, 1977). This correlation is that when research is performed on someone or something, their voice is not necessarily heard. So I think it often is with the body.

Of course, as I have said already, it is not possible to separate the body from the self. They are distinguishable, but indivisible. The body needs to claim its space in sociological research.

*By now, the interest in sociological theories of the body is well established. It is acknowledged that the corporeal existence of the individual, in its dialectical relation to society, is crucial for better understanding society (Pirani and Varga, 2005 p. 187).*
Here we sit, stand or lie in an amazing skin bag containing flesh and bones that performs miracles by the millisecond. Many of us take our body for granted, or observe it as an alien other. On our behalf, our body (our self really) defies gravity, grows, manages and coordinates incredibly complex systems, senses danger and pleasure, deals with traumas and keeps us informed from moment to moment about what we need in order to continue living (expanded in Nuland, 1997).

Occasionally this communication happens in a somewhat irritating fashion such as through pain or other symptoms. Yet even when something apparently major breaks down in it, the rest of the body may continue on and manage to keep us alive. Researchers and writers have questioned why we so often disregard the body (Berman, 1990; Olsen and McHose, 1991), objectify it and relegate it to relative invisibility, obscurity and silence. Anzieu, a psychoanalyst, talking with Tarrab about the importance of the skin, gave his impression of the body’s present situation:

... the repressed of today is the body – the sensory and motor body. In the era of the third industrial revolution, the revolution of information, nuclear energy, and the video, the repressed is the body ... physical and affective closeness is being unlearnt, and the sense of natural realities and ecological balances is being lost. We are forgetting the biological roots of man (sic) and of the mind (1990, p. 64 to 65).

I agree with Anzieu and am attempting, in this thesis, to redress the balance by privileging the body. As researchers, let us allow our bodies to have their say.

I increasingly used my body as my guide while I researched and wrote my Masters thesis (Baensch, 2002b). Writing was far easier and more meaningful when I felt comfortable as I wrote. When I noticed a disturbance in my focus or a discomfort in my body, I learned to pay attention to the messages from my surroundings, so expanding my possibilities for writing. Instead of being distracted, I was enriched. Trying to force myself on, through discomfort, led to incongruent writing and loss of focus. Now, as I write I feel tired after a busy day. I am quite capable of continuing to sit at the computer to write, despite an advancing ache in my upper back and up the left side of my neck. At present the discomfort is quite bearable. I am by no means locked up and incapable of typing. I am, on the other hand, presently aware of an increasing frequency of little typing errors slipping in and requiring correction. I also know that, although
what I write when I am uncomfortable seems profound and scintillating at the
time of writing, it often strikes me as trite and off the point when I read it back a
day or two later. So I plan to notice my preferences, seek comfort, and go
straight to bed.

Feedback in Research

Research is a process of attending to feedback, or evidence, from inner and
outer environments. Bodies, carry out research. Reflexivity, a particular,
sometimes overlooked, aspect of research, concerns continuous or continual
learning and feedback (see Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Herz, 1997).
Whether this aspect is acknowledged and recorded or not, all types of research
are reflexive to some extent. It is human nature to monitor the effects, on
ourselves and our surroundings, of what we are doing and experiencing, for our
own safety and survival. All research conducted by living humans has its own
voice and expresses the identity of its researcher, who makes choices and
leaves an influence on the research. The humans carrying out the research are
embodied to some extent, whether they acknowledge this or not. Whether the
research is quantitative or qualitative it betrays something about the embodied
being who designed, set up, carried out and recorded results of the research
(Mindell, 2000b; Penrose, 1994). It may have been carried out at arm’s length
using sophisticated technology or tools, but it still holds the fingerprint or the
‘thought print’ of its devisers and perpetrators. Perhaps that fingerprint is
mechanical, apparently devoid of feeling, relying on statistics (for examples, see
Neville, 2000a; Williams, 1995) and so on, but it still links back to an embodied
human: a person who gave the research some of its qualities and emphases.

A research methodology and methods were chosen by the researcher, or
allowed to unfold, and that course of action influenced the research and its
outcomes (see Graziano and Raulins, 1993; Reinarz, 1992). The thought or
intuition involved in that process was reflexive at many levels. Researchers
choose or agree to do research through a process of reflecting on information
and checking feedback loops in order to make a decision. Those feedback loops
are attended to via the body at some level. Each researcher is pumping blood,
respiring, contracting and relaxing muscles and imagining (in a similar way to
descriptions by Juhan, 1987). Subtle variations in the way these functions are
conducted affect the universe and the research at some level (illustrated by
Mindell, 2000b, 2004). So I think it is vital for researchers to reflexively
contextualise their research.
... the legacy of qualitative research is one ... in which the attendant ontological and epistemological assumptions are presented up-front and the voice and identity of the researcher are described unambiguously and reflexively (Whiteford, 2005, p. v).

It is through an adequate, reflexive context that the reader of research reports comes to ‘flesh out’ the research and gains a deeper understanding of where it is located in the body of available knowledge.

Body and Mind as Research ‘Tools’

As a researcher, the place I would begin such a learning adventure is my body (Baensch, 2002b). Body in this sense is flesh and bone, sensual body, not a disembodied concept (Berman, 1990; Olsen and McHose, 1991). Included in body are the senses and tissue that gather, absorb, create space for, and help digest, group, interpret, reflect on, regroup, make sense of, communicate and draw conclusions from data (brought to life in Abram, 1997; Berman, 1990). When I have used instruments as data recording devices, they were employed as tacit extensions of my senses. As a researcher, my body captures me (Baensch, 2002b). In one sense, it grabs up my enthusiasm as a primal place where research juices flow, nerve impulses shimmer in excitement and osmosis occurs. It fascinates me as an influencer of my every move when I perform bodywork and research. In another sense, my body holds me captive and appears to limit my reach. If I want to do research beyond my physical reach, I need to develop extensions to my senses in the form of spectacles, cameras and videos, amplifiers, computer keyboards and software, space rockets, rock drills, and other aids. Each of these extends my body beyond its usual reach: its ability to sense and to do work.

Of course my mind is involved in this process of invention, design and implementation of any type of research and I do not want to flip the mind/body issue over by crediting the body alone with achievements brought about by me as a whole person, employing mind and body and more. What I do want is to bring more awareness and balance to research discussions. The body’s voice is rarely overtly taken into account in research reports. I am not talking about anatomy and physiology research. My focus is on researchers stepping into a conscious, easy and generous relationship with, and awareness of, the body. We learn how to operate other tools, giving them due credit in research reports. A photographer would include the camera model and particular lens used for a project and an immunologist would mention the use of petrie dishes or other
tools and materials. The body is so much more than a useful tool. When using an artificial device during research, we usually write about the way we use it. We do not ignore its existence as so often happens with the body. Perhaps this is based on a past belief that it is possible to perform research in a neutral or uninfluential manner. Recent research has shown that researchers have an effect on their work simply by observing phenomena (see Baensch, 1999; Gleick, 1987; Schiff, 1995). In designing and conducting research and interpreting the data, researchers must influence results. Decisions are made about which direction to take. In qualitative research researchers decide (or fail to actively decide) how to represent the voice of the researched and the uniqueness of researcher and researched (identified in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Fine, 1992; Herz, 1997). I stand for greater recognition of the body’s contribution to all research.

Conclusions and Implications

I have suggested that many of us neglect the body’s voice. We repress or overlook the body’s role as an ally in our lives and especially in our research. Instead of gratefully valuing its messages from symptoms and other signals, we force our bodies (ourselves) to submit to our plans and programs to ‘cure’ these disturbances. That is one approach to life. Another approach is to bring the body into our awareness and attend to it as an ally. There are many means of making an ally of our body. Three ways that support our process of life are Ortho-Bionomy, Process Work and Open Space Technology. Because of space constraints so far I have not discussed Open Space Technology in any detail. So I will include a quote from Harrison Owen’s Practice of Peace website, which echoes and sums up an underlying theme for this thesis. Owen is speaking about self-organising systems in general, not just the body.

A brief consideration of the remarkable fact that after 14 billion years and multiple disasters we are all still here to complain about how badly things are going. All of which is to say that things have been working rather well under the circumstances, at least sufficiently well to enable countless generations to come to fruition and pass their wisdom and skills on to the succeeding generations. Simple Question – How come? Proposed answer – Self-Organization rules (Owen, 1998, p. 1).

Whether we respect our body and take it into account, or fight its self-organising abilities, it remains an ally to cajole, hassle or tenderly lead us towards greater awareness of our universe and ourselves. Trusting and following the body’s hints
and guidance (and being responsive to similar types of messages from other self-organising systems we encounter) can be challenging, rewarding and comforting. It can educate us, or lead us into unexpected adventure, and open up our lives beyond our present limits and wildest dreams.

In the following two chapters: Ontology and Epistemology, I provide the philosophical basis on which the research and thesis are set.
ONTOMETRY

Journal Entry: Divine Ecology

After going to a hospital to visit a friend yesterday, I take a tram to the railway station from which I need to catch my train home. I ring Jim to ask him to meet me at the end of the train line. No answer. I prefer to wait where I am until I can contact Jim, so I go into a nearby bookshop. I sit on one of two available chairs so I can concentrate on looking at the books on shelves. There, directly in front of me, is a book called “a divine ecology” by Ian Mills (2004), a man I met while studying Social Ecology, ten years ago. I buy the book and start to read it. The subtitle of the book is “the infinite potential of our between.” It is very pertinent to my thesis and my practice. My work with clients takes place in the space between the client and me, most likely also between the structures and cells of the body and so on. Some of the bodywork I do requires no physical touch, so the work cannot be said to take place where my hands contact the client. I feel excited, so far I have read little that corresponds so fittingly with my research thinking about the power of the ‘between’. Although he used different words, such as “the space between the notes” (comparing bodywork with music Pauls, 1993) when teaching Ortho-Bionomy, this ‘between’ is the profound place, which was emphasised by the founder of Ortho-Bionomy Arthur Lincoln Pauls, as the location where change occurs, both in and between bodies. Mindell speaks of its energy when discussing relationships (Mindell, 1987), emphasising that relationships consist of more elements or characters than simply the people, who are normally taken into account. The relationship, as an entity in itself, existing in the space between the people, is also a vital consideration when working with people in relationships. I am pleased to find similar ideas in another source, expanding my knowledge base a little more.

Mills (2004, p. 123) also says:

The inter-activity of my body-mind-living is an em-bodiment in actuality of what is theorised by modern science as relativity. Einstein’s theory of General Relativity reinforces, in scientific mode, Spinoza’s theory, in philosophical mode, of the relating of all things as one substance, as being as such, as Life itself.

I am delighted to find someone else speaking of embodiment in a way that is not disembodied and purely conceptual, as it is used in some academic writing. My thesis is about “body-mind-living” and “embodiment in actuality of what is
theorised by modern science as relativity”. Mills touches on similar ideas to mine and brings new connections, such as Spinoza’s writings, for me to consider in the future. At this stage in my research process, I am trying to prune my writing, and not expand into new areas of study. However, I am curious about Mills’ reference to Einstein. When I applied for ethics approval for my research project, then called “Embodied Relativity Explored”, the University of Western Sydney Ethics Committee asked me to respond to the following point, in which they stated: “The researcher should check her literature reference list as Einstein is not relevant to this project” (Buckley, 2004,p. 1). This requirement set me back in my planning, since I had believed that Einstein was a significant part of my research project. So I was interested and reassured to see Mills linking Einstein’s theory of relativity with embodiment. I say more about relativity, Einstein (1961) and Mindell (2000b, 2004, 2007) later in this chapter.

Introduction

Many research projects have investigated subject matter in consensus reality. This project is different. Its ontology embraces a wider conception of reality, one that includes non-consensus reality. During the process of researching my practice, I recognised a need to clarify my beliefs about ontology and epistemology. As part of that clarification I was surprised to discover that my research is, at heart, both ontological and epistemological in nature. This research is a study of being, of reality, and of how we know what we know. This chapter provides an ontological context for my research, and a discussion of my present view of ontology follows, which I will expand and explain as the chapter progresses. I describe reality as integral (as defined by Gebser, 1991), relative, situated, and paradoxical. My concept of reality is that it is experience-based, mediated by my senses, and unique to me. In spite of that uniqueness, my ontological view is not solitary, but relational, transpersonal, storied and emergent.

Layers of Reality

The world and universe in which I live are vast and complex. As an individual person, I cannot consciously observe and integrate all aspects of reality, merely snatches of some of its layers and qualities. I compile my sense of ‘what is’ from those snatches. In addition, a layered reality has several co-existing readings that may be paradoxical. As examples of reality readings, I have chosen to describe the layers of reality recognised in physics by Einstein (1988), in psychology by Mindell (2000b) and in philosophy by Gebser (1991) and Steiner (1994). To touch on paradox, I visit the Tao te Ching (English). Each of these
writers resonates with my ontological views. I do not conceptualise these as being discrete layers. I think they can merge from one discipline to another, and the layers within a discipline can ‘bleed’ into and influence each other. In his book *The Meaning of Relativity* (1961), Einstein (1988) described two layers of reality, which can be compared using a shared language and which I have labelled consensus and non-consensus reality (after Mindell, 2000b):

*By the aid of language different individuals can, to a certain extent, compare their experiences. Then it turns out that certain sense perceptions of different individuals correspond to each other, while for other sense perceptions no such correspondence can be established (Einstein, 1988, pp. 1-2).*

In other words, consensus reality can be experienced when there is correspondence between different people’s sense perceptions. Where no perceptions are shared, these sense perceptions can be described as belonging to non-consensus reality (Mindell, 2000b, p. 25). Einstein considered physics, which valued impersonal, objective, consensus reality perceptions as real, and as “... the most fundamental (science) ...” (1988, p. 1). As a child I was taught to value consensus reality perceptions ahead of those in non-consensus reality. The latter perceptions were denigrated by my family and disavowed by the school and first university I attended. In the last months of 1967 I studied undergraduate psychology. The subject was described as ‘rats and stats’ and taught experimental method, based firmly in consensus reality. This psychology course felt unrelated to my life, and I failed it, perhaps partly because its lack of balance and relatedness drove me to dreaming. In those days I did not realise the importance of a balanced ontology and had little idea that science would gradually come to include more non-consensus reality within its scope of study (Briggs and Peat, 1990; Davies, 1993; Mindell, 1989b; Wertheim, 1995).

**Relativity**

Einstein attached the word ‘relativity’ to both his special and general theories of relativity. His special principle of relativity referred to: “the principle of the physical relativity of all uniform motion” and he said that: “every motion must be considered only as a relative motion” (1961, p. 59). Einstein explained this in his special theory of relativity in terms of two observers watching a stone drop from a railway carriage, which is travelling uniformly along a rail. An observer travelling on the train will see the stone drop straight down, whereas an observer who stands on a path beside the railway track will see the stone’s path as a parabola. What is observed is relative to the observer’s location. Einstein’s general theory
of relativity is more widely applicable than his special theory and more complex
to understand and describe. An explanation of his general theory is not
necessary for my thesis, which mainly studies bodywork, and simply touches on
this physics from time to time. I mostly use the word relativity in a broad and non-
technical sense that includes Einstein’s use of the term in physics, as far as I
understand it. Einstein expresses his theory in simple, concise language:

The present book is intended, as far as possible, to give an
exact insight into the theory of Relativity to those readers
who, from a general scientific and philosophical point of view,
are interested in the theory, but who are not conversant with
the mathematical apparatus of theoretical physics. The work
presumes a standard of education corresponding to that of a
university matriculation examination, and, despite the
shortness of the book, a fair amount of patience and force of
will on the part of the reader. The author has spared himself
no pains in his endeavour to present the main ideas in the
simplest and most intelligible form, and on the whole, in the
sequence and connection in which they actually originated.

The purpose of mechanics is to describe how bodies change
their position in space with “time.” I should load my
conscience with grave sins against the sacred spirit of lucidity
were I to formulate the aims of mechanics in this way, without
serious reflection and detailed explanations. Let us proceed
to disclose these sins.

It is not clear what is to be understood here by “position” and
“space.” I stand at the window of a railway carriage which is
travelling uniformly, and drop a stone on the embankment
without throwing it. Then, disregarding the influence of the air
resistance, I see the stone descend in a straight line. A
pedestrian who observes the misdeed from the footpath
notices that the stone falls to earth in a parabolic curve. I now
ask: Do the “positions” traversed by the stone lie “in reality”
on a straight line or on a parabola? (Einstein, 1961, p. 9).

These words are understandable to me, despite my limited physics background.
I can picture Einstein on the train and the pedestrian on the footpath, each
having a different, relative view of the stone being dropped. I appreciate the
simplicity with which Einstein goes on to make his original statement more
precise:

Moreover, what is meant here by motion “in space”? From the
considerations of the previous section the answer is self-
vient. In the first place we entirely shun the vague word
“space,” of which, we must honestly acknowledge, we cannot
form the slightest conception, and we replace it by “motion
relative to a practically rigid body of reference.” The positions
relative to the body of reference (railway carriage or
embankment) have already been defined in detail in the
preceding section (Einstein, 1961, p. 9).

Use of the word relativity in my research encompasses my belief that everyone is
different and all views of reality differ, relative to the viewer’s location, their
physical and emotional location and their conceptual viewpoint. I think it is
probable that no single view is totally correct and appropriate or absolutely
incorrect and inappropriate. Even an objective experiment that marginalises non-
consensual experience can serve a purpose if, for example, through its one-
sidedness it wakes researchers up to the importance of sentience and greater
completeness in research. In this thesis, I am broadening the discussion of
ontology beyond physics, which is defined as: “ The study of the motion and
interactions of matter and the transformations between different kinds of energy”
(Bullock, Stallybrass, and Trombley, 1988, p. 650). In this chapter, I want to
demonstrate the relevance of relativity to a ‘branch’ of psychology and highlight
some links between physics, psychology and research.

Process Work

In Process Oriented Psychology (Process Work Community, 2006), three layers
of reality are recognised: consensus reality, dreaming reality and essence
(Hatch, 2004-8). These layers are simultaneously present and available to be
accessed at any time through a shift or expansion of awareness using Process
Work or other methods. Mindell (2000b), a physicist and Jungian psychologist,
and founder of Process Oriented Psychology speaks of two realms within non-
consensus reality: dreaming reality and essence. He says of dreaming reality:

In non-consensual, dreamlike reality, you are not an
individual object or person, but a composite relationship with
everything that is seen … Dreaming no longer means only
dreams, pictures from the night. Dreaming now refers to all
sentient non-consensus reality experiences, such as the
feelings you have in sleep, your fantasies, intuitions, and
unexpected body feelings as well as partially observed
objects that fleetingly catch your attention. These are the pre-
material origins of the world … In general, every “real” thing
you see has a real and also a dreamlike nature. The universe
is a material substance consisting of planets and solar
systems, quasars and black holes, and a dreaming
substance consisting of everything you feel (Mindell, 2000b, p. 581).

Dreaming reality has the potential to express itself as polarities. Within a dream, for example we can experience happiness and sadness, expansion and contraction and so on, as well as preferences. The third layer of reality, called ‘essence’ by Mindell (Process Work Community, 2006) is a unitary realm, beyond polarities and preferences, where conflict and opposing forces are no longer relevant. Essence is a unitary reality that undergirds existence and is beyond conflict and difference. It provides an environment for synchronicity, which Jung described after conversations with the physics professors Einstein and later W. Pauli as he related in a letter to Dr Carl Seelig, on February 25, 1953:

Professor Einstein was my guest on several occasions at dinner... it was he who first started me thinking about a possible relativity of time as well as space and their psychic conditionality...this stimulus led to ...my thesis of psychic synchronicity (Jung quoted in Mindell, 2000b, p. 352).

In 1957, Jung was interviewed on film and talked about synchronicity being “complicated” and “peculiar”. He referred to an experiment by Rhine as he gives an explanation of what synchronicity is:

For example, I have a certain thought, or a certain subject is occupying my attention and my interest. At the same time something else happens, quite independently, that portrays just that thought. Now this is utter nonsense, you know, looked at from the casual point of view. That it is not nonsense is made evident by the results of Rhine’s experiments. There is a probability, it is something more than chance that such an event occurs (Evans, 1980, p. 297).

On another occasion, in a talk to the Basel Psychology Club in November 1958, a member of the audience addressed Jung about the topic of synchronicity:

I had hoped this was a point where depth psychology and theology could finally meet (Jung, 1980, p. 359).

Jung responded:

Oh no, here we are not in agreement at all. Synchronicity states that a certain psychic event is paralleled by some
external, non-psychic event and that there is no causal connection between them. It is a parallelism of meaning. That has nothing to do with the acrobatics of predestination. Theologians do perform the merriest pranks (p. 360).

Synchronicity has many expressions, for example it might be related to the Lazy Girl’s Mthd (Baensch, 2002b) of research that is described in the Methodology chapter of this thesis. It came to light often when Jim and I were working cooperatively together to build the consulting rooms for my practice, and, for instance, the timbers we required would arrive exactly when we could use them, and at exactly the same moment as the carpenter who could help us install them, without any coordination. This was in marked contrast with our experience of the initial renovation we made to the house when Jim and I were undergoing relationship difficulties. We were arguing a lot, and everything that could go wrong seemed to go spectacularly amiss, making the work onerous.

I return now to physics and relativity after my divergence about synchronicity. Mindell described positivist physics and its one-sidedness towards consensus reality in this way:

Without sentient awareness, not only does observation lose its soul – you do as well. Since the sixteenth century, physics has based its experiments on consensual reality, which marginalises non-consensual experience. To be more complete, physics needs your help to include non-consensus reality experiments, that is, subjective impressions. … Remember the lesson of relativity: no framework is real in the absolute sense. No perception or level of perception is everything. There is no one reality (Mindell, 2000b, p. 581).

This idea of relativity, that there are realities and that each person has a different vantage point and sees different objective and subjective worlds is central to my impression of ontology. As I said earlier, my use of the word relativity does not limit its meaning to Einstein’s (1961) applications of his theory in physics.

Soul

One reason I have incorporated more than consensus reality in this research, is because I agree with Mindell: I want the study to have ‘soul’, and to be representative of dreaming reality.
This point deserves development. What does having soul imply to me? Why is soul important in a thesis? In the introduction to his book ‘Care of the Soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life,’ Moore states:

*The great malady of the twentieth century, implicated in all of our troubles and affecting us individually and socially is ‘loss of soul’. When soul is neglected, it doesn’t just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence and loss of meaning* (1994, p. xi).

My postgraduate studies have addressed care of the soul via the medium of practical skills, directed in a safe, loving, gentle, generous and comfortable way towards care of the body. How can affecting the body not affect the soul and vice versa? This is not possible, any more than we can break a leg and imagine this will not affect the rest of our body. We are not compartmentalised creatures. Of course body and soul have an effect on each other. They together influence, reside in, are part of, and delineate aspects of an entire person. I believe this type of care need not necessarily require diagnosis and therapy, it can become more ordinary and everyday than that. Here, I use the word ‘soul’ to represent a characteristic of life and self, not a religious quality which can partly be conceptualised as the outward expression of the inner life of a person (after Arendt 1978 in Pirani and Varga, 2005, p. 194).

Another view of the soul is given by Merleau-Ponty.

*As Descartes once said profoundly, the soul is not merely in the body like a pilot in his (sic) ship; it is wholly intermingled with the body* (in Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 36).

Soul cannot be dissected out from the body. I cannot find soul as a component of a person to show you. Soul is what gives a person or a thesis colour, personality and life. As Moore says, it shows up in minutiae as well as major determinations.

*Care of the soul is a continuous process that concerns itself not so much with ‘fixing’ a central flaw as with attending to the small details of everyday life, as well as to major decisions and changes* (Moore, 1994, p. 4).

I return to answer my earlier questions about soul. What does having soul imply to me? It is difficult to answer. I can only say that when I was at school, I was intent on ‘doing my best’. I trained and competed in sports and strove to apply myself to study. Part of doing my best involved trying to appear ‘happy’ and to
‘smile’ most of the time, because people around me expected it of me. In the end, I could not tell how I was feeling inside, and began to be depressed to the point of not wanting to live any more. It took me years to settle back into my own feelings and care for myself. That came about when I attended to the needs and hints from my body through learning first Biodynamic Psychotherapy, then Ortho-Bionomy, Bowen Technique and later Process Work. I felt as if I had lost my soul through trying to please everyone else and forgetting my own needs. To reconnect with my soul, I became present to “the small details of everyday life as well as to major decisions and changes” (Moore, 1994). This time, I did that from the viewpoint of my own wants and needs, as I gradually learned what they were.

Why is soul important in a thesis? Without a sense of the person who wrote it and of its own character, a thesis has minimal context. It is one-sided. To be valid, I think a thesis needs to portray the nature of the research it describes, not simply the facts. One means of making sure this thesis has soul is to attend to its small, personal details so I breathe life into otherwise dry theory. This stems from a style of writing, which was traditionally considered inappropriate for academic theses, but is now accepted as valuable (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b; Richardson, 2003).

I believe that Ortho-Bionomy is one way to care for the individual body and soul and that Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology care for the souls of individuals and groups. When I say Ortho-Bionomy cares for individual bodies and souls, I know, from the comments of clients and their families, that Ortho-Bionomy also has more than an individual effect. A client’s family members who watch me work say they feel as if they have had a session too. Another suggestion of its wider effect comes from observing parents when they bring their baby or child back for a second session. Some of the parents are difficult to recognise, despite the fact that I have met them only a week earlier. They look so different at our second meeting. When a baby or child sleeps or feeds well, or a child is reported by teachers to be settled, relaxed and able to learn more easily, parents visibly relax. Once they are able to get adequate sleep and to let go of some worries about their children, their faces lose their strained look and the dark circles under their eyes fade. They can take part in a conversation with enthusiasm. In other words, the effect of a session of Ortho-Bionomy can ripple out and affect family members too.
Similarly, with Process Oriented Psychology, once symptoms in individuals or groups are addressed, amplified and worked through, tension may ease and relationships find more balance. Process Oriented Psychology also works specifically with group processes, dissolving knotty or stuck issues, helping group members relate more democratically, and making new space for creativity and soul (Arye, 2001; Mindell, 1995b; Mindell, 2005).

The soul aspect of individuals and groups can also find expression via the space that is provided and held during an Open Space Technology event. The role of a facilitator in such an event is to help a group devise a topic, invite participation which calls for passion and responsibility and then to open a space for a group of people to meet and intermingle. Such gatherings hold a potential for highly conflicted issues to be sorted out in a relationship (Owen, 1994, 2005b). This can be energising as well as soothing and satisfying. One of the facilitator’s roles at an Open Space event is to attend “to the small details of every day life” so group participants can concern themselves with “major decisions and changes” (Moore, 1994, p. 4).

This thesis explores and sets down some of those possibilities for opening spaces that allow for fulfilment of the soul, for example in the research findings chapter.

It provides more than facts and figures to incorporate imagination, emotions, personal details and behind the scenes fleshing out of data.

**Dreaming and Physics**

Now I am interested in explaining why this thesis is representative of “dreamlike reality” (Mindell, 2000b) too. Daydreaming was frowned on when I was young but it need not be seen as signifying a recalcitrant child who refuses to concentrate in class, as I was led to believe. Dreaming, or any sentient experience, during the night or day, can also be seen to form the foundations of our world:

… *dreaming processes are the roots of physics and psychology. The basic stuff of the universe is an interactional relationship process between everything involved in observation. This process is mirrored in the mathematics of quantum mechanics and relativity. That math is a metaphor for the dynamic, dreamlike interaction in complex hyperspaces with the “other,” which is the object of observation. In non-consensual, dreamlike reality, you are not an individual object or person, but a composite relationship with everything that is seen* (Mindell, 2000b, p. 581).
Historically, in science classes, I learned to see myself as discrete from my environment and able to measure and observe it objectively while manipulating variables, without having an effect on results. Now I know (as I knew, deep down, then) that I affect the cosmos as I observe it and that observation is a mutual process. I cannot help but be an influential part of my research.

Physicists such as Feynman (1961) and Mindell (Process Work Community, 2006) no longer see particles as the basis of physical existence, but instead they believe dreaming and interactions, which pre-exist and surround particles, form the ground of existence. Pauls (1993) taught that the work of Ortho-Bionomy occurs between the client and practitioner, not ‘on’ the client’s body itself. Mindell (1987) says that Process Work also works in the space between clients and process workers. He describes this, in a context of relationship work, when writing about spatial and temporal signals in relationships:

In addition to individual signals, there are also signals sent out by the couple as a unit which are impossible to categorize as ‘his,’ ‘hers,’ or ‘theirs’ (Mindell, 1987, p. 45).

These signals are in the field between parties involved in any relationship including a therapeutic one.

Beyond the level of dreaming is the essence realm of existence, which can be equated with:

... the alchemist's Unus Mundus, the world beyond all duality... (from) the Latin word meaning “one world” (Mindell, 2000b, pp. 52 and 352) (my word ‘from’ in brackets).

Jung also wrote about this:

This principle of synchronicity suggests that there is an interconnection or a unity of causally unrelated events and thus postulates the unitary aspect of being, which can very well be described as Unus Mundus ... (Jung quoted in Mindell, 2000b, p. 352).

The 'Unus Mundus' is like a matrix, which allows for the emergence of self-organising systems. It is central to my research in several ways. For example, I wonder if: it is connected to my assumption of the body’s role as an ally in life; it parallels Gebser’s notion of ‘origin’ (1991); and Pauls’ idea of the ‘original concept’ (1993). I have so far said that one reading of reality layers includes
consensus reality and non-consensus reality, with the latter consisting of two layers: 'dreamtime' which includes differences and preferences, and 'essence', a unitary world, beyond polarities. Non-consensus reality is central to existence of the environment, the body and the psyche, which are all one, at the deepest level. Now I would like to explore representations of reality in image and language.

Gebser’s Structures of Consciousness

Figure 7: Pablo Picasso, Drawing (1926) 31x46.7cm
(Gebser, 1991, p. 25; taken from Plasto, 2005, p. 112)

Other types of reality ‘layering’ or expansion exist in other disciplines. Layering is evident in art, philosophy, history, and linguistics as well as science. In art, the layering of consensus and non-consensus reality can be seen in works such as Picasso’s Drawing (1926) (Gebser, 1991, P. 27; Plasto, 2005, 112), which ostensibly presents a drawing of a person’s body. On closer inspection, it becomes apparent that this is not a realistic snapshot of a person, but rather the work incorporates other elements of time and space (past or future) apart from
the present, depicted in consensual reality. The person is shown in more ways than could be seen if present. In Picasso’s drawing, we can simultaneously see views of the front, side and back of this person. To see these views would require us to take time and space to walk around the person, yet we see these all at once on the page. The drawing transcends time and space, which are now “transparent” (Gebser, 1991, p. 24). Picasso’s work brings elements of dreaming together with present reality. As Gebser explained, about Picasso’s drawing:

In this drawing, ... space and body have become transparent. In this sense the drawing is neither unperspectival, ie, a two-dimensional rendering of a surface in which the body is imprisoned, nor is it perspectival, ie, the three-dimensional visual sector cut out of reality that surrounds the figure with breathing space. The drawing is “aperspectival” in our sense of the term; time is no longer spatialized but integrated and concretized as a fourth dimension. By this means it renders the whole visible to insight, a whole which becomes visible only because the previously missing component, time, is expressed in an intensified and valid form as the present (Gebser, 1991, p. 24).

It is not possible, in consensus reality, to see all these parts of a person together at once – for example, the head has not been drawn in a realistic way, but in ‘slices’ – not only has a three dimensional body been depicted on a two-dimensional page, but also the dimension of time (the fourth dimension) has been made visible to us, in concrete form. Picasso managed to represent “the unimaginable and truly unrepresentable...” (Gebser, 1991, p. 27), and through his works, “... time becomes visible in its proper and most unique medium, the human body (or the head)” (Gebser, 1991, p. 27). Picasso and Braque (for example in 1930: Woman’s Head and 1931: Sao) both searched, at a similar time in history, for ways to make time ‘tangible’ and present to viewers of their portraiture.

Some histories attempt to impose a particular version or perspective of an event or period on a society, apparently in order to create a consensus reality. Other possible perspectives are pruned away to leave a sterilised or one-sided view. Here we can consider the way Australian history has been taught in schools, often mostly excluding the thousands of years of rich Aboriginal history. The limited Australian history I was taught at school began with Captain Cook’s arrival on Australian shores. There was scant mention of the Aborigines and their rich cultural history. The Aborigines who greeted Cook were treated as incidental
and dispensed with in a few words in our texts as Cook, his crew and the early settlers took centre stage.

For example, a school text published in 1968 first mentioned Aborigines as “... the greatest source of danger to the squatters” (Munday and Grigsby, 1968, p. 44). In the entire book, of over 170 pages, about eight pages are devoted to Aboriginal issues. The book is entitled “Mainstreams in Australian History”. What could be more mainstream than a culture existing in Australia for thousands of years? To be more fair, colonial occupation of Australia should have been documented in eight pages and the longer, rich cultural history of the Aborigines described in the majority of the book. Another school history text from the State of Victoria (Serle, 1968) included one paragraph on page 2 and 3 and part of one sentence on page 32 about the Aborigines in a book of nearly 500 pages – an insult repeated by other authors such as Mitchell (1965) and Gurry (1981).

History depends on the viewpoint of the observer. Its depiction is relative. To present integral (or holistic) history of a time or location, multiple perspectives are important (Berman, 1990). Historical stories are also more complete when they go beyond mechanistic accounts. Another way I experience new depth, for instance, in Australian history, is in the recent inclusion of the stories of women, who were also almost left out of my history texts at school in the late 1950s and 1960s. Stories about Aborigines, women and others bring greater depth because they are written from another standpoint and add new layers of complexity and reality (see for example Bell, 1998; Wiencke, 1984). Caroline Chisolm is the only female’s name I see in the index of Munday’s Australian history book (1968) despite the names of many men being listed (pp. 171 to 174). Here I proudly include mention of the unreckoned story of my Aunt Kath Ward who, I believe, was one of Australia’s first female accountants and who fought fiercely for Aboriginal rights during her lifetime.

Gebser (1991) and Abram (1997) both show how language can be richly interpreted by looking at its roots. Its development is not as dry and mechanical as I believed from attending English classes at school and learning the roots of words. Language also has layers of reality that contribute to its depth of meaning, layers that link us to the people who used it, and their varied activities, feelings and thoughts. Elsewhere, I have discussed how I believe philosophy and science now incorporate more than consensus reality, giving them greater depth and relevance in my life.
Art, history, philosophy and science are some of the disciplines explored by Jean Gebser, a highly respected European commentator on consciousness, in his book “The Ever-Present Origin” (1991). Gebser depicted five structures of consciousness that are all omnipresent in everyday life, and non-hierarchical. Each structure describes a layer of reality that was dominant for people living during the period when a particular structure ‘held sway’. Gebser labelled these as the archaic (primordial, prespatial and pretemporal), magic (pre-perspectival, spaceless and timeless) mythical (two-dimensional, symbolic and storied), mental (perspectival, spatial and abstractly temporal) and integral (aperspectival, space-free and time-free) structures of consciousness. I have described the structures more fully in the Praxis chapter, in conjunction with a chart (below) showing the relationship of the structures in time and space (Gebser, 1991, p. 117):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Space &amp; Time Relationship</th>
<th>a) Dimensioning</th>
<th>b) Perspectivity</th>
<th>c) Emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zero-dimensional</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Prespatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pretemporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic</td>
<td></td>
<td>One-dimensional</td>
<td>Pre-perspectival</td>
<td>Spaceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Timeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythical</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two-dimensional</td>
<td>Unperspectival</td>
<td>Spaceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Natural</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>temporality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td></td>
<td>Three-dimensional</td>
<td>Perspectival</td>
<td>Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abstractly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Four-dimensional</td>
<td>Aperspectival</td>
<td>Space-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time-free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Chart of Consciousness Structures (in part)

Archaic people lived in a dark fog or dream, magic people had one dimension: the point, and had no knowledge of time, space or movement. Mythical people were aware of two dimensions, they thought in a cyclical process and had a natural sense of time, but not of space or (therefore) of perspective. Mental people had and have awareness of perspective, and can conceptualise time. Their world has three dimensions: length, width and depth. Integral people can (or will be able to) play with space and time. They (will) have gone beyond
perspective and now experience the fourth dimension of space and time (Gebser, 1991, p. 352).

For the sake of brevity and simplicity, I have described the people inhabiting each consciousness structure as “archaic people”, “mental people” and so on. This is not really accurate, since the structures are not hierarchical and all are co-present. Someone loosely described as occupying the mental structure, for example, would have access to all other structures at the same time. During any day, I might try to convince people to do as I say with my persuasive rhetoric while inhabiting magical consciousness, I might dwell on polarities such as the passage of day following night in mythical consciousness or argue rationally to prove a point in mental consciousness, or see many perspectives about a situation through approaching integral consciousness.

People are rarely stuck in one structure of consciousness, and are free to fluidly move between them. Each structure has advantages in certain circumstances and disadvantages in others, one is not generally superior to another, for example, by being strongly rational, we gain a linear perspective, but may lose access to the “transformative ability of words … the power of rhetoric to sway human action” (Arneson, 1993, p. 29). Arguably humanity will need integral consciousness to help us deal creatively with the apparently overwhelming crisis facing the earth, such as global warming since integrality goes beyond polarities and debate towards an aperspectival existence.

Humanity, according to Gebser, is now mutating into the integral structure of consciousness, which holds all other structures within it, giving those of us living today simultaneous access to every structure at any time. For example, as I perform bodywork with a client, or write this chapter, I might experience reality in any number or all of the consciousness structures, successively or simultaneously. When my thinking is rational, and I speak from one perspective, I inhabit the mental structure of consciousness (see Gebser, 1991; Neville, 2000a) as I did for part of today, when searching for some journal articles and following certain steps in a logical, focussed way. During that process, I accessed the university library’s catalogue via the internet using my computer. I have no idea how the software for the catalogue works. After typing in the name of a journal I wanted to access, I clicked on a button displayed on my monitor and the catalogue, as if by sleight of hand answered my enquiry. Without needing any idea of what paths the information followed, or what methods had produced it, the article I desired was ‘conjured up’ for me and simply appeared
on my computer screen. Part of my day was therefore experienced within the magical structure of consciousness (discussed in Gebser, 1991; Neville, 2005). Sometimes I existed in two or more structures simultaneously, for example when I was operating in the magical and mental consciousness of the situation I just described.

Gebser’s structures of consciousness (1991) differ from Einstein’s view of relativity (1961) and Mindell’s consensus and non-consensus reality (2000b) in the way they are described. It seems to me that these men are looking through slightly different lenses at what is. Gebser’s ‘view’ is simultaneously of historical ‘stages’ and ever-present or omni-present existence. Mindell’s (and Jung’s) processes cover similar, transdisciplinary territory through a lens that sharpens up personal experience of consensus and non-consensus reality. Access to knowledge is gained through various single channels, or access routes, such as visual or proprioceptive awareness, or through composite channels such as relationships or the world. Mindell (1995b, 2004, 2007) uses other lenses including alchemy, Taoism, Jungian psychology, teleology and so on. Like Gebser’s, Mindell’s lenses favour fluidity, but from different approaches. Mindell (1993a, 1993c) provides practical exercises to teach, training students in the ability to shape shift fluently through varied roles. Gebser (discussed by Combs, 2005; Neville, 2005) emphasises the contiguousness and ever-presence of all structures and their freedom from hierarchy.

Steiner

Rudolf Steiner (described by Hemleben, 1975), like Gebser and Mindell (quoted in Mindell, 1995b), also had a transdisciplinary approach. Steiner left a legacy in education, health, agriculture and architecture that still informs these fields today through, for example, the Waldorf School movement, Biodynamic Agriculture and Anthroposophical Medicine. He advocated an interconnected knowledge of disciplines:

... Steiner devoted his whole life to overcoming the gulf arising between science, art, and religion, between clear scientific thinking and the belief in “higher” realities. He did this in a manner that recognises the inadequacy of monolithic world views in which everything is subsumed under a universal principle (Michael Holdrege in his foreword to Theosophy, Steiner, 1994, p. xi).

This is also a vital aspect of my research. Working with the body has taught me how impossible it is to work with one part or system of the body without
influencing the rest, or to touch the body but not affect thinking or the imagination. Everything about a person is interconnected and related, and everything a person does changes the world and therefore, ultimately the universe. We are part of many interconnected systems.

Rudolf Steiner also spoke about perception of reality. He called the first chapter in his ‘Theosophy’ book: “The Essential Nature of the Human Being” and opened the chapter with a quote from Goethe:

As soon as we become aware of the objects around us, we start to consider them in relationship to ourselves, and rightly so, because our fate depends entirely on whether they please or displease, attract or repel, help or harm us (quoted in Steiner, 1994, p. 21).

This quote includes both relatedness: our relationship with our environment; and relativity: the relationship we have to the objects around us relative to our own position.

For instance, I am a writer who is vicariously relating to you, the reader of my writing. I see reality in a certain way, because of my practical experience and from relating to authors like Gebser, Mindell, Einstein and Steiner, who also displayed an idiosyncratic view of reality. When I give you my opinion of these authors’ ideas, you read what I write relative to your own vantage point or points. As you read, conceivably (I really think definitely) your perspective(s) begin to shift. You cannot avoid being affected by my words in some way - even becoming more entrenched in your original position alters your angle of view! Living cannot be a neutral, stable experience for long. Our feelings and sensibilities are affected by everything around us. Since everything is relative, nothing remains fixed, but moves along many continuas. A more accurate metaphor for relativity than seeing life from a variety of viewpoints is ‘fluidity’, since fluidity suggests a continuous process of diversity rather than continual steps of alteration.

We intimately relate to our environment, in our own unique ways, on many levels. Steiner speaks of human beings “constantly linking ourselves to the things of the world in a threefold way” (Steiner, 1994, p. 24): through our body, soul and spirit. He describes human nature in the following way:

Through the body, we are capable of linking ourselves for the moment to things outside us. Through the soul, we preserve the impressions things make on us. Through the spirit, what
the things themselves contain is disclosed to us. Only when we look at the human being from these three sides can we hope to understand our true nature, for these three sides show us that we are related to the things that present themselves to our senses from outside. The substances of the outer world make up the body, and the forces of the outer world are active in it … (Steiner, 1994, p. 25).

These complex links with the environment allow us a degree of inter-subjectivity, of many perspectives that shift and mingle, creating our dynamic ontology or view of existence.

Steiner explained that reality consists of more than we can apprehend or measure using our physical senses.

The domain of the soul is inaccessible to bodily perception. … When we look up at the starry sky, the soul’s experience of delight belongs to us, but the eternal law of the stars, which we may grasp in thought and in spirit, do not belong to us. They belong to the stars (Steiner, 1994, p. 25).

The ontology behind my research must be broader than consensus reality and measurable facts. It includes the soul or personal dreaming reality and spirit.

An example of spirit could be the trust shown in me and my work by Ron (on page 4 above) or the way the body can heal itself when damaged.

I cannot ignore the pleasure I derive from my practice when a client’s pain is relieved or limitations eased. My life is full of feelings, so they, as well as the eternal laws I encounter, need to be reflected in my research, as they all ebb and flow. For example, I believe reality is in flux and that nothing remains static, including objects that seem solid and permanent like rocks, mountains, metal bars and people. Rocks, mountains and metal bars are affected by changes in temperature, oxidation (if on earth), weathering and even movements of their atoms. “My life is all suppleness, tenderness, mobile, uncertain, fluid” (Irigaray, 1992, p. 23). How relieved I felt to read Irigaray’s words after years of being counselled to remain consistent! Consistency can be a useful characteristic, in some situations, and it is far from the whole story.

As a young parent I heard how important it was to be utterly consistent so my children could depend on me. I believed I should make rules and enforce them in the same way every day. Trouble was that I was unable to do that. I forgot what rules I had laid down dogmatically, trying to sound firm and authoritative, a few
days earlier. Not only that, but I felt different about issues from one day to the next. On one occasion, I might feel tired and headachy at the dinner table and want some peace and quiet, making that a rule. Another day, feeling rested and exuberant, I might want to make a noise at the table myself. Trying to be consistent (which is not actually possible, I realised later) led to my feeling guilty and inadequate as a mother. Learning, at a ‘Parent Effectiveness Training’ class (Gordon, 1975), that other people also change their minds and moods came as a great relief.

I take advantage of my belief in fluidity by using Process Work to help me ‘shape-shift’ or imagine myself in the form of an object of interest, and to ‘process’ or work through issues where I feel stumped or blocked. For example: I noted in my research journal (14/6/2006):

_It is just after midnight and I feel a little tired, but also keen to get more writing done. I notice that I am stuck for words, sitting here on the couch with a rug over my knees for warmth on this chilly night. When I pay attention I also notice that the fingers of my left hand are on my mouth. Perhaps those fingers have a message related to my writing being blocked? In order to process that possibility, I put my attention on my mouth and fingers (noticing that I am already writing this departure from theory quite fluently) and ask my fingers what they are telling my mouth and me. The fingers are noticeably still and quiet. As I pay attention to my fingers, I become aware of the finest, most subtle tremble. What is that? Everything else, including the world outside is still and silent. Are my fingers trembling from cold? No, I have a rug over me and feel warm. Can it be excitement? No, that doesn’t quite fit and I think I am not allowing myself to drop into the process enough. Excuse me, please, while I put down my pen and sink into this relationship between my lips and my fingers. The tremor in my fingers is slight, yet persistent. It makes me imagine my fingers are full of pulsating tiny beings, in fact microscopic organisms, all alive and all doing their thing. My fingers are saying to my lips: “Go slowly”. “We are filled to overflowing with ideas”. “Being stuck as a result of a lack of ideas is not an issue, so just make us some space”. “Each of our microscopic cells has a story it can tell”. “Everyone is in a similar situation. So just stop long enough to find space for your self”. “Luckily everyone shares this level of complexity already, so you only need to hint at the complexity”. “Don’t aim to record every idea. You already know that’s impossible”. “Ease back and let go.” I notice a toy tiger on top of the filing cabinet to my right. It looks very laid back and like a good role model for me now. In fact, I think I will follow the_
tiger’s lead and take myself off to bed, once I photograph that
easygoing tiger as a reminder.

This preparedness to follow my awareness of inner and outer messages is an
example of my willingness to trust the ‘flirts’ (subtle or obvious signals) (see
Diamond and Jones, 2004; Mindell, 2000a) that flicker in and from my body and
surroundings. I am not always aware of trusting myself or flirts from the world,
but I am learning how valuable such hints can be as a way of guiding my choice
of direction in life.

I gave an example earlier in this thesis about how noticing a backache while
writing about the Body’s role as an ally helped me regroup and write in a new
and more embodied way. Paying attention to a dream nudged me into
postgraduate studies, as I have said. Our two dogs Rose and Romeo gave me
hints of new ways I can expand my being. Rose barks very loudly if strangers
intrude whereas I used to endure such invasions. I am learning (slowly) to be
more assertive and loud with my ‘barking’ when I need to. Romeo is fascinated
by the night sky and sits up straight, staring above his head for a long time each
night. He is teaching me to meditate and to appreciate the cosmos right now, as
it is. My awareness has been heightened through studying Process Work in
Australia and overseas since the early 1990s. Mindell connects this willingness
to attend to intuition and interactions with the world as a form of self-love.

He says:

… self-love comes from taking your perceptions seriously,
accepting your wondering, noticing it as the beginning of a
conjugal act, a heartfelt relationship process…embracing
your experience and following whatever flirts with you is the path of heart, a modern shaman’s guide through life, death, dreaming, and the universe (Mindell, 2000b, p. 580).

My ontological belief in my ability to be self-trusting (refer to Lehrer, 1997) and fluid (portrayed in Castaneda, 2000), both internally and in relation to the field(s) I inhabit, make it possible and important for me to stand for my view of ontology. This belief helps me to develop and evaluate epistemological knowledge, through this thesis, as my environment and I support each other’s co-creation and evolution. My world and I grow and change together as we relate to each other. “Pre-material dreaming is trying to generate itself through you into reality” (Mindell, 2000b, p. 581). Whether I pay attention or not, this “pre-material dreaming” continues unabated. That means reality for me is active, on the go, constantly changing, and transfiguring itself in new ways.

When I refer to the river near our former home in Healesville as the Yarra River, I speak as if there is a river to name. Yet the drops of water that create the river are on the move, descending as rain, flowing, evaporating and always changing. Grass is sprouting, growing and dying on the riverbanks, never the same for a minute. The dirt and clay of the river’s banks and bed are eroding and moving to be built up elsewhere along the river or in Port Phillip Bay. You are also on the move. You are breathing in and out, eating, digesting and excreting, recombining elements that have existed on earth for aeons into your body in ways that are unique. Like each grain of sand on the riverbed, in the process of transforming to a slightly different and unique shape with each wave splash or warm air blast, you are ‘a becoming’.


This should not suggest I recommend a lack of form or its disavowal. Fluidity and structure can enhance each other through their interrelationships.

Allowing myself space to catch flirts and learn (as I did from the microscopic cells pulsating in my fingers earlier) helps me become constantly new.

Voiding creates form: a clearing organises the forest around an opening. This excavation creates a place – where meeting
In Ortho-Bionomy, the practitioner’s role is to make a safe space for the person to remember their body; to regain confidence in the body’s ability to heal itself, after stress or trauma, and move on. Irigaray’s words give me a new way to consider what happens when Ortho-Bionomy is used. Here is my former way of conceptualising my work with an elbow joint that is stressed, tight, and seems reluctant to straighten. I have encountered the tightness associated with spraining my ankle, and the relief gained from shortening the tissue around that ankle until it lets go. So I know from experience that the body has one reflex to tighten soft tissue that is overstretched and another reflex to relax and lengthen tissues, like muscles and connective tissue that have been shortened. Perhaps the person with whose elbow I am working has carried a heavy bag that forced his elbow to straighten more than it wanted to do. As an Ortho-Bionomy practitioner, when I work with this bent elbow, I gently bend it a fraction more, if there is no resistance to my physical suggestion of bending. I support the arm into the bent position and apply a ‘whisper’ of compression, pressing along the bones of the forearm’s bones towards the elbow joint. This bending and negligible compression has the effect of shortening the tissues around the joint that had earlier been stretched and tight, giving the person the opportunity to relax the joint and allow the tissues around it to lengthen. This, in turn, most likely and usually helps the elbow to straighten.

That is one way to see what happens when I work using Ortho-Bionomy. From another perspective, this work might be seen as a way of creating a ‘cave of comfort’ or an interlude approaching nothingness so the body can relax and take time to attend to what the elbow needs for repair to take place. Now how about the impetus to my thinking from Irigaray’s words that I quoted? What do her words add or alter? Her choice of words brings Ortho-Bionomy together with Open Space Technology concepts in a fresh way. I can imagine the cave created at the elbow as a space around which the body can organise itself, inviting a new version of elbow into presence. This response by the body to a safe space: a cave; a ‘nothingness’, supports my belief in a creative, flowing view of reality.

My description of ontology as fluid should not discount the value I place on structure, not as a fixed expression of form, but a dynamic form that accounts for present circumstances, as in the structure of a space. This will become clearer.
when I write, for example, about Open Space Technology (Owen, 1998) and the employment of empty space and chaos in conjunction with its simple yet essential structure. As Heraclitus, (quoted by Plato in Fragment 41 of Cratylus), said: “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man” (Heraclitus, 535 to 475 BC). You and I, our words written and read, the grains of sand, the river, and Rosa our dog twitching here beside me in her dreams, are also relative.

_He (Heraclitus) looked at everything being in the state of permanent flux and, hence, reality being merely a succession of transitory states (Knierim, 1995 to 2006)._  

Continuously, as we incorporate our environment into us and excrete any excess, sharing it once again with our world, we become ‘new’ people and we shift relative to each other. How we view and record that relativity depends on our frames of reference (discussed by Mindell, 1993c, 2000b, 2004; Process Work Community, 2006). These frames can be inclusive or exclusive. I think everything has a part to play in reality, so I tend to be inclusive and espouse an integral view of ontology.

So, I do not feel limited by an archaic view that lacks any perspective or a magical view that cannot embrace non-consensus reality as valid. I want my research to go beyond and include logical thinking, to avow a multitude of perspectives and disciplines and to reach beyond them. I want the soul and spirit to be at home in my life and work as everyday influences and part of my research without requiring a special fanfare, because practical, every day events softly shine with their influence. This view of course, has influenced my research. With a view of ontology like mine, positivist research would have been out of place.

My upbringing occurred in a considerably material world where observation and logic were revered. Consequently, that which could not be externally and empirically observed and validated or rationally defended was generally treated as virtually non-existent, including emotions (rarely spoken about by my family or teachers), pain (“mind over matter” was my Father’s dictum) and intuition (usually ignored or disparaged). This background still periodically influences my views of reality. It formed a strong pattern that I was immersed in at home and school during my formative years. Other appreciations of existence were forced to occupy my fantasies and daydreams, and I was regularly chastised for lack of attention to the ‘real’ world, especially during my school years.
Now I think my dreams were trying to bring balance (see Mindell, 1996, 2001) to my rather austere circumstances. When I was a child my daydreams mainly caused me troubles and worries. Some were based on a belief that the world I inhabited was not the real world and that I was being tested to ascertain my mental fitness to graduate to the real world. Now I think my ‘fantasy’ that a more real world existed outside the one I inhabited as a child was fairly accurate. The world I lived in then was partial. It lacked much acknowledgement of and appreciation for realities beyond empirical certainty, such as dreaming, intuition and feelings.

For example, my father and mother, like many of their generation, had little time for emotions. When I would tell them I had no friends and felt terribly lonely, they would respond “What nonsense”. Perhaps they liked to be in charge of their lives and emotions were unruly and caused disturbance. If I could not prove what I was saying in some concrete way, there was no point in saying it. The girls’ school I attended for 12 years was similarly dismissive of feelings. This could have been because the staff wanted to forge a way ahead in, and gain respect for, the education of the girls at a time when that was not a high cultural priority. The education I received at school was academic with an emphasis on maths, sciences and rational thinking, through it was somewhat balanced with languages and arts. Day dreaming, however, was very much discouraged as a waste of talents. I slid relentlessly into my own complex, inner, fantasy world and was regularly castigated for it. The rational world I was forced to inhabit did not fit my need for richness of perspectives and belief in the value of dreaming and communication about emotions.

In spite of this early training in rational thinking, my present ontology is multivalent and exhibits connectivity between consensus and non-consensus reality, between science and creativity. This is partly expressed in my Taoist leanings (with reference to Capra, 1989; Hoff, 1992; LaoTzu, 1990), which support my preference for accepting and enjoying the possibility of the simultaneous validity of more than one polarity. For example, I experience the polarities of simplicity and complexity coinciding in Ortho-Bionomy. One quality does not need to give way in order for the other to be true; both can co-exist. Learning this bodywork is a simultaneous process of both remembering and letting go or ‘unlearning’ (explained by Pauls, 1993, 2003), which is another example of polarities, normally seen as widely divergent that need not be oppositional. Such paradoxes ideas and polar realities may not only co-exist but also actively cooperate. Reality need not be singular. Creating a space inside me where I can
allow these differing aspects of reality to be together is one of the roles I expect of myself as a practitioner of Ortho-Bionomy, as a researcher and as a person. This is a skill that sometimes feels like a slight stretch of the mental ‘muscles’ that I associate with consciousness. The stretch can feel physical, as if part of my mind actually needs to expand to accommodate realities I would once have believed to be exclusionary of one another. The skill is one I am learning by degrees, both in practice and in theory, by allowing my awareness to expand rather than by employing specific effort or intention. I associate this making of space with patience and working on my self through reading and self awareness.

I said my view of reality is based on experience, mediated by my senses and unique to me. That is relatively true. Experience is important in building a sense of who I am and of my surroundings. Or I could say that sensory input builds a conversation with the environment that includes me as a small part. This is personified by Abram, who describes an encounter he had when walking in a Javanese nature preserve:

“I stepped out from a clutch of trees and found myself looking into the face of one of the rare and beautiful bison that exist only on that island. Our eyes locked. When it snorted, I snorted back; when it shifted its shoulders, I shifted my stance; when I tossed my head, it tossed its head in reply. I found myself caught in a nonverbal conversation with this other, a gestural duet with which my conscious awareness had very little to do. It was as if my body in its actions was suddenly being motivated by a wisdom older than my thinking mind, as though it was held and moved by a logos, deeper than words, spoken by the Other’s body, the trees, and the stony ground on which we stood (Abram, 1997, p. 22) (italics in original).

It is important, I think, for me to realise that I am not separate from nature. Just as I learn from my body’s signals, I need to acknowledge my connection, with my environment, as Abram did, in Java with the bison. My environment includes the natural and built environment with which I have continuous intercourse, whether I pay attention or not. Writing this thesis, I find myself mainly staying inside our house and separated from direct contact with nature. My strongest link with the natural world comes from our dogs. They set me an example, challenging me to be aware and open to nature. They demand attention, by barking at an encroaching sound, by placing their head in my lap or bumping my arm from the keyboard now and then, when I am oblivious of the outside environment and fully focussed on the computer. In Abram’s words:
Caught up in a mass of abstractions, our attention hypnotized by a host of human-made technologies that only reflect us back to ourselves, it is all too easy for us to forget our carnal inheritance in a more-than-human matrix of sensations and sensibilities. Our bodies have formed themselves in delicate reciprocity with the manifold textures, sounds, and shapes of an animate earth – our eyes have evolved in subtle interaction with other eyes, as our ears are attuned by their very structure to the howling of wolves and the honking of geese (Abram, 1997, p. 22).

At a deep level, my body understands I am part of the cosmos. Disconnecting myself from nature also dislocates me from myself and leads to distress.

To shut ourselves off from these other voices, to continue by our lifestyles to condemn these other sensibilities to the oblivion of extinction, is to rob our own senses of their integrity, and to rob our minds of their coherence. We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human (Abram, 1997, p. 22).

Although I am part of the ecology around me, at the same time, I am an individual. There is no other like me. My uniqueness has ramifications on the development of my ontological beliefs. Whichever ontology I create, it becomes unique to me because no other person, living thing or ‘inanimate’ object has my particular view. Whether that uniqueness is relevant or not is described by my perspective at any time, which leads me to my next words about ontology. They describe a ‘social’ part of my reality and how it is influenced by and built up with others, in relationship, or through story. It is emergent: realising potential as well as building and carrying meaning. The meaning of reality is partially constructed through social encounter and narratives. No one else encounters my experiences exactly as I do. My nature and nurture differ greatly from yours.

My Situation

Why did I use the word ‘situated’ (refer to Fine, 1992; Hunter, 1999; Kirsch, 1999) when summarising my ontology in the introduction to this chapter? Context determines reality. This is demonstrated in fields like physics (through reading Briggs and Peat, 1990; through reading Capra, 1989; Einstein, 1961; Gleick, 1987), feminism (for example Daly, 1995; Firestone, 1970; Grosz, 1994), philanthropy (as in Roddick and Miller, 1991) and philosophy (studied by Bak, 1996; Bell, 1998; Bookchin, 1990; Foucault, Martin, Gutman, and Hutton, 1988). Where I am located influences my reality (see Gatens, 1996; Rosenau, 1992;
Weiss, 1999; Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1996), a good reason for me to declare assumptions and clarify the ontology for my research. The word ‘situated’ should not imply that I inhabit a set location. Both physically and in my thought processes, I may, for example, be influenced by the concepts and effects of non-locality. As Combs explains:

\[... \textit{biological molecules are subject to quantum level effects,} \]
\[\textit{so it becomes possible, even necessary, to reconsider the nature of our own bodies in light of the new possibilities of quantum physics. Is it probable, for instance, that quantum level phenomena such as non-locality (action at a distance), or the “entanglement” of events separated by time, might play a role in the quantum neurodynamics of the brain, and thus in the human mind and consciousness itself (Combs, 2005, p. 4).}\]

Perhaps, as I wrote earlier, your future (for me) but present (for you) thoughts occurring in another geographic location from my present one, are tangling with my thoughts and helping me to write. This wild idea seems to have an echo in Cixous’ thoughts.

\[\textit{This latest book, that had never sketched a step, made a clear sound, see how it seems to expect, intend, solicit recognition from this world? An incarnation? (Cixous, 1998, p. 6).}\]

Who is to say where thoughts come from, what they really are, and where they go?

\[\textit{And what this book and a poem had in common was the physical sensation, the cardiac certainty, of their both belonging to a wholly other time from our time to us all. A poem merely passes, coming from elsewhere then moving on. Signifying to us, in passing, at its passage, this elsewhere.}\]

\[\textit{Well, this book was from elsewhere (Cixous, 1998, p. 6).}\]

While we are entertaining thoughts, we experience bodily sensations and processes that we may not attend to. What does this amalgam of thought and physicality amount to? Thinking of myself, I ask: even if I complete this text, will it feel as if my work has been worthwhile? Is that my task anyway? Might there be some words that spark a new possibility for a reader? Or will this thesis fall short of fulfilling its role, whatever that might be?
So how do they exist - this land, this book, this song - lost? In the land of lost lands. In the land where – with words, music, images, with desire and pain – we nonetheless do not have what it takes to make a whole book (Cixous, 1998, p. 6 to 7).

I take heart from Cixous, a few words later when she says: “Behind the pain, sprouts the poem” (Cixous, 1998, p. 7).

Despite aiming for comfort while writing, both physically (in the body) mentally (through appropriate stimulation) and emotionally by learning to deal with issues that arise, parts of my researching and writing process have been painful, I must admit. So I hope a poem sprouts from beneath the pain, as Cixous suggests. One aspect of this PhD that has caused me unexpected pain has been my inability to catch and record most of my discoveries. I feel surprisingly deep sorrow that the resulting thesis is so narrow and limited in the face of all the ‘aha’s’ I have made during my years of study. Perhaps I was naïve to imagine a thesis could be representative of its process? I think so. But if Cixous is right, some of the poetic experiences that remain unrecorded might shine or even softly glow through in some mysterious manner.

Heritage

My general and extremely incomplete knowledge of Australian Aboriginal ontology through reading, taking part in seminars (as conducted by Bell, 1998; Mindell and Mindell, 2002-5; Process Work Community, 2006) and meeting members of my local Koori community tells me that living in Australia with its particular ancient history has strongly influenced me. I experience a degree of relatedness with the land where I live and with family and friends. It is my belief that Australians possess metaskills (term defined by Mindell, 1995a) like mateship, and the valuing of kinship and stories to the extent we do, in good part because we live in a land cared for historically by people who exhibit such qualities.

It seems Australian soldiers have a reputation for not letting a mate down even in difficult or dangerous circumstances. One such story concerns Simpson who, with his donkey, defied danger on the battlefield to rescue injured comrades (Walsh, 2008). (Calling mateship a metaskill might be a stretch of the term, since mateship is a composite of several metaskills such as friendship, love, compassion, warmth, generosity, loyalty, fidelity and so on, in various combinations). It has taken me too long to recognise the paternalistic hegemony that gave almost no recognition to learning from Aborigines but rather believed
that wisdom and learning passed in the opposite direction, from Australia’s colonisers towards Aborigines. I am grateful to be discovering more about what I have absorbed while growing up in a culture that taught a whitewashed version of Australian history despite being unaware of how influential that Aboriginal heritage has been in my life (see Bell, 1998). Part of my appreciation is related to ‘new’ thinking about dreaming, and its importance to humanity. Mindell (2000b) explains how the mainstream, Western attitude to dreaming can be likened to internalised racism:

“The racism and colonization of Aboriginal and emerging world cultures is the same internalized repression of our own Dreaming souls that happens daily” (2000a, p. 13).

Most of us living in mainstream cultures have learned to turn against and ignore our own Dreaming souls.

Mainstream educational systems repress not only the dreaming, but the Aboriginal way of life as well. Most school systems reprimand children for being dreamy. As a child, you are in danger of being publicly humiliated if you are meditative or regularly enjoy fantasy. Everyone, not just Aboriginal peoples, suffers from the decimation of Aboriginal cultures. Today, even through some mainstream people in democratic cultures are awakening to racism, very few notice internalized oppression of Dreaming or its depressing effect on everyone’s aboriginal nature. You may be ignoring the Dreaming because of external and internal racism.

The Aboriginal cultures that supported Dreaming have been so hurt by racism that they are just about overwhelmed by Western attachment to “everyday reality.” Racism suppresses aboriginal people, their cultures, and everyone’s inner tendencies toward Dreaming (2000a, p. 12).

Reading, watching television, meeting Aboriginal elders and attending workshops have taught me that Australia has been covered by a network of caretakers who each accepted responsibility for looking after part of the ‘body’ of Australia, together caring for the whole of the country (Mowaljarlai and Malnic, 1993, p. 191-2 & 205). This care has not lapsed in thousands of years. Likewise, people in tribal and family groups taught and cared for each other (Mowaljarlai and Malnic, 1993, p. 105). I believe these qualities of persistent loyalty and care have been passed across to Australia’s colonisers to become an important, though unacknowledged, part of our way of life as a nation.
Until now, I have mainly spoken personally about ontology. When I do this, I exclude myself from a paradigm such as positivism or post positivism, and I realise that both of these paradigms are influential on my ontological perspectives, because of past training and experience. When I claim to be part of a constructivist or participatory paradigm, I can see ways I do not fit in. Ideally I would declare my research to be outside existing paradigms, either in a paradigm of its own or ‘aparadigmatic’. Although I can see that making links to established paradigms and thinkers can be considered useful in contributing to and describing my research in other ways, I might be too rascally and self-governing to succumb to one. As Victor Hugo said: “Tous les systemes sont faux” (Hugo, 1827).

Despite Hugo’s statement that ‘all systems are false’, I have still tried to link with or develop a systematic ontology that suits my purposes to some extent. To begin describing that search, I will go back in history once more. First I connect with my interpretation of a tradition practised by many Australian Aborigines of recognising and affirming relationships between parts of the local landscape and parts of a person’s body. Body, land and law develop significant, shared meaning from birth, through ceremony and practice (Mowaljarlai and Malnic, 1993). I believe the baby’s body is held with the smoke from a fire flowing around it as features of the local landscape are related to parts of the child’s body through touch and language (Schupbach and Vikkelsoe, 1994). As the child grows, I understand that the links between body and landscape are reinforced. By contrast, some clients I have worked with apparently attach little significance to the body’s existence, seeming to be unaware of and disconnected from bodily issues and symptoms until their symptoms become unavoidably intense. The people I am referring to often seem engaged by concepts and logic ahead of embodied presence. My research enquired into the ontology of embodiment because I believe it to be a vital, central basis for life. The link I make here with Aboriginal Australians is important to me. This is not to suggest that I have specific knowledge of Aboriginal customs or that I follow similar understandings and practices. My knowledge, in that respect, is unfortunately still too limited. My rudimentary knowledge is restricted to learning from Aboriginal elders at several workshops (Schupbach and Vikkelsoe, 1994), from reading (for example Bell, 1998; Wiencek, 1984), and from meetings with local Koori women from time to time. From those experiences I have learned that one Aboriginal tradition, in Murri Country (in particular Schupbach and Vikkelsoe, 1994), was to connect young babies with physical elements of the place where they were born, through ceremony, so the land became identified as part of the growing child. In that way,
wherever the child went, the land was imprinted onto and into the body and
inseparable from the child. This is a topic I want to explore further in the future, if
I have an opportunity, in order to address some of the gaps in my understanding
about living in Australia.

Paradox

Reality is paradoxical. There is not one single truth. Opposite beliefs can both
simultaneously be true. This is best described in Taoist writings, for example:

TWENTY-TWO
Yield and overcome;
Bend and be straight;
Empty and be full;
Wear out and be new;
Have little and gain;
Have much and be confused.
Therefore wise men embrace the one
And set an example to all.
Not putting on a display,
They shine forth.
Not justifying themselves,
They are distinguished.
Not boasting,
They receive recognition.
Not bragging,
They never falter.
They do not quarrel,
So no one quarrels with them.
Therefore the ancients say, "Yield and overcome."
Is that an empty saying?
Be really whole,
And all things will come to you (English, 1991, p. 1).

In conclusion, I agree with Freire when he says: “Reality is a becoming, not a
standing still” (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 182). It is my belief that reality is a
process, not a fixed, ineluctable and permanent proposition. “Process is an
empirical reality” (Mindell, 1989b, p. 8). Existence shifts, everything is in a state
of flux; even those things that appear to be static and fixed hold the potential for
process and movement. Process springs from dreaming, which is at the root of
reality.

“Sentient psychology is basic to Buddhism, Aboriginal
science, shamanism, and quantum physics” (Mindell, 2000a,
p. 73).
In many ways, the Dreaming is to the Aboriginal view of reality as the quantum potential, with its tendencies, imaginary times, and unbroken wholeness, is to the modern physicist’s view of reality.

Aboriginal thinking is ahead of physics in the indigenous people insisting that to feel well and enjoy your life, you must perceive and live in the Dreaming (Mindell, 2000a, p. 10).

These ideas about the value of indigenous knowledge were brought out in more detail when I wrote about the relationship between dreaming and physics, at the start of this chapter and I return to them now, as I draw this chapter to a conclusion, in order to emphasise their importance in my work:

The very basis of process-oriented psychology lies in the idea that this dreaming is always there, we just have to notice its subtle pull and, with a loving focus, allow it to unfold and enhance our lives. Those things that seem static – material objects, frustrating body symptoms that do not seem to change, or unwieldy moods – when approached with wonder and a Zen-like beginner’s mind are found to be processes in the midst of unfolding (Mindell, 2005, p. 4).

This view of reality is not only important to me in relation to my interest in Process Work but also carries consequences for my work as a practitioner and teacher of bodywork. It helps me to “avoid dogmatism and disrespect” (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 183) towards clients, who come from a variety of worldviews, and to practise ‘deep democracy’ (or awareness)

Deep democracy involves helping the various parts of a group to come forward and interact with each other, including those parts that have been silenced or seen as disturbing. Out of the interaction between all of these parts, conflicts can be resolved and a deeper sense of community created (Diamond and Jones, 2004, pp. 11-12).

In my practice, as in this thesis, I mainly practice deep democracy as inner work.8 I use the concepts and practices to help me notice and work with my inner voices and characters. Examples of this can be found in various parts of the thesis such as the internal discussion entitled ‘Inner work - following a process’ which I portrayed halfway through the first chapter: Body as Ally, in my work. The

8 Since I am not a Process Work Diplomate, someone who has completed training in Process Work is known as a ‘Process Work Diplomate’ and practices deep democracy in groups and communities.
way I see my job is not to convert clients to my ontological perspective, but to accompany them, as much as I can, in their process, and in offering possibilities, to develop enough awareness to heed their feedback and co-creatively discover which of those, if any, suit them in their situation.
EPISTEMOLOGY

Introduction

This research into my practice is about how it is possible to develop an ontology for life; to know reality through learning physical self-trust (as in Baensch, 2002b). Thus the research is both ontological and epistemological.

I struggled initially because I thought I had insufficient background in such fields as philosophy to give me a toehold so I could start to climb into the subject matter concerning ontology and epistemology. I read books and papers (Byrne-Armstrong, Horsfall, and Higgs, 2001; Higgs, 1998) and searched the internet in order to acquaint myself with pre-set paradigms so I could discover where my research might fit. My efforts were unproductive since I could not place myself comfortably in any paradigm I encountered. Then Elizabeth, my elder daughter asked me how I see reality and I began to talk about some simple, basic qualities of existence for me. Suddenly I could see that ontology, far from being an annoying detail to fill in, a required box to tick, another necessity to ‘put to bed’, was what the research and thesis had been about. Elizabeth helped me to drop down into another level of understanding through her questions and my personal answers. I wrote a new chapter on the topic and looked at the drafts of my thesis chapters with new eyes. It dawned on me that my research has been ontological. Elizabeth also asked about my epistemology: how do I know what I know?

Others, especially Debbie Horsfall, had asked me similar questions, but I had not realised how simply and personally I needed to answer those questions, at least to start with, in order for me to connect with the topic of epistemology. Here is my individual answer to how I know what I know.

Embodied Epistemology

There are many ways to see knowledge. Presently I want to say how I apprehend and gather what I know.

… neither the methodology of the natural sciences (‘realism’) nor that of an abstract rational psychology (‘intellectualism’) provides a satisfactory explanatory framework for the understanding of behaviour, both animal and human. Instead behaviour can be understood only within a distinctive ‘existential’ context that situates the subject, animal or human, in its world and identifies the structure of its behaviour in the light of the subject’s ‘body’, its bodily way of making sense of its world. Merleau-Ponty further holds that these structures can themselves be identified only as
structures within the perceived world of an embodied subject; … (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 2).

Since I am alive and human, I live in a body, as is the fashion, and I am fortunate enough to have relatively functional senses. They mediate multiple, varied experiences, filtered through my sensory appreciation and awareness (perceived by Ackerman, 1992; Soesman, 1990; Wright, 1971). Curiosity leads me to engage my senses and enter into their messages (see Ackerman, 1992; Shoemaker, 1994). This helps me create meaning and stories from what I experience, in association with my internal climate and contexts, formed from assumptions and prior learning (for example Colegate, 2004; Ellis, 1996; Richardson, 1997). I gather knowledge through relationship with people, things, attitudes and so on, and through process, using observation, intuition and logic. The knowledge I build comes from varied perspectives. Like D.H. Lawrence, I think:

What man [sic] most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his 'soul'. Man wants his physical fulfillment first and foremost, since now, once and once only, he is in the flesh and potent. For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive ... We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos (Lawrence in Center for the Evolution of Democracy, 1997, p. 7).

The more I can be present and aware, and immerse myself in embodied living, the more I can experience life and develop knowledge. In a way, my last statement can be seen as a ‘tautology’. How can I avoid being immersed in life until I die? I think there are ways I can distract myself from being embodied and present, and conversely, ways I can learn to trust my body and its messages and to come home to my body as a welcoming place to dwell. It is possible for me to see my body as an ally and listen to its voice, just as I can choose to regard it as an enemy to be sidelined or overruled at all cost. My motto can be “no pain, no gain” or it can be “less pain, more gain”. I can whip myself along, or I can trust the process of life, treat myself kindly, and celebrate being here now, in the flesh.

Following my research, I think I have arrived at the ability to use constructed knowledge at times. Constructed Knowledge occurs when a woman sorts out: “... the pieces of the self ... searching for a unique and authentic voice ...” (p. 137). It involves realising that knowledge is not received, but constructed by the
person knowing it and dependent on context. Questions and answers are not simple and are clarified by asking who, why and how questions to elicit their context and relevance (pp. 137-9).

For instance, in my understanding of texts I have accessed during my PhD candidature, reading a particular book such as Husserl (1980) originally left me floundering and feeling uncomprehending, although convinced it was important to me. As my years of study progressed, I moved into Subjective Knowledge of that book or topic or writer and often, eventually, through to Constructed Knowledge of its subject matter, when I could make its knowledge part of my wider understanding, in relationship to knowledge of myself. A new book, writer or topic might still tip me, even now, back to a perspective of “silence” (mindless and voiceless) (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15) or “subjective knowledge,” until I find my ‘feet’, gradually gathering a meta position as well as being able to immerse myself in the subject matter.

Since waking up to the importance of ontology and epistemology for this present study, I am re-reading Women’s Ways of Knowing (1986) in a new way. Its opening lines now have new import:

> We do not think of the ordinary person as preoccupied with such difficult and profound questions as: What is truth? What is authority? To whom do I listen? What counts for me as evidence? How do I know what I know? Yet to ask ourselves these questions and to reflect on our answers is more than an intellectual exercise, for our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 3).

I agree with the assertion that, in general, most people are not preoccupied with these questions, although ‘preoccupied’ is a loaded word as is ‘ordinary’. My preference in this case is to use the word ‘considering’ instead of preoccupied with and I believe that most people do consider these issues. We may not come to definitive answers, but the questions exist in the background for many people. Questions of truth and authority are brought in front of me daily, for example on radio or television news broadcasts. I check truth and validity using more than the words I am told.

While I was writing this section (November 2007), politics proved to be a rich source of material around this topic of how I know what I know and validity. As I write an election approaches, for finding examples of messages I can check for
validity (ABC, 2007). On 31st October 2007, the Minister for Federal Health Tony Abbott insulted Bernie Banton, a man who was dying of asbestos-related illness and who had received an Order of Australia for his activities on behalf of the victims of asbestosis. Next morning, the Minister apologised to the man. "It was a mistake... it was an error of judgment on my part," Mr Abbott said. I did not believe the apology was sincere. Why not? Because the Minister looked very tense and contained rather than giving and approachable or soft. His words contained a veiled criticism or attack on the man. Both points demonstrate to me that the Minister’s words at face value sounded like an apology but his stony expression, (set jaw and hard eyes) locked posture and indirect words of criticism give the opposite impression. This seemed more of an attack that an apology to me.

When I receive a double message, that is when words say one thing and other information, such as a speaker’s body language, simultaneously gives me a different and conflicting story, I feel somehow uneasy. It does not matter that the story is then repeated more forcefully, or is told again by others, somewhere inside me I feel strange or uncomfortable. Although I think people observe double messages and register them somewhere inside, that registration might not immediately come to conscious awareness. Then I think confusion and a level of discomfort build until the discrepancies can be resolved. This is a practical application of epistemology. It shows the centrality of being aware of how we know what we know in our everyday lives.

We know if a message is valid and honest when what we see, feel and hear all add up. If we try to ignore all but one channel of input, our bodies register what is happening and we grow confused by the conflicting information.

*Body language is like dream language. It gives you indications that the conscious mind is not yet able to give. Once the mind is able to function in harmony with the body signals, the body automatically relaxes, if the body is tense, there is reason. The tension is needed, and the shouldn’t be arbitrarily relaxed* (Mindell, 1985, p. 27).

**Children Overboard**

One practical example of embodied epistemology can be seen in a situation that took place during February 2001 when the Minister for Immigration and the Prime Minister of Australia made announcements, reported on several
Melbourne television stations, that refugee parents had thrown their children overboard from a boat.

I remember seeing the news report on television, and feeling so uncomfortable that I was internally writhing around. It took quite a long time for further information to be reported that suggested the incident was not as it had been
Censored Smiles of Kids 'Overboard'

PHOTOGRAPHS of happy children being cuddled and cared for by relieved asylum-seeker parents have emerged, more than 18 months after the same parents were wrongly accused of throwing their children overboard.

Six photographs, posted on the internet yesterday, show tired but attentive parents on the deck of HMAS Adelaide soon after they were rescued in October 2001 by navy personnel after their vessel, carrying 187 people, sank off the Australian coast. The Opposition said yesterday the release of the photographs before the election could have changed public attitudes to asylum seekers. Labor Senator John Faulkner, who sat on the children overboard Senate inquiry, said he had no doubt that if the photos had been released before the election, "there would have been much greater sympathy towards asylum seekers".

He accused the government of deliberately preventing the Defence Department from releasing the images.
"The government was intent on perpetuating the myth, for political advantage, that asylum seekers were callous and cruel towards their kids," he said.

The photographs show mothers in headscarves and their husbands holding babies and sitting in family groups with young children draped in towels and drinking glasses of milk supplied by naval officers.

The asylum-seekers became a focal point in the 2001 election campaign when pictures of children allegedly thrown in the water by their parents, were released days before the federal poll. (Laurie, 2003, p. 6)

'Why didn't they show the other ones to Australians?' Jack Smit, Refugee advocate

At the time, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock described the refugees' actions as a disturbing and premeditated act. John Howard said they were "a sorry reflection on their attitudes of mind."

The Australian's Nathalie O'Brien broke the story that the children overboard incident never happened.

The story days before the election forced the government release video of the episode and later sparked a Senate inquiry.

The new softer images of the asylum-seekers were posted on a website by West Australian refugee advocate Jack Smit, who said he had received them from an anonymous source.

He claimed the images had been withheld from the public to dehumanise the asylum-seekers, despite the release of the (k)now well-known digital photographs - apparently taken at the same time by a navy officer - showing children in the water. "This is the same camera, the same (series of) pictures that went to John Howard, so why didn't they show the other ones to Australians?" Mr Smit said (Laurie, 2003, p. 6).
To provide an additional view, I include information from an article in The Age newspaper with the headline “Accountability Overboard”, written by Robert Manne, Associate Professor of Politics at LaTrobe University:

A week ago, Mike Scrafton, a public servant once seconded to the staff of defence minister Peter Reith, claimed that on the evening of November 7, 2001, he had informed Prime Minister John Howard that no one inside the Department of Defence believed that Iraqi children had been thrown into the ocean from a refugee boat. Despite this conversation, on November 8, 2001, at the National Press Club, the Prime Minister repeated the discredited claim.

Although the Prime Minister last week disputed Scrafton’s account of his conversation with the Prime Minister, Howard’s denial was difficult to believe. Unlike the Prime Minister, Scrafton had nothing to gain by lying. His integrity was affirmed by several former colleagues. He passed a lie-detector test. A senior public servant he spoke to on the following day corroborated Scrafton’s version of his conversation with the Prime Minister.

On the balance of probabilities it is likely that the Prime Minister deliberately misled the people on November 8, 2001. Even more importantly from the constitutional point of view, it is likely that he deliberately misled Parliament on a dozen occasions in February 2002 (Manne, 2004).

Repeated claims, by government politicians, transmitted on television (for instance Bradford, 2002), and radio news reports (such as Aedy, 2002), and Hansard reports (for example Committee, 2002), that they were telling the truth about these children being thrown overboard, only led to greater discomfort on my part. I cannot explain exactly why I did not accept these stories as valid knowledge, but I can explain it partially. There was a bad fit between the words being spoken by the government politicians and their behaviour. They looked a little awkward or out of place as they spoke, almost as if they were controlling themselves so they did not squirm as they spoke. Their words did not match the way their bodies stood and moved: their body language (a bit shifty and awkward) and voice qualities (strained) contradicted what they said, in my observation. On my television screen, I saw men who looked and sounded uncomfortable and who did not stand strongly and confidently to speak. Their voices sounded unclear and left me unsure of their motivation in speaking. Their posture suggested that these men were pushing themselves to come forward
and say certain words while their bodies were slightly retracted, partly pulled back. They looked to me as if they were trying to compose themselves by moving smoothly rather than spontaneously, and trying hard to convince me. None of these observations was dramatic, yet they all built to contribute to my sense of mistrust about whether what I was being told was true. A little voice in me was quoting: “Methinks you protest too much” to these politicians. I felt very uneasy. When the news broke that lies and incomplete information had been provided to me, I was relieved. Double messages can drive people mad or drive them into an altered state of consciousness (as described by Goodbread, 1987, p. 85). They undermine self-trust by creating a clash between our own perceptions and stated “facts”. Double messages can teach us to disbelieve our senses.

As well, a loop of understanding was left incomplete and open for me. If the accusations were accurate, and the children had been thrown overboard, I was left asking questions like: Why would parents throw their children off a ship into the sea? Why am I being told this is what they did? Why did the Prime Minister take such an active role in relating a story that would normally be told by those directly involved in such an incident?

My answers to these questions, and more that came to me internally as I watched and listened, were not necessarily all immediately conscious. Some realisations remained below awareness, gradually emerging as more and more strident reports came through that were trying to convince listeners or viewers of the veracity of this, I thought, rather unusual claim. My inner writhing became so strong and painful that I could no longer watch the reports and would often switch the television off. Was I, in a way, squirming because the politicians who were relating their version of the truth were not doing so openly themselves? Was there a squirm in the air that I was picking up in my body because the storytellers were preventing their own bodies and voices from freely moving in that way?

I believe the ‘writhing’ I immediately experienced at a bodily level in response to viewing the initial report contained all the questions and answers. Had I ‘unfolded’ my writhing movement at the time (as suggested in Mindell, 1989c), I think the questions I listed above, and some answers to them, would have been available to me. I think my body gives and receives information in a truthful way in spite of any attempts I might make to twist messages I give, or to believe distorted and untruthful stories I am told. Inside me I have a ‘truth and justice
dial’ that registers incoming and outgoing messages. That dial, sometimes
located on my face, and sometimes in my heart, belly, or elsewhere in my body,
is calibrated and directed by my body, which is continuously conscious, at some
level, of incoming news. New information is checked against what I know
already. Questions are asked internally such as: “Does this new ‘data’ ‘stack up’
against past knowledge I can match it with? Does everything fit fairly seamlessly,
or are there details that poke out or trouble me? After this matching process
occurs, the dial swings to a certain place of belief or disbelief. If I am really keen
to believe something, I weight the pointer on the dial a little to pull it towards
where I hope it will rest.

If I am forced to absorb too many double signals and unresolved inner reactions
to them, I run the risk of developing symptoms and becoming ill. My self-trust
and confidence can become undermined by long-term experience of conflicting
messages. To remain healthy, I need to be able to come to terms with
discrepancies in the information I take in. Goodbread gave an example, which
illustrates the power of double signals, when he wrote about their effects in
therapy situations, and the way a therapist can be ‘dreamed up’, or come to
respond in an unexpected way, if a client gives a double signal:

_We know that the therapist’s dreamed-up reactions are
mediated by the client’s double signal. Since these signals
come from contrasting aspects of the client’s experience, the
therapist becomes confused and does not know which part of
the signal to respond to, Her dreamed-up reactions are born
out of this confusion._

_This suggests that if the therapist can remain aware of the
client’s double signals, she is in a position to help the client
unravel their meaning and eventually embrace disavowed
aspects of their experience (Goodbread, 1997, p. 85)._  

When I was a child, my facial expressions caused me a few regrets. If I spent my
day’s fourpence bus money on lollies by means of walking half a mile to catch
my first tram home from school, Mum sometimes asked me whether I had done
so. I would try to lie because I knew I was not supposed to (a) buy lollies and (b)
eat in school uniform on the trams. Mum always knew when I was lying. She
must have possessed a higher quality ‘squirmometer’ or ‘dial reader’ than I. Or
maybe she saw evidence of chocolate smears around my mouth or liquorice
remnants between my teeth from my favourite chocolate covered liquorice
bullets. More likely I would wriggle and writhe just a little and look uncomfortable
and guilty whenever I tried to lie convincingly. She did not ever divulge to me what ontology and epistemology she employed in her research into me, on the validity of my statements. She simply used her methods with unerring accuracy and I gradually learned it was futile to lie to her. Mum could tell the difference between truth and lies. She paid attention to double signals, whether she knew that was what she was doing or not. She trusted her senses to guide her. So can we.

By trusting our bodily response to messages we receive from all our senses, rather than being swayed by an apparently convincing argument, we might get a clearer idea of which messages are trustworthy and which are not. The physical tension and emotional stress, caused by conflicting messages we experience, have good reason to exist. Trying to force ourselves to relax and ‘delete’ the tension through relaxation may be one more way to doubt the body’s guidance. A more trusting way to deal with stress is to believe in the tension, as an early warning system, and follow it through to try to discover what the dream is behind the symptom.

Now I want to return to the summary of my epistemology that I listed at the start of the chapter and bring you a fuller account of its points. How does the word ‘process’ apply to epistemology? How does this meaning here differ from its earlier application to ontology? In the last chapter, I was saying that reality itself is a process (a noun). Now I am saying that I know what I know through processing (an action word or verb) what comes to me in the light of knowledge I have accrued already. One example is embodied in my earlier writing about how I recognise truth in politics. If I notice feeling uncomfortable about a situation, I can ‘process’ (dealt with by Diamond and Jones, 2004; hooks, 1994; Zwig, 1992) my physical sensations or emotional responses and uncover the story behind them. This processing depends on a certain attitude towards myself including my body. The attitude I am describing encompasses a level of self-trust, which is foundational to my research. Self-trust not only requires metaskills (demonstrated in Mindell, 1995a) like compassion, patience and awareness, but also helps me to build these metaskills.

This is a chicken and egg situation, and a process of being willing to trust myself, and simultaneously be patient and compassionate when I doubt myself. I think a major key is awareness – paying attention to little hints from my body and not slipping into the habit of discounting my intuition. Gradually I learn to trust myself,
just as I have more awareness of the inner and outer signals I can trust:
sensations and thoughts about what I am experiencing.

It makes sense to me that citizens should trust themselves. I see ways that many
peoples’ self-trust, and their sense of embodiment, become undermined.

For example, I hear people at a barbecue jokingly put each other down, I see a
child in a supermarket being smacked for picking up a lolly he wants that is
provocatively displayed within reach where he is waiting at the checkout. I notice
how my elderly Mother’s confidence risked being undermined by professionals
who initially tried to talk to me about her body as if she was senile or absent.
When teaching I sometimes heard children labelled by their teachers as ‘difficult’
or ‘naughty’ in their presence. Each of these experiences teachers the object of
the criticism that they are not worthy and that can have the effect of reducing
their self-trust and self-love so essential for confident, responsive living.

This means their personal ontology and embodied epistemology lack strong,
sensational roots. In what ways is epistemology undermined? We can lose faith
in our ability to find out what we know.

Irigaray (1985a) has some thoughts, about relying on the body and its
knowledge, with which I concur. The body is an ongoing process. Its very fluidity
increases its reliability in each changing moment through its responsiveness.
There is no need and no point in holding to an external ‘authority or reality’. Can
we know ourselves as we flow and change?

Your body is not the same as yesterday. Your body remembers. There’s no need for you to remember. No need
to hold fast to yesterday, to store it up as capital in your head.
Your memory? Your body expresses yesterday in what it
wants today. If you think: yesterday I was, tomorrow I will be,
you are thinking: I have died a little. Be what you are
becoming, without clinging to what you might have been,
what you might yet be. Never settle. Leave definitiveness to
the undecided; we don’t need it. Our body, right here, right
now, gives us a very different certainty. Truth is necessary for
those so distanced from their body that they have forgotten it.
But their "truth" immobilizes us, turns us into statues, if we
can’t loose its hold on us. If we can’t defuse its power by
trying to say, right here and now, how we are moved
(Irigaray, 1985b, p. 214).
I agree with Irigaray that humans are fluid beings, and that the body remembers. I agree that it is possible to be present to what the body tells us dynamically as life moves on. I agree that definitiveness, like labels, can be a trap and can cover indecision. However, if the body is my ally, it is not my call. I still exist to make decisions and learn from the body’s hints, just as I am writing about my body perceiving and interpreting its messages. I can be distinct from my body and paradoxically at one with it simultaneously. I need not hold to an external authority or reality but I can trust my own truth, which I need in order to assess reality and recognise what feels right to me. If I can be truthful to myself and pay attention to my perceptions, I build self-trust, which acting as a keystone, allows me to learn confidently from my perceptions.

Repeated experiences that teach me to doubt my perceptions undermine my ability to trust myself. I will follow my intuition and offer some possible ways for this suggested loss of epistemic confidence or self-trust. There are many other reasons such as traumatic experiences or betrayal that might cause people to lose trust in their body’s messages, but space limits me to a few examples.

**Babies and Children**

Throughout pregnancy for example, the mother’s degree of self worth may pass to her foetus (found in Odent, 1984; Schwartz, 1980; Verny and Kelly, 1981). During the birth process, simple provisions to ensure an undisturbed birth are sometimes not made. This is an understatement, in my experience and judging from birth stories and statistics (as presented in Odent, 1984; Reiger, 2001). These simple birth provisions include a familiar and safe place where the mother feels warm enough and unobserved and where she is not engaged by others with language (listed by Odent, 2003). Here I am not referring to the idea of silent birth. I believe that a labouring woman should feel free to express herself in whatever ways she wants. I am not suggesting placing restrictions on a woman in labour, but not engaging her in any unnecessary conversation, since this can interfere with the birth process (see Odent, 1999; Robertson, 2004).

Instead, more often than not in ‘developed’ countries, the labouring woman is encouraged to go to an unfamiliar place such as a hospital, where she is asked questions, given ‘support’, monitored, assessed and left without a doula, who is a woman attending the birth in order to accompany the mother in relation to her emotional well-being (portrayed in Robertson, 2004). This artificiality can inhibit the production of natural oxytocin, a hormone required for an easier birth, for the bonding of mother with baby and to encourage the let down of milk for
breastfeeding (Odent, 1984). Then the baby is taken home to conditions under which it is difficult to establish and continue breastfeeding (described by Ratner, 1974) and many women are expected to or want to take up outside employment without realising the full consequences of this step (taken up by Biddulph, 2006). Children begin school or kindergarten when they are quite young and are expected to focus on conceptual learning before they have enough practical experience on which to base the concepts (fleshed out in Baldwin Dancy, 1989; Nash-Wortham and Hunt, 1990; Salter, 1998). There are frequent opportunities for being labelled a failure, including being taught by people whose self trust has also been compromised, or who believe competition is a necessary way to motivate children to learn.

Ten years of experience as a primary classroom teacher and principal taught me that competition takes children’s attention away from what is happening for them and trains them to watch others. It is one way to divert children from their body and self-awareness (perceived by Berman, 1990). Children might also be taught to overrule their body’s pain signals and warnings of imbalances in their situation. At school, children are required to sit for long periods, often in chairs and at tables inappropriate for their build, at times resulting in postural problems (personified by Pauls, 2003). By degrees, some children begin to lose trust in their body’s sensations and messages. They may be taught to listen to external experts and authorities, who further undermine their inner trust by teaching values, logic and priorities from the authority’s own perspectives.

Milgram (1974) described how people, in perceived positions of authority, could persuade research subjects to behave in extraordinary ways. Horsfall, Byrne-Armstrong and Rothwell (2001) discussed power, knowledge, the notion of ‘truth’ and the importance of being aware of the ways discourses can shape our lives in professional practice. They asked such questions with regard to nursing practice in a hospital as: “Does the person in the bed have a voice” (Horsfall et al., 2001, p. 93)? I additionally ask: “Is the body’s ‘voice’ of a child in class, or a university student at a lecture, or a researcher working towards a deadline, or an elderly person in a nursing home, or a baby being born, listened to and respected?” My answer is: The body is frequently ignored and we are often unaware that this is happening. In fact, I have even internalised authority figures that tell me to ignore my body, and carried them with me inside my head, without noticing. It now takes quite an effort for me to attend to my body’s needs during times of stress.
For example, I am writing this sentence close to a deadline to send a second
draft of my thesis to Debbie. I sometimes find it hard to drag myself away from
the computer in order to eat, or go to bed, at this demanding stage of
proceedings. My poor body starts by metaphorically clearing its throat to say it is
time to stop, then calling softly and gradually more loudly, until it finally shuts
down my memory or gives me a painful symptom like tight shoulders, and I wake
up to its message.

Partiality

Does this sound like a soapbox diatribe? I do feel strongly about these issues –
strongly enough to spend over twelve years of my life working towards
researching embodiment, self-trust, and the body’s voice, in my practice in order
to bring them to public and academic notice in my own way (see Baensch,
2005). These beliefs, which I have just expressed, about the need for
awareness, trust and love at all levels of society, developed from 58 years of life
experience and practice, discussion and reading, teaching and learning, and
deeply influence my epistemology (Baensch, 2002b). It took over half my life so
far, for me to wake up to some of the deeper reasons for my own lack of
confidence and self-trust. My life experiences have left a burning impression.
Once that internal fire would have been discarded or sneered at as subjective
and therefore unreliable in research. Now I can declare my partiality and find
other researchers (such as Cixous, 1998; Dillon, 1997; Foucault and Rabinow,
1997; Shepherd, 1993) who include their own voices in their research:

... traditions of research have changed in recent years so that
the voice of the researcher and participants in qualitative
research is often no longer masked behind impersonal
passive-tense prose, but instead the account is written in the

Where they might once have used an ‘objective’ distant, formal, academic style
of writing a growing number of researchers (such as Cartledge, 2004; Denzin,
2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b; Irigaray, 2002; Lakoff, 2005; Macklin and
Whiteford, 2006; Maxwell, 2005; Watson, 2005) have been bringing awareness
to the active influence they exert on their research and are writing in ways that
acknowledge their own voices and roles.

... The voices of researchers and participants contribute to
making qualitative research authentic, readable and richly
My voice was built into the structure of the research from the start because I think validity of research is increased through the fleshing out of researchers throughout the research process, both for their own self awareness as they conduct their study and to give readers a stronger sense of the research’s context. I used a journal to record my experiences, observations, beliefs and ideas as the project progressed. I followed my interests and inclinations in reading and I applied what I learned to the research. For example, when I noticed I was beginning to feel uncomfortable or restless, I found a new perspective from which to observe, a new lens through which I could magnify the issue, or another colour or viewing angle to throw the research into an unexpected relief. On occasions when I felt mired in a deep bog and unable to write, I might climb up on a chair and view my desk and surroundings as if I were an all-powerful god. I then imagined myself embedded in my predicament and used my omnipotent powers to create whatever miracle was called for.

‘God’

For example, as I write this section, I have reached a place in my research where I am making no progress. I have two days left before a deadline to submit a first draft to Debbie. Half of today is taken up with receiving a session of Ortho-Bionomy, including travel. Several chapters need a lot more work. I feel immobilised. When I go to make corrections to part of a chapter, I think some other part is more important to adjust. So my time is less effectively used. I decide to try getting above my situation (literally) to see if part of me has a solution. Finding a solid chair, I climb up onto the sink in the kitchen where I have been writing. Once standing on the sink’s draining board, I imagine my way into having the powers of a god. Many years ago, Liz, my daughter, painted white clouds on this room’s pale blue ceiling, which helps me to shape shift. As god I can look down on the smallish, square room where Allison is writing at a round table. The table has a pool of light from her lamp illuminating the papers and pens she has been using. My godly attention is drawn to her dogs lying near the table. The older one, Rose, is lying very still now that she has grown used to seeing god standing on the sink. The younger, foster dog, Romeo, is less accustomed to such unusual antics. His ribs are moving in and out quite a lot as he looks up at me hovering above him. Movement and stillness catch my attention with their contrast. Then Romeo settles on the floor and begins to doze. I see no problems with the scene. Allison has her revolving chair turned away from the table. I reach down from my great height to turn it back to the table and feel a pang of pain in my back. As god, I take that as a hint. Before I reached
down, I had decided all was well. Then I intervened and over-extended myself. I realise that is a sign to do less and observe more, allowing nature to take its course. If Allison has her chair turned to one side, then that is how her chair needs to be. Even I, as god, need to know when to be a bystander and when to get involved. Allison might not like this realisation, but the dogs seem to be with me. I climb down from the draining board and shift back into Allison’s shape, sitting on the chair. How do I feel now that I am back in my skin? I am a bit calmer. God’s reminder, that events sometimes need to take their course, reiterates my research finding that I can do less to achieve more. That is a bit irritating. I do not like such neatness. I wanted god to hit the table with lightning bolts and declare, in a deeply resonant voice: “I am your salvation. I will grant you the miraculous completion of your thesis.” And then lob four or five leather-bound copies onto my kitchen table as I stepped down from the sink. It did not happen. Sigh. If it had, I might have felt sort of let down anyway.

Another ploy I used to navigate inertia was to take a pen in each hand, writing questions with my right hand and answering using my left hand to see if new information emerged. There are other examples of devices I used that you will discover as you read the thesis, such as amplification of signals from the world or my body, and awareness and processing of dreams. There are also sections of writing which show what happened when I ignored or obliterated signals. It was my wish to design and carry out research that contains and conveys meaning. This wish was built into the research structure because it was incorporated into my body. As I learned to trust and follow signals, so my bodily structure and the structure of the thesis reflected that process, as symptoms and edge behaviours abated. When I ran roughshod over flirts (found in Diamond and Jones, 2004) and signals, symptoms recurred. There are simple examples like writing when I felt tired and finding my words made little sense on rereading, or needing to treat symptoms via the dentist when I was juggling too many roles during my fieldwork project and my tooth became infected.

Reading Paul Roberts’ (2003) examination of his research epistemology is helpful at this point. Roberts uses three voices to question, critique and contextualise his research as an ‘epistemology of practice,’ where ‘truth is made, not discovered’ (Roberts, 2003, p. 224) and where the emphasis is practical and ethical. He is suggesting that truth and reality are not received or discovered, but rather constructed as part of a practice of engaging actively with the world and creating knowledge as a participant. There is a practical and contextual basis for Roberts’ epistemology, rather than isolated theory. His use of voices involved in
critical exchanges enlivens an otherwise formal, scholarly chapter for me. Roberts uses four main voices: a traditional academic voice, a critical voice, a personal autobiographical voice, and a meta or witnessing voice (Roberts, 2003, p. 105). Here is an excerpt from the thesis to demonstrate this use of two of the voices:

_How was that last chapter?_

_Well, if the first was difficult to write, that was more so._

_Why was that?_

_I think it's partly to do with the complexity and inter-relatedness of the ideas I am grappling with. Partly, also, the frustration and tension common to any writing where I am struggling to articulate my ideas, find an 'authentic voice' and not fall into what I see as traditional, academic writing emphasising abstract propositional knowledge, whilst at the same time, because this is a PhD thesis giving due weight to academic standards and conventions._

I saw parallels between Roberts’ approach and some of the difficulties he encountered and mine. His words reassured me that my stress around separating ontology from epistemology was shared by others (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Roberts, 2003).

It is a relief not to feel a need to be one-sidedly objective or logical or try to make my research fit into an empirico-analytical paradigm (see, for instance Byrne-Armstrong et al., 2001; Higgs, 1998; Higgs et al., 2001). Despite that relief, I do not want to replace one type of one-sidedness with another. I am pleased to have let go of an earlier aim to research how Ortho-Bionomy works, since whilst I am delighted that clients report satisfactory results, I am not interested in dissecting Ortho-Bionomy to discover which elements of the work carry the secrets of its success. It is enough for me to recognise the qualities of Ortho-Bionomy in the work of other writers (similar to descriptions in Gebser, 1991; Owen, 1998; Wheatley, 1994) and let go of trying to be in control of the research and its results. I am content to see that Ortho-Bionomy, and my work in general, facilitates the body’s self-organising ability and basically to leave it at that for now.

I am exploring my philosophy, which is to trust the process and follow its lessons; go slowly and minutely into that process, taking responsibility, and
actively pursuing deep democracy, which informs the process of self-organisation, both in the body and in society (Senzon, 2005). I am researching what I know from direct experience of internal sensations resulting from inner and outer stimuli. I am not trying to be even-handed in my approach.

Conclusion

My epistemology is fluid, has form, is brought to me by my senses, and built in layers with perception and self-trust. I become aware of my inner and outer environments and develop preferences, which build on and expand my developing self-trust. Another option would be to put my faith in external experts and authorities, in spite of my perceptions. If I learn to sideline my trust in the body’s signals, for example, I can become dependent on others. Even if they had my best interests at heart, outsiders cannot know what is best for me ahead of my inner knowing. So I prefer to trust my personal experience in learning about my life and environment and to pay attention to my body’s messages.

Already in the thesis there have been several spiral movements from the practice of my work in the Preface to touching on some theory underpinning the thesis in the Introduction. There was a hands-on valuing of the body’s aliveness in Body as Ally followed by the philosophy on which the research rests, when I wrote about Ontology and Epistemology. None of these chapters has been solely practical or theoretical. Each chapter married these approaches to knowledge, because I see the spirals that have been forming throughout the writing as being interlaced with each other. The next chapter is intended to demonstrate the store I set by this flowing together and inseparability of the streams of practice and theory.
PRAXIS

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with praxis: a union of the theoretical and practical basis of my research. Through exposure to ideas from numerous fields and perspectives, including agriculture: (Bawden and Packham, 1993); education: (Neville, 1989); medicine and research: (Heron, 1996); health sciences: (Higgs and Titchen, 2001a); feminism: (Irigaray, 2002); philosophy: (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006); and many others, I have come to recognise the inseparability of practice and theory. I call this interwoven relationship ‘praxis’, though this term is not necessarily used in the texts I listed above. Its importance became plain to me when I studied Social Ecology in 1994, and it was reinforced through the crystallisation of ideas as I read other praxis perspectives reflected from many facets. So, although I do not recall Irigaray using the word praxis, her writing sings of it, while Heron (1996) uses different terminology like “practical” and “theoretical” where I might say praxis. Consequently I have devoted a chapter to unpacking some elements that contribute to my praxis, and showing how they work together.

My work’s foundations lie in the field of education, but not in a one-sided intellectual indoctrination that denies, represses or ignores the body and practical learning. No, with hooks (1994) I believe education to be broader and more free than that, inclusive of the body, and connected with the student’s community. I like to think of education as a coming together of practical and theoretical learning with a tendency towards integral knowledge (see Neville, 1999).

Integral Consciousness and its Literature

My interest in integral consciousness (as described by Gebser, 1970, 1991) was sparked by attending a research discussion group run by Dr Bernie Neville at LaTrobe University in Melbourne, Australia, during 1997. At first I did not see Gebser’s relevance to my work. Then, caught up by the enthusiasm of fellow research group members, I bought his book ‘The Ever-present Origin’ (1991). On reading the book I felt simultaneously both out of my depth and easily at home. Ideas, language, and references slid past my awareness as I read. Many of Gebser’s terms were new to me, and I found much of his language obscure and difficult to understand, but I seemed to grasp enough to continue reading. Gebser covered many disciplines thoroughly. He spoke of history, ranging from prehistoric times to the time when he wrote the book. Art, music, science and many other fields were explored in relation to the evolution of human
consciousness. Gebser’s writing provided a context for many of my ideas and experiences, and felt right.

The concepts he explored reminded me strongly of those taught to me as underpinning the gentle bodywork of Ortho-Bionomy. Gebser demonstrated how practical experience provides a foundation for theory. His writing broadened my theoretical understanding of Ortho-Bionomy.

Consciousness Structures

I think archaic consciousness was and is similar to meditating, somewhat like nowadays driving a car along a familiar road, and having no memory or awareness of part of the journey, or like a deep, dreamless sleep. Magic consciousness is close to being in a crowd of spectators and barracking for your team swept along by the sentiments of others. Mythic consciousness can involve stories or prayers and people knowing who they are and how they behave through listening to and telling stories. Sometimes people believe they inhabit mental consciousness when they are really acting out stories. Mental consciousness is the structure of consciousness most people are in now. It involves rational thinking and seeing our environment in perspective.

Gebser’s structure of consciousness can be roughly equal with stages described by their thinkers, through unlike these stages, they are not hierarchical. Babies are most likely born into archaic consciousness. They sleep, eat and act instinctually. Archaic consciousness can roughly be compared with McLean’s label ‘Reptilian Brain’, to do with operating out of the brain stem (Cain and Cain, 1990) in a primitive, instinctive way. Kegan (1994), a developmental psychologist called his first stage of development ‘First Order’ being (see Neville, 2000b), and Egan named this the ‘Somatic’ stage (1997). Piaget’s equivalent first stage was called ‘Sensorimotor’. Egan and Kegan based their steps on Piaget’s (Ginsburg and Opper, 1969; Piaget, 1973) developmental stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jean Piaget’s Stage Theory</th>
<th>Kieran Egan’s Developmental Stages</th>
<th>Robert Kegan’s Orders of Mind</th>
<th>Merlin Donald’s Cognitive Transitions</th>
<th>Jean Gebser Structures of Consciousness</th>
<th>Paul MacLean’s Triune Brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor reflex activity (0-2)</td>
<td>Mythic Story, metaphor (0-7)</td>
<td>First Order Perceptions</td>
<td>Primate cognition</td>
<td>Archaic</td>
<td>The Reptilian Complex Brain stem &amp; cerebellum, physical survival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stages</td>
<td>Second Order Durable categories</td>
<td>Mimetic Social Groups</td>
<td>Magic</td>
<td>The Limbic System - amygdala &amp; hippocampus - emotion &amp; memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intuitive (4-7)</td>
<td>Third Order Socializing</td>
<td>Mythic Narrative</td>
<td>Mythic</td>
<td>The Neo Cortex or cerebral cortex (5/6 brain) - language, logic, formal operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Operations</td>
<td>Fourth Order Self-authoring</td>
<td>Theoretic External memory field, eg writing</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relies on authority (7-11)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Operations</td>
<td>Fifth Order Embraces contradiction and paradox (mid life or beyond)</td>
<td>Integral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract Logic (11-15 or adult)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss philosopher, natural scientist and development psychologist</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary: anthropology, archaeology, psychology, linguistics, neuro biology</td>
<td>Transdisciplinary integral researcher, philosopher</td>
<td>Former director of Laboratory of Brain &amp; Behaviour</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: Developmental stages chart

Here I have included a chart (Figure 11: above) that lists these stages next to each other for easier comparison. There is not enough space in this thesis to expand on each stage. The chart is here to demonstrate the correlation between Gebser's structures of consciousness and the stages named by other, mostly more recent, thinkers. I am not suggesting that these psychologists and educators devised stages that were exactly parallel to each other, but that they contain similarities. In recent years, Wilber has also written about the evolution of consciousness in ways that strongly remind me of Gebser, to whom he gives some credit for his ideas.

*What I knew of Gebser was obtained from one long article published in Main Currents (which was then the only such article available in England), but it was enough to show me unmistakably that Gebser and I had hit upon essentially identical stages in the broad evolution of human consciousness. Out of respect and deference to the pioneering work of Gebser (he had been working on this for decades before I was even born), I immediately annexed his terminology to mine, so that the various cultural stages had*
names like magical-typhonic and mental-egoic (Wilber, 2001, p. 63).

I find Wilber’s writing rather unengaging and difficult to read, whereas Gebser’s words draw me in, despite his more challenging use of language, possibly partly because it has been translated from German. In fact, now that I have returned to Gebser’s writing, some years after writing the last sentence of this thesis, to search Gebser’s writing for examples of a Germanic style of translation that seems hard to understand, I find I was mistaken. The words chosen by Barstad and Mickunas when translating Gebser’s terms are quite appropriate to their context. I think that I was overwhelmed, on first reading ‘The Ever-present Origin’ (Gebser, 1991), shifting responsibility for my lack of accurate comprehension from me and transferred it to the language used. Now, I have had time to allow the terms to sit with me, and to read writers such as Feuerstein (1987), Neville (1994, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2004, 2005), Combs (2005), and Plasto (2005). Their interpretations of Gebser’s work fleshed out his terminology for me and helped me to feel even more at home with Gebser’s concepts. I have also found other writing (for example Gebser, 1970) that further expanded my earlier, reasonably narrow view. Now I can differentiate and understand most of the words, and take the writing’s meaning in more slowly. On my first reading, I was worried that I should have been looking up every unfamiliar word (and there were many) in a dictionary, rather than letting them slip by and absorbing a feel for the book. Yet I felt really at home with Gebser’s style, and could immerse myself in it, despite not originally comprehending many of the special terms he used, such as “the diaphainon”, “supersession”, “temporicity”, “the achronon” and “inceptive” (Gebser, 1991, pp. 361 to 362). Besides, many of Gebser’s terms were not defined in dictionaries I could access. Wilber, on the other hand, writing on an apparently similar topic, although he says he has a deeper grasp of the spiritual dimension than Gebser, seems more to talk about spirituality than to connect me with a numinous experience.

But what Gebser and Habermas both lacked was a genuinely spiritual dimension. Gebser vigorously attempted to include the spiritual domain in his work, but it soon became obvious that he simply was not aware of – or did not deeply understand – the contemplative traditions that more readily penetrate to the core of the Divine (Wilber, 2001, p. 64).

It could be that Wilber has a more “genuinely spiritual dimension” than Gebser, but that dimension does not communicate itself to me. Perhaps what Wilber
expresses is hubris? Or it could be that I am not spiritually mature enough to appreciate Wilber’s superior spiritual development. On the other hand, although Gebser is comparatively understated about spirituality, he writes in a way that seems to me to capture and communicate both the profundity and the ordinariness of spirituality. One brief quote is unlikely to give a full picture of what I am trying to explain, but a hint might suffice?

The spiritual, having appeared in the form of idols in the magic sphere, in polar form in the psychic, and in trinitary form in the mental, will possibly - indeed probably – luminesce in man (sic) and the world if we consider that the mental structure, now in its deficient phase, has attained the limits of its own possibilities. This opens up the possibility of a mutation, and as a consequence of an actual and real mutation, the spiritual will not be approached in unitary, polar or dualistic-trinitary form but can be truly perceived as the energy which effects itself transparently and diaphanously throughout the whole (Gebser, 1991, p. 236).

It is not my priority to go into details given by Gebser about, for instance how a decision was made “to subordinate the spirit to the trinitary God at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.” (Gebser, 1991 p. 235) or what that led to. Gebser seems to have provided a great deal of evidence of his claims about the way consciousness structures have mutated (or transformed) at critical periods of history, although I am unable to follow up and verify so much diverse evidence. I rely on authorities such as Neville (1989), in education, and Feuerstein (1987), in history, with knowledge in their specific fields, to demonstrate Gebser’s inaccuracies and so far, authors with far more experience than I in such fields have admired and not greatly disputed Gebser’s accuracy.

I feel comfortable with Gebser’s insistence that the structures of consciousness he delineates are not hierarchical. Here I am in agreement with Plasto (2005), who writes, in her PhD thesis about Integral Creativity:

In Wilber’s view, the mental/rational structure is superior and he places its position, both historically and hierarchically, as necessary to further evolution. However, I agree with Gebser when he makes it clear that all structures of consciousness can and do continue to present other ‘ways of knowing’ and rather than being transcended by new modes, their expression must be made present and integrated (Plasto, 2005, pp. 10-11).
I experience all structures of consciousness to be present in me at all times, even if I am immersed in or focussed on one or other.

*Although Wilber’s overall model includes and relates to many perspectives and structures of consciousness beyond the mental/rational, his is a rational, hierarchical, approach. Such an approach, while it is suitable as a method of academic research, is probably most appropriate to the study of creativity as a hierarchical structure and I am wary of this. … I am particularly indebted to Gebser and his vision of Integrality as the creative experience of origin made manifest in the simultaneous expression of archaic, magical, mythical and mental/rational consciousness … (Plasto, 2005, p. 42)*

My ‘chance’ discovery of Paddy Plasto’s thesis, after I had submitted the second draft of my own thesis to Debbie, came as a great joy to me. This was despite the lateness, in my process, of my coming across it. Her thesis has many points of interest since she and I both conducted research to do with aspects of integral consciousness and her views about Gebser and Wilber have several similarities to mine. She found Gebser after having worked with Wilber’s ideas, and was attracted by Feuerstein’s interpretation of Gebser in Wilber’s 1995 book: Sex, Ecology, Spirituality, (1995, p. 189). Plasto says:

*According to Feuerstein’s interpretation of Gebser, the integral-aperspective structure is a nascent structure of consciousness which ‘for the first time in human history, permits the conscious integration of all previous (but co-present) structures’. … Wilber’s approach is clear, his model of the evolution of consciousness states that each structure includes and transcends the previous structure, however, co-presence has an emphasis that implies something different. This difference in approach, I discovered, is fundamental. Unlike Wilber, Gebser is not interested in outlining levels of man, or in a mental illumination of the various structures but in disclosing the transparency of man as a whole and the interplay of the various consciousness structures which constitute him (2005, p. 205).*

Gebser wrote, as much as possible, in language appropriate to the consciousness structure he was describing: logically when discussing mental consciousness, aperspectively when describing integral consciousness, and so on. It is difficult in the space of a few lines, to demonstrate the congruence of tone and style used by Gebser to represent each structure of consciousness, yet I will try to do that. For example: in a section about the temporicity of the mythical
structure, Gebser told stories in flowing language, rather than writing in a rational, linear, and perspectival style. He showed how the myth of Athena marked a watershed between pure dreaming and “a type of dreaming-of-awakening in which the mental image of world is anticipated” (Gebser, 1991, p. 165). When discussing the mental structure, however, Gebser used a more linear and intellectual tone:

… we might say that time differs from temporicity because of its directedness, and hence a retrogression into mythical movement can neither answer or resolve the question as to the nature of our mental time (Gebser, 1991, p. 173).

Because of my greater sense of comfort with his work, I have chosen to base the theoretical understanding of my practice on Gebser rather than on Wilber, despite Wilber’s present-day popularity. My bodywork experience using touch, a non-linear sense, as a form of communication, and my sense of deep democracy exemplified through giving equal weight to all aspects and parts of the body, while I work, tell me that structures of consciousness are not hierarchical. One is not superior to another, just different, and to be valued for that difference. Gebser chose to use the word ‘mutation’ rather than ‘evolution’, reinforcing for me that consciousness is not improving as much as shifting between already available structures.

Space and Time in my Practice

After developing his ideas for at least two decades, Gebser wrote “The Ever-present Origin” (Gebser, 1991) in 1949, when he was 45, in the year I was born, now over 58 years ago. This was well before the 1970s when Arthur Lincoln Pauls developed Ortho-Bionomy (Kain and Berns, 1992; Pauls, 2003). Pauls (1993), regularly spoke of Ortho-Bionomy in terms of “the evolvement of the original concept”. He used to teach that everything the body needs for recovery is present and simply needs to be remembered. Nothing needs to be brought or channelled from outside. In other words, the elements for understanding our needs are all present and no striving, improvement, or learning is needed, only re-member-ing (or re-assembly of our parts and abilities).

Gebser’s book was not translated into English until 1985, my edition in 1991. In his book, Gebser described the movement of human consciousness, based on ethnology, psychology, archaeology and philology, in terms of evolving structures. I would like to show how I think Gebser’s structures of consciousness, and in particular his integral structure, can be identified in my bodywork practice,
and possibly prompt some thoughts of what that might mean for businesses and organizations more generally. My main focus for this chapter is the way Gebser’s concepts and overview of the mutation of consciousness helped me understand the experiences of space and time I noticed as I worked in my practice.

Here are the structures Gebser listed, in evolutionary order. From the “archaic” or “primordial structure”, Gebser (1991) suggested that humanity has moved through “magic”, “mythical” and “mental” consciousness structures. He believed we are on the verge of mutating into an “integral” structure whose characteristics, in my opinion, are similar not only to the principles and practice of Ortho-Bionomy, but also to those of the two other main modalities that inform my life, work and business approaches: Open Space Technology (Owen, 1994, 1997), and Process Oriented Psychology (Mindell, 1982, 2000b). The structure of my practice can also be seen to reflect some of Gebser’s motifs of integral consciousness, as I hope to show.

I am intrigued by Gebser’s ability to intuit humanity’s mutation to the next stage of consciousness at a time when I imagine there were very few clear signs of this shift in the general community around him. For example, the internet, computer technology, space travel and quantum mechanics were not yet part of the general public’s imagination when Gebser was writing in the 1940s. Reading his words was a heartening and exciting experience for me. He helped me newly conceptualise the principles of my bodywork and gave me a framework I could use to make sense of my ideas and experiences within the present, predominantly rational, cultural climate. In order to discuss the parallels between my work and Gebser’s “integral structure of consciousness”, I first want to give some context to my discussion by very briefly describing his first four structures: “archaic”, “magic”, “mythical” and “mental”.

Gebser’s evidence for the qualities of each structure of consciousness and its approximate time of mutation to the next structure is very detailed and involved, drawing as it does from so many fields. I can only sketchily allude to some of this evidence, primarily using some examples of art that Gebser (1991) provides in “The Ever-present Origin”, taken from Plasto’s (2005) PhD thesis. Those people alive when the “archaic or primordial structure” predominated, lived a pre-spatial and pre-temporal life. They had no places to be or deadlines to meet, I imagine, and no awareness of individuality. Since these people did not quantify time, it is only possible to say that archaic consciousness came into existence with proto-humans and continued until the magic structure began in about 750,000 B.C.
(Feuerstein, 1987; Neville, 1999). Evidence of this magic structure is shown in “Nubian Battle” a 1300 B.C painting found on a chest in the tomb of Tutankhamen. Here we see the influence of points of existence rather than a linear movement of human figures, and their interweaving with, rather than separation from, nature.

Figure 5: “Nubian Battle,” from a painting on a chest from the tomb of Tutankhamen; 1300 B.C. (reduced in size).

Figure 12: “Nubian Battle” (Gebser, 1991 p. 53)

During the “magic structure”, people inhabited a spaceless and timeless world, in a sleeping consciousness and centred in their bodies, connecting with nature. This boundlessness and lack of awareness of space and time can be seen in the portrayal of the battle, which is painted without reference to perspective (since perspective was not to be developed until much later).
People inhabiting the “mythical structure” which emerged in about 20,000 B.C., were two-dimensional and spaceless, with a natural temporicity (or time awareness). They related to their circumstances through the imagination and psyche, using the heart and mouth, so people in the mythical structure were not conscious of concepts.

Figure 13: "The Prince with the Crown of Feathers" (Gebser, 1991 p. 62)

This coloured stucco relief "The Prince with the Crown of Feathers", from Knossos dated at around 1500 B.C. shows how the mythical figure was then gradually seen as an individual, emerging somewhat from a close weave in with nature, who is looking up and outwards, across the earth. The upper body is shown against the sky, "... which is simultaneous with the soul and ... time" (Gebser, 1991, p. 62). This painting suggests that people are starting to separate
themselves, from their earlier sense of merging with nature, and recognise individuality. It is representative of the art Gebser uses to demonstrate the mythical structure. He also considers the etymology of words, through studying their roots and patterns of use, and shows how language reflected changes in consciousness, as well as the structure and content of poetry (Gebser, 1991, p. 254).

Gradually, after about 5,000 B.C., the “mythical” gave way to the “mental structure”, which describes much of present-day consciousness. Perspective began to appear in art with the work of Giotto. He developed an awareness of space that had earlier been dormant in humanity, and the ability to show perspective to some extent, as seen below in his painting: “View of the interior towards the apse” (Giotto, 1304 to 1306) where lines of view converge to a single point through the picture. This is around the time when the Troubadours began writing poems that expressed the personal and created a separation between the human subject and an object, the environment (Gebser, 1991, p. 11).

(Giotto, 1304 to 1306)

Fresco. Capella degli Scrovegni, Padua, Italy.
The mental structure:

... emerges fully in the eighth century BC (more or less simultaneously in Greece, India, Palestine, and China). After the collapse of the Roman Empire, Europe experienced a regression to magical-mythical consciousness while the mental structure was preserved in the Byzantine and Arab worlds. It was only in the late medieval period that the mental structure becomes widely discernable once more in Europe, only to deteriorate to its deficient form, which Gebser calls “rational” consciousness, in the past four hundred years.

The evidence which Gebser draws on to support his theory is mainly archaeological and philological. While he presents his theory as a universal one, most of his illustrations come from Indo-European sources and his focus is almost entirely on the evolution of European culture (Neville, 1999, p. 19).

While he presents his theory as a theory of the evolution of consciousness, he is adamant that he is not doing so within a fantasy of historical “development” or “progress”. Our tendency to think in such terms is an artefact of our dominant mental consciousness, in which our experience of time is linear and quantified. Rather, reality is an unfolding process, and the archaic, magic, mythical, mental and emerging integral structures are all valid ways of apprehending it. In Gebser’s understanding, we are all shaped and determined not only by the present and the past but by the future. (Neville, 1999, p. 5).

These days, much of our art employs perspective, we use directive, discursive thought based in reflection, abstraction, and will or volition. We can think using rational, causal and directed modes of thought. The organs our consciousness emphasises are the brain and the eye. Examples of the effect of this visual, conceptual consciousness that many people inhabit nowadays, may be seen in the way marketing is conducted by visual means using billboards and television. Our general motto is “Thinking is Being”. I am not suggesting that everyone constantly lives in this type of consciousness, but that it underlies a large proportion of present-day existence for many people. One danger in mental consciousness is humanity’s possible dislocation from earlier perspectives such as being able to imagine nature’s circumstances: to ‘commune with nature’ and other people; to feel what it is like to be a bird or a forest, an ability that came naturally to a person living in the magic structure of consciousness, and was
necessary for survival. I imagine that a hunter who could ‘shape shift’ into the
prey she was hunting would have been more successful than one who could not.

Each of us has the possibility of accessing all ‘past’ and ‘future’ consciousness
structures, since they are not hierarchical. One structure is not inherently more
desirable than another. In recent years people seem to me to be mutating or
shifting into the structure which Gebser (1991) called “integralty” (p. 3) or
“integral consciousness”, and developing a new relationship to space and time.
New science displays some of these shifts as some scientists move from
positivism and reductionism to quantum mechanics and other paradigms that
take non-consensus reality into account (Bak, 1996; Capra, 1983, 1989; Gleick,
1987). Gebser described the “integral consciousness structure” as four
dimensional, which he says:

... represents ultimately an integration of dimensions. It
results in a space-and-time-free aperspectival world where
the free (or freed) consciousness has at its disposal all latent
as well as actual forms of space and time, without having
either to deny them or to be fully subject to them (Gebser,

This integral consciousness structure is aperspectival, consciously spiritual and
represented in sign by the sphere. Social relationships are carried out in a way
that is neither matriarchal nor patriarchal, but rather complete and whole
(Gebser, 1991). These are not the terms in which Arthur Lincoln Pauls (Pauls,
2003) spoke about Ortho-Bionomy. But all the same, I believe he evolved his
work within “integral consciousness”, and I would like to explain why Gebser’s
writing sparked such a sense of relief and recognition for me in relation to Ortho-
Bionomy, to my Social Ecology studies, and even before that, to my experiences
when teaching schoolchildren.

The primary (or elementary) schoolchildren I taught in classrooms over 30 years
ago, and those who have come to me for bodywork more recently because of
concerns about their progress with learning, differed from many of my peers and
me when we were in primary classes. Our common complaint as we grew up
was that we were bored and time passed unbearably slowly. Now children and
adults both frequently complain that there is not enough time and that their lives
are rushing past. Their complaints suggest that time has a social component,
and could even hint that time has sped up in recent years. During my school
years, I gathered an impression that time progresses in an orderly, measurable,
linear fashion. This is because my education was predominantly set in mental consciousness (Neville, 1999, p. 5).

Teaching and research, in this age of transition from mental to integral consciousness, seem to be gradually diversifying and moving beyond the widespread use of rationality (Irigaray, 1985b), positivism and an emphasis on measurement, towards more integral, fluid, transparent teaching and research methodologies (examples in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003b, p. 29) being used in courses such as Social Ecology, in my experience, and increasingly in disciplines such as science and management (see Williams, 2004). There is less emphasis on correctness, in some disciplines now, and an openness to exploration in areas like transdisciplinary studies where the aim is not so much on the acquisition of personal, specialised status as on a desire to gather far-reaching general and shared knowledge. One example is the use of Open Space Technology in businesses and schools as a framework for sharing knowledge, recognising that all groups are self-organising systems (emerging in Owen, 1998) with information being made accessible for members to share with each other. Under these conditions, the spirit of the group can emerge and flourish. While my individual ego is caught up with possessing expert status and the power of owning information, and keeping it from others, I am trapped in a misconception. Once I let go of that attempt at control, my circumstances are free to self-organise.

… for someone able to act out of ego-freedom, the world and even his (sic) daily life will become transparent. And when this happens, the phenomena of his (sic) surroundings will set themselves right (Gebser, 1991, p. 532).

Experiences of integration and being present are reported to me by clients, their parents, teachers and others, which build to connect me with Gebser’s descriptions of ‘integral consciousness’ as I practise, which interrupt my avowed preference for life to be as straightforward, practical and down-to-earth as possible. I am not given to elaborating on mystical or ephemeral phenomena, not yet in my life anyway, and feel as if I am being dragged despite my resistance, into an integral life. It is what Process Oriented Psychologists might describe as a secondary process for me – a way of thinking and awareness that I do not fully own. Each example I have given so far may seem unimportant in isolation, but together with recent writings (Abram, 1997; Merleau-Ponty, 1992; Wheatley, 1994), they combine to suggest to me that humanity is in the early stages of a transition into a new structure of consciousness.
In order for integral consciousness to have space to be experienced, I believe we need to take time to ponder, imagine and create. We need space for self-organisation and a balance of experience.

Nothingness

As a young remedial reading teacher I used to try to ground my student's learning through practical application. In addition, although I couldn’t have explained what I was doing, and was apprehensive about being caught with an inadequate or non-existent lesson plan, I was beginning to sense the importance of relative nothingness in learning. I saw children respond with pleasure to unplanned space in their day for taking a walk or rolling down a hill rather than directed exercises and formal lessons. The students needed space. Fertile ideas and experiences could expand into a moment of space. Such ideas could not bubble up if the students’ days were crammed with lessons and information. I sensed the vital importance of employing as many senses as possible for an education based in experience – touching, rolling, smelling, yelling, running, laughing, building, wondering and so on, as well as space to be.

In future education, I would like to see space, time, metaskills (Mindell, 1995a), awareness, and resources made available for children and adults to learn in integral ways similar to those described by Neville:

In Gebser’s understanding, the everpresent origin is sensed by the archaic structure, felt by the magic, imagined by the mythical, conceptualised by the mental and concretely perceived by the integral. A curriculum for the good of the world will attend to the unfolding process of the child as it attends to the sensation, feeling, imagining, conceptualisation, and concrescence of a truth which is neither one nor many, a truth which, we may speculate, will become transparent to us as we learn to see through not only the fragments of sensory and imaginal reality, but even through our ways of seeing (Neville, 1999, pp. 18-19).

One way to provide the wherewithal for people to develop integral consciousness is to create periods of ‘empty’ space or nothingness in a day. Another way is to provide a rounded education where every part of each student, including the body’s wisdom, is taken into account. Many people can and do have integral experiences, they occur naturally, since all structures of consciousness are ever-present in individuals and society. At present, integral learning is not generally accepted as central to education. My acceptance of its importance has devolved from past experiences, including the work and study I have been drawn to. One
form of nothingness in my life is exemplified in my practice of bodywork, as I explained in the Core Concepts chapter. The founder of Ortho-Bionomy taught us to work in “the space between the notes” (Pauls, 1993) as he said music is composed and played. Music relies on pauses and gaps of various lengths, not just a random group of notes without spaces in between.

Ortho-Bionomy depends on spaces too – between client and practitioner, between parts of the body, between events in life and so on. Bowen Technique similarly uses spaces between physical moves to allow the body time to heal issues that have been drawn to its attention by the Bowen moves.

Space

In each modality I practise, the facilitator of a session - for an individual, a couple or a group - sets up a situation then usually ‘steps back’ either metaphorically or physically, thus allowing a space of relative nothingness to occur. The facilitator makes the smallest possible intervention in order to allow space for the client’s experience and creativity to flourish. This is in line with the principle of homoeopathy that says ‘less is more’ or ‘the smallest dose is the best possible dose’ (Bhatia, 2006). With Ortho-Bionomy, this may involve making a miniscule exaggeration of a body’s posture, or in creating energetic space by not crowding a client.

Evidence of the metaskill of trusting the process is also evidenced in Ortho-Bionomy in the saying: “quiet hands and listening fingers”. Practitioners of Ortho-Bionomy are counselled to have no intention, and to interfere with the client’s process as little as possible. Their hands are not placed on the client’s body in order to work, but rather to ‘listen’. The less intervention made, the better. This corresponds with Pauls’ description of how he began this form of bodywork through working with a client with an extremely sore neck, who could hardly bear any pressure or movement. He obtained unexpectedly helpful results with her neck by using the merest whisper of repositioning and contact (Pauls, 1993).

Bowen taught students to make a small number of gentle moves and then leave the room, for the client to process the information in peace (Rentisch, 1986 - 1999).

Spaciousness is exemplified in Open Space Technology through the recent words of Harrison Owen: “Always think of one more thing not to do! Always works” (2008). Owen is also well known for his propensity to open space for a group, and then leave the event’s venue in order to take a nap, while group
members continue the process without him. He feels free to do so because he
trusts the people in the group to deal with issues perfectly well on their own.
Although he may not be physically present at such times, he holds awareness of
the group while looking after his own needs, just as he recommends for others to
do through following the Law of Two Feet.

In Process Work, ‘the space between’ is most obviously at use during
relationship work, when the main subject of attention is the relationship, not the
people who present for the session. Process Workers conceptualise issues as
being represented by “timespirits” or “spacespirits” (see Mindell, 1993b, p. 27),
which can be carried by any member of a group or relationship, and which can
transfer from, or be picked up by, one member or another at different times,
lending fluidity to people’s interactions. The “timespirits” can exist independently
of individuals (Mindell, 1995b, 2002), in the space between people, which is
where relational Process Work is performed (Mindell, 1987). A great deal of self-
organisation occurs in spaces of apparent nothingness, yet it often seems to go
unnoticed.

Main Game

How is it that I do not notice the miracles I am performing momentarily? If I do
notice some of them, like my ability to write as I breathe and beat my heart and
digest my food all at once, how is it that I do not celebrate right away? A basic
sense of what I am achieving every moment is enough to make my jaw drop in
awe. And it is so local! I am doing it right here, right now. I do not need to catch a
tram to the museum or a science department at a university to get impressed by
clever exhibits and research. I am conducting far more complex research and
processes this instant. So are you. Nuclear science or space travel are basic and
paltry in comparison, incredible though they may be. Congratulations to us!

We have to take a lot of our achievements for granted, or we would never get
anything else done except for celebrations and congratulations. However, I think
it is a salutary experience now and then to say: “Wow, I am doing a great job
here. Even when I feel depressed because of dashed hopes about meeting a
deadline, or anxious or guilty for letting someone down, I am still incredible at
juggling all these complex functions. So thank you body (and other parts of me)
for serving me so well. The breakdowns you inflict on me are minor in
comparison with all the other tasks you are quietly achieving for me.”
Illness, injury and upsets are still painful, frustrating and scary. I am not trying to put a gloss over them. They can be truly terrible. They need recognition, and remedying if possible, and our coping or not coping also needs to be appreciatively noticed, I believe. Awareness and appreciation of my own and others’ everyday basic achievements help me to see things in another perspective. There are multiple perspectives available to each of us. In our thinking we can include a perspective firmly centred on self-appreciation. We can accord ourselves at least as much respect and admiration as we give others. Why not? Acknowledging and incorporating many perspectives is a feature of integral consciousness (Gebser, 1991).

There are other important parts to this study and writing, as well as its integral aspects. For example, rationality, which should not be sidelined, has its place. Having a perspective should not be decried in favour of a perspectival consciousness. I do not even know that analysing what structure of consciousness I am in, as I have at particular points in this thesis, is useful. Does integral consciousness take us beyond rational thinking and analysis? I don’t think so. There is no benefit in assuming a hierarchy of consciousness structure. In integral consciousness, how can I appropriately know and present my research? I wonder if following the process and being aware of and responsive to feedback from the data, participants, the world and me, is a way I need to go. If so, I wish the process would ‘get a move on’. My anxiety most likely springs from a part of me that finds the leap to integral consciousness too challenging and is resorting to fear and worry. If I follow the process and include dreams and second attention (Goodbread, 1997), then difficulties, dualities and even fears melt away. The bigger picture nestles these problems in a field of inspiration that casts my concerns in another light. I am bigger than I realise, linked to my environment, including you, through my awareness. This has been explored by Mindell (2007) in his development of earth psychology, when considering the big U.

**Postgraduate Meeting**

Journal entry: *Yesterday (4th March 2005) I attended a LaTrobe University research meeting for postgraduate students led by Associate Professor Bernie Neville. I speak about my struggle to represent the complexities of my research and of trying to find an integral form or forms of communication. Bernie reminds us of the need to select and limit what is presented and I know that must happen, especially until there is a way to make knowledge available differently. A few*
years ago the generosity of information now available on the internet and its freeing effect on our experience of time and space were unimaginable.

Since I do not have easy access to integral communication however, up till now, I still see a need to limit the view of my research and thesis. Regularly as I read I come across material that seems connected with and appropriate to my thesis. For example, at yesterday’s LaTrobe postgraduate research student meeting I am re-introduced to several authors. I find some of their books at the library and have several of them here now. One is ‘The Body in the Mind’ (Johnson, 1987). The book is open at page 126 by chance, and Johnson is writing about ‘How Schemata Constrain Meaning, Understanding, and Rationality.’ His own ideas add extra dimensions to my writing. He also introduces ideas from other fields such as architecture (Alexander, 1966) and stress research (Selye, 1976). All are pertinent to my research. The pages at which the book fall open are not especially rich in content, and not based on topics necessarily central to my study, but they could all justifiably be explored and included. Each adds a certain quality and direction to the work in new and unexpected ways.

Life is a process. Whatever happens in life contains useful learning if we trust and follow the process, rather than trying to stop or reverse it. For example, it is difficult to push the water in a river upstream, and easier to let it go downhill. The process goes on anyway, whether we fight it or not, we may as well tune into it and trust it to take us where we need to go. This works in the body. If a muscle is tight, you can passively shorten it in comfort, allowing an inbuilt reflex to lengthen the muscle, often effortlessly and immediately. Or you can try to stretch the muscle, often an ongoing procedure that carries a risk of pain or spasm. It is also possible to take a drug that divorces you from the pain. I prefer to follow a path of least resistance to allow self-organisation to occur.

In the psyche, you can go a little further with awareness and support into the feelings around stress, and allow the process to resolve itself. Or you can try to avoid the precipitating feelings, force your way through them, or use drugs to create some separation or reduce the pain.

In groups, you can meet together with all constraints in the open, agree to make a space for the airing of views and allow chaos to reign momentarily until the group’s collective wisdom brings awareness. Or you can employ rules, power and secrecy to keep people apart.
Journal entry

Until this weekend, (3rd and 4th November 2007) I have had difficulty in discovering what has been going wrong. I have known that I have found it almost impossible to concentrate on writing my thesis, although I have experienced some improvement in focus through having sessions of Process Work or occasional Ortho-Bionomy sessions. The improvements have been incomplete and/or temporary.

Last week I discovered that Bruce Stark, an advanced teacher of Ortho-Bionomy, was coming to Melbourne to offer private sessions and two classes this weekend (2007). The theme of yesterday’s class was the T.M.J. (or Tempero-Mandibular Joint). Today’s class topic is the ribs. I had two private sessions on Friday, then asked if I could attend the class as a model for demonstrations. Usually, different class participants act as models for each demonstration during the day, but Bruce kindly agreed to my taking that role for most of the workshop. Between demonstrations, as now, I was able to work on editing and adding to my thesis with clarity. I think that having work done to help balance my jaw and surrounding structures has made a huge difference to my ability to focus on writing. I should not be surprised, because I have been hearing reports to that effect from clients, parents and teachers for many years regarding clients who have felt more settled and focussed after sessions with me. Yet I am still somewhat sceptical. I wait to see if the effects on my concentration last. You will know how I went, if you are reading this thesis. As things were, despite an agony of effort, guilt, self-admonition and cajoling myself, I was completely unable to write, in any useful way, for many months. The cynical part of me that bobs up at times like this says: “This is all too convenient. You are just trying to prove that your ideas ‘hold water’. You can make up or imagine anything you like. How do you know you are not simply talking yourself into writing more easily to suit your own convenience?”

My body answers by drawing my awareness to how I feel. Before the bodywork was started yesterday, I though I felt quite fine. Now I notice soft relaxation in my mouth and tongue. When I am not eating or speaking, my jaw is relaxed open enough for the tip of my tongue to fit between them rather than my teeth being together and slightly clenched, as was often the case. My shoulders feel low and open. I had not been aware of tension in my shoulders in recent weeks even so, and now they feel distinctly dropped down – somehow serene and calm – rather still. Bruce demonstrated basic and isometric releases for the tip of the neck and occiput, collarbones and first ribs. Then he showed how to work with the hyoid
bone and the base of the tongue. These releases were all carried out from outside the body and simply involved placing the hands on the client's jaw, on the area to be worked with and being present, noticing how the tissue felt (such as tight or loose, moving or still). When the tongue releases were done for me, I felt gentle, comforting hands contacting my jaw with fingertips resting under my jawbone, followed by apparent stillness for a few seconds. My lower jaw was then torqued the tiniest bit towards any tender or tight spots Bruce or I noticed as he palpated the line below my jaw at the meeting place(s) between soft tissue and bone.

Another reason why I struggle to find words to express some aspects of the body's experiences and importance is because experiences of the body are partly located in a pre-linguistic area, or archaic consciousness structure. The pre-linguistic part of the brain is described as the reptilian brain (see Cain and Cain, 1990; Levine and Frederick, 1997).

... my reptilian brain does not contribute much to my awareness except for the occasional shot of adrenalin but as the seat of my instinctive behaviour, it drives the whole project whether I'm aware of it or not (Neville, 2000a, p. 5).

The lack of language in our reptilian and mammalian brain should not suggest that these parts of the brain are unimportant. As Neville (2000a) and Levine (Levine and Frederick, 1997) have said, these areas of the brain are foundational to the body's performance. This is one reason why I offered fieldwork participants art materials, to give them an opportunity to possibly record and integrate some of their 'unlanguaged' experiences, that might otherwise be overlooked, into their understanding of the whole experience they were having (please see Fieldwork chapter for details). I thought creative expression might deepen their sense of connection with the body, especially since the fieldwork involved the sense of touch, which, to a large extent, is not well-resourced with language. This might be a way of enabling or easing a transition to what Heron calls "a post-conceptual world" (1996, p. 183), or "a postlinguistic world" (Heron, 1992, p. 9), akin to that which Gebser calls integral consciousness.

Including Gebser, several writers have named humanity's transition into a new phase of knowing.

The postconceptual world is the world of Torbert's reframing mind, Bateson's Learning Ill, Reason's self-reflective mind, Gebser's integral-aperspectival mind and of Wilber's vision-
Several other writers, shown here in the chart on page 118 have discussed a somewhat similar stage of human development or possibility. Where I think my research differs from past studies in this area is in my accessing and valuing of the body's voice as a bridge between worlds or consciousness structures, with the benefit of art as an additional form of expression. I have taken tentative, exploratory steps into this possibility by studying my practice, where for many years I have observed and listened to the body's voice and mused on its role as an ally in life. By 'translating' this voice into one or more other channels (Diamond and Jones, 2004), for example from the proprioceptive channel sometimes inhabited during an experience of the art of bodywork, to the visual channel, participants in the fieldwork had an opportunity to discover new information about their situation and to bring new elements of experience to their awareness. This was not exactly an 'intention' of mine, more a possibility that seems to have come about during the fieldwork. As Heron says:

*Artists of all kinds are the precursors and point the way towards this interplay (between concepts expressed through language and the primary matrix of our lived experience, which may yet have no language or concepts). They use language, and non-linguistic forms of expression, to symbolize their vision of the primary meaning of their world (Heron, 1996, p. 213).*

In this way artists, employing diverse media, use presentational knowing in a way that both disengages them from their experience and paradoxically allows them to participate deeply in it, while allowing them the freedom to reveal what exists beyond the limits of language and concepts. In the case of my research fieldwork, this revelation was primarily for the participants’ own reflection. Because it formed part of my research, it has become available to others through this thesis, which opened a window into an otherwise relatively private, reflective experience.

Heron (1996) says more about a postconceptual world:

*It seeks to avoid conceptual closure and alienated contraction, while it retains all the benefits of independent, ethical, political and scientific thinking in revised forms. It reaches out expansively to reframe itself, subject to the claims of a wider and deeper vision, elaborating conceptual frameworks which remain continually open to the experiential*
depths of primary meaning and its limitless hierarchy of contexts or grounds. It is a world born by an ever-expanding intentional re-enactment of the origin of language. As the use of language thus progressively regenerates itself, more and more primary meaning is transformed into secondary, conceptual systems (p. 183).

During my research, I saw fieldwork participants transforming their deep, practical, physical knowing, brought about through, for example, experience of Ortho-Bionomy, being reflected in and translated into images and words in the form of art, poetry and so on. The slow pace of the five days, and the way personal needs for food, shelter and art forms were provided for, gave enough time, space and resources for this transformation to occur. Another example of postconceptual experience can happen during sessions in my practice, when clients, who have most likely been involved in proprioception during the gentle bodywork, climb down from my massage table, then stand and begin to move. This takes their inner experience into kinaesthetic expression, another channel which is more readily seen by me, and which gives the client another way of registering what happened while they were on the table. They might also use words or sounds to tell me what they have discovered. Their body begins (continues) to voice its ‘opinion’ of the session’s experiences, and its preferences. It can take a more active role where it once might have been relatively silent. It moves actively where, during the session, the client’s body was moved by me and might often have been relatively passive. This constitutes a new way of regarding and experiencing what has occurred during the session, and another way of linking their new feelings and sensations with the client’s ongoing life. There is a brief liminal space at the end of a session in which to experiment and try out this ‘new body’ before re-entering daily life. This liminal space is one that was magnified in the group fieldwork, when participants were invited to record their feelings and experiences using language, visual or movement arts. I discuss this topic more specifically later in the thesis when describing my feelings from the project in the Fieldwork chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, to do with the relationship between practice and theory, I have described Gebser’s structures of consciousness. I have demonstrated how I experience these structures in my practice. I have briefly shown where I can recognise them in my ways of classroom teaching in the 1970’s and how the structures may now be recognised in the curriculum (Neville, 1999). Later in this thesis, I hope to bring these two fields of bodywork and education together. I will
produce initial evidence from my research to show how Ortho-Bionomy can be taught in an integral way to adults, and how Ortho-Bionomy can be recognised in Gebser’s motifs of aperspectival consciousness (Gebser, 1991 p. 361-2).

For the next chapter, I wish to narrow my focus from the general context of the research, as described in the thesis so far, to the methodology underpinning the research design.
METHODOLOGY

But this new methodology would involve our bodies as well as our minds; it would create bodily and emotional echoes in the person who reads historical studies reconstructed in its basis … our bodies might be the key to the historical dramas we seek to understand. Above all, corporealité would link the visible with the invisible, put the macrocosm back together with the microcosm… Our history has been disembodied long enough, the time has come to flesh it out (Berman, 1990, pp. 134 and 135) (italics in original).

Embodied Relativity Explored

This research was an ontological and epistemological enquiry into ‘embodied relativity’ within my bodywork practice. “Embodied Relativity Explored” was the working title I used for the project. I recently changed the title when it became apparent to me that those words did not accurately describe the experience of participants in the fieldwork, and when readers of the thesis did not find the words accessible. All the same, because they had meaning for me, their influences occur through the thesis, so I want to say some more about embodiment. Relativity was discussed in the Ontology chapter.

For my purposes here, embodiment encompasses a quality that goes beyond the physical representation of a concept. Hansen comes close to my meaning of the term when writing of “spirit” and “incarnation”:

To Embody is to put into a body an idea or spirit, to give a concrete form to or to express (principles, thoughts, or intentions) within art, action, word combinations, or institutions. Thus, an embodiment of an idea or principle is its physical form, realization or expression, or the incarnation of that idea (Hansen, 2003 P. 1).

She does not describe embodiment as an inner experience, which is part of my approach. I do not wish to break embodiment down into its elements, or think of it primarily as a metaphor or a concept. I am talking about a process of residing in every cell and liquid of my body, of inhabiting my marrow, of settling with gravity into the bony basin of my pelvis, of the power and grace of being grounded in my entire body and at liberty to focus my attention on that which I choose.

When I have felt disembodied, I have been dreamy without volition, as if I have involuntarily lost connection with my sparkling senses. In the extreme, I have felt
as if I am at the end of a huge, long aquarium, far away from myself, and my usual environment. I swim in an ocean of apathy, because I feel powerless to influence what happens to me.

My PhD research interest lies in the intimate, internal sense of being at home in a welcoming dwelling place: the body. The ease of being present, and having a familiar, hospitable home heightened every aspect of life for me. When I felt at home within my skin, life was a totally different experience: I could be present and focussed when I wanted to; or dreamy and far away when I chose. I wrote about aspects of my experience of embodiment in my Masters thesis (Baensch, 2002b). Feeling embodied can be a fluid state, not a permanent, fixed goal to reach. From my mid thirties to my early forties, life was much easier for me than when I had been younger and disconnected. I could focus on the family and be with them fully, or tackle a task and settle into completing it, without daydreaming or distraction, unless I preferred to ponder. This was not a conscious, obvious or instantaneous transformation. The realisation that I had changed took time to announce itself. One hint came through the reports of clients, and my observations of them, after sessions. Many clients reported that they no longer felt depressed, vague or unable to apply themselves. Parents and children spoke of immediate improvements in learning and body awareness after a first bodywork session with me. With their prompting, I realised I had been experiencing similar ‘symptoms’ of clarity and poise, and began to pick up other hints such as greater ease in social situations.

Then I was involved in a car accident and my body, for a second time, became a less pleasant, friendly place to inhabit. My thinking once again became fairly fuzzy, and I was aware of regular restriction, discomfort, or pain in parts of my body. I was able to have Ortho-Bionomy and improve my situation somewhat. The one aspect missing for me was the basic cranial work I had developed and used with my clients. How could I pass that knowledge on, in order to benefit myself, and others?

Seeking to make the work more accessible to people, I decided I first needed to research my practice, since I knew of no other such research, or ways to conduct such research, to base further study upon. There were studies of bodywork (Grossinger, 1995; Juhan, 1987), practice (including Higgs and Titchen, 2001b; McGuinness and Wadsworth, 1992; Neville and Willis, 1996; Roberts, 2003; Titchen and Ersser, 2001) and some books about Ortho-Bionomy (such as Huff, 2002; Kain and Berns, 1992; Pauls, 2003). I could find no bodywork study that
incorporated the body’s self-organising ability in practice, while retaining maximum mutability. As I have said earlier, I wanted to pass on the skills of Ortho-Bionomy, especially cranial work, as effectively and fluidly as possible. Consequently, I felt the need to develop an appropriate, custom-built means of studying my work. This chapter records a heuristic journey, especially a major part of my research: the development of a suitable methodology; which I summarise and explain next.

Overview

For the research, I have used quite a simple methodology that appears complex when approached from a traditional, academic perspective. In summary, the methodology I used is corporate (see Neville, 2000a), emergent (after Cixous, 1998), heuristic (as described by Richardson, 1997), transdisciplinary (akin to Nicolescu, 1997), integral (following Gebser, 1970), and qualitative (for example Denzin, 1997). The multiple method (portrayed by Reinharz, 1992) study is phenomenological (along the lines of Abram, 1997), and includes autobiography (see Olney, 1980) or self portraiture (look at Gusdorf, 1980), reflexive writing (represented by Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), Process Work (approaching that taught by Mindell, 1989c) and case study (illustrated in Behar, 1993; Stake, 1995) as the main methods employed. As integral research (alluded to by Prosser, 1998), it incorporates multiple perspectives (for example Fine, 1992) and has a holistic (after Grossinger, 1995) bias. Its ontology and epistemology are basically process oriented (based on Whitehead’s views expressed in Irvine, 2003) and carnal (fleshed out by Merleau-Ponty and Lefort, 1968). It has feminist tendencies (as seen in Grosz, 1994).

The methodology relates to aspects of the interpretive, critical and creative arts paradigms (see Higgs in Byrne-Armstrong et al., 2001). Dynamic balance (found in Hanna, 2002) is valued, and extremes (see Mindell, 1988), which add colour and vibrancy, also have a place. Intuition (as discerned by Shepherd, 1993) is appreciated alongside logic (reasoned in Nussbaum, 2001) as two contributors to the knitting together of knowledge. Archaic consciousness suffuses the methodology, in liaison with magic, mythical, rational and integral consciousness (exemplified through Gebser, 1991). These are described in the Praxis and Modalities chapters. This methodology moves beyond hierarchy (influenced by Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1996) and patriarchy (in response to Daly, 1992) to a transparent, deeply democratic (see Mindell, 1993b) attitude that nevertheless privileges the body (personified in Anzieu, 1990) in its role as ally, and brings awareness to its voices (ensuing from Boal, 1979).
The chapter's task is to discuss the methodology for my PhD research by expanding and explaining much of this initial précis from one viewpoint or another. Parts of the chapter were adapted from a conference paper called: ‘Body as ally’ (Baensch, 2005, from p. 82 to 100). When written in words, the overview of my research methodology seems highly complex, however when carried out in practice, it was a natural way to work. In fact, “[w]hatever happened [was] the only thing that could have happened” (Owen, 1994, p. 68). The process of the research asserted itself strongly, guiding the research with such power that following the process was the natural and seemingly inevitable way to go. Only on reflection, when describing the concepts and practices utilised do the complexities seem apparent. Labelling language, such as I have just been using to describe the methodology, was not predictive. It generally emerged in a heuristic way from analysing what had happened.

Choice of Methodology

Where do I think my research was located? Ideas began to shift. At the start I had set up an idea I wanted to research, associated with Ortho-Bionomy (Kain and Berns, 1992; Pauls, 2003) and education (Neville, 1989), sharing bodywork with schoolchildren. When I looked into my ambitious plan, I got cold feet. I decided I needed to explore who I was as a bodywork practitioner. After a chat, my first supervisor, Dr Mike Clear, said that he thought I was tending towards researching my practice. I decided to take up that idea, and began reading to see where I fitted into the literature. I still did not have a clear research question, and tried to formulate one, since I was frequently recommended to do so.

What I did come up with, were some areas of research that I wanted to piece together, or rather aspects of enquiry that seemed to naturally go together. The main components were the three modalities I use in my work and life: Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology (Mindell, 1993a, 2000b) and Open Space Technology (Owen, 1994, 1997) as well as Jean Gebser’s structures of consciousness (Gebser, 1991). But what methodological paradigm would give them coherence?

Reinharz, I knew, provided a good overview of several methodologies (Reinharz, 1992). She gave me some promising leads, including the possible use of multiple methodologies, and I reflected on them to see what I could use. In the meantime I also wanted to follow up suggestions, from several people, that my work and research might fit within phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1992). Certainly phenomenology appealed to me. In particular I felt some affinity with the writing
and approach of David Abram (Abram, 1997). His language, way of writing and the depth of his approach appealed to me.

Not Feminist

Regarding feminist research: Debbie Horsfall pointed out to me, when she read a draft of my thesis, that I could hardly claim for my research to be described as feminist, since I base my work mainly on male thinkers. I think it is important to make clear that Amy Mindell has influenced my research greatly. She has made an enormous contribution to the development of Process Work, and me. In particular, attending her classes relating to coma and altered states of consciousness in Portland, Oregon in 1991, gave me practical skills that radically shifted my understanding of communication. Her metaskills such as: generosity; loving attention; and valuing creativity have expanded and connected Process Work. You can find some of her influences in the Fieldwork chapter. Her name, when cited, looks similar to her husband’s name: Arny Mindell. Amy and Arny wrote books, taught and researched Process Work both independently and together. Although I don’t want to create an unnecessary or artificial separation between the work of Amy and Arny Mindell, I do want to make clear the contribution Amy has made to my life and research.

I am also aware of including the stories of several men in the DVD, although the fieldwork participants were mainly women. It is not my wish to provoke debate about whether my research is feminist or not. My main concern is to call for and encourage both women and men to have the freedom, skills and motivation to develop both self-trust and body awareness. Of course, these freedoms are unlikely to eventuate while sexism is rife, so the issue of feminist research is related and important. I believe the men to whom I referred were generally not patriarchal in their teaching, or else they worked actively against sexism and use of power over others in their approaches. For example, Arnold Mindell taught and teaches deep democracy and actively helps himself and workshop participants to catch any hints of sexism in their language and behaviour, and process them. He writes and facilitates using non-sexist language and behaviour (Mindell, 2007; Process Work Community, 2006). I agree with Shulamit Reinharz and Mary Daly (in Reinharz, 1992. p. 14) “… that men can support feminism but cannot be feminists because they lack women’s experience …”.

I feel quite content to say that I appreciate the work of feminists, who have gone before me and helped to provide me with:
During my years of postgraduate study, I have read and listened to many feminist writers and speakers and been influenced by their work. They include: Behar (1996); Fine (1992); Grosz (1994); Irigaray (2002) and Cixous (1998). Their influences affected my approach to the body especially in relation to ownership (Daly, 1995) developing ways of thinking that helped me to form concepts about the body (Belenky et al., 1986; Collective, 1985), noticing, incorporating and languaging the spiritual in my body (Friedman and Moon, 1997) and owning and writing about softness and fluidity of my body and mind (Grosz, 1994; Irigaray, 1985b, 2002). There were many other areas where feminists and feminism opened spaces in me for new perspectives (such as hooks, 1994; Lather, 1997). Most of these, although lending influence, could not be developed more fully in the thesis because of the subjects and methods I chose to explore, and the space available.

I chose not to put a main focus directly on people challenged by social and political circumstances or by long-term physical issues. In my practice, I welcome people of all races, gender affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities and persuasions and with a variety of challenges. In this thesis, however, my focus is on the bodies of people in general. This is partly because I basically do not diagnose or base my work on difficulties, but rather work with a belief that people are first-rate as they are. I have gone to some lengths to provide access and a warm welcome to a diverse range of people, for example: by providing wheelchair access to my rooms through our house; by establishing the practice close to public transport; by having class notes translated into several languages; by having flexible payment methods; and by working through any glimpses of homophobia, racism, sexism, or other signs of prejudice as soon as I notice them in myself or within my view. To sum up, I no longer claim that this thesis has a feminist methodology, and now just acknowledge that feminism is important to me.

Feminists have contributed richly to my views within the research. Irigaray is one such thinker/writer. Recognising that clients cannot be classified into groups, and that each moment in every session needs to be treated anew, keeps me present to what is happening in each moment. I can still notice patterns and similarities shared between clients and sessions over time, as long as I keep in mind how fluid people are, and how easy it is to lock people into categories and moulds (a
desire for fluidity is another reason I prefer not to insist on describing the thesis as feminist):

*Alone, I rediscover my mobility. Movement is my habitat. My only rest is motion. Whoever imposes a roof over my head, wears me out. Let me go where I have not yet arrived* (Irigaray, 1992 p. 25).

It is important that I do not lock clients (or research participants) into ways of behaviour they have since discarded in my efforts to obtain evidence of patterns, rather than dropping preconceptions, and noticing what my body tells me as sensory-grounded information right now.

**Beyond Methods**

*We engage in research innovation precisely because we cannot know in advance what form it will take* (Heron, 1996, p. 202).

Methodology goes beyond methods. In research it can be seen as a context into which methods sit appropriately, and as the philosophical or scientific structure containing reasons why a research method was preferred or rejected. In my gentle bodywork practice, the term methodology refers to a rationale for how I choose, present and conduct my work procedures and run my business. In research the methodology covers the logic underlying a project’s design that provides coherence. There are both methods and methodologies that can be chosen and applied to research as a package, which carry their own loading of assumptions and beliefs (see Mann, 2006). For this research, I required heuristic responsiveness and fluidity of the methodology, so pre-designed methods did not fit my needs. Most of the methods and methodology for the research were developed or ‘renovated’ in response to particular circumstances that emerged during the course of the study, albeit influenced by and based on the work of others before me and by my own Masters research (Baensch, 2002b).

The methods and methodology could not be planned or selected in advance of conducting the research because I was investigating issues for which I had little pre-tested knowledge. Ortho-Bionomy is a relatively new art, having been founded in the 1970s. It has been the subject of only one academic research project (authored by Huff, 2002) so far. As Heron says:

*There is no precise methodology for generating new ideas: they are not the logical product of empirical observation;*

I have not been “... treading a familiar path to a known destination,” (Heron, 1996) but found I had to immerse myself in the chaos and uncertainty of choosing and creating methods and designing an appropriate methodology ‘on the go’ as circumstances dictated. When I tried to conform to a known methodology, I came up against insoluble problems. Too many aspects of my enquiry were outside the scope of each methodology I considered.

Qualitative Research

My methodology has turned out to be almost entirely qualitative. I have hardly used quantitative methods of analysis. Moreover, although I was open to participants’ use of quantitative methods, that did not happen in any significant way. I suggested many options as ways for fieldwork participants to study themselves. One option was for them to measure their body and record such observations as their range of movement of various joints at the beginning and end of the fieldwork. As far, as I know, no-one took up this suggestion.

There are many types of qualitative research (Berg, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Neville and Willis, 1996; Prosser, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Whiteford, 2005). I would like to unpack the choices I had available, the methods I chose, and why. Reading Reinhaz (1992) with Belenky (1986), many years ago, attracted me as a woman, to multiple methods research. It fitted with my wish to be ‘my own person’ while based in a certain milieu of research. As Reinhaz (1992) explains:

Feminist descriptions of multimethod research express the commitment to thoroughness, the desire to be open-ended, and to take risks. Multiple methods enable feminist researchers to link past with present, ‘data gathering’ and action, and individual behaviour with social frameworks. In addition, feminist researchers use multiple methods because of changes that occur to them and others in a project of long duration ... By combining methods, feminist researchers are able to illuminate previously unexamined or misunderstood experiences (p. 197).

The reasons for choosing qualitative methods almost exclusively are varied. When I began postgraduate studies I had little understanding about the complexity of research and I would have embarked on a positivist, quantitative experimental design for any research I carried out at that time. Positivism and
experimental method left non-consensus and subjective reality to one side. When I wanted to group clients, I found they were too individual to fit into groups. When I considered studying the psoas group of muscles, I could not disengage it from its milieu, poetry and stories, in order to embrace positivism as I saw it. My Master of Applied Science candidature prevented that. The Social Ecology coursework degree showed me the relevance of wide and inclusive research parameters. I began to appreciate the role of the researcher in any study (set out in Baensch, 2002b; Fook, 1996; Kellehear, 1993).

During my 1990s Social Ecology course, which fully engaged me, I had experiences that contrasted with my psychology studies that I had found so tedious and irrelevant in the 1960s. Psychology lectures were formal and involved hundreds of students sitting in tiered lecture theatres. Practical work was carried out in classrooms containing large groups of students. Even tutorials consisted of lectures given to groups of about three hundred students. There was very little or no opportunity to clarify issues or interact with fellow students. It was not how I had excitedly expected university education to be, it did not suit my learning style in the slightest, and I failed. I felt bored, disengaged, lonely, guilty, incapable and stupid. Instead of studying hard, I needed to escape the course and spent time with Jim, my new boyfriend or stayed home to avoid going to lectures whenever I could because they felt alienating and impersonal to me.

In contrast to my 1960s experience of university, I found Social Ecology rewarding. By then I was in my forties. Studying was daunting. It took me four years to pluck up enough courage to write an application. I had been a mother at home producing, feeding, looking after children for 25 years. Apart from child care, nothing else entered my mind. Except an occasional letter to family and friends, I had written nothing for quarter of a century! Once I was accepted to Social Ecology at University of Western Sydney and attended my first residential, I realised this course would differ in many ways from my earlier taste of university. The emphasis was on collaboration rather than studying in isolation, and that engaged my imagination. I learn best through relationship and conversation. Simple strategies were put in place by the university to aid connection, such as a networking booklet, containing the contact details and interests of peers, which was supplied to each student. I used that booklet for inspiration, and to contact several of my fellow students, in order to exchange information about our projects.
New ways of doing research were shown to me in practice and through readings and lectures, so my thinking about research possibilities expanded, and I was introduced to writers whose work inspired me (for example Bateson, 2000; Reinharz, 1992). Course participants met for several days twice a year, providing face to face connections with faculty members and peers, and allowing on-going relationships that continued by email or phone, supporting my forays into qualitative research methods. I knew whom to ring about administrative questions because I had met the people involved. On top of that, my whole being was involved in the course. I was physically engaged in striding around the extensive Hawkesbury campus of University of Western Sydney between lectures. My body was also invited into classroom activities: role-playing or movement activities engaged my muscles and senses. Accommodation and meals were easy to find on site at reasonable cost. Intellectually, emotionally and socially I felt well catered for. My learning was achieved in an atmosphere of excitement and challenge. I was extended by assignments that required me to reframe my bodywork for an academic audience. Yet even when I knew I needed to improve an area of performance, I felt accepted and encouraged rather than guilty and incapable as I had in the 1960s. Circumstances were quite different.

At University, reading about new science (such as Barrow and Tipler, 1986; Chalmers, 1996; Penrose, 1994; Wheatley, 1994) brought several connections and new understandings. For example:

*Quantum theory introduces yet another level of paradox into our search for order: At the quantum level we observe a world where change happens in jumps, beyond our powers of precise prediction. This world has also challenged our beliefs about objective measurement, for at the subatomic level the observer cannot observe anything without interfering or, more importantly, participating in its creation. The strange qualities of the quantum world, and especially its influence in shaking our beliefs in determinism, predictability, and control, don’t seem to offer any hope for a more orderly universe* (Wheatley, 1994, p. 20).

I became interested in Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle (see Briggs and Peat, 1990; Gleick, 1987), as an influence on research. Far from being a neutral, objective process, as I had expected, I learnt how the act of observation has an effect on that which is observed. I realised how complex research is and how impossible it is to replicate research in order to test its results, since every researcher, research subject and circumstance differs so much.
Speaking with friends and clients who had no ongoing association with academia and who had been involved with positivist projects, and reading feminist and other papers (such as those written by Burman, 1996; Cole, Howard-Bobiwash, and Bridgman, 1999; Daly, 1995; Fine, 1992; Firestone, 1970; Grosz, 1994, 1995; hooks, 1994; Hunter, 1999; Irigaray, 1985a; Lorraine, 1999; Morawski, 1994) helped me realise all was not as it seemed in at least some research reports. These people explained how some research papers omitted to mention issues like design failures and experimental errors during research. My personal contact with these people was casual and occasional, but enough, when combined with my reading and studies towards a Master of Science degree (Baensch, 2002b), to convince me that I wanted to carry out research that was undertaken and reported qualitatively and as deeply democratically as possible. I wanted to use thick description (described by Geertz, 1973) ahead of restricted variables and reports relying mainly on numerical data. Research is embedded in culture. It is an interpretation and its meaning depends on the situation of all involved in its conduct. As Geertz says:

[b]elieving, with Max Weber, that man (sic) is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (1973, p. 5).

Of course I cannot supply details of every nuance of my research. I restrict the information I provide, and thus influence the output of my research. What I want to do is to be as democratic as I can in my report. In that case, I will represent as many aspects and flavours of the research as I can. Life and the cosmos are very complex. I do not believe life’s complexities can be reduced and simplified in order to create an accurate representation of ‘reality’. I think research can only present an impression of part of life and that this sample needs to be contextualised sufficiently to allow observers of the research to build a comprehensive background in their minds. Research results are relative: they are relatively accurate, and the context supplied with the data helps readers of reports assess their accuracy. They also exist relative to the readers, who can compare their own situation with that of the research, in order to know how much they grasp and concur with its meaning. They can ask whether their perspective is likely to be similar to the researcher’s, or to some degree opposed? Statements have different meanings in different contexts. A rich background allows readers to orient themselves. Clearly I am in favour of a qualitative methodology for this research.
Phenomenology

It was pointed out to me long ago in a conversation (Bak, 1999) that my approach to working with peoples’ bodies and research is phenomenological. When I read Abram (1997) I felt at home, confident that I had a basis, in my experience of nature, for understanding the content of his writing, I attended a talk Abram gave in Melbourne (2005) and appreciated his approach, which incorporates practical experience with theoretical understandings, acknowledging sensations, perceptions and subjective qualities for their intrinsic value in coming to know ‘reality’. I found Abram’s style of writing and speaking to be engaging and understandable. When I read passages like the following one, my body responded physically via my imagination:

[my life and the world’s life are deeply intertwined; when I wake up one morning to find that a week-long illness has subsided and that my strength has returned, the world, when I step outside, fairly sparkles with energy and activity: swallows are swooping by in vivid flight, waves of heat rise from the newly paved road smelling strongly of tar; the old red barn across the field juts into the sky at an intense angle. Likewise, when a haze descends upon the valley in which I dwell it descends upon my awareness as well, muddling my thoughts, making my muscles yearn for sleep. The world and I reciprocate each other (Abram, 1997, p. 33).

Although my experience, here in Australia, differs from Abram’s in America, it is close enough for my skin to get an impression of the dampness of a haze, descending through the Mountain Ash trees and ferns in the Yarra Valley hills near here, and for my muscles to feel the relieving weariness of such a change of weather. That physical recognition gives me a basis to build comprehension of concepts, such as Abram’s reciprocation with nature. From my first reading of Abram, I began to feel at home with phenomenology. This ease contrasted with my initial connection with Husserl (1980) when I found myself to be ‘at sea’ with a dry approach and unfamiliar terminology. For example, Husserl wrote:

[to be in infinitum imperfect in this manner is part of unannulable essence of the correlation between “physical thing” and perception of a physical thing. If the sense of the physical thing is determined by the data of physical thing perception (and what else could determine it?), then that sense demands such an imperfection and necessarily refers us to continuously unitary concatenations of possible perceptions which, starting from any perception effected, extend in infinitely many directions … (1980, pp. 94 and 95).
I found these words too difficult to comprehend, with my limited background in philosophy. Abram and Husserl cover somewhat similar territory, using different styles. With time, as I become increasingly familiar with phenomenology, I have found Husserl’s writing increasingly approachable and useful. One step in that direction came from reading Abram’s translations of Husserl’s ideas. For example, Abram wrote:

*Husserl’s notion of intersubjectivity suggested a remarkable new interpretation of the so-called “objective world.” For the conventional contrast between “subjective” and “objective” realities could now be reframed as a contrast within the subjective field of experience itself – as the felt contrast between subjective and intersubjective phenomena (Abram, 1997, p. 36).*

Abram then gave an example of how this is expressed in science. Whether he sees Husserl as I will see him, when I can ‘make him my own’, is not vital to me. What is important is that I now feel as if I can approach a book I found daunting. Once I feel more at home with Husserl, I can form my own opinions about what he is saying and enter more fully into his “… Lebenswelt or ‘life-world’” (Abram, 1997, p. 40).

Although I also suffered from an inability to easily comprehend Merleau-Ponty’s ideas at first, Abram beckoned me back to them through writing about him in an inviting way:

*Maurice Merleau-Ponty set out to radicalize Husserl’s phenomenology, both by clarifying the inconsistencies lodged in this philosophy by Husserl’s own ambivalences, and further, by disclosing a more eloquent way of speaking, a style of language which, by virtue of its fluidity, its carnal resonance, and its careful avoidance of abstract terms, might itself draw us into the sensuous depths of the life-world (Abram, 1997, p. 44).*

and:

*… Merleau-Ponty invites us to recognize, at the heart of even our most abstract cogitations, the sensuous and sentient life of the body itself (Abram, 1997, p. 45).*

and:
This breathing body, as it experiences and inhabits the world, is very different from the objectified body diagrammed in physiology textbooks, with its separable “systems” (the circulatory system, the digestive system, the respiratory system, etc.) laid bare on each page. The body I here speak of is very different from the body we have been taught to see and even to feel, very different, finally, from that complex machine whose broken parts or stuck systems are diagnosed by our medical doctors and “repaired” by our medical technologies. Underneath the anatomicized and mechanical body that we have learned to conceive, prior indeed to all our conceptions, dwells the body as it actually experiences things, this poised and animate power that initiates all our projects and suffers all our passions (Abram, 1997, p. 46).

A few moments of conscious awareness

From my research journal, I want to try to give two partial examples of the vastness and complexity of an experience of space, and part of my relationship to my thinking process: phenomenological thinking, in a particular moment. First, here are some notes I made about how I experience being conscious. They demonstrate some of the issues I have had with writing and editing, so I will place them here.

I am in a space, or several.

Mentally.

Somewhere inside my body.

The place I am located is linked with eyes and throat to a point up high inside the back of my head.

Or beyond it.

But not a point, actually,

A diversity.

Thinking thesis.

And how can I convey

my conception?

Back at this place are links and jumps forward to the side, diagonally and back.
Spatially, historically, philosophically, topically.

Leaps and weavings, blank turns and rushing distances.

Vast, minute, disproportionate.

Some judged and excommunicated, others leapt into.

I know of no language to grasp the feelings and wild wisdom of those infinite meetings and ‘missings’.

Characters inside lecture me disapprovingly or gently urge me on. To what?

Gushing streams of possibility cascade away from me each moment and the landscape shifts. There is nothing to grasp for long enough to write or even think through an idea.

A second journal extract follows:

**Integral Research: An embodied geography of thinking**

*My eyes’ focus is locked forward into the middle distance. I can see bushes and houses but they do not really register, though they are sharp and clearly focussed. It is not that I am looking through them – rather that my eyes are seeing something outside the room where I physically sit, but my mind has another focus – a little closer, as if at the level of the flyscreens a metre away, but also internal. Like my mind’s eye is seeking, in the space at the back of my head, for a focus.*

*A phone call drags me back to the here and now of the room. The cultivated female voice asks for Christine. “Wrong number,” I say, feeling ruptured from the containment of my thinking. “Sorry, I suppose I pulled you away from watching the tennis.” “No, I was writing,” I said, “Oh well, I hope I am not pulling you away from the tennis,” she replies, not listening to me. She and I hang up and I feel mildly shattered. I wish I could ring her back to convince her I am not watching the confounded tennis, but rather, trying to understand – or over-connect (geographically) with where and how I am thinking and convey my feeling of that. I do not feel as if I am understanding (not fully standing right underneath) my place of thought but that I connect with my thoughts upwards just now. Maybe not always, but ‘right now’, which is a sliding now, connecting often to past and future ‘nows’.*
A beautiful flowering gum tree in our neighbour’s garden catches my glance and calls my eyes in for a landing. The entire tree is covered with flowers in clumps. They are vermillion red and lipstick pink all at once. Not one or other, it seems to me.

The few areas of leaves are likewise grey and green at once. To appreciate the colours for myself is acceptable, and a cause of internal wonder and appreciation tinged with a tension of not knowing about these colours when I try to grasp them. Then, in order to write about it so you might empathise with my sense of the colours, the tension builds and grows quite strong and starts to become unpleasant for me. I feel restless and embarrassed. I imagine your response (if you are still reading) and sense some irritation that this passage is so slow and detailed. Does it matter where I feel my thinking in my body? Perhaps not. And maybe this passage of writing will not make it to my thesis. But I want to know more for myself. Sort of. That phone call broke my thread of concentration. Jim has been baking one of his first cakes. He has come into the room to ask how to make icing. Time to go. Rosa has left the room with Jim. She knows which side her bread is buttered. Maybe I will return to this geography of thinking. Maybe not.

After my cake (delicious, light as a feather, moist, chocolaty) and some crispy biscuits from the same oven load, I decide to continue writing, after reading this out loud rather cautiously, but the phone rings again.

Another false alarm, in a way, that comes to nothing. What might these calls and interruptions mean? I am not aware. To do something less focussed? Or to interrupt myself more? Nothing is obvious to me. I try to write again. This time Rosa is barking madly at the gate. No-one is there. She has heard a little girl running in the distance. Another interruption whose meaning I cannot grasp, then domestic tasks to attend to (washing hung out, more brought it). I will try one
more time today. At 7.15 on a Sunday night, I am growing vexed at so many cuts across my focus. I notice that one area where I seemed to be supported in my process was with picking some roses for my desk. Most were hanging over the fence and I picked them with sudden finger flashes and tweaks so the ferocious thorns could not grab my flesh. Several times the roses should have dropped over the fence out of reach, but each time they became caught and suspended where I could grasp them safely in my own time. The mood of that experience contrasted with that of the writing distractions. Again there could be a message but I do not notice it except to say the roses have a strong yet delicate, light, clean and slightly sweet and sour perfume. I am enjoying their company on my desk. Before they joined me, I noticed that many other senses were stimulated as I wrote – vision, hearing (dog), taste (cake), touch (wet and cold washing hung out, and dry, rough clothes brought in). Smell remained in the background until the roses ‘came to the party.’

Now I want to pick up where I stopped when the phone rang. I said I was aware of a place inside my head as a location for thought or awareness. A space. I could feel some link between my eyes, my throat and a place back in my head above and behind my eyes. There is a sensation almost like muscular effort – just a faint whisper, not like strong effort.

I am sitting at a desk, looking east over two weathered, grey, paling fences, towards and beyond the side of our neighbour’s dark brown brick veneer and tile house.

It is early evening, so their house is lit with late sunlight. Before the house is a vacant block of land, between the fences beyond it, snatches of further tiled roofs in brown and dull red, some electricity wires swooping from wooden lampposts and trees on a slight hill at the horizon. The sky is a clear blue – rather washed out. The flowering gum tree is to my right. In the soon-setting sunlight its flowers’ colour is less pink, predominantly red now, but even harder to describe.

I look out through a sliding window half covered by a brown mesh security grille over a flywire screen. Jim’s car is about three metres away from me and I look diagonally through its roof rack bars. My view, as you can read, is quite complex with many levels. My eyes ‘complacently’ take in many of those. Bear with me, if you can, I am trying to work something out and explain it although my description is pathetically inadequate to evoke the actual experience. I hope it will spark someone else to convey what happens with thought more graphically. No doubt
this has been done before, but so far I have not seen it. I feel a need to be quick, since the light is threatening to fade.

Here I sit, looking out and thinking about my thesis. Many aspects of it move around in my mind. I want to deal with only one part – presently the place where I am thinking. My mouth is relaxed, lips closed, jaws slightly apart, my eyes are open and I am looking through the window.

The dark brown grille is a metre away, each diamond of metal grille filled in with fine grey flywire (close view). I look through that to the red roof of a house down the road, (middle distance).

When I glimpse that red roof, showing below the neighbour’s dark brown eaves, I mainly sense its warm terra cotta colour. It is about 100 metres away. Now I am looking at it as I write. My eyes feel a certain way, focussed into the middle distance. When I look there, a place inside my head also feels and responds in a certain and similar way. Like I can ‘see’ or think backwards into my head the same distance as I look forward (say, 100 metres). The distance is relatively unimportant to me, but there is an extra dimension. As I look ahead, my thoughts seem to go to that depth of thinking. At the same time, I am clearly aware of the grille and flywire in front of my eyes. They are not out of focus (that is, blurred) yet I am not focussed upon them.

When I look at the grille, I lose much of the detail of the view beyond the grille, but still see it. My thinking ‘place’ feels as if it moves further forward in my head; lower and still behind my eyes, but closer to my eyes and throat. I find it hard to continue looking at the grille, my eyes ‘find themselves’ looking beyond it at the middle distance as I consider what is going on. In the meantime I need to keep glancing at my page and the words I am trying to write down on it without looking.

There seems to be something about the middle distance view that helps me to dream into a topic. What is your physical experience of thinking, if you notice one? Do you undertake particular types of thinking in certain head or body spaces and in response to certain views? Is physical comfort such as a supportive chair more important to you than your length of view when thinking? I would love to know how thinking affects you and your focus.
There is a lot more to this than I have explained, but the sun is going down (it is 8.15pm) and my middle distance view is now in shadow, its detail lost to me. I am hungry too, so plan to go out to eat the salad Jim has kindly prepared for me.

For me, this writing I have just done links with part of Merleau-Ponty's writing (Merleau-Ponty, 2004) by setting out some awareness of consciousness. Only a fraction of my experience was recorded as I tried to write as a living attentive body and to partially show you what this might look like. Every moment of consciousness is likely to encompass a myriad of relationships and interconnected attention.

_The living, attentive body – which Merleau-Ponty called the “body subject” – is this very being that, pondering a moment ago, suddenly took up this pen and scribbled these thoughts_ (Abram, 1997, p. 46).

Abram’s words invited me to return to Merleau-Ponty, particularly his later writing, (such as Merleau-Ponty, 2004) where I made a connection that brought me greater clarity about living in the world, and about phenomenology as an aid to understanding my situation and research.

This happened as a progression of relationships. Abram’s book was recommended to me by Bak (1999) whose opinion I respect. I had been a bit reluctant to start reading Abram early in my studies, knowing it was about phenomenology, and after having been daunted by Husserl’s and Merleau-Ponty’s turns of phrase. Bak’s recommendation, once accepted, saw me swallowed up into, and taken over by, Abram’s style and content, with great pleasure. Abram’s ‘translations’ of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty’s writing gave me the courage and stamina to pursue Husserl again and I came across the later writing of Merleau-Ponty (1992). By then, perhaps as a result of studying in other fields such as Process Work (Diamond and Jones, 2004; Hatch, 2006; Mindell, 2005; Process Work Community, 2006) and Gebser’s ideas (1991), Merleau-Ponty’s words no longer overwhelmed me, but excited me and came as a relief. I was beginning to find new ways of expressing difficult ideas. For example I now have more courage to dive into describing experiences such as bodywork sessions, even though they rely on tactile and other sensing, where my language richness and choice of concepts are less developed than I would like. I was thrilled to read Merleau-Ponty’s portrayal of ‘red’ in “Chiasm”, (Merleau-Ponty, 2004) in which he brings together aspects of touch to describe sight and the visible.
What is this prepossession of the visible, this art of interrogating it according to its own wishes, this inspired exegesis? We would perhaps find the answer in the tactile palpation where the questioner and the questioned are closer, and of which, after all, the palpation of the eye is a remarkable variant (p. 251).

This sagacious adduction, and unhurried, uninhibited exploration of the senses enlarges my freedom to use language in unconventional blends and tastier ‘recipes’. It deepens and widens my knowledge of the mechanics and relationships within sensuality. Once I might have kept such ways of description for more private musings, not academic writing.

We must first understand that this red under my eyes is not, as is always said, a quale, a pellicle of being without thickness, a message at the same time indecipherable and evident, which one has or has not received, but of which, if one has received it, one knows all there is to know, and of which in the end there is nothing to say. It requires a focusing, however brief; it emerges from a less precise, more general redness, in which my gaze was caught, into which it sank, before – as we put it so aptly - fixing it (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 249).

To consider our relationship with red in such detail brings colour, and the visible, and our other senses to life. Merleau-Ponty goes on to talk about a constellation of reds that we see, relative to each other red encounter we are familiar with, from past experience as: “A punctuation in the field of red things …” (p. 250). I am in accord with him and delight in his laying out of the influences prevailing upon such a momentarily minute, and often overlooked, quality of life as redness. Each tiny, sensual moment is replete with an incredible complexity and depth of experience. Earlier, I tried to capture some details of a few moments of consciousness in my journal. Now, having read Merleau-Ponty’s luscious, thought-provoking prose, perhaps I can be aware of experiences with greater luminosity and specificity.

Phenomenology is difficult to define. 50 years after Husserl began to write on the topic, Merleau-Ponty still believed there was no clear answer to what phenomenology is. He gave his explanation of the term, one that I found practical and helpful. He described phenomenology as: “… the study of essences …” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 63) such as of perception or consciousness, “… a transcendental philosophy …” (p. 63) aiming for a contact with the ever-present world directly and through a beginner’s attention. He
thought of phenomenology as “... a ‘rigorous science’”(p. 64) that invites a lived experience of our world as it is, unfiltered by sciences like psychology or sociology. Merleau-Ponty listed signs of phenomenology’s beginnings in writers as varied as Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud as well as Husserl and Heidegger.

I think phenomenology describes the phenomena themselves, from the vantage point of the one experiencing their world, without explanation. Its philosophy and approach are necessary for my work, which concerns physical contact. Within contact, owing to the direct nature of touch, interpretations and languaged explanations may be negligible or hard to discover. The philosophy of Ortho-Bionomy and its principles and practices rest on the acceptance of clients as they are, not as they might become, or could be. The work I do is direct and present-oriented, based on what is happening at any moment, and therefore suited to being studied by a phenomenological research methodology because of its similar style of operation, in basic experience rather than diagnosis or analysis.

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 65).

Ortho-Bionomy, for example, does not rely, for its ‘results’, on being translated or interpreted into words. Perhaps this trait contributes to my difficulty in writing up my research. I have had a strong resistance to analysing the data I collected during the fieldwork. My urge has been to let the data speak for itself, without interpretation except for my selection of parts that attract (or repel) me. I realise that I do interpret in other ways and that my methodology is not ‘pure phenomenology’ by any means, despite my admiration for ‘beginner’s mind’ (see Mindell, 1993a) or my attempts “... to get behind objective thought to our pre-objective experience of ourselves and the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 145). I have been helped to understand my relationship to participants in ‘my’ fieldwork through grounding my own body’s experience in this direct way:

... once we have internalised this new conception of our own bodily being in the world, we will be in a position to understand how there can be other similar bodily experiences of the world which are not located mysteriously inside
another’s body but are expressed through behaviour in just
the way that my behaviour expresses my own being

Merleau-Ponty writes about a fifteen month old baby’s ability to experience
playful biting, and to respond in a way that suggests it can perceive: “… its
intentions in its body, and my body with its own, and thereby my intentions in its
own body” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 151). This idea was later developed by
Merleau-Ponty, in a manuscript, incomplete at the time of his death:

… as a ‘chiasm’ or crossing-over (the term comes from the
Greek letter chi) which combines subjective experience and
objective existence. His term for this concept of the body is
‘flesh’ (chair) and he insists that it is an ‘ultimate notion’, a
‘concrete emblem of a general manner of being’, which
provides access both to subjective experience and objective
existence. The phenomenon he concentrates upon is one he
had discussed earlier in The Phenomenology of Perception
(PP 92 [106]), that of touching one hand with the other hand.
This phenomenon, he suggests, reveals to us the two
dimensions of our ‘flesh’, that is both a form of experience
(tactile experience) and something that can be touched. It is
both ‘touching’ and ‘tangible’. Furthermore the relationship is
reversible: the hand that touches can be felt as touched, and
vice versa, though never both at the same time, and it is this
‘reversibility’ that he picks out as the essence of flesh. It
shows us the ambiguous status of our bodies as both subject

Merleau-Ponty helped me to understand and express senses such as touch and
aspects of vision through his writing in that manuscript. I am more at ease with
the sense of touch than with the visual, and his way of writing helped me to
experience how intertwined, co-operative and elucidatory one sense can be for
understanding another. For example, he described the experience of one hand
touching the other as a situation of ‘flesh’, which was a term he used to denote
the coming together of subjective and objective experience, of and in the body.
The hands both touch each other and are touched. Baldwin discusses the idea
that ‘flesh’ can be both ‘touching’ and ‘tangible’ as expressed in Merleau-Ponty’s
writing:

Merleau-Ponty extends the application of this conception in
two directions. First he extends it from touch to sight, which
he now models on touch – ‘the look, we said, envelops,
palpates, espouses visible things’. So sight has the same
ambiguous nature as touch, and it is from its own ‘objective’
side that the objectivity of the visible world is generated.
Second, taking the example of a handshake as exemplary, he
extends his thesis to apply to our sense that others, like us,
are both subjects and objects (Baldwin in Merleau-Ponty,
2004 p. 248).

In Ortho-Bionomy, this simultaneous and mutual experience of touch is partly
expressed by the saying: “who is on the table anyway?” Both practitioner and
client can benefit from a session, as well as observers nearby, (thus bringing
Orth-Bionomy into the ‘world channel’ of Process Work (described in Mindell,
2002)). Merleau-Ponty links the sense of touch with the visible. For example, he
writes again about the colour red, and the factors that combine to form our
perception of various reds, each stimulating a rich profusion of dimensions.

If we took all these participations into account, we would
recognize that a naked colour, and in general a visible, is not
a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked
to a vision which could be only total or null, but is rather a sort
of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever
gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and
makes diverse regions of the coloured or visible world
resound at the distances, a certain differentiation, an
ephemeral modulation of this world – less a color or a thing,
therefore, than a difference between things and colors, a
momentary crystallization of colored beings or of visibility.
Between the alleged colors and visibles, we would find anew
the tissue that lines them, sustains them, nourishes them,
and which for its part is not a thing, but a possibility, a
latency, and a flesh of things (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 250).

This crossing of boundaries between senses was helpful to me. I have spent my
working days immersed in a realm of touch, movement, intuition and relationship,
despite the fact that these are all aspects of life that I find challenging to express.
In that case, why did I choose this type of work? Because it suits my inherent
way of experiencing the world? Because I lacked touch and company when
young and now compensate for that with my work? I have no definite answer to
these questions, although both are likely to be somewhat true. For whatever
reason, this is the work I have been doing and have lately been researching.
This is the work I want to be able to discuss despite experiencing language
limitations. So I have been grateful to Merleau-Ponty for his discussions of ‘red’
and ‘flesh’. By his describing colour in such fresh detail, partially in tactile terms, I
realise I can discover ways to describe aspects of touch by including the
language and style of other senses. His emphasis on the fluidity of concepts
such as ‘red’ gladdens my heart, and gives me hope that I might one day convey a sense of Ortho-Bionomy to students, without encasing this fluid, relational, physical and energetic expression of bodily self-organisation in concrete.

I am fascinated by Merleau-Ponty’s view of the relationship between looking and visible things, as if we have a connection or rapport with the things: as if we “… knew them before knowing them” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 250). This reminds me, in a way, of Jung’s archetypes (de Angulo, 1980, p. 211) roughly: of things existing beyond our gaze. I also think of Gebser’s belief about the visual sense being the emphasised sense of the mental structure of consciousness, and of a shift happening towards the integral structure and people’s more holistic appreciation of life. Merleau-Ponty, in somewhat collapsing the categories of the visible and the palpable, helps to gather the senses together. Gebser, in a different ‘intertwining’, brings time and space into a new liaison. He does so when he discusses Picasso’s art such as “Le Chapeau de paille” (The Straw Hat) (1938):

![Picasso's art](image)

**Figure 16:** Picasso’s “Le Chapeau de paille” (The Straw Hat)

to exemplify how time and space can “… become evident” in “unimaginable and … truly unrepresentable” (Gebser, 1991, p. 27) ways, through a:

… *complementary overlapping of temporal factors and special sectors, audaciously rendered simultaneously and conspacially on the pictorial surface. In this manner, the figure achieves its concrete character of wholeness and presence,*
nourished not by the psychic demand for beauty but by the

Looking at Picasso’s painting, we can see the subject depicted simultaneously in
several views, for example the left eye is shown facing us, and the right eye and
nose are depicted in side view, as if the head had turned while Picasso was
painting. This way of painting has made waves of time concrete, by presenting
them in a new relationship with space.

One of my methodological questions concerned finding how to express insights
about, for example, touch, in an integral way. Merleau-Ponty helped me to do
that through bringing together ‘temporal factors’ and ‘spatial sectors’ in his focus
on red and the visible. He shows how a sense of red is built up as a: “... concretion of visibility ...” over time through its relativity and relationships with
events, other colours and the spaces and textures it covers or “... holds with ...”
until “... it forms a constellation ...” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 250) through such
participation with associations and with us as seers. Merleau-Ponty explains:
“The look, we said, envelops, palpatates, espouses the visible things.” (Merleau-
Ponty, 2004, p. 250). He tells how the visible and the seer form a whole system
that is not simply ‘visual’:

(w)hat is this prepossession of the visible, this art of
interrogating it according to its own wishes, this inspired
exegesis? We would perhaps find the answer in the tactile
palpation where the questioner and the questioned are
closer, and of which, after all, the palpation of the eye is a
remarkable variant (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 251).

When attending Bruce Stark’s “TMJ and Ribs” Ortho-Bionomy workshop (Stark,
2007) I experienced this ‘intertwining’ of time, space, relationships, senses and
so on, from a different perspective from Merleau-Ponty’s example. I was the
model for bodywork demonstrations. I was lying on a massage table, with Bruce
carrying out Ortho-Bionomy releases on my body, while others observed what
was happening. My eyes were often closed, so I could focus on my experience,
yet I was aware of the gaze of class participants on me and heard their
comments. I could feel Bruce’s hands on my jaw and rib cage at various times,
and knew the observers had to create their sense of what was going on through
looking. Like me, each person connects with a history of experiences that builds
to constellate ‘jawness’ or ‘ribness’. Each person in the group observed jaw
moves, and adjusted their own sense of ‘jawness’ from within and without, by
first watching and listening to Bruce and me, then acting as client and
practitioner in pairs, as they practised what had been demonstrated. As a teacher with 22 years of experience in Ortho-Bionomy, I could feel Bruce’s demonstration on my jaw subtly affecting tissues throughout my body, and simultaneously have some notion of what the students around me were seeing. Each instant of the class (of life) is intensely complex, as you can imagine, in terms of experience and consciousness. Perhaps this is why people inhabiting the mental structure of consciousness (where I live a good deal of time) chose scientific method as a way to limit and try to control the ‘buzzing, blooming confusion’ of variables around them, for the purposes of research? I can understand such a desire, and find it a pity that such control is wishful thinking, in my experience.

As far as my methodology for this research is concerned, I am still trying to understand, develop and improve on one, built on a ‘mood’ or philosophy or psychology of phenomenology. I have been using the luxury of space to research in, as a way of exploring and learning from methodological dead ends, such as my initial foray into positivism, and ways through such as Bak’s (1999) remark that my bodywork approach is phenomenological, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenal gift of creative ways to express the senses (Merleau-Ponty, 2004), and Abram’s moving links with the natural environment and with language (Abram, 1997, 2005).

As I indicated before, reading Merleau-Ponty’s later writing (Merleau-Ponty, 2004) inspired me. Both he and Abram have the ability to put experience into words, in situations where I might find myself floundering and impotent. The living moments I want to share with you from my practice and research are deeply felt. I search inside my mind, and too often find my language resources barren or insufficient. Perhaps what I feel is pre-verbal or beyond words? Yet I read Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) words in the chapter called “The intertwining – The Chiasm” and realise he is close to expressing the experience of touch and its intercourse with the other senses, such as the visual (Merleau-Ponty, 2004). I also remember more examples I have cited, of Gebser’s bringing together of time and space, of Bruce Stark’s hands delineating my jaw while I simultaneously imagine the view of me as model from the students’ observing role and of Jung’s ability to look beyong present experience to imagine archetypes. I hope I am developing courage to step into liminal places when I write, to go beyond the barriers of safety and suitability, and take fitting risks.
The methodology ‘I’ developed (with the help of Th’ L’zy G’rl’s M’th’d) was a rigorously loose, foundational instance of the ‘Going with the Flow School of Phenomenology’, of which I am so far unable to find further examples. This might be the way phenomenology develops in the future. The way forward for phenomenology has not yet been determined:

*The shape that phenomenological philosophy will take in the first decades of its second century is difficult to say… perhaps the emphasis will be on philosophical anthropology and related issues such as ecology, gender, ethnicity, religion, and technology as well as continuing concerns with aesthetics, ethics, philosophy of the human and natural kinds of science, and politics (Embree, 1997, p. 6).*

Why do I call my research phenomenological? When I work, I do so by being present with a client, paying attention to what my senses notice about them, about me and about our environment. David Abram’s book ‘The Spell of the Sensuous’ (1997), and my attendance at the lecture he gave in Melbourne showed me that the general feel of Abram’s ecological approach to phenomenology (1997) suits my way of working, since it values the voice of nature, something that is important to me too. Needing a label for what I do is partly a factor of this thesis.

**Holistic and Mandalic**

I do my best to represent a whole or mandalic impression of work, based on a holistic approach. Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology each consider the whole person or system. They recognise that people and groups cannot be reduced to discrete parts, but that whatever happens influences everything else. For example, in Ortho-Bionomy it is not possible to work on one muscle alone. When any part of a body (person) changes it has an effect on every other part. Even if it were possible to release tension in one muscle, that release would immediately affect the fluids bathing the muscle, the bones it was attached to and the somatic experience of the person. Even if the effect were extremely small and subtle, it would still occur, and the person as a whole would be changed.

**Integral and Transdisciplinary**

The research methodology is transdisciplinary (see Nicolescu, 2002). It links and is influenced and supported by many disciplines and approaches, and goes beyond them. Transdisciplinarity is a term coined in celebration of:
... transgression of disciplinary boundaries, an act that far surpassed the multidisciplinary and the interdisciplinary approaches ... (and which is) ... intrinsically global in character ... (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 1) (my words in brackets).

When we are shocked or traumatised, I think we disconnect, to some degree, from parts of our selves (for example Levine and Frederick, 1997). The disconnection can occur at any age (partially shown in Levine, 1994), even (or particularly) during birth (explained in Odent, 2002, 2004). I believe the bodywork I do, especially Ortho-Bionomy, helps people to come back into relationship with parts they have lost contact with. Pauls’ phrase for Ortho-Bionomy was: “the evolvement of the original concept” (Pauls, 2003), or a way to return to ourselves and fulfil our potential (this topic is analogously represented by Senzon, 2005). Re-membering, or renegotiating relationship, was noticeable for me when I was working with participants in the research group, and I write about that in the Fieldwork chapter.

Locating my work

My work is often seen as being located in the health field. Indeed I included the words “health care and information” in the logo for my business, in lieu of more accurate words to describe my work. Greater health is one of the outcomes clients have often described after sessions with me. So my work has a relationship with health. It would be inaccurate and churlish to deny that. The research is also influenced, to some extent by the fields of anatomy, physiology, writing, creative arts, and many others. And yet I know my work sits pretty firmly in the sphere of education. When I work, I make no corrections, I only amplify symptoms, thus prompting the body to choose whether to resolve its situation in some way. My hands ask: “What is happening here? How about this? ... Or that?” This makes me an educator, not a healer, since I am not expecting or desiring change in a client, or not if I am true to my way of working (which I am often not, as I describe in the Modalities chapter). Instead, I offer options, for the body to accept or reject, according to what suits its self-managing ‘purposes’. It is a form of work that fits with the idea of ‘leading out’.

Because my work is educational, the methodology for its research requires an educational orientation. One of my early postgraduate mentors was Associate Professor Bernie Neville. His book, ‘Educating Psyche’ (Neville, 1989), was influential in my research planning. From Neville’s book I took the importance of catering for all parts of the students I educate, including their creativity, and making space for them to respond to content as a whole person. This was
reflected in the fieldwork planning through attention to participants’ physical wellbeing as well as providing for creative expression and variety of learning styles.

Why speak of education in this chapter? Learning is central to the methodology of this research. It is not simply an outcome to be noted, but a core belief that people only need to be reminded who they are, under relatively safe and gentle circumstances, for them to transform themselves. This central belief of my work is echoed in my research methodology, which I designed according to the principles of the work I do. Rather than pursuing methods for the research, I focussed on the topic, and waited for appropriate methods to emerge, trusting that they would be sympathetic to my coalescing methodology.

Allowing

My methodology ranges across several methods and ways of thinking about research, and I have felt at liberty to invent or contribute to research methods. One of the latter is ‘Th’ L’zy G’rl’s M’th’d of R’s’rch’. This was introduced to me by my elder daughter, Elizabeth, ages ago. She developed this metaphysically grounded research technique when studying, and showed me the secret of it in practice, while using it to plan and entitle the chapters of her (unfinished) Masters thesis, in a matter of moments. The results were an eye opener for me. Elizabeth closed her eyes and asked me to spin her around near a bookcase. She then overbalanced, reached out and touched a book, which I selected and secretly opened, holding the book behind Liz. Whatever sentence she touched in the book, still without looking, became the title for chapter one. This sequence of events was followed for every chapter in the prospective thesis, including the introduction and conclusion. Every chapter had an apposite name. I forget how many chapters there were to be, or their titles, except that one had something to do with Pythagoras’s trousers, from the book of the same name (Wertheim, 1995). I suffer from bouts of academic temerity: a lack of robust faith, so only use Th’ L’zy G’rl’s M’th’d of R’s’rch from time to time. It is one of my renovated methods. My innovation to the method is to extend it into my life, trusting what happens, rather than trying to control and manage events.

So what? you might ask. Well, I think the examples I have given are most likely examples of self-organisation in the universe. Because as a writer I have harboured delusions of being in control of my writing, this idea sometimes strikes me as being too imaginative and rather provocative. One of the learnings I have made during this thesis is that, no matter how hard I tried to take full control of
the writing and researching process, I failed. To succeed, to the extent I have, I needed to leave plenty of space open for chaos and emergence. Liz’s L’zy G’rl’s M’th’d, and my younger daughter Kate’s recommendation of the removal of a percentage of my written pages, described below, all allowed me to stop wasting energy on worrying about outcomes. Noticing this helped me to apply my effort to more co-operative creative pursuits in preference to worrying (Owen, 2008).

Once when I was writing a paper for a conference, Kate wanted me to care for her children. To speed up my writing process for the looming deadline, Kate suggested that I should throw out every second page of the copious notes I had made. I did so, rather reluctantly, and the writing process sped up. With some minor patching, the paper also made better sense. This was a blow to my pride as a writer, but I was compensated by some unexpected time with my grandchildren.

Conclusion

When I began writing this chapter, I was fairly settled in my thinking. I thought my methodology sat mainly in a creative arts paradigm, containing elements of the critical and interpretive paradigm, with a ‘retro’ hint of the empirico-analytical paradigm. While writing, I began to wonder whether these paradigms fully accommodate a reality based on spaciousness, nothingness, energy and change. Although it is difficult for me to admit to you, in many ways, I am still in philosophical disarray, wrestling with perspectives and paradigms, at a time when I would prefer to be sailing serenely through somewhat charted waters. You have probably already picked that up. I exude uncertainty. Because I have an affinity for several views, I think I should have a thorough knowledge of the philosophical roots of each. Instead I feel like a fraud. There is no longer time for me to learn about each methodology’s ontological perspective, and so on, to my satisfaction for this thesis. I can only drop my self-expectation, and allow the part of me that set such goals to fade out, admitting to glorious failure. It means a relatively public confession. If I were to subscribe to Rational Emotive Therapy, I might now accuse myself of “awfulising” (Froggatt and Lakeman, 1998) or dramatising my situation, but mercifully, that is one paradigm that so far holds little appeal for me, probably because I doubt I would succeed at managing the size of my molehills and restraining them from surging into mountains, as is my wont.

This chapter has listed, and at times briefly described, some of the influences of many research fields on the methodology. Other spheres of study, besides
research, bear influence too. For example, the methodology is basically educational. The word education, comes from the roots *educare*, meaning: “to rear up” and *educere*, meaning to lead out (Little, Fowler, Onions, Friedrichsen, and Coulson, 1973, p. 630). I see the process of research I have followed as leading participants (including me) out, in particular facilitating our reconnection with our selves. I see it as a way for us all to ‘re-member’ or reconnect with our spirit. I hyphenate the word re-member deliberately. The word ‘member’ can refer, for instance, to the timbers holding a house up, and keeping it together, to its roof beams or floor joists. Sometimes, such as during the demolition of a house, or at times of major shock, the members or parts of the house become separated from each other, and no longer function normally. Or member can refer to the limbs and structural elements of a human body. Receiving Ortho-Bionomy may be experienced as the body re-assembling and becoming whole again, re-membering parts, re-incorporating its self or spirit, after shock or stress has partly disturbed the body’s usual functioning.
METHODS

Meta-methods

There were some methodological approaches that should perhaps be described as meta-methods rather than methods, since they underpinned several methods and were sometimes in evidence as attitudes or principles. Yet I think they fit in the Methods chapter as well as in Methodology because they were sensual as well as theoretical, practical in addition to philosophical, carnal at the same time as esoteric. I think these meta-methods sit somewhere in the middle of a continuum between methods and methodology. If they were hem heights on skirts, they would not be miniskirts (methods) or maxis, (methodology) but midis. Fashion has a way of insinuating itself into the darnedest places.

These meta-methods sprang from the modalities I use in my practice, especially Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology. Here are a few examples of my use of each modality as a metamethod.

Ortho-Bionomy became a research metamethod when I repeatedly fell back on checking and attending to my mental, physical and emotional comfort while I researched and wrote, for example by letting go of past learning in favour of more simple or emergent ways to proceed, and by ensuring my approach did not take more energy than necessary. It also showed up as valuing and making space for self-organisation to happen in the research.

Process Oriented Psychology become evident as a metamethod, by way of my giving regard to ‘second attention’ (background flirts) (Mindell, 2000b), and following the Tao (or natural process) of the research. This is easiest to see in the fieldwork when I chose a case study method for its fit with the person and their data, rather than imposing one method on all participants. The steps I took are described in each case in the Fieldwork chapter. The influence of noticing second attention can also be seen in the Body as Ally chapter through the toy tiger’s message to me in relation to timing and rest.

Open Space Technology formed a structural container for the research by helping me trust that: the people who joined in; what we did; when we began and ended; where we ‘hung out’; and how we proceeded were exactly appropriate to the emergence of the research; (Owen, 2008) and that I could do ‘one less thing’ even before I was aware of feeling stressed because of overload. An example of Owen’s coaching to do less comes in an email he sent in reply to a question he
was asked about an Open Space event to be conducted for a group of engineers:

I’d put your engineers to work. They are smart fellows, know how to make a report, probably can run a computer too. Think of one more thing not to do, and let the participants have all the joy of creative discovery!! After all it is their report (Owen, 2008).

Space was opened at the beginning of the fieldwork experience. The four principles and one law of Open Space (see the Modalities chapter) are descriptive of what happened, rather than prescriptive of what should have been done. Openly stating the principles and law reminded me not to interfere with the process of research, and that I could rest assured that all groups are self-organising (definitely the fieldwork participants), especially if given plenty of open space in which to emerge. Order emerges from chaos in its appropriate time, to the degree that outside control is relaxed. This is something I need to trust even more than I did in the fieldwork. Notwithstanding my angst about organisation, several participants in the research commented on the freedom from constraint they encountered within the fieldwork. They felt free to explore new forms of creativity. Here are comments from two fieldwork participants who, when interviewed, expressed pleasure in their experience of relative freedom:

1. “It was just a lovely experience, and to be in a group like that where we … were allowed really to have the freedom to do what we liked, so to have a bit of fun, to play and to create.”

2. “Colouring in seemed to be drawings that you had to stay within the lines and you’d colour with numbers and for some reason I think that I never got a joy of drawing so I didn’t do it… And I haven’t seemed to have scribbled ever as a child, and as far as I know this is one of the few scribbles I have ever done.”

3. “I’ve enjoyed my five days … its very winding down, you end up becoming very relaxed and almost tired and on definite holiday mode which was probably a good thing for a lot of people instead of being go, go, go.”
Detailed Reflection on Personal and Practice Experience

Having worked in several schools and two practices since 1970, I have built up a certain body of experience. Reflecting on that experience influenced both my bodywork practice, and the research about the practice. Personal reflections about my life contributed some material to this research method. How did I **collect**, and **review** material for this research method?

The main **collecting** of information came from memories. Now and then through my life, I have journalled my feelings and experiences in an ad hoc way, such as I did after being discharged from the psychiatric clinic in 1979. The notes I wrote from time to time, and my memories and realisations, that bubbled up about my psychiatric treatment, inspired me to undertake post-graduate study, eventually leading to my PhD candidature. I reviewed this material partly by reading some of my notes, and mainly through writing stories about what had happened, and then editing in layers in the form of a palimpsest (Baensch, 2002b), described later in this chapter. This process of writing in layers helped me to make sense of my experiences and distil learning from them as I reflected and wrote new drafts of the notes.

While at the clinic, I was immersed in its daily routines and incidents. It was not until I had left the clinic, had somewhat emerged from the depression that had engulfed me, and had begun to feel more at home in my life, finding time and space for reflection, that I questioned some of the behaviour I had witnessed at the clinic. Over time, as I learned more about myself and found options for living a more expansive life, such as Process Work, massage and bodywork, I went through further layers of reflection. After several iterations of cycles, I began to develop metaskills (Mindell, 1995a) like self-trust, patience and a multi-perspectival view. The outcome was for me to engage in postgraduate study so I could share with others some of the skills that helped me to resolve my depression. Being no longer ‘homeless’, in a radical sense of the word, gave me a starting point for a better life.

Another aspect of this method of deliberation came from having time and space to reflect. That is a luxury not afforded to many people, and I was given a great deal of such time and space, through the receipt of a PhD scholarship from the University of Western Sydney. I was able to give consideration to my practice, and to notice which sessions and which clients caught my attention when I looked back. The purpose of reflecting about the practice was to help plan and design my research before beginning it for the PhD.
Two main factors operated in my contemplation about the practice. One was how I felt about myself. My lack of self-confidence, and my ongoing scepticism about the work I do, meant that I often remembered and picked out case notes that showed results confirmed by an outside source: medical reports or comments from people beyond the immediate session. I was not satisfied by transformations that I noticed happening during a session. To check my memory of these sessions, I had case notes I could refer to. Where case notes seemed insufficient to back my memory, I did not include those stories in the preface. The second factor was: wanting to record approximately a cross section of cases. I searched my memory and case notes for stories about young and old clients of both genders, with a fairly representative variety of reasons for coming to see me. Most of the ‘data’ for reflection in this method was based on “embodied knowledge” described as knowledge gathered by the body rather than learned intellectually by the mind (see Titchen and Ersser, 2001, p. 39). The body is seen as intelligent since it is capable of knowing and interpreting knowledge.

Embodied Knowledge as a Research Method

I have described my way of using embodied intelligence as a method for this research in the Body as Ally chapter and often throughout the thesis. In summary, it consists of referring back to how I feel in my physical body whenever possible, attending to the stories and hints given to me by my body, respecting these messages, and following their guidance in a practical way. This includes following flirts or hints, whether these are intellectual (like boredom), emotional (like fear), spiritual (like epiphany), relationship (like arguments) or environmental (like a breeze) hints, since I believe these ‘other’ aspects of experience cannot really be separated out from the physical body. Even though I might describe these flirts in other, more esoteric terms, I experience and recognise each of them through physical signals including: boredom signified by: restless legs or dull, droopy eyes; fear by abdominal contraction or trembling hands; epiphany experienced via torso expansion or neck relaxation; arguments through facial heat or a haughty posture; a breeze with skin coolness or warmth. The messages might inspire me to move to a new activity (or more of the same), take a break, have a drink of water, try another perspective and so on.

Use of a Journal of Reflections

The journal was written on loose pages, as a serendipitous and fluid way to record my thoughts. This way of writing was useful for several reasons. Early in my research, I began writing journal notes in a book, which brought the following difficulties. During my candidature, I often needed to pack up my research
paraphernalia to move to another room, or another house. When I did so, my
journal book would be packed away and hard to locate for some time, which
became frustrating when I had an idea to record. Occasionally, when I wanted to
go back and add some content to an earlier entry, there was no space
remaining. All things being considered, individual pages proved to be a more
convenient, energy efficient and reliable way to record journal entries, especially
once I had devised a way to keep track of my pages.

The method I contrived for that purpose involved dating each page as I wrote it,
and naming the pages according to a working file name. Following pages were
tracked through their date and page number with the initial of the file name on
each page. For example, I am writing this page on 6/1/08. And the file is
presently called ‘Methods’. This file is somewhat unusual, since it has six sub-
sections. The first sub-heading under “Methods” is “Use of a journal”. I am writing
page two of this sub-section now. So this page is headed with (P2) (Mj) 6/1/08.
This denotes page 2 (P2) Methods – journal (Mj) and today’s date January 6th
2008. In this way, if a page wandered away from its fellows, I was mostly able to
reconnect it.

Then Jim or I would fax the handwritten journal or chapter notes to Jeannie, who
would type them and email the file to me with great alacrity and precision. As
Jeannie told me recently, she and I have a similar way of thinking and
approaching this task, so she found my filing technique easy to follow. We have
made a good team. For most of my candidature I was too slow and inaccurate in
typing to be capable of writing directly to a computer. Thinking and expression
are rather physically based for me, and linked with the choreography of
handwriting. Hitting letters on a keyboard does not carry the same thought
provocation of a pen rolling and halting, backtracking then moving ahead across
a previously empty page. Perhaps if I had learned to type when young, this
would be different.

An Extensive Reading of the Literature

This is an integral, transdisciplinary and multiple method thesis, so naturally the
methods I have used overlap each other. Reading the literature impinged on,
and was influenced by, other methods. To start with, the literature was broadly
based. The written literature consisted of many types of reading from academic
books (for instance Goodall, 2000; Neville, 2000b; Stallibrass, 1989) and journals
(such as Arneson, 1993; Melia, 1989), to a children’s story (Wagner, 1990), and
from theoretical approaches (for example Lehrer, 1997) to practical workbooks
(like Kain and Berns, 1992). I immersed myself in literature from many fields including philosophy (resembling Gebser, 1991), education (for example Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985; Neville, 1989), bodywork (such as Berman, 1990; Juhan, 1987; Kain and Berns, 1992; Pauls, 2003), psychology (see for instance Mindell, 2000b), organisational development (including Owen, 1997; Wheatley, 1994), and research (represented through Denzin and Lincoln, 2003c). Apart from published texts, I consulted unpublished theses (among them Huff, 2002; Plasto, 2005). The internet was a great source of learning resulting from the use of general search engines such as ‘Google’, as well as accessing the University of Western Sydney library’s home page through which I downloaded many interesting documents (for example Combs, 2005; Plasto, 2005; Wright, 2006).

The printed word yielded rich knowledge. Yet it formed only part of the resources I would describe loosely as 'literature’, and I benefited from other ‘stories’ and ‘information’ as well. My most fruitful source of knowledge for this research over the years has been feeling the effects of Ortho-Bionomy on my body (as described in Baensch, 2002b) and sensing its effects on the bodies of clients. I noticed a fractal (see Shearer, 1992) effect in these body ‘stories’. One fractal pattern can be seen in iterations of the self-similar effects of the work, both in my practice as a whole, and in aspects of the practice. If I describe this from the standpoint of a client, I can identify a pattern of seeking comfort and ease in the body as a whole, in order to make a safe enough space in which the client may deal with a specific injury. This process of sorting out particular pains and tensions on a small scale seems to contribute, on a broader scale, to greater ease and comfort in the client’s life and in their family, according to reports I have received from former clients and family members (as recorded in Baensch, 1985 to 2004). The pattern can also be seen in my practice, where I try to make space for clients to take their time during appointments, allowing an extra spell between each hour of session for a leisurely conclusion and departure. This research follows a similar quest for ease and comfort, taking the fractal pattern in my practice through a further iteration of expansion into the world via the videos, thesis and conference papers I have produced.

Going in the other direction, from large to smaller, while I see each session taking the entire client into account, I am also aware of how each system in the body seems to be strengthened and enlivened by a session. For example, most clients who had been using daily medications for asthma, have reported that they have felt no need to continue their drugs following a session or two of general Ortho-Bionomy and Bowen Technique with their whole body. (I advise these
people to refer to their prescribing health carer, if they wish to stop taking drugs, in order to be guided appropriately.) Within those bodily systems, I also hear of single organs or other body parts that are reported to be more at ease and effective after bodywork. One client explained how he and his sibling, who had a family history of kidney failure, were both told to go on dialysis. The sibling did so, and the client managed to live well, without dialysis, for several years, while having a couple of bodywork sessions with me once or twice a year. I am not sure whether he eventually decided he needed to use dialysis, because I have not worked with him for some time. Another client told me how she had been assessed with a shoulder problem, and advised that she required surgery, because her arm’s nerve conduction test had produced very poor results. She came to see me in order to have her shoulder in optimum condition for her imminent operation, and I gave her one session, mainly focussing on her body in general. The following week, her surgeon reassessed her arm’s nerve conduction ability and found it to be excellent, thus obviating the need for surgery. I had allowed her time and space to focus on her needs, and her body had done what it needed to in order to become more comfortable and function more efficiently.

I imagine the body tells stories of smaller and smaller bodily parts being influenced by bodywork, down to the cellular level and beyond, but I can supply no specific practical evidence for that micro level of change. Those changes I have described in larger structures are likely to be repeated in some way at a cellular level in order for organs, systems, organisations and the like to change too. I doubt that the body can effect changes in a system, without affecting the organs and cells that make up the system.

The Literature Review as a Method

I found I could not condense the literature review into one chapter, since it was fairly evenly distributed throughout the research. Literature insinuates itself into most chapters. Because the research had a meandering character, and because its focus and approaches shifted so much, I did not want to cage the research into a feeling that I had completed the reading aspect of the research, and was now moving into the ‘fieldwork phase’ or the ‘writing phase’. As I have explained elsewhere, valuing and trusting serendipity was an important metaskill I felt a need to develop. It was a way of allowing the research to partially self-organise. In fact, I believe I could not have stopped the self-organising process, but could perhaps have tried to slow it or control it more or less. From time to time I did try to take charge. Sometimes I was probably going in the same direction as the
process, and we sailed along smoothly together, the research and I. Like tonight when I got out of bed at midnight to write rather than lying awake, and found that writing flowed quite easily. At other times I was most likely at odds with the process. For example, earlier, in the day, I forced myself to sit at my desk and try to write without success, with a blank mind and feelings of guilt and panic at approaching deadlines. I allowed anxiety to overwhelm my sensitivity to what felt right.

During my literature search, I used several strategies to find books and papers about this research. One was to visit second hand bookshops. Most of these were local to where I was living, reducing my travel time considerably, compared with driving to a city to access new books or a library. As well, I found that used books were less expensive than new ones, so I could risk buying several tantalisers, even when they seemed to be at a tangent to my topic, which proved valuable when I got them home. The local bookshop near where I now live has an interesting philosophy section where I recently and reasonably bought two books by Foucault (1973; Foucault, 1977), one by Descartes (2003) and one by Barthes (1973). Each will no doubt bring me a deeper understanding of how I want to proceed with my practice. They complement books I bought earlier, such as Foucault (1988). In the case of Foucault I have referred to books such as (1988; Foucault and Rabinow, 1997) in relation to self care and ethics, having bought the books as texts for my Master of Applied Science course.

Another strategy for tracking books and papers involved checking lists of references used by authors of books and papers I was reading, and found useful. Here, the University’s library catalogue was invaluable, as were databases offering full papers, such as PsychINFO and Proquest on the University of Western Sydney’s library web page (UWS, 2008). I could download and print papers I would never have been able to access through hard copies of journals. I live a long way from a tertiary institution’s library and do not travel happily or well, so electronic copies of papers and theses were a godsend for me.

Debbie Horsfall made several suggestions of papers and theses that I was able to download when she noticed gaps or unfinished areas in my writing. These provided me, for instance, with examples of clear or interesting styles of writing and examples of introductions such as those of Flowers (2001) and Camden Pratt (2002). They showed me what an introduction can usefully contain. Even though my style differed, I learned from these suggestions. Once I had
downloaded materials, I was able to access them later on my computer by using a search program called Spotlight, which became a close friend who tended rapacious, extravagant and wild filing ‘techniques’ and supported my sanity.

The internet became more useful as a strategy for finding materials as time went by, and as I grew more proficient in its use. In the beginning I felt overwhelmed by the variety and extent of the information available. Then I narrowed down my requests and became more adept at finding helpful details. In particular I found the world wide web a boon for checking definitions. Then I could back that up through consulting a hard copy dictionary or thesaurus. I used Google on ‘Safari’ first and later found ‘Foxfire’ to be helpful search engines.

This reminds me that, earlier in my research process I enjoyed taking time to attend garage sales, local markets and car boot sales. Sometimes I would find someone selling a book collection that helped me explore new territory, or filled gaps in my own book collection. One such experience came about at a garage sale, when I discovered both volumes of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary in a stack of books. The person selling these books also sold me a group of books related to education such as Richmond (1972). While the dictionary has frequently been very useful, the education books allowed me to dabble and find occasional handy references or expansions in areas outside my specific fields of study. Richmond, as the example I have picked, provided some background and references to do with Piaget (Richmond, 1972, p. 80 to 86). It was not central to my research, but added more flesh to my sense of Piaget when creating the chart comparing developmental stages given by educators, developmental psychologists and so on with Gebser’s structures of consciousness in the Modalities chapter.

I encountered some challenges with the literature review. Early in my research, I had difficulty accessing materials with direct bearing on my study. This was partly a factor of my being unused to suitable terms to enter when searching for electronic sources, and partly due to my trepidation towards and lack of familiarity with technology. It took me a long time to learn to type adequately, and I faced frequent frustrations when I would put information in inappropriate places and find I had to start again. I wasted time through trying to cope with my computer and simultaneously trying to access literature through it. As well, there was a lot less relevant information available on the body and embodiment when I began my research. Fewer books had been written on the topic during the last millennium. Sometimes I would be fortunate, and an entire strand of new
information would open up to me. One case illustrating that occurred when I bought a book because Debbie had co-edited it (Byrne-Armstrong et al., 2001). The chapter by Higgs, in that book, called “Charting Standpoints in Qualitative Research” led me step by step to a collection of books, chapters and papers that enriched and expanded my approach to my practice and research. One of those resources is a book chapter called: Professional practice and knowledge (Higgs et al., 2001), which was helpful for an up-to-date discussion of types of knowledge, as well as ways to differentiate between them and to apply them in learning situations. These chapters and papers, and others like them brought me out from a narrow teaching view of simply sharing bodywork skills, to reflecting on the roles to be filled by my possible future students, and whether my present ways to facilitate learning are adequate to give students what they will need in their own practices. There were many other examples where following a single thread led to an expansion of my horizons.

One difficulty, which became a benefit, emerged from the geographic isolation that I have already touched on. The richness of resources made available through the University of Western Sydney’s library catalogue and the support provided by library staff helped me make connections with journals such as: Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour (Flick, 1992); Integrative Exploration (Arneson, 1993) and ‘Art Journal’ (Adams, 1992), and writers like: Beryl Arbuckle (Arbuckle, 1948); and Priscilla M. Pyett (Pyett, 2003) that I might otherwise never have known about. These journals and authors provided background information, and were mostly not cited in the thesis because there was insufficient space, or their relevance was indirect, and other resources, such as those I listed in the previous paragraph, had a more central role.

My process was: to read for many months, then write a first round of journal entries and documents, in longhand. Then these were typed into Word documents and I edited them until they felt fitting, (as described in this chapter). After that I connected what I had written with more literature about that topic, in another round of editing, generally using Endnote to create a citations list, then consulting further books and papers. These documents gradually built up into chapters and sections for the thesis. My next step was to cut down these chapters and sections and juggle the order of the remaining pieces of writing until a level of comfort was reached. Once again I would refer to the literature at about this stage in order to catch up with recent writing, and to prune the references I had listed to the ones that seemed most relevant to me by then. The further I went the more exciting and appropriate were the references I found. For
example, Dr Paddy Plasto’s thesis (2005) at last made me feel as if someone was doing research in an area with many similarities to mine, both in her use of art and Gebser’s (1991) structures of consciousness.

Some of the literature I chose (for instance Mindell, 2000b) was included for its intellectual content, and there information it gave me about the mind. Other writing or broadcasts took their place because of different resonances, so I referred to books about the body (Kain and Berns, 1992; Olsen and McHose, 1991) because of the physical interest of their contents. I found Abram’s (Abram, 2005) writing called to my senses and Daly (1992, 1995) evoked a strong emotional response, whereas Wilber (1996, 2001) inspired less sympathetic feelings and thoughts. Irigaray’s words (such as those expressed in, 1985a, 1985b, 2002) brought together a visceral, intellectual and feeling acknowledgement in me. I had many different reasons for selecting a particular piece of literature to represent, support or occasionally counter statements I was making about my research. The literature I consulted had a much larger and further reaching impact on me than this thesis can hope to demonstrate. You would need to take a tour of my bookshelves to find evidence of connections made, and interest stimulated, in the pencilled underlining, and comments as well as the bristles of paper and card, marking places of enthusiasm I found in the texts.

Case Study

Case studies provided a major contribution to the methods employed in this research. Despite the fact that, according to Stake (2003) case study is not a method in itself, I include discussion of it in this chapter, because case study contributes to this research, by deciding the focus of the method used.

*Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods – but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case* (Stake, 2003, p. 134).

In the thesis, various expressions of case study were used and applied to different types of case, and they helped create a structure for both the research and the thesis. The underlying case study was one about my practice. Nested within that wider study were several others, which could be described as auto-ethnographic, carried out by fieldwork participants and me. I would not call them
autobiographical, since none aimed to encapsulate an entire life, but rather each
gave impressions or a snapshot of life experience connected to the research
fieldwork in some way or, in my case, to the research in general. My own case
study is not discrete, it appears in snatches throughout the thesis. Perhaps it
should not therefore be called a case study, but I think it resembles one in some
ways, since I can be described as a case (especially since embarking on this
PhD). Stake (chapter 5, 2003) identifies a case as follows:

[a] case may be simple or complex. ... It is one among
others. In any given study, we will concentrate on the one.
The time we may spend concentrating our inquiry on the one
may be long or short, but, while we so concentrate, we are
engaged in case study. ...

The case is a specific One.

If we are moved to study it, the case is almost certainly going
to be a functioning specific. ... In the social sciences and
human services, the case has working parts; it is purposive; it
often has a self. It is an integrated system. However
immature, the child is a working combination of physiological,
psychological, cultural, aesthetic, and other forces Similarly,
the hospital, as case, the agency as case. Functional or
dysfunctional, rational or irrational, the case is a system.

Its behaviour is patterned. Coherence and sequence are
prominent. It is common to recognize that certain features are
within the system, within the boundaries of the case, and
other features outside. Some are significant as context
(Stake, 2003, p. 135).

I think I am a complex individual among many, a “functioning specific” (Stake,
2003) in that I am a self-organising system who can be, and was, studied. As a
system, I am a bounded combination of physiological ... forces. In this thesis, my
case study is broken up, and surrounded by other case studies of both people
and 'entities', such as my practice or my work. This thesis places the case study
of me in a more secondary situation, where it is taken out of ‘isolation’ and
placed in a context of others. Like all the case studies of this research, the study
of me and the study of my practice seek commonalities as well as particularities,
about the practice and me, leading to a portrayal of some idiosyncrasies and
special characteristics of both.
In order to study my practice, in the pre-research, I reflected on its history, some of the people who have played a part in it, the various venues it has inhabited, the work done in those venues and the administration of the practice. These reflections provided me with a great deal of data. Some data ended up being written in my research journal, and some apparently got forgotten or discarded, but still most likely influenced the practice case study through having been experienced in the first place. Writing helped me to order my thoughts, as did allowing time and space for editing: the ‘palimpsest effect’ written about later in this chapter.

I looked back through case notes to find pertinent examples that represent my work. Then I wrote what I could remember of the sessions and people involved. These brief descriptions are not intended to show an exact cross-section of my practice. It is not possible for me to say one client represents a certain group of clients I have seen, because my practice was only blessed with entirely individual clients. The clients only represent themselves, not ‘that group of clients presenting with back pain’ and so on. I imagine this is true for all practice research of this type. For similar reasons, I have not tried to be exactly balanced in my choice of people to include. This is also impossible for a researcher. Hidden assumptions and biases creep in when such decisions are being made. The people I included were memorable for me, but then, most clients have been. As I flicked through some of the pages in my folders of client case notes, some sprang out metaphorically. I did want to include some babies and children, since they have formed a disproportionate share of my practice over the years. I also wanted to provide variety to show some of the issues with which the work can engage. Serendipity helped me, for example by having one client surgically assessed and one medically, before and between my sessions. Reports of such interventions are infrequent, so I have included both, mostly in the Preface.

Preface Case Studies

The Preface case studies are casual and impressionistic. Most consist of a paragraph or two about my memory of a brief interlude in the client’s life and mine. I have tried to convey my experience, and the client’s feedback, as accurately as I could. Through them I hoped to give you a flavour of, and feel for, a variety of client sessions in my practice, as context for the research.

How did I proceed to study each case for the preface? Each case study had some similarities of approach that can be described, and some aspects peculiar to it. I used similar steps when writing up the case studies for each participant in
the fieldwork project, but there I used a different ‘exercise’ or method to fit with the particular individual in question.

Steps for preface case studies

1. I focussed on the person (or entity in the case of the practice), and the data and memories available to me, and became familiar with them.

2. I looked for salient information that stood out from the rest of that case’s data and seemed to crystallise the case for me, asking myself: what represented of this person or entity, contrasted with my expectations, surprised me, or caught my attention. I did not try to be objective or even-handed since I believed this would be impossible to achieve. My aim was to express the essence of each case as I saw it.

3. I wrote my impressions of each case, and these developed as I wrote, in longhand, and reflected. In these case study notes, I disguised the identity of cases except for me (and the entities).

4. Jim faxed my notes to Jeannie. (Fax machines are hostile towards me.

5. Jeannie typed my notes in Word, and emailed these documents back to me.

6. I printed the typed notes and edited them using a red pen.

7. Jim typed my corrections into Jeannie’s documents, marking the alterations and pages with a green pen.

Sometimes steps 6 and 7 were repeated, or I typed corrections and additions directly into the documents.

The steps I followed when writing up the fieldwork case studies were adapted through the employment of questions, techniques, or exercises from one of the research modalities: Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology, or Open Space Technology. Each method is enunciated within its own case study, in the Fieldwork chapter. They followed a similar pattern to the steps listed above, administratively, but each differed in the detail of its approach.

Interviewing as a Method

As a method of collecting data, participants in the residential fieldwork were each interviewed at the end of the five days together. Seven interviews were recorded as video footage. I conducted one interview with H and wrote her answers by
hand, because she preferred not to be filmed. Following the five days, I interviewed several participants a second time recording their comments in several ways and at different times. I visited HG and LR at their homes, recording our conversations on a tape recorder and an iPod. GH was at home when I spoke with him, at a time when I was passing through his interstate (for me) city, and I used an iPod and a video camera to record our talk. I also communicated with LL and WW by phone. It was not possible for me to contact ATM, H or M following the five-day workshop. I wrote to them and phoned them, but received no response, so I stopped trying to contact them for fear of irritating them. Interviews were of varying lengths, decided by the interviewee's content and preference and lasted approximately 10 to 30 minutes. They were semi-structured and sought to elicit information about participants' responses to the project and what they had learned about who they were as they proceeded to research themselves.

There were benefits and drawbacks to the interview and recording methods I used. I was occupied with the group as they completed some self-assessment exercises while Jim interviewed seven members of the group. It might have led to greater continuity if I had asked the interview questions. On the other hand, Jim had been involved with the group for the entire fieldwork project and participants knew him well. I also thought they might feel more free to be critical of the fieldwork if I were not the one to interview the participants, except for H. Also, Jim was much more experienced with setting up and using the video camera than I was. By that stage of the proceedings, I was too tired to learn how to operate the camera. Like Rae Andre, a psychologist whose research was about homemakers, I see the variation in interview results as “a valuable reflection of reality” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19).

Andre was quoted as saying:

*If the purpose of this project had been to make inferences about a whole population based on our sample, or to compare ideas from one interview to another, these interview irregularities would have presented more of a methodological problem. As it is, our goal in this project is simply to record a range of possible ideas – to tap as many homemaker values as possible – and in designing our project we felt that diversity of interviewees, of interview styles, and of settings would be facilitative (Andre in Reinharz, 1992, p. 19)*
My project differed from Andre’s. She was a psychologist studying the attitudes of 30 homemakers. Mine was a study of eight people’s responses to five days of residential bodywork experience, and I am a body worker, not a psychologist. Still there were similarities, of purpose and metaskills. Andre spoke about interviewers becoming involved with the homemaker’s story and forgetting to ask questions, of feeling some questions might be intrusive and leaving them out, or of conducting interviews under quite different conditions (see Reinharz, 1992, p. 19). I changed the interview circumstances to accommodate H’s preferences, by doing it myself, off camera. Although I planned to ask the same questions of each participant when I conducted follow-on interviews, I deviated from those questions, and conducted more unstructured interviews because I became involved in what I was told. Because the iPod and tape recorder combination proved troublesome, I included video recording of the interview with GH, and I was unable to visit the other participants because of distance or lack of response. These follow-on interviews were an interesting but non-essential part of the fieldwork because my aims were (i) to record an experience of a bodywork class, (ii) obtain some feedback about participants’ responses, (iii) reflect on how I might improve my practice regarding facilitation of bodywork learning and finally, to learn how to conduct fieldwork. That is not to say that the fieldwork interviews could not have been better. They could and I consider that topic in the Reflection Section of this chapter.

More detailed information about the Fieldwork method is contained in the Fieldwork chapter.

Writing as Inquiry

My aim in doing research was not to establish and embark on an academic career. At nearly 60 I feel too old and otherwise-directed for that prospect. My two main research objectives were not related to career advancement. Firstly: I wanted to understand my bodywork practice in as many contexts and from as many angles as I could, for my own satisfaction. Secondly: I especially wanted to make my hands-on work more available and acceptable to others. In order to do that, I believed it was important to locate the practice and work in its theoretical context and open it to public scrutiny and debate. At the same time, I was mindful of wanting to retain fluidity and to follow the principles, such as lack of intention and minimal interference, which are inherent in my hands-on work.

Once I realised that my methodology was likely to be mainly qualitative, I made headway on several fronts, though progress was uneven. I was often frustrated
and bewildered, since I had to create a path to travel along, and I often seemed
to make my way in circles. Writing was a ‘technology’ that I kept returning to. It
became my major research method. It was not without problems. I wrote far too
much while attempting to find my way. That I had written too much did not
become fully apparent until I needed to make sense of what I had written and
bring it into some sort of order.

Recently, while listening to Sue Woolfe being interviewed by Natasha Mitchell on
an ABC Radio National program called Writing the Brain (Woolfe, 2007), I
experienced a great sense of relief. Woolfe, an author of several books including
novels, and a lecturer in creative writing at the University of Sydney, described
the way she wrestled with writing and got stranded. She looked to neuroscience
for help in understanding her process. The important part of the interview for me
was Woolfe’s description of how she writes and makes sense of her writing.
Although her area is fiction writing, I think we share some similarities.

This is the dilemma of a novelist like me. She stumbles
around not for months but for years building something, let’s
call it an igloo from the inside only, and out of the oddest of
blocks, ice here, but over there bits of wood, bits of metal,
glass, ribbons, thoughts, air – without knowing if it will hold
and worse, being unable for a long time to go outside the
igloo to look at what’s been made (Woolfe, 2007, p. 3).

I have to admit that I have felt ashamed of not writing in a more clear and
structured manner. Hearing that I am not alone helped me to value my way of
writing more. I do want to acknowledge and report that I truly and totally trusted
my process, and I am proud of my persistence there, but as well I suffered from
massive doubts and shame about taking all this time to write and not knowing
what I had written about or whether it would ever make sense to anyone else.
Woolfe also felt shame about her thinking and writing.

Natasha Mitchell: You call this sort of notion of loose-
construing, this sort of chaotic process as subversive and you
even suggest that it needs to be amoral – what do you mean
by that?

Sue Woolfe: Well I don’t think you can demand things of that
part of the mind that really are to do with the real world, the
actual world. You’ve got to let anything emerge and you’ve
got to say okay, I do trust it, it will, in the end, be okay but I’ve
got to let anything emerge. You can’t go saying, oh I can’t
think that thought because that doesn’t accord with my status.
in the world, or even what I believe in the world. You have to let the thoughts emerge of their own accord whatever they're like and that's why the shame, to come back to your earlier question. Because when you stop writing or thinking in this way and you walk away and you're in the actual world again and you're being the person you are, suddenly you think back to the wild things you were thinking and you feel oh, that's not the right way to think at all (Woolfe, 2007, pp. 5-6).

I was often convinced that the mess of embarrassing writing I had done would amount to nothing and I felt completely overwhelmed. Reading it aloud to Jim enormously helped me to edit and sort the writing and talking it over with Elizabeth one weekend was a massive help. I started to take heart. With my last thesis (Baensch, 2002b), I had printed all the pages ready to be sent away, except for the title page, believing I had been researching ‘Self trust as an agent in healing’. twenty minutes before the last mail left, on the day of my final deadline, I suddenly realised what I had actually been researching. It came to me in a blinding flash, giving me a name for my thesis that altered the entire tenor of the research I had done. I just had time to print the title page, slide it into its envelope and drive out immediately to catch the mail in the next town. Listening to Woolfe talking, it came as a huge relief to read the following:

Natasha Mitchell: … And yet in all this chaos you often don't have any idea what the grand narrative is until, well, you admitted with one of your novels, Leaning Towards Infinity I think it was, only four days before the launch, that you finally knew.

Sue Woolfe: The printing press

Natasha Mitchell: The printing press … what it was all about.

Sue Woolfe: That's right, I realised it was a biography. I hadn't thought of that before. There were all these pages at the back that I couldn't sort of put in somehow. And then four days...I suddenly realised it was a biography, a pretend biography. So I had to do a lot of rewriting in four days, it was scary and the page proofs were full of mistakes but I think we got them all out (Woolfe, 2007, p. 6).

The gruesome fact that I need to report, to be fair, is that parts of the research process were quite painful for me, despite having sessions of Process Work with Susan Hatch to work through some of the difficulties that emerged over the years. The reason I describe the pain as gruesome is because the point of my
research is to value and seek comfort. So where did the pain come from? I think it was related to my not realising how much I needed to trust myself. When I took a step into a new area of trust I would start to recoil a bit. The process was a stern teacher and I came up against a painful reminder each time I pulled back and tried to take control.

Once more I found striking similarities in Woolfe’s experiences, this time as she read some of her writing:

*Sue Woolfe: [Reads] I tried to control my wayward imagination but again and again I discovered that I couldn’t create fiction when I was in conscious control of it. The work seemed stifled, artificial and counterfeit and ultimately the writing bored me. To my astonishment I found that I had to put all ideas of control out of my mind, indeed I had to put my own mind out of control, capitulating to what seemed my weaknesses to the only way it seemed possible to write. Every word seemed to change the nature of not only what was to come but what I'd already written. The writing became a process of chaos and uncertainty, full of unexpected contingencies, accidents and sometimes anxious, sometimes jubilant leaps of the imagination. But the outcome seemed orderly, in fact my eventual readers have told me The Painted Woman has a sense of inevitability about it right from the start (Woolfe, 2007, p.7).*

I am not quite at the end of my process, and am not as clear as Woolfe yet. It is difficult for me to distance myself from my thesis enough to discover whether it makes sense or not. Having feedback from others is helping, at my present stage. I have arrived at a point where I can take in constructive criticism and appreciation. To start with, I could not tolerate suggestions. Even reading books about research could often throw me off balance, sometimes leading to great excitement or hopelessness, and might even block my ability to write usefully for weeks. I felt as if I were in the grasp of a determined controller who would not let me stray from a certain path. There was no negotiation. I needed to ‘toe the line’ or I could not write or think about the research. The trouble was, I had no idea what the ‘rules’ were, or how I was ‘going wrong’. I just knew that I was unable to write. In time I learned to trace back through what had happened and started to see a pattern. When I failed to look after myself, my mind would go blank. Unless I took great care of myself, I remained stuck.

Time went by and the closer I got to a deadline, the more reluctant I became to stop sitting at my desk and trying to write. Even though I was not sleeping at
times, and felt as if my brain was stewed, I could not decide to sleep and
exercise or do whatever my body (!) needed because the deadlines were so
pressing. When I took courage and really focussed on, and attended to my
needs, I grew clear-headed and able to write. By then, time was impossibly
short. Even though I know this to be true, I am sometimes still very challenged by
needing to rest or take time away from my research but I am closer to following
my process. Then I get very frustrated and ask myself what it will take for me to
learn this apparently simple lesson.

Writing Linked with Reading as Research

Writing from our Selves should strengthen the community of
qualitative researchers and the individual voices within it,
because we will be more fully present in our work, more
honest, more engaged (Richardson, 2003, p. 500).

The writing was not simply a way of recording and describing data, but an active
method of research in itself, aspects of which are portrayed by Lawler (1998) and
Lee (1998). Some of my exploratory writing is included in the thesis, the rest
formed raw ‘data’, which I worked through in waves until an idea formed and was
expressed in a way that eventually sounded true and fitting to me (spoken about
by Woolfe, 2007), when I read it aloud, mostly to Jim, and occasionally to the
dogs. Reading aloud helped me to hear with a more related ear than when I read
silently as I wrote. It assisted me to put myself in the listener’s (and therefore
perhaps the reader’s) shoes more easily, to listen for what made sense, carried
the atmosphere I wanted to convey, and was clear.

Palimpsests

The writing aspect of my research happened in stages. The first stage might be
reading or experience, the second writing. After that, the process might bifurcate
to more reading or experience or it might go through a series of over-writings. In
either case, a palimpsest of sorts came into being.

A palimpsest is a manuscript on which an earlier text has
been effaced and the vellum or parchment reused for
another. It was a common practice, particularly in medieval
ecclesiastical circles, to rub out an earlier piece of writing by
means of washing or scraping the manuscript, in order to
prepare it for a new text. The motive for making palimpsests
seems to have been largely economic–reusing parchment
was cheaper than preparing new skin (Keep and McLaughlin,
1995 p. 6).
If I speak about layering further experience on top of an initial happening, followed by writing, the layers are inscribed on or in my body. I proceed, not by scraping or cleaning back the hide (or inscribing surface), and marking it anew, as the term ‘palimpsest’ originally meant, but by merging new information on or into my body or paper. In any experience, whether actual or imaginary, my body is involved: muscles are activated, respiration, circulation, digestion, nerves and so on work in particular ways, and change. Memories are stored in the brain or tissues, then new experiences are recorded ‘over’ them, affecting what is there already. The body is constantly in flux.

In writing ‘over’ my original script, as I edited my writing, I sometimes used a pen whose colour contrasted with the words already on the paper. I crossed out words or phrases I considered inappropriate, and inserted new ones, occasionally replacing my original choices. When I used a computer, my erasures disappeared, apparently completely. My mind also recorded changes, although much of that went on beneath my conscious awareness. Writing took shape gradually over time, from my initial hand-written version, to its typed and then corrected versions. Others might play a part. My friend, Jeannie, typed hundreds of handwritten pages that I faxed to her over many years. Then Jim took on some of that work, by typing in the corrections I marked in red on printed copies. This was sometimes printed with one and a half spacing between the lines of text, so I would have room to write. Each person who was involved influenced the outcome of ‘my’ writing by subtly affecting the words I chose, the timing of the writing, its return to me, and so on.

When I have worked with a client, or taught bodywork, the client and I produced a different type of palimpsest. With a client, the process reminded me of the erasure stage, through erasure is an inaccurate word for the process. The client lay on my massage table and together we would go back through positions that might have created an acute or chronic injury. We did this in subtle and comfortable ways, without the need for conscious remembering. The body then brought its reflexes into action to undo some or all of the damage caused during the initial trauma, injury or overextension. I don’t think the ‘inscription’ was ever totally erased. There would always be some historical message or memory. However there was a point at which the injury was resolved enough for the body to feel ‘as good as new’ as clients sometimes remarked. At that point, a new confidence came into being and the person could use their body freely and respectfully, without nervousness that the injury or pain or limitation would recur. During the fieldwork for this research, participants and I made time and space to
record how we felt after receiving and giving bodywork, using various forms of
creative expression. This step had not been a feature of any other classes or
sessions I have given or received before. It was a way of bringing awareness to
the palimpsest process, of translating it into another medium, of slowing it down.
Examples of this process can be seen in the Fieldwork chapter and on the DVD
relating to the fieldwork.

An example of a writing palimpsest can be seen in the following (Modalities)
chapter, where I have described the similarities between Ortho-Bionomy and
Gebser’s motifs of integral consciousness. In that case, because words were the
medium, I was able to demonstrate the palimpsest through the use of font
colours.

Process Method

This way of research I have used, following the process as it unfolds, helps me
to consider both the consensus and non-consensus reality aspects of my
bodywork practice. Since I believe both types of reality function together in the
practice, both need representation and exploration in the research. Overall,
despite fairly frequent forays into non-consensus reality, such as following the
processes of dreams, symptoms and imaginary conversations, I would estimate
that the majority of the thesis is represented in consensus reality. Where I have
referred to writers and thinkers, their ideas can be checked and discussed by
reading publications in books, journals, on-line and so on. Works of art I wrote
about can generally be accessed and inspected. While underscoring the
importance of consensus reality in the academic and philosophical parts of the
research, I was keen to achieve some degree of balance when I came to
interpreting the fieldwork. To be honest, if I could have set about interpreting
what I will describe as data, (for want of a more applicable and softer term) in a
simpler, pre-tested way, I might have done so. Instead, I felt as if the choice was
taken out of my hands.

Over the years I have been involved in this research, I have agonized over how
to interpret the data I collected. When I practise bodywork, I do not diagnose
clients. This is not part of the philosophy of my work. So I looked for tools to help
me carry out the fieldwork fittingly. Following certain principles and practices at
work and abandoning them in the research would have been incongruent.
Guided by my body’s responses, I read about various methods of qualitative
research (Arneson, 1993; Becker, 1998; Bowen, 2005; Denzin and Lincoln,
2003c; Fetterman, 2002; Maxwell, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Watson,
and felt fully comfortable with none, as I have said already. All seemed to somehow objectify or ‘neaten’ participants, or the process of research. Each participant’s data in the fieldwork carried their personality. Each case study was quite different.

Because time was running out, I decided to try writing up a case study for one participant. When I did so, I felt fairly at ease describing what the participant had written and created, as well as listing my learning as a practitioner/‘teacher’. Once I had done that, however, I had little interest in repeating the exercise seven more times. Although I might have gained some new insights from each case study, I felt restless with that progression. Wondering about my restlessness brought me back to the most striking feature I noticed about the participants in the fieldwork: that each was so individual in their way of being and in their approach to the research project. Somehow using one research method did not strike the right chord. I decided to find a way of research that fitted each participant, if I could. If that seemed like an onerous task, or if several participants seemed best suited by one approach, I would ‘regroup’.

Thinking about the paintings I had sketched, in response to studying each participant’s data at an earlier time, I decided to incorporate those paintings of mine into the next case study, as a guide or theme. The paintings I created are located in the ‘dreamland’ aspect of non-consensus reality (Mindell, 2000a, pp. 20 & 50). That is to say that they are outside consensus reality and not based on logic, measurement and so on; they were created in my right brain or imagination, making them peculiar to me. They are not in the realm of ‘essence’ where there are no polarities, but rather in the dreamland neighbourhood of non-consensus reality, a locality that embraces polar opposites, opinions and preferences.

Incorporating them into HG’s case study helped to relieve my discomfort around selecting appropriate methods for interpreting her data. Two of the strong threads running through my research, especially the fieldwork, were of appropriateness and individuality. Looking at the data overall, I was struck by the differences between each participants’ approach to the fieldwork and the body. How could I use the same method with eight participants who were all so individual? I decided, as a bricoleur, to vary my methods.

Once again I began searching for appropriate ways to learn from the data. I had a go at seeing where each person was located with regard to: structures of consciousness (Gebser, 1991; Neville, 2005); open space (Owen, 1994, 1998);
learning styles (described by Kolb in Sharp, 1995) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996; Nussbaum, 2001). None of these perspectives inspired me to take it up. Then two books I had ordered from overseas were delivered to my home, containing exercises I wanted to try. The books were “Alternative to Therapy” by Amy Mindell (2006) and “Earth-Based Psychology” by Arnold Mindell (2007). When I tried the exercises in the books myself, they impressed me with their potential value for understanding fieldwork participants and data, and consequently my practice. I searched through both books for exercises or approaches that might suit remaining participants and found several. I was also reminded of earlier process work ways to gain understanding that better suited the people involved.

When choosing a method or approach, I used consensus reality and looked for aspects of the person’s primary identity (the process they claimed, and with which they identified – their “me” that they had described). LR said she meditates, and she spoke of learning about her attitude to pain during the fieldwork residential, so I selected an approach entitled “Discomfort and Meditation” from Amy’s book (Mindell, 2006, p. 212). On the other hand, comfort was the topic WW mused about several times. I chose a method for understanding WW’s data that was called “Focusing on Comfortable or Awesome Moments” (Mindell, 2006, p. 256).

Conclusion

The methods described in this chapter represent those that were memorable during the research. They included: writing as active research; reading for cadence, meaning and structure; interviewing, and case studies as research method receptacles. Others, such as the use of creative expression as a form of interpretation, dreaming, and the use of bricolage appear in other parts of the thesis, such as the Preface, the Introduction, and the Fieldwork chapter.
MODALITIES

Introduction

As I narrow the writing’s focus and return to my hands-on work, this chapter becomes more specific about the main applied methods or modalities I use in my practice and this research. Providing a general, if limited, practical and intellectual background to my work in general terms has given you an ontological and epistemological background, against which the major modalities for this research: Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology can now be highlighted. In the Praxis Chapter I provided some context for the modalities with respect to Gebser’s structures of consciousness (1991). As well, I explained why I want my writing to express its hands-on roots; to include and value a certain type of practical wisdom that is sometimes neglected. Now I plan to give some more practical examples of Gebser and Aristotle’s ideas, in relation to my work.

In this chapter I will mention some of the similarities, differences and links between these three central modalities and other fields such as: osteopathy, massage and allopathic medicine (in relation to Ortho-Bionomy); psychology, taoism, alchemy, teleology and modern physics (concerning Process Work) and business ‘management’ (contrasted and compared with Open Space Technology). I will give some detail about those practical and theoretical links and progress to the nitty gritty of the work. By the time you have read this chapter I would like you to have a deeper understanding of the principles and practices of Ortho-Bionomy, which is at the heart of my practice, as well as having an overview of Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology, which I have used in a supportive role in my practice and research. Bowen Technique will also be described.

Naming and researching Ortho-Bionomy and its philosophy and principles do not make it any more real (Kain, 1986; Pauls, 1993), but do enable me to exhibit its connections to other ways of working, and locate it in a body of knowledge. This chapter provides more context for my research methodology. You may start to see parallels between what my hands do in an Ortho-Bionomy session and, for instance, how my psyche processes and learns from environmental ‘flirts’ (especially body signals and symptoms) in Process Work (as described by Hatch, 2004-8; Mindell, 1996). Or it might become clear how my practice, or
another type of small business, might be conducted simply, using Open Space Technology (see Ender, 2005; Owen, 1998), so its staff need not waste effort trying to force its administrative and other systems ‘upstream' against its natural flow.

The function of the chapter is to familiarise you with three modalities that have never, at the time of my writing this, been associated with each other in a practice like this before. I want you to have a vibrant sense of these three building blocks of my work. To share that sense, I have decided to describe Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology in a way that combines personal experiences with theoretical insights. I can only describe some aspects of these three modalities in this chapter. I can provide some word pictures that convey tasty tidbits, so you can at least plot some points, and perhaps connect those dots into your own impression. That is it, I want to impress you, to press your flesh and leave a tactile sense of how my work is built. With your permission, I want to reach out from these words with my hands and support your body and mind in positions of comfort. I would like to meet you through my choice of words and our imaginations. Since I do not know exactly who you are, I want to cover many bases, so you can personalise an impression to suit your way of learning. I do not want to limit my descriptions to visual language if you learn kinaesthetically, proprioceptively or aurally (Hatch, 2004–8). If you are more comfortable with concepts, I do not want to tip the balance into solely practical experiences. I want you to feel welcome here and connected to the text in a way that suits us both. Let us make an engaging job of this project together. I do not wish for this experience to be arduous for you, and hope that my descriptions of these modalities help you ease into, and then follow, your preferences and tendencies towards comfort.

I am attempting to do just that for my own body as I write. For example, it is now six o’clock on Christmas morning and I have been at my desk for three hours. Although it is summer here, on the Bellarine Peninsula in Victoria, Australia, where I now live, the night has been cool. So I am wrapped in three blankets. One of our dogs woke me up and I could not sleep again. My mind was ready to write (via my hands) and so I got dressed, ate a few luscious cherries left over from yesterday’s family party and collected a drink of water. Then I settled down to put pen to paper. Now I feel tired again and plan to return to bed. I am following my internal rhythms as much as I can, rather than judging them to be inappropriate and trying to make my body conform to my expectations. Instead of going with a concept of the ‘correct' time and place to eat cherries, or to write a
chapter's introduction, or journal notes, I have been checking how I feel. When I woke, I asked myself: ‘Does my body prefer to lie in bed and drift off to sleep again or would I be more at ease if I got up and did some writing?’ My body was all go, go, go: energised and eager, so I decided to get up and work, since waking Jim through my restlessness at that hour seemed unfair. Now, although the sun has risen and the neighbourhood dogs and birds are stirring again for a new day, I feel weary. Jim will be rested after a good night's sleep, so I can, theoretically at least, return to bed and have another snooze. Being able to follow inner preferences has its merits, and I have that privilege at present, since I have no babies needing to be fed, or outside employment to go to. I can more or less please myself what hours I keep.

My Work

The three major modalities I have chosen as the basis of my practice have similarities to and differences from each other. Their major difference is their foremost focus on different elements of life. Each is more inclusive and more widely effective than I am about to say as I summarise them. Ortho-Bionomy, at its core, works with physical positioning of the body, and seeking comfort. Process Oriented Psychology takes care of, and pays attention to the psyche or dreambody (Mindell, 1982). Open Space Technology places its focus on groups, their self-management, and emergence. My experience demonstrates that Ortho-Bionomy and Open Space Technology support resolution of emotional issues as a ‘by-product’, while Process Oriented Psychology includes hands-on work with the body, and organisational management, within its compass. I think that experience of the wider applications of these modalities is echoed by others, for example: clients (noted by Baensch, 1985 to 2004), Process Oriented Psychology books, (for example Diamond and Jones, 2004; Mindell, 1990; Mindell, 1999) theses, (Hatch, 2006; Zig, 1992) and students (Process Work Community, 2006), Open Space Technology books (such as Owen, 2005b) and the DVD accompanying this thesis. Each of these three modalities is similar to the others in supporting and encouraging a process to unfold. Each achieves this without the use of force. When practised to good effect, each modality allows and supports a ‘space between’ or a ‘nothingness’ to exist where transformation can occur. None of them directs or pushes participants beyond their preferences or limits. Instead, a space is created into which participants may move, if appropriate, in order to acknowledge, and possibly resolve issues in, their situation. Practitioners and teachers of each of these methods often describe the performance of their modality using different language from the others. Ortho-
Bionomy practitioners may speak of drawing attention to postural preferences (Kain, 1986), whereas Process Workers might say they assist clients to develop greater awareness (Mindell, 1993a), and Open Space Technologists describe creating opportunities for group emergence (Owen, 1998). To my mind, though, beyond the differences, the work of all three modalities essentially exhibits many similarities.

Roughly speaking, this is what happens in all three modalities: an issue exists that causes a person (or persons) some sort of disruption, lack or desire. Instead of trying to normalise, administer, or correct the situation, as with many other current ways of working, such as allopathic medicine (see Bak, 1996; Clendening, 1960) or rational emotive therapy (as in Ellis and Harper, 1975), or business management, (for example Blanchard and Lorber, 1984; Wild, 1983) Ortho-Bionomy, Process Oriented Psychology and Open Space Technology workers invite participants to become aware of what is happening; to allow and even join the chaos or eccentricity momentarily; and to trust the process to resolve itself under conditions of relative safety. In other terms, it can be said that a democratic and somewhat neutral space is formed through relationship, where inner and outer feedback can be observed and responded to. This space forms a ‘structure’ in, or across which, relationships may be created and developed. In Ortho-Bionomy, parts of the body such as cells, organs and systems are invited to communicate and relate, through an alteration of bodily tension in the particular area or structure in question and often in the entire body (exemplified by Kain, 1986). In Process Oriented Psychology group work, a container or ‘pot’ is formed as a group shares experiences and awareness (for instance Mindell, 1995b). This pot is created as trust builds between group members. It is a vessel or space in which relationships, attitudes and behaviours can be tested or developed, and issues worked through (as in Mindell, 1993b). In Open Space Technology participants in an event gather in a circle, and create a democratic space where passion, guided by responsibility, can come to fruition in thought and action (described by Bardwell, 2007).

Learning and the Body

We learn and express ourselves through our senses. As we progress through life I think the senses used for education, generally speaking, narrow down. During birth and our early months, the skin is our most central sense organ for learning (touched on in Anzieu, 1990; Montagu, 1986). Through our sense of touch, centred on the mouth, we learn who we are and who we are not. Other senses such as balance and sight impinge on touch of course (see Baldwin Dancy,
1989), but I am still speaking in general terms. At playgroup and kindergarten we are encouraged to immerse ourselves in play, and we touch and are touched quite often. In primary education, touch gradually begins to be replaced by listening and looking. There is less movement and more sitting (lamented by Pauls, 1993). Continuing through secondary to tertiary education, in most courses, we become even more sedentary in our learning. Touch is now by no means our main avenue of education. We sit in lecture theatres, study areas or libraries to learn what others have discovered (hooks, 1994; Neville, 1989). We listen to lecturers. In many courses, touch would rarely be used, especially touching other people, apart from an occasional greeting. Some courses involve physical contact, but even in practical, body-oriented areas like medical training, I imagine that a relatively small proportion of time is spent really focusing on finessing touch. Having my body examined by highly-trained medical practitioners has shown me that sensitive touch is not always ingrained, because these ‘experts’ sometimes handle my body as though it were a sack of potatoes, and cause discomfort, even if I ask to be touched with care.

Ortho-Bionomy learning differs from most tertiary training. It is learned by means of osmosis through ‘absorption’ of experiences and physical contact. Listening and looking both play a lesser role in workshops than other senses, such as touch. The senses of touch, balance, life, self-movement, temperature and ego (described by Steiner and portrayed in Soesman, 1990) work together to build an impression of who we are, and all contribute to a practitioner’s Ortho-Bionomy learning. Pauls (2003) described the work he developed as a way for the body to remember itself and let go of learning that is unhelpful and saw Ortho-Bionomy classes as an opportunity for students to drop unnecessary information from their past, rather than gathering new learning (as taught by Pauls, 1993). He emphasised the importance of play, and derived great pleasure from playing with and sharing toys like yo yos and his favourite Pooh Bear that he and others brought to his workshops. The book I heard Pauls recommend most often was “The Tao of Pooh” (Hoff, 1992) for its light hearted philosophical teachings that reflected his own views of life and Ortho-Bionomy.

**Knowledge in Modalities**

When unpacking the influences inherent in the term ‘praxis’ in the chapter for that topic, I spoke about categories of knowledge and reasoning. Here I want to discuss the topic of theoretical and practical wisdom in order to demonstrate its application in Ortho-Bionomy. The name Ortho-Bionomy comes from Greek roots – ortho (straight or correct), bio (life) and nomy (pertaining to laws)
meaning ‘the correct application of the natural laws of life’ (Kain and Berns, 1992). In giving this definition, I am emphasising ‘episteme’ or theoretical wisdom (defined by Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 74). This type of knowledge also comes forward in the principles of Ortho-Bionomy, in which osteopathic, homoeopathic and Taoist roots can be distinguished. Epistemic principles are developed into methods of working with the body, using what Aristotle described as ‘techne’ or practical knowledge (see Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 74) by allowing the art and craft of Ortho-Bionomy to become palpable and manifest. It is ‘hands on’ knowledge, and using techne requires a degree of relativity, or response to circumstances as they vary. Thinking on one’s feet carries across to Aristotle’s term: ‘phronesis’, which is exemplified by the need to be in conversation with context (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 74). Every movement I make, when working with a client, is an application of phronesis.

Ortho-Bionomy cannot be learned as a recipe to apply to clients. Although its theoretical knowledge basis is simple, the scope of the practical reasoning called upon by the work is infinite. No two moments of a session have been the same in over 20 years of my practising this modality. Pauls encouraged his students to learn the principles of Ortho-Bionomy and apply them in their own way (Pauls, 1993). He was keen for the work to be communicated by word of mouth, rather than being written with the risk of becoming concretised, rigid and locked down in written form (Pauls, 1993). Although he did not use Aristotle’s terms, Pauls knew that practising Ortho-Bionomy involves the skills and metaskills of phronesis as well as episteme and techne. Giving sessions of Ortho-Bionomy requires: “a capacity to combine knowledge, judgement, understanding and intuition in order to act ‘fittingly’ in a particular situation and in the face of a variety of contingencies” (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 75). This bodywork provides a holistic approach “…that does not involve pure technique or pure intellect, it requires a capacity to sense or intuit things and hence a capacity to perceive and draw on emotions” (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 75). When working, I have a sense of needing to dance or move lightly between physical, mental, emotional and other possibilities in me. To practise Ortho-Bionomy, I need to be present, so I have my wits about me and can be involved and reflexive.

As I work, the client and I are both changed to some degree by each aspect of the encounter. Both client and practitioner can benefit from a session of Ortho-Bionomy. By considering the results after the session, it might be difficult to discern who had been the designated client and who had been the practitioner.
Both generally report feeling both more relaxed and more alive after a session. Macklin (2006) touches on this when he says that research involving phronesis affects its practitioner as well as its subjects. As well, borrowing the term 'aporia' from the field of legal and moral philosophy, Macklin applies it to qualitative research. He says: “...practical rationality in interpretive research requires researchers to deal with what Jacques Derrida (1990) called aporia (impossible puzzles and paradoxes)” (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p. 71). It is also relevant to conducting a bodywork practice such as mine. During Ortho-Bionomy sessions it is often not possible to know how to proceed from the facts, as represented by consensual reality, and I am faced with aporia. For example, as a client’s allotted time draws to an end, there might still be essential issues to attend to. Sometimes a pressing symptom might not have been mentioned during the taking of case notes. Is it better to send the client home even though they will need to make a long journey back at another time for the remaining issues to be dealt with, or is it better to continue working and delay the start of the next person’s session for as long as it takes? My response in such cases may be to talk with both parties to see if one choice emerges as preferable, or if another course of action can be arranged. In my research, when I went to interpret the fieldwork data, I came upon several aporia, which are described in the Fieldwork Chapter.

Ortho-Bionomy

The Self-regulating Body

Systems self regulate. Bodies are emergent, self-organising systems. In order to thrive, our bodies need suitable nourishment, shelter and recognition. Good food nourishes us, and shelter, in the form of clothing and dwelling places, protects us from harm. Recognition might take many forms. When we are first born, recognition involves being held and nurtured. Gradually we learn to care for ourselves and provide our own food, shelter and recognition, or seek it out from others. Without touch and recognition as a particular human being, babies can cease to thrive and even die from this lack despite having sufficient food and shelter (Montagu, 1986). Infants spending an extended time in foundling institutions in the USA, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, were almost certain to die of marasmus, or “wasting away”, unless they were fostered out of the institution. In America, under the influence of Luther Emmett Holt (1935) from 1894 to 1935 (Montagu, 1986, p. 98), babies were expected to
be raised ‘scientifically’, with good hygiene, but little handling, for fear of spoiling them. It was found that even in good homes, babies were dying of marasmus, and a study was instituted, which discovered that babies with mothers who touched them thrived despite poor hygiene in their homes. Instituting contact and cuddles for every baby decreased the death rate sharply in one year (Montagu, 1986, p. 99) by 1938.

Ortho-Bionomy provides a type of recognition. It involves being with another person, or oneself, in a certain way, as a designated client or practitioner, though these roles can be fluid. It provides a practitioner with something to do with her hands that, at worst, will do no harm, and at best will make space for and encourage the body to emerge and return to more efficient functioning, in line with its own way of being. I do not say ‘optimum’ functioning because to me that suggests striving. There is no need for effort or intention with Ortho-Bionomy. I think you can simply drop back into relying on your body’s inherent wisdom. What inherent wisdom? It is the inner knowledge that allows your body to continue functioning, despite some massive challenges, from birth to death. We all have it. It could be described as our inner life force, or our self-organising ability (Nuland, 1997). In addition there is an inanimate organising principle that takes into account non-living elements of our systems and of the cosmos (described by Owen, 1998). Exactly what that principle or wisdom consists of, I do not know. It is a mystery to me and I have little curiosity to find out. I simply know of its existence. It would be crazy to imagine we need to, or can, control and organise our body and life (demonstrated in Hartley and Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences., 1995). Such control is impossible and efforting after it would be hubristic (Hatch, 2006). Without force or control, our bodies care for themselves, mostly without conscious effort on our part (see Baensch, 2002b). Something must surely exist to organise the complex patterns of movement and transformation that go on within cells and systems and between such parts of living and non-living systems in the human body and elsewhere in the cosmos.

The work I am investigating has a strong relationship with space or emptiness, among other things. Ortho-Bionomy involves working ‘in the spaces between’. For example much of the bodywork I am researching takes place in the space between the client and practitioner and between large and tiny parts of and around the body.
Another ‘space between’ comes into awareness during Phase 5 in Ortho-Bionomy (Kain, 1985). The work occurs in a place between the physical and energetic expressions of participants. Phase 5 usually involves movement, something approximating tai chi if it were to be carried out with a partner. Movements are minimal and fluid, and the body part being moved seems to almost float between the practitioner and client. Each often reports that the body part felt light and as if the other person is supporting its weight. Writing about Phase 5 like this makes the work seem elusive, ephemeral and esoteric but when I use the work, I experience it as quite ordinary and practical. I wish I could find or invent more appropriate words to describe my work and the resulting experiences. Maybe this research will show me some ways? I wish it were possible for you, the reader, to experience and/or learn Phase 5 through your body, since it is difficult to convey through words and images. Had I not experienced it, I would never have credited what the body can achieve in practical ways, in response to such an appropriate, though tiny, impulse. In fact, a big part of me is still eager to disbelieve what I have learned, at the first opportunity for doubt. Although I approve of scepticism, I would encourage doubters (like me) to try Ortho-Bionomy, as a client and/or student, with a relatively open mind that is yet ready to seize on doubts and wholeheartedly see them through.

The Physical

In attempting to write this thesis, I am beset by difficulties. Here is one of them: Ortho-Bionomy is a form of gentle bodywork known to few people. Many, if not most people are relatively unfamiliar with the term bodywork. Juhun (1987) wrote a book about bodywork. He could have written several books, without running out of subject matter, since bodywork is such a broad and varied topic. My entire thesis could be about how Ortho-Bionomy is bodywork rather than massage, with which bodywork is sometimes erroneously equated, for example, and about its effects. How can I convey the essence of Ortho-Bionomy to you succinctly yet potently in one part of one chapter of this thesis? Ideally I would do that with my hands, which is why I chose to open the thesis with some stories (for human connection) and video footage (for the extra senses stimulated) of my practice in action. By using words now, I am asking a great deal of you as a reader. Words are such abstract forms of expression! You and I run the risk of getting lost in concepts when speaking about embodiment, and concepts, without the balance of practice, are too one-sided for this thesis. As you are already aware, I aim for
a praxis – a marriage of theory with practice – as a launching place and a space to encourage further relativity, inspired by views from many, varied perspectives.

Words and concepts simply will not suffice. They can only supplement embodied experience. Until I find a hands-on way to unravel the clotted concepts I describe wordily, I ask you to exert great discipline in seeking balance as you see fit. In what ways can you allow a sense of praxis to emerge in your own experience from this limited, though supplemented, one-sided, language perspective? Force of persuasion is unlikely to be helpful in this situation. Following the process, especially your spontaneous, inner process, has more chance of being useful for balance. In my Masters thesis I included practical exercises to balance my words, whereas for my PhD thesis I have resorted to integrating still and moving images - incorporating illustrations, words and sound - into the thesis design, to evoke and communicate the hands-on work. These present ways, I hope, will be enough to flesh out the concepts and stories expressed in words, by offering a diversity of experiences employing several channels (Hatch, 2004-8) or senses (Soesman, 1990).

So far I have complained about a lack of time, space and a vehicle for executing my desire to have you live and feel the core of Ortho-Bionomy. Pauls chose to communicate the work by practical means, mainly augmenting hands-on practice by using some spoken words and movement, although he eventually bowed to community pressure to write a book about his philosophy (2003). I have put a lot of time, effort, research and reflection into my choice of words and ways of expressing some rather ineffable ideas and carnal encounters. Ortho-Bionomy forms a marvellous bridge between worlds. It is impressively practical. Students are encouraged by Ortho-Bionomy teachers to practise in their own way, once they grasp the few simple principles of Ortho-Bionomy. Not that I am suggesting that grasping simple principles is, in itself, necessarily easy, since the process often requires letting go of former, more involved learning, to which many become attached. For example, having learned massage before I was introduced to Ortho-Bionomy, it was my practice to use my hands actively to work into muscles and so on. It took me a long time, during my Ortho-Bionomy training, to allow my hands to be still and ‘listen’ to the tissues of the body that I was touching.

In practice, Ortho-Bionomy is secure in its own rightness and simplicity. At the same time it has a strong theoretical basis. I think Ortho-Bionomy provides a stellar example, not only of practical wisdom (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006, p.
77), but also of Gebser’s beliefs about integral consciousness. To demonstrate how I see that happening, I am including a quote from Gebser’s book (1991, p. 361) where he describes integral consciousness via a series of motifs, consisting of elements or ideas depicting this structure. I have then broken Gebser’s words into individual motifs and described how I see the first eight motifs exemplified in my work. I did this in steps: firstly I divided Gebser’s words into single or grouped motifs, which I have coloured sea green; then I quoted some words from my MSc thesis in dark blue; and followed that with a further, more recent expansion in teal. Later edits are coloured red. In other words, each main layer of writing is depicted in a new colour, to show how my thinking on the subject developed over time. Although I have added or altered written layers and pieces, rather than completely erasing my original writing and beginning anew, this next section of the thesis is presented as a sort of ‘palimpsest’ (Richardson, 1997) expressed through colour. Originally, ancient people created a palimpsest by scraping the inscriptions from an animal skin, or vellum, so further words and pictures could be applied to its surface. Writing surfaces such as hides were valuable because of the amount of energy required to prepare them, which presumably involved hunting and killing an animal, skinning it, then preparing its skin for writing by drying and possibly tanning it. In recent times, paper has been regarded as less valuable than vellum (especially, one might imagine, by the animals wearing suitable skins), yet the word palimpsest is still used at times (for example Keep and McLaughlin, 1995; Richardson, 1997), and now conveys the sense of an object or place carrying its history with it in some way. The presentation of this section of my thesis gives a short, approximate example of the way I created most of the thesis, from many edits and layers of writing, in this case highlighted through the use of coloured fonts.

Here is Gebser’s (1991) entire list of motifs as provided in “The Ever-present Origin” on page 361:

- the whole,
- integrity,
- transparency (diaphaneity),
- the spiritual (the diaphainon),
- the supersession of the ego,
- the realization of timelessness,
- the realization of temporality,
- the realization of the concept of time,
- the realization of time-freedom (the achronon),
- the disruption of the merely systematic,
- the incursion of dynamics,
- the recognition of energy,
the mastery of movement,
the fourth dimension,
the supersession of patriarchy,
the renunciation of dominance and power,
the acquisition of intensity,
clarity (instead of mere wakefulness),
and the transformation of the creative inceptual basis.

Now I will divide Gebser’s words into individual motifs and talk about the first eight of them, since I think they are the most relevant to my thesis. Gebser’s motifs for integral consciousness have also been used in the DVD.

(Motif 1)

“...the whole,

integrity,...” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

I work with each client’s whole being and mine as people within a wider system such as the family or community. So I encourage family members to attend sessions, when clients are open to that, to develop familiarity with the work and a context for any changes, in the client, which may impinge on the family. Each cell, organ and system of the body is accorded equal respect as I work (Baensch, 2002b, p. 124).

As I work with a region of the body, I remain aware of that part’s interrelationship with the whole body and person, with me and with our surrounding environment. Sometimes a client wants to bring apparently non-physical aspects of their life into a session and I welcome that. This may take the form of describing their history, experiencing emotions or talking about matters of fantasy or fact. I generally ask clients to share their best hopes for each session. Making room for activity and passivity, consensus reality and creative dreams, memory and forward planning expands the possibilities for useful connections to be made.

How do I know what links exist in the person with an existing injury or trauma? So I follow the process I discover as I work with the client, and when ‘aporia’ (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006) arise, I accommodate them as I go, to the best of my ability.

How might this motif look in a session? First of all, I try to ‘meet’ the person over the phone as they make their initial enquiry or set up an appointment. I try to give the prospective client enough information to set their mind at ease. Any questions are answered as fully as possible. Sometimes, by making suggestions
over the phone, I can tell the enquirer what to do at home and obviate the need for any sessions, or at least ease her or his symptoms until we can meet. If parents are ringing about their children, I invite the child to also come to the phone, or ask the parent to pass on information about the sessions. Children can be apprehensive about what might be done to them, which is a shame if a few words might set them at ease and establish a respectful mood for working with them.

I request that clients wear comfortable, loose clothes during the session if they can and explain that they have control over what happens to them. This client-centred approach continues through my work. For example, with a child’s agreement, I invite a parent to be present during their sessions so the child has someone at home who is familiar with what went on. I ask children if they feel okay with their parent coming closer to see what we are discovering together about their body, on the table. When I notice something, such as one leg appearing to be shorter than another, I show the client first before including a family member. For cranial work, I have a beautiful, softly felt-framed mirror, which I hand to clients, so they can see and describe what they notice in relation to the balance of their cranial bones, especially of the face. The clients’ observations have precedence over mine. I work on the basis of their comments, with my observations usually playing a secondary role. One example is that I might notice that a client’s right cheekbone looks to me to be a little elevated compared with the left one. If the client sees or feels the cheekbones to be even or the opposite way around, I work accordingly. Clients have the inside running when it comes to expertise about their bodies.

As I explained in the Preface, my consulting rooms and their approach were designed to create a safe, private, easily accessible space for sessions. I looked into public transport, parking, clear directions, feng shui, sustainability and energy efficiency in building and business practices, non-allergenic materials, access to a bathroom and kitchen facilities for clients’ refreshment, comfortable chairs, reading materials for all ages and so on. I provide a variety of natural and manufactured toys for children and adults, like smooth or interesting stones to hold, kaleidoscopes to see or stories to hear, and they can choose their favourite sheet to go on my massage table, for each session, from a large selection of colours, patterns and textures. I want to encourage the whole of the client to feel as much at home and cherished as possible. As I work I try to make space for all parts of the person to be welcome. Sometimes, though not very often, a client will experience some sort of cathartic reaction during a session and might cry or
express anger and so on. Although I rarely engage clients around emotional issues in an active way, I support them to express any feelings that bubble up during sessions, and refer some to practitioners of other modalities such as Process Work and Homoeopathy.

When carrying out bodywork, I engage with the client’s body in broad regions. It is not possible, for example, to deal specifically with just one joint. The body is all connected. If I work with someone’s foot, because they experience pain and are therefore limping, I might realize that one of the little bones of the foot seems out of place and dropped down. In order to take that bone a fraction further down, I must influence the bones, muscles, connective tissue, nerves and circulatory systems around the bone. As well, I need to find out how the toes relate to the bone in question, both before and after it returns to its ideal spot. The ankle and knee of both legs will also have been affected by the limping, as well as the hip and spine. Appropriate walking patterns need to be reinstated. If orthotics (shoe supports) have been prescribed, the client can see whether they still seem necessary, and discuss their new situation with their podiatrist. A change to one part of the body has wide ramifications.

The weather has a part to play in each session. I supply rugs, hot water bottles and heaters for chilly clientele, and fans and Yarra Valley breezes, if available, for hot clients. Different birds and insects call and fly around on warm versus cool days. The Japanese Maple tree outside my consulting room’s casement leadlight windows bring their colour inside in autumn with glorious reds and yellows and in spring with the new pink tips on each twig contrasting with its fresh green leaves. All of this variety and fluidity has profound effects on each session, which differs according to the net experiences that the client, the family and I have had in the past. (Let me not even start on the effects on each session of the future!) Even apparently minor aspects can have an unexpectedly major effect, such as: the present buzzing hum of cicadas, which comforts some clients and makes others feel oppressed and anxious. Cicadas bring back situations for me like my father placing a cicada on my hand when I was five or six years old to allow me to feel the pricking lift of its sharp feet on my skin, and appreciate the glowing beauty of its greenness and rosy head ‘jewel’. Those memories affect me and I, accordingly, affect the people who come to see me. As becomes obvious, the aspects of a session that have come to mind as I write now, represent a tiny fraction of what goes on in the immediate and further space and time of a session.
It could even be said that, ultimately, everything has some effect on a session, and a session has an effect on everything there is, or will be. Ortho-Bionomy and Process Work have helped me to become aware of interconnection, and of the whole. They provide me with ways to trust the process unfolding in a session. Both modalities help me become more fluid and flexible, while still valuing rigidity and locking up as equally valuable in their own place. Not needing to try being in control of a session helps me to open myself up to unexpected possibilities and new, often multiple, perspectives. Ortho-Bionomy avows nothingness. Pauls (Pauls, 1993) warned students against having intention when working. He spelled the word as “in-tension” (Pauls, 1993). I agree with Pauls, even though I find it is not possible to be completely free of intention when working. In my experience, having an intention for a session is too directive and controlling: it restricts possibilities and seems untrusting of the process of life, which has, after all, got us this far, relatively well. I guess I simultaneously hold both not having intention for a session, together with expecting my work to be as helpful as possible for the client, since they have often been motivated to travel a long way to see me for bodywork. Maybe this situation can be seen as an ongoing aporia (Macklin and Whiteford, 2006) – impossible to solve, and perplexing? I have tried to give you some feel for, and impressions of, the wholeness and integrity of an Ortho-Bionomy experience relating to Gebser’s first motif. Now I want to move on to his second.

(Motif 2)

“…transparency (diaphaneity),

the spiritual (the diaphanon)…” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

_During classes or sessions, I am imbued with awe for the ordinarness of the body (and personhood) of my client. Moment by moment as I offer possibilities, her/his body accepts what is appropriate and aligns itself with helpful information while eschewing inappropriate details. How can this be? I am constantly excited and amazed by the miraculousness of such mundane processes. I can understand, for example, how those in the magic era consulted the viscera for divination. It is one site of the astounding everyday transformations proceeding unabated as I write and you read this. The digestive system is endowed with remarkable powers (Juhan, 1987). Its lowly status gives no hint of its capacity to contribute to a bodywork session. Every part of the body contributes to its integrity (Baensch, 2002b, p. 124)._
All clients bring their ‘spirit’: their essence, or particular qualities, to a session. Their spirit meets mine and our relationship creates its own flavour or spirit. Part of integral consciousness is greater awareness of the spiritual, not in religious terms, but in the simple, practical noticing of the character of encounters. This character or nuance might be evident in clients, relationships, groups, such as organisations, or the environment. The spirit is the “I am” of any entity – its, nature, texture or temper. During sessions, the spirit of each person involved, such as the client, family member or friend and practitioner plus the spirit of the work, of our location and so on lends its flavour to those sessions. It cannot be seen or measured, but it can sometimes be sensed. No two sessions are alike – each has a different spirit or feel.

Here I am not focussing on the numinous qualities of the spiritual but rather on the practical and tangible, much easier to demonstrate than to write about. Perhaps some examples will help? If I work with a tiny baby, I feel very focussed, and something like reverent, and experience the baby as potent: like its being is condensed. I usually work efficiently. Many babies grow tired quickly, so I do as much as possible without disturbing their rest. If possible, I ask the mother to breastfeed (or bottle feed) their baby so I can work with the head both without disturbing their rest and with attention to their jaw’s movements. Babies are shorter than adults, so sessions are more contained, they seem more intense. I have less distance to walk in order to get from one end of a baby to the other. They usually lie across my table rather than lengthwise. From weaning until about school age, I conduct sessions differently. Toddlers and pre-schoolers are less likely to want to lie on my table. They usually prefer to be active, and have not yet developed enough language and concepts to choose to cooperate. Sessions with toddlers often have a spirit of adventure or challenge.

I often work with children of this age while they play on the floor, or on a parent’s lap, at least until they choose to lie on my table, if that happens. I have become relatively skilled at working inside or outside my room, upside down or while following and maintaining contact with a bouncing or crawling child. Older children sometimes enjoy finding out about their body: comparing their own leg lengths or giving me feedback about tender spots. They agree more readily to lie on the table. I can give them a restful toy to use, or play them a recorded story or music, to make the session suit their particular preferences. If a child would rather not to lie on my table alone, I ask a parent if they would like to experience Ortho-Bionomy. Then the child will often be interested to help me work with their parent. Soon, many of these children cheerfully hop up on the table, either alone
or beside their parent and enjoy the work while learning ‘neat stuff’ about their particular body. When children are ticklish, I find that Ortho-Bionomy releases, for that region of the body, regularly lessen or sort out the ticklishness, just as they usually reduce or resolve pain, to the surprise of the child and parents. Sessions with ticklish children have a slower, more measured approach and calmer quality as I take care to avoid tickling them.

As clients become older, my way of addressing them changes little. I explain what I am doing, and address most of my comments to the client, whether newborn or elderly, rather that to their accompanying relative, spouse or friend. I figure that parents can hear the comments I make to their child, and are free to ask questions. Whereas, if I only address the adults present, the children might feel disenfranchised and left out of their own session. The session, to my mind, belongs to the client of whatever age, and they are at its centre. I aim for every session to express the metaskills (Mindell, 1995a) of respect and inclusiveness.

Adults bring different reasons for sessions and new challenges. They are more likely to have preconceived ideas about how I will work. A few are unable to relax. Most seem interested, and keen to work with me, towards their greater comfort and freedom of movement.

(Motif 3)

“the supersession of the ego,” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

This is the key to practising Ortho-Bionomy. The client from birth to old age is my expert and guide. My ego has no need to dominate as I work. I don’t try to be selfless or ego free, but rather to be present. This is hard to describe. My closest approximation is that I ‘lead a session from behind’. I am there to hold space for the best outcome and safety of my client. By that I mean I make myself available, and endeavour to conjure elasticity of space and time so clients can experience what they need to, in concert with my needs.

I get caught up with how others might find me, or I project my feelings onto them. However, Ortho-Bionomy sessions given or received, help me to gradually gain more transparency in matters of ego, since ego is not an essential part of the work and with time, I try to ‘relax’ my need for strong ego connection as I work, if I notice it (Baensch, 2002b, p. 124-5).
Of course my needs impinge on the session. When a client comes to me in pain, asking for me to help them get relief, I draw upon all of my resources to help them. This is in spite of the Ortho-Bionomy belief that everyone is fine exactly as they are, and that they do not need to change at all during or after the session. I hold that belief to be true, yet simultaneously move heaven and earth to provide the circumstances for their increased comfort and freedom of movement. To the extent that I am keen for change to occur, it could be said that I am failing to let go of, or ‘supersede’, my ego.

(Motif 4)

“…the realisation of timelessness, … temporicity, … the concept of time and … time freedom (the achronon)…” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

This all occurs during sessions to the degree I am able at present because of circumstances and my present limitations (see Gebser, 1991). Once humanity lives in “integral consciousness”, we will encompass the attributes of former consciousness structures, as we do already. But sometimes I think the client or I get stuck in one or other of them. Then I may not be fully present with my client (Baensch, 2002b, p. 124).

During sessions, time becomes elastic, some clients remark that a session seemed very short, others that time expanded and passed slowly. It is not that they are unfamiliar with the concept of time, but that this work can bring about a certain sense of timelessness. As a practitioner, I notice a similar effect.

(Motif 5)

“…the disruption of the merely systematic…” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

I take these words to relate to breakthroughs from regulated systems to acceptance of understanding such as chaos theory. Unlike those of some bodywork modalities I have studied, Ortho-Bionomy practitioners and teachers tend not to adhere to set rules. Pauls (1993) did not expect it. He encouraged students to follow the basic principles, make them their own and imbue their work with their own spirit or signature, as that felt natural. There is minimal dogma taught; yet the work is widely recognisable (Baensch, 2002b, p. 125).

Perhaps because learning Ortho-Bionomy depends on following a few simple principles, it is easier for its students to discover the spirit of the work? Ortho-
Bionomy is called “a system of health care”, but Pauls seemed to me to attach little importance to “the merely systemic”. He wanted Ortho-Bionomy to be fluid, within its relaxed limits, to not become concretised through for example being written down. He advised me to try to keep Australian Ortho-Bionomy connected to, but independent of, the world associations so it could develop in its own way. I similarly see no reason for building systems as if a systemic edifice improves or ensures the continuance of a group or way of working. Just as regulation does not seem to increase the safety of a type of health care, on the contrary stakeholders seem to me to focus on legalities instead of core issues once regulation is instated.

One example, which I believe to be associated with regulation is the soaring costs of health care in the United States of America in response to the threat of litigation. Another might be a higher incidence of certain medical procedures, because of some doctors’ fear of litigation in relation to an accusation of neglect. These examples are loosely linked to regulation. Writing about them, I feel quite anxious, fearing a descent on me by rightly indignant defenders of regulation and am aware that I am holding back an assorted cacophony of voices arguing many sides of a polyhedron of opinions, rather than two or three sides of an argument. Feeling also under time pressure of a deadline for my second draft, I am reluctant to continue, but the voices are mounting in my head, quoting radio and television programs and waving books and articles.

Having a pattern to follow during sessions of bodywork might seem to represent the “merely systematic” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361), however, I experience that having access to such a pattern can free me up to focus on issues other than thinking what part of the body I will address next. During a first session, I take case notes, and explain what my work entails. Then I generally describe what I notice and do, as I work with the client, often following a similar plan, working up through the spine, from feet to head, then the extremities. How does my having a similar pattern for my approach not lead to sessions being the same? Having a pattern allows me to be more present with the client, since I rarely need to think what comes next. I can deviate from the pattern at any time if another part of the client’s body ‘calls’ me to work there.

In organisations that choose to open space for their own spirit to be expressed, order need not be imposed. It develops. Chaos is welcomed as an essential ‘component’ of order. Groups are inexorably self-organising. We can stand in the
way of their emergence, by attempting to impose systematic control, but cannot succeed, ultimately, in turning the tide of self-organisation.

(Motif 6)

“...the incursion of dynamics...” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

Despite lack of intention and action, dynamic changes occur during sessions in the client, practitioner and observers. These changes seem spontaneous, given appropriate circumstances, and almost irrepressible (Baensch, 2002b, p. 125).

One instance of this occurs when I am involved in cranial work in the following way. I find, for example, that one cheekbone of the client is higher than (superior to) the other. With the fingers of one hand on each cheekbone, I exaggerate the body’s situation by lightly lifting the high cheekbone a fraction higher and drawing the low cheekbone a little lower. I do not try to ‘correct’ the eccentric posture I have found, but simply slightly amplify it. After a few seconds, I can feel a subtle but clearly discernable, relentless shift under my fingers. It feels to me as if the client’s cheekbones are moving. I can see and feel a slow and yet inexorable movement of my fingers. Clients can verify that I do not try to lift the lower cheekbone or press down on the higher cheekbone. On the contrary, they can feel that I am gently but insistently holding the cheekbones further out of balance, not trying to realign them. Clients can often feel their cheekbones (and other bones) slightly moving, to their surprise and our mutual wonderment. Observers, such as a parent or friend can often also see the movement happening. When I immediately then place my fingers under the cheekbones to measure their locations, it is clear a change has taken place. The cheekbones are almost invariably more even in height than they were.

These dynamics come from the client’s body and self, and they are irrepressible, even against strong pressure from my fingers. Once the body (the self) becomes aware of an imbalance, it seems as if it ‘wants’ to bring about balance. The body, in effect, pushes my hands out of the way. The body’s dynamics do not retreat, but rather advance, even against resistance. appear As I said earlier, Pauls counselled against use of intention when working (2003). By simply taking the body further out of balance (which can possibly be seen as allowing for chaos) order is allowed to establish itself without the need for intent for a particular result. We can trust the body to assist its own dynamic equilibrium, it seems to me, following thousands of examples during sessions.
“…the recognition of energy…” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

Working with energy is what set Ortho-Bionomy apart from osteopath Lawrence Jones’s work called ‘Spontaneous Release by Positioning’ (Jones, 1972). My understanding is that in many forms of energy work, such as Reiki, energy is channelled or ‘brought through’ to a client. Arthur Lincoln Pauls instead taught his students to simply allow space for or recognise the energy of their clients, allowing the natural tendency for balance to reinstate itself at its own pace. This is simply one of the aspects of energy recognition in Ortho-Bionomy (Baensch, 2002b, p. 125).

When Pauls learned osteopathy, he was unsettled by the idea of imposing his intention on the body, against the body’s inclination or energetic expression. In judo, he taught his students not to oppose the body’s energetic flow or direction, but to use the energy by joining or going with it. He heard about Jones’s (1972) experience with a client who was so locked up and sore that he looked like a ‘pretzel’ and could not lie on Jones’s treatment table. Jones propped the client up, supporting him in a position he could cope with comfortably and left the room to work with another client. After Jones returned, the client greeted him with enthusiasm for giving him such a helpful session. Subsequently, Jones explored the way positioning clients with support for their presenting posture, and allowing them time to rest like that, could result in what he called ‘spontaneous release’ (Chaitow, 1996).

Pauls was pleased to find a way to work that did not involve forcing the body or going against its energetic preferences (2003). He began to use this new way of working with his clients. Then, a woman with a very sore and restricted neck came to see Pauls. She was too sore to allow the usual positioning, so Pauls made the subtlest and tiniest movement he could manage. It was hardly a physical movement, but rather one that mainly existed in his imagination, and the restriction and pain in the woman’s neck released (Pauls, 2003). Pauls began to use similarly minimal movements with other clients and had good reports from them.

Over time he found that it was possible to do some work without contacting the body at all, and realised he was affecting the client’s energy system. At first he felt embarrassed about apparently doing so little with the client and yet getting paid for it. Clients contacted Pauls following sessions and told him that they had
noticed obvious changes. They asked him for follow-up sessions. Pauls called his work with energy, generally done off the body: ‘Phase 6’. I had similar feelings to Pauls after I was taught Phase 6 (Pauls, 1993). There was no sign at first, that anything was happening, when I included some energy work in a session, and I felt shy about doing it. When clients reported to me that what they were experiencing during sessions had helped them, I felt confused because there was a similarity to the reports, and that made them harder for me to discount. Having Phase 6 available to use irritates me. I would rather not know about its possibilities. In fact, when I travelled to Switzerland in 1997 to study with Pauls, I was convinced he would see me as the fraud I felt myself to be, and ask me not to use energy work. He did not. Instead he named me a teacher of Basic Ortho-Bionomy.

I complained to him about energy work and that was when he confessed about his having similar feelings as he developed the work (Pauls, 1993). I still rarely use Phase 6 when I work with clients. There are certain situations that call for its explicit use, such as when a client has experience of energy work, feels at home with it and asks for some, or when physical work alone does not seem to be resolving some aspect of a client's symptoms. Of course, my particular energy must affect every client whether I deliberately use it in a session or not. I cannot prevent that from happening. Each session or class involves an interrelationship of energies between the client and me. Perhaps that explains why having a session with another person can be more effective than self-work perhaps having the focus of another person's energy allows a safe space in which resolution of symptoms can more easily happen – a form of recognition?

(Motif 8)

“…the mastery of movement…” (Gebser, 1991, p. 361)

During bodywork, such as Ortho-Bionomy, spontaneous completion of apparently arrested patterns of movement in the client’s body is achieved through the practitioner’s doing less (following homeopathic principles) and allowing time and space for the client to resolve the patterns. This minimal ‘intervention’ has the effect of calling on self-corrective reflexes in the client's body. So the mastery is present within the body, but sometimes quiescent. By being present with clients and doing as little as we are capable of as practitioners, the clients’ inherent mastery of movement becomes apparent (Baensch, 2002b, p. 125).
What did Gebser mean by “Mastery of movement”? I am unable to find a specific definition of this phrase at present, so I will rely on my own interpretation of what Gebser intended. Awareness of movement came about as concepts of time and space evolved in mythical consciousness. In spaceless and timeless consciousness, events appeared to happen in one place and then another, like points or dots, but not as a result of movement through space and time.

I want to devote some energy now to explaining this motif. The difficulties that will emerge in this explanation parallel my struggles in trying to communicate the essence of Ortho-Bionomy in words. Although they differ, I think there is a resonance between one conundrum and the other. Here, I can only give a sketchy summary. (I can feel myself restlessly ‘walking around’ in my thoughts and writing, trying to find a suitable place to begin. Each starting place seems to need me to go further back in history to make my point. So I will just need to take the plunge, knowing that my attempt will necessarily seem inadequate at least to me, since I do not and cannot have Gebser’s vast range of information or his focus).

Returning to “mastery of movement”, I note that movement is not observable without concepts of space and time. So awareness of movement grew slowly. It depended on awareness of periodicity, for example, regular shifts between day and night.

“The dark, spaceless confines from which movement slowly emerges is evident from the fact that the earliest mode of telling time was based on nocturnal and lunar periodicity. Vestiges of this are still preserved in our modern languages: English for example speaks of a “fortnight,” that is, fourteen nights instead of fourteen days ... and German ..., Weihnacht, “Christmas” are further examples (Gebser, 1991, p. 166).

From this noticing of movement: of night following day and sleep preceding being awake, came a sense of time. “Only movement, that is, directed motion, could give rise to what we today call “time”” (Gebser, 1991, p. 167). This awakening to thought, space and time is recorded for us in the story of the sun, Helios, interrupting his course through his indignation at the birth of Athena. Here emerges my conundrum. By trying to describe the transformation from magic to mythical consciousness in an intellectual way, I fail to convey “ ... the pure eventfulness and dynamism (of these magical and mythical events and phenomena) to mere temporal sequence or succession” (Gebser, 1991, p. 167).
To speak of ‘space-timelessness’ requires concepts relevant to the mental structure of consciousness. Concepts are not part of the magical or mythical structures, and while we can get the feel of these structures, without our ‘new-fangled’ concepts, once we emerge from that feeling, we will not be able to discuss our experience, since it was concept-free. It is a tricky situation, which Gebser somewhat resolves through his partial explanation and word pictures of “… the miraculous healings of Lourdes” (Gebser, 1991, p. 163). Some aspects of experience such as touch are also very difficult for me to express with satisfying verisimilitude. This is one of the challenges I find in describing integral research. Both Gebser, in “The Ever-present Origin” (1991), and I have earlier referred to Merleau-Ponty in “The Chiasm” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 250) for example when he brings out the ‘feel’ of the colour red, exemplify a standard of what might be possible for me to strive towards.

To provide a feel for the link between my work and my interpretation of Gebser’s mastery of movement motif, I need to give an example, which emphasises the ‘mastery’ aspect of Gebser’s phrase. The easiest instance to describe is a part of Ortho-Bionomy called Phase 5. Let me suggest that a client has some soreness in his neck and I consider using Phase 5 with him. He lies on my table on his back, with his head near the end of the table. I sit comfortably at the end of the table, on my stool, with my legs under the table. I check for tender or tense areas in the neck. Then I place my hands gently under his head and neck and wait, I get a sense that the client’s head wants to tilt slightly back and to the right and I support his head and follow as that movement occurs and changes directions slowly and steadily in a fluid motion. What is happening is a minimal movement. What the client reports is often described as a huge or global movement.

For example, clients may say it feels as if their head is being moved through a vast distance, when in consensus reality terms, I can see their head is almost stationery. Perhaps a loose metaphor for that would be that when I move my computer mouse the cursor on the screen can move a large distance across the monitor.

If I close my eyes as I work, I have a sense of the expansiveness of the movement. It feels to me as if the client is making the movement and I am following their lead. In other words, it is as if the client’s head moves of its own accord without their assistance between us both, and each experiences a sense of the head’s apparent weightlessness. I certainly mostly have no impression of controlling the movements, but rather of observing and following with my hands,
the way the head moves and changes direction. When doing Phase 5, I often feel very focussed and a bit meditative. Now and then the head pauses and sometimes remains still for a while. When that happens, I begin to experience the weight of the head again. If the pause is a long one and I grow uncomfortable, I might suggest the beginning of movement to see whether the time for stillness has run its course or if there is more to wait for. Some clients and observers of Ortho-Bionomy describe Phase 5 as: doing Tai Chi with a partner. It is also similar to mirroring exercises where two people sit or stand opposite each other and intuitively follow or copy each other’s movements. Sometimes one person in the pair leads and sometimes the other takes over leading for a while. In Phase 5, it seems to me that the client’s body generally does the ‘leading’. Sometimes a pattern can be observed like that of a ‘strange attractor’ in perhaps a lemniscate (figure of eight) or similar movement, changing ever so slightly for each iteration of the pattern. Here I include a depiction of what I consider to be a double lemniscate: two figures of eight, which give an indication of possible patterns traced in Phase 5 Ortho-Bionomy (Bourke, 2002). This is not to suggest that Phase 5 work in Ortho-Bionomy follows pre-set patterns. It is actually impromptu, with practitioner and client creating their own patterns anew throughout the process.
Mostly I do not try to notice recognisable patterns, because I want to be freely available to go with the client as he moves into a new direction. I do not want to be so caught up following a pattern of movement that I begin to impose it upon the client.

To our mutual wonderment, after the few seconds of following, the movements come to a place of conclusion, and the tense or painful areas I palpated at the start of the procedure have often lessened or disappeared. It comes as a surprise because so little seems to have happened. Both parties in the exchange usually feel particularly relaxed. Most clients enjoy Phase 5. I do not use Phase 5 if I sense any resistance to that type of ‘free-form’ movement in the client. Some clients are not in the mood and are more inclined to having the physical work of Phase 4 or the energy work of Phase 6 done. In Ortho-Bionomy a practitioner does not impose her will or preferences over the client’s though she does make certain she is comfortable as she works.

How does this story relate to Gebser’s mastery of movement motif? As I said, the movements in Phase 5 come from the client, or are somehow generated in the space between the client and practitioner. The practitioner is not intended to be in control of the movements. I think they exemplify the body’s inherent mastery of
the exact movements required to undo damage done to it through injury or overuse. I say inherent mastery because I use Phase 5 even with tiny babies and animals and notice their ability to ‘lead’ me in movement directions in a similar style to an adult or child. I think we know what we need to heal our bodies. Sometimes we need to find the ‘combination’, to unlock an issue, with someone else’s help or support, in practical ways that are quite easy to communicate and learn. Although it is mysterious to me how the body ‘knows’ how to ‘fix itself up’, learning to ‘midwife’ the body’s remembering of relative comfort is pretty simple and straightforward. The mastery is inherent, primarily in the client, and secondarily in the practitioner. We simply need to remind ourselves to make space and allow this emergence of mastery. Of course, Gebser was not only describing people, but also other living things and their environments when he spoke about the mastery of movement motif in integral consciousness (1991), as well as other forms of movement, such as thought.

My purpose here is not to provide you with facts, it is to give you an impression of how my work seems to me as a practitioner. How can I ever accurately report what is happening inside a client except that we have a link through, for example, the collective unconscious (Jung, 1971, p. 82)? All I can do is to say what I notice and dream, influenced by the remarks of many clients I have worked with over the years in my practice.

From here on, for ease of reading, I will use a black font for the main text, with red to emphasise a layer of the changes I made to the following text.

An Ortho-Bionomy session

![Ortho-Bionomy session](image)

Figure 18: Ortho-Bionomy session
All sessions differ. Here I describe an imaginary, ‘representative’ session. First I welcome the client, tell him what he might expect and how I work. I ask for information about him and what he would like to gain from the session. Then I ask the client to lie, fully clothed, on my massage table, if he is happy to do so. I compare the lengths of his legs. His left leg appears to be two centimetres longer than the right leg. Telling the client he need not help, I slide and curve his upper body towards the shorter right leg, which I also slide across towards the right side, creating yet more of a comfortable curve. His body now describes a banana-style bend. Pressing gently through the right leg, I draw softly down on his right arm, first with the leg straight, then bent. Then I walk to his left side and pull his body towards me to accentuate the curve in which he lies. Next, I ease the body back into a straight line and check his leg length again. The legs now appear to be equal in length. How fascinating! I am continually amazed. How is it that clients can “correct” their eccentric posture by having it exaggerated? I repeat similar processes in various places throughout the body, discovering where to work by gently pressing on particular points in order to check for discomfort or imbalances at specific sites. For example, to discover whether there is pain or tension at the first vertebra, I would press just inside the front of the hip bone (medial to the anterior superior iliac spine) (Kain and Berns, 1992). When the client reports discomfort, tightness or numbness when I press, I bend his legs, ask him to allow them to drop against me and I lift them slightly up from the table. This amplification of the body’s eccentric posture informs the body (through the golgi bodies in the joint and so on) of its situation, and the client’s body is free to bring itself back to balance. Once I have worked with all points referring to the lumbar spine, I move to the end of the table in order to check and work with the client’s neck and head.

While thinking I was doing what I had been taught in class (Kain, 1986), I developed basic cranial work. In Australia, classes were widely spaced over time and I did not realise, for some years, until I attended my next Ortho-Bionomy cranial class, that what I was doing differed from what I had initially learned. By then clients, especially children with learning challenges, their parents and teachers were reporting excellent results after sessions with me that included “my” cranial work. I was told children could run and skip with new grace, and could catch more accurately. They could concentrate more easily, were less restless in class, their marks improved for maths and they received their first good reports from school. So I continued with my way of working.
One of my PhD research aims was to develop effective ways to pass on simple ways of working with the body, and especially “my” work with the head, which I will now describe.

The bodywork session continues...

Cranial work

![Cranial Work with a baby](image)

The client remains on his back, and I sit on my stool at his head, asking him to move up to the end of the table. My comfort is central to this work. Heads are heavy, so I need to be positioned properly, relative to the client. I place my fingers behind his ears and feel for a hard, bony bump on each side of his head, called the mastoid process. With one finger on the lower border of each mastoid process, I see whether my fingers are level or out of balance. Does one finger seem closer to the client’s feet than the other? As I do that, I ask the client if the spots where I am gently pressing seem evenly located to him or whether one feels lower (towards his feet) or higher (towards his head). I offer him a mirror so he can see what is happening. The right side appears lower than the left. That view is emphasized by the way the client’s left ear lobe covers my left finger whereas on the right side, I can see a little of my finger below his right ear lobe.

The client can feel that if I were to push my fingers towards each other, they would not meet, and that the top of his head would shift to the right as I pushed, because my gentle pressure on each side shows that my fingers are not exactly opposite each other. This type of measurement, linked with the client’s own
internal awareness, as well as visual cues supplied by the mirror he is holding, tell us both how his body is situated as we begin the cranial releases. We repeat similar measures below the skull (at the occiput), at the jaw (temporo-mandibular) joint and below the cheekbones. Now we know aspects of the client's present situation. Let us say the bones of this man's skull all appear lower on the right side – the most common arrangement in my experience of doing this work for over 20 years with clients.

In that case, I make myself comfortable on my adjustable stool at the head of the massage table, with my legs under the table, and my feet supported by the floor or the table's end rail. Then I softly place my (often middle) fingers on one of the bony eminences or ‘bumps’ at either side of the head. I take that bump slightly more out of balance, relative to its opposing bump. That is to stay, in this imaginary client’s case, that I bring the lower bump (on the right side) even lower (towards the client’s feet) than it was. This work uses minimal pressure and is very gentle. Perhaps I use the amount of pressure that would dent a fresh egg yolk, without breaking its sac. I emphasise how vital it is for the client to give me an indication of the slightest decrease in comfort anywhere in his body, no matter where I am working. As I hold his mastoid processes, for example, in a negligible amplification of their eccentric positions, there is usually a time when these bony protuberances seem to ‘go along’ with the suggestion of my fingers and move a tiny bit further out of their present, relative alignment.

Then I notice what feels like a pause. To me it seems like the client’s mastoid processes have gone out of balance as far as they are easily and comfortably able. It is as if they are (he is) checking out where and how they want to be. After that pause, I often have a sensation in my fingers as if the two mastoid processes are moving back towards a balanced position. It is an uncanny feeling, even after all these years of experiencing it. My fingers continue to hold the mastoid processes out of alignment, gradually softening their pressure as I stay in connection with the bone. For the bones to bring themselves back into balance, they must push against my opposing, if slight, pressure. I do not assist the body to achieve balance, but rather I hold the bones more into their eccentric locations than they were when I began the session. All I do is to gradually reduce my gentle pressure on the bones as they begin to move. When other family members are present and watching me work, they are intrigued to see the movement slowly occurring in front of them. The client, meanwhile, reports that they can feel I am mildly opposing the body's effort to find balance, rather than moving their cranial bones towards equilibrium.
I stress this because it is a crucial aspect of my wonderment about the body. It is as if my exaggeration of the body's eccentric alignment reminds the body that it is out of balance. As soon as the body notices, it Remediations that situation. This occurs many times during nearly every session. The tiny homoeopathic hint I give is enough to simulate the body to bring itself further into balance. I find that talent in the body to be very exciting. While working I have the impression that I am present as the body re-sculpts itself, resulting in the ‘birth’ of a somewhat new person. Many clients do not say much. They often seem to be in a reverie: quiet, and focussed internally after cranial work. My work differs greatly from any other work they have experienced. Lots of clients make such comments as: “It seemed as if you were doing nothing.” They are right, their bodies do the work, while I provide space and suggest some possibilities.

The Ortho-Bionomy ‘Mood’

Ortho-Bionomy, upon which this research was based, is part of a new way. It is an integral capacity of nature, rather than an intervention to 'correct nature's mistakes' or eradicate symptoms. Ortho-Bionomy draws attention to bodily eccentricity in the moment, slightly emphasising postural imbalance by going in the direction of the body’s present postural preference. It also makes space available, through the merest hint of compression, at the area needing attention, to help bring focus to that bodily region (Kain and Berns, 1992).

No intention is used. Practitioners do not intend for clients to change or 'improve', they simply hold a space and time of safety for the client’s ‘reflection’. I use the word ‘reflection’ in a wider way than thinking. Clients may not be consciously aware of the work being done, they can be wafting into a reverie or light sleep or be experiencing a daydream and may not necessarily notice where the practitioner is working. I use ‘reflection’ to indicate any combination of bodily connection, dreaming, and conscious awareness.

When I have sessions of Ortho-Bionomy as a client, I often feel very relaxed and sometimes dreamy. It is hard for me to write about it because, as I search inside me for words, I slip into the state of reverie induced by some sessions of Ortho-Bionomy. Concepts melt away. It is a ‘zone’ where my rational mind no longer needs to stay sharp and speedy. Thoughts slow down and worries grow hazy and drift off. There is a pleasant sense of comfort and ease that seeps through the body. In order to fully describe this experience, I can tell that I need to experience some more Ortho-Bionomy. Perhaps I will be able to better describe what happens while it is actually occurring. I will return later with my ‘field notes’.
In the meantime, I will continue to describe the effects of Ortho-Bionomy during a session.

Not all sessions bring about a dreamy state. In fact, I usually engage clients in conversation during their first session, because I want them to be consciously aware of the work we are doing together. I want to know what feels good to them. There are several reasons for that. Comfort is a central ‘tenet’ of Ortho-Bionomy for me, and some clients find attending to physical comfort to be quite foreign to them. They can tell me about degrees of pain, but seem unable to discern degrees of comfort. Asking the client what they are experiencing and wanting, and talking about what I notice, and what I am doing, keeps us both somewhat in the present moment. It helps some clients make a connection between comfort and the body, and what circumstances lead to their feeling of ease. This connection helps them to return to, or create, their own situations of comfort in the future: a useful preventative skill to have. The learning happens mainly at a physical level. I help clients make a conscious connection using language (descriptions of what I am doing as I work) linked with proprioception (provided by gentle bodywork) because I believe that helps them anchor the bodily sensations in another channel (as in Process Work (Hatch, 2003)) or sense (as in Anthroposophy (Soesman, 1990)), to cross reference a way of understanding what is happening.

Jim just gave me a few minutes of Ortho-Bionomy so I could check how Ortho-Bionomy felt for me as a client. I felt as if I were melting. My body was on the massage table. My mind was freely floating to any flirt or hint that called it. I saw a small branch with a certain type of leaf through the window and thought of cutting back the suckers from some trees that have invaded the garden. My thoughts were very clear, and easy. No overload of pressure was attached to them. I noticed feeling like a lizard basking in the sun – torpid and lazy-yet still clearly aware of my environment. This accords with how clients look after a session and reports many give me of what they have experienced. Their faces look softer and calmer.

After a session, most clients look relaxed. They are slow to roll over, sit up, and climb down from the table. I take great care to assist people as they make the transition from lying to sitting and standing. Sometimes, during this process, a client might feel light-headed. So I ask if that is the case as clients sit up, and I watch for any signs of pallor or unsteadiness, until their circulation reorganises itself to being upright, after lying so long. I also check for neck movement and
often use Bowen Technique at that point. This has two effects: one is to improve head rotation after lying face down for a while, the other is to help clients become more present and aware of themselves physically: more grounded. Both effects are important on leaving a session since many clients have a long drive ahead of them.

Ortho-Bionomy is not limited to the physical work (called Basic Ortho-Bionomy or Phase 4) that I have described in this chapter. I have drawn a chart to show an overview of the methods and training available in many countries around the world:

Ortho-Bionomy training.

It also includes Phase 5, 6 and 7 plus exploration of movement patterns, isometrics, posture and post techniques. Other classes such as ethics and emotions, practitioner training, elements of a successful practice and self-care
contribute to the five hundred hours of training required to become a basic practitioner of Ortho-Bionomy. From the Society of Ortho-Bionomy Australia website (Goldberg and SOBA Committee, 2004), I have included summaries of the class descriptions, to provide more information about them, in Appendix 1.

Self Care

Self Care is one of the Ortho-Bionomy classes offered during training, both to become a practitioner, and for people who just want to attend a single class for their own interest. Here I quote Nicky Roosevelt, an Ortho-Bionomy practitioner from USA, describing the value to her of having learned Ortho-Bionomy, and Self Care in particular:

Be Your Own Self-Care Case Study

Recently, when I broke my fourth toe, I was reminded of how important it is to take oneself seriously as a case study in Ortho-Bionomy (O.B. …

… the benefits to tracking both acute and chronic injuries within myself were tangible.

I noticed I was more in tune with the experiences my clients might be going through. I could relate what I had experienced, and what had worked for me, in resolving our similar problem. Plus, I could give them things to do at home that would continue the healing process.

I also learned a lot about ways of addressing injuries through experimenting on myself. After ignoring a back strain injury for a month until it got so bad that I couldn’t bend over to put my shoes on, I knew what self-care exercises I needed to do. I spent a good chunk of time on my back on the floor with my legs up on a chair calming the muscles with a little heat. When I was comfortable, I did some of the mobilization exercises and pretty much returned to normal in a couple of days. I was thrilled to have taken an O-B self-care class!

By the time I broke that toe, I thought I knew the drill. I iced it right away, had it x-rayed and taped up, but it took hobbling around for several hours before I checked to see what O-B would feel like on it. I was surprised at how comfortable the toe was when working on it. Then it dawned on me how freaked out the tendons running past the break to the end of the toe must have been. Just simple compression in line with the bone was very comfortable and I could feel things
releasing. (Phase 4 and 6 doing their thing.) I had forgotten how great Phase 6 is on broken bones. When I got up to walk, my hobbiling was noticeably less.

I continued the work on the toe over the next week and paid attention to the collateral pattern in the ankle and knee, releasing them after they had worked overtime protecting from stepping on the toe the wrong way. I found a sandal that didn’t annoy the toe and went about my days very comfortably, notwithstanding a bit of an ache to the toe.

After two weeks it is almost ready for a shoe (why rush it?) and I feel very lucky to be an Ortho-Bionomy practitioner and know how to work on myself.

So, how about you? Are you using the opportunities that present themselves to study yourself and tune in to the power of Ortho-Bionomy as it manifests itself in your body? I’m sure glad I did (Roosevelt, 2008, p. 10).

Bowen Technique

![Figure 20: Bowen Technique](image)

Bowen Technique and Ortho-Bionomy seem to me to have some similarities in that they are both quick to take effect, gentle, and relaxing to receive. Neither should cause pain although some people experience aching during the week following a session. Both allow space for the body to deal with its own issues, rather than trying to impose corrections. Apart from that, I think the two
modalities differ. Basically, I think Ortho-Bionomy works by supporting the bones and joints in positions of comfort, thus allowing muscles to relax and release discomfort. Bowen Technique, in my opinion addresses muscles and connective tissue tension, strength and fluid retention directly, and thus assists the body to realign its skeletal system. I see these two modalities as arriving at a similar destination despite using quite different routes.

Bowen Technique (Navratil, 2003; Rentsch, 1986 - 1999) is another bodywork modality I have used in my practice since the 1980s, to good effect, as a supplement to Ortho-Bionomy.

It was named after Tom Bowen, the man who developed it in Geelong, Australia (Matthews, 1999). It usually consists of a series of four to six light and small, cross-fibre moves in specific places on the body followed by a two-minute rest, then more moves. During the two-minute rest, the client is usually alone (unless that is inappropriate) giving the body time and space in which to use the information it receives from the cross-fibre strokes.

According to Bowen, (Rentsch, 1986 - 1999) the initial strokes or moves are designed to segregate areas of the body like walls built across an imaginary dam (or small lake). The following moves are like pebbles thrown into the middle of the dam, which cause ripples to spread out through the water. When the ripples hit the ‘walls’ that were ‘built’, they rebound and ripple back, crossing over new waves still issuing from the pebble’s original splash. The effect of these ripples, or impulses of energy, crossing over each other, alerts the body to situations that need attention. Bowen’s description reminds me of the sonar signals a bat sends out, in order to map the terrain it is in. Returning echoes, apparently, give the outlines of features in the bat’s environment, so it can orient itself. Perhaps the Bowen Technique causes similar vibrations in the body, showing areas that are retaining fluid, or really tense. Whatever the cause, clients often report feeling the effects of the technique very soon after it is started. For example, blocked sinuses or tight breathing may clear within seconds or minutes of their specific moves being done. A recently sprained ankle may be seen to promptly reduce its swelling as the moves are done – quite a diverting sight. People report that the area that has been treated remains stronger and more flexible than it was before a session. Two sessions seem enough for many conditions, with three often being needed for shoulder concerns. Some situations require more sessions.

I have described this bodywork method here because it is part of my practice and research, but have chosen not to discuss it in great detail because it is
mainly a supplementary technique in my practice. Clients report (and I have also found) Bowen Technique to be remarkably quick and effective in apparently helping to resolve certain conditions such as: breathing challenges, sinus problems and hay fever symptoms, some circulatory bothers such as irregular heartbeats, infertility, joint strains and stiffness. I am most grateful to Tom Bowen for developing this work, and to my teachers, especially Ossie and Elaine Rentsch and Kevin Ryan, for passing on their impressive interpretations of Bowen Technique skills, as well as to Romney Smeaton for his generous, memorable demonstration of the work to me. Although the technique is a wonderful tool, and despite attending several series of classes and extra demonstrations in its use, I am not yet familiar enough with its philosophy and principles to include it more than incidentally in this thesis. As Navratil (2003) says:

[perhaps we will never really unveil the mystery of how and why his method works so well for so many people. Perhaps it is not so important to know but to just be grateful for Tom Bowen’s pioneering efforts (p. 39).

As far as I have been able to ascertain, Bowen Technique rests on different assumptions from the other three modalities. Like Ortho-Bionomy, it involves stimulating the self-corrective ability of the body. It differs in that its message to the body occurs through small, cross-fibre 'moves' across muscular, connective and nerve tissue in specific places, so communicating messages of stimulation or calm to relevant parts of the body.

The principle of this method, known generally around the world today as Bowen therapy was to instigate a change in the body that would reactivate the body's innate healing capabilities and allow it to heal itself (Navratil, 2003, p. 37).

Process Work

Process Oriented Psychology, or Process Work as it is now more commonly called, is a modality I have been studying since 1990, both in Australia and overseas with the founder, Dr Arnold Mindell and his colleagues. It has become an important part of my life and provides a background to my work. I rarely use Process Work directly in my practice and am no longer a registered student, choosing instead at present, to focus on postgraduate studies. Process Work is, however, a vital part of my practice, since I use it for inner work to gain insights
during sessions with clients, for supervision sessions, for personal growth, and to help me sharpen my awareness as a practitioner.

What is Process Work?

It is an approach to life that is all encompassing and therefore difficult to condense into a few pages of description. My friend and colleague, Helma Bak used to call Process Work: “Ortho-Bionomy of the soul” (Bak, 2001). Process Work is based in Jungian psychology (Jung, 1933, 1977). It was developed by Dr Arnold Mindell (Mindell, 1982), a physicist and Jungian analyst, who found that dreams and body experiences such as symptoms, reflect each other and hold inherent meaning. Mindell realised, through working deeply with his own process that phenomena like symptoms are meaningful, and can be unfolded to reveal the wisdom within. I have given some examples of this unfolding in the thesis, such as at the beginning of the ‘Body as Ally’ chapter. Amy Mindell, a co-developer of Process Work, and Arnold Mindell’s wife, describes how the role of the process worker is attitudinal rather than consisting of following a series of set techniques:

… the process worker is a modern day Taoist who is fascinated by the ‘unending flux’ of Nature. A process-oriented therapist seeks to unfold the spontaneous emergence of nature while knowing that it cannot be manipulated or hurried, only cradled and allowed to reveal itself in its own unique way and time (Mindell, 1995a, p. 59).

Process Work has a structure that can help us find our way and gain information. Briefly, the parts of our self that we identify with are included in the ‘primary process’, or the “I” (Mindell, Mindell, and Community, 1991). Those elements or attitudes of ours that we ignore, or exclude from what we own as part of us, we call our ‘secondary process’ or possible self. Between these two aspects of us is a barrier called the ‘edge’, in our psyche. Edges come about because we consider ourselves separate from our field of existence. And an edge:

… marks the limits of who you are and what you imagine yourselves capable of (Mindell and Mindell, 1992, p. 43).

When we are at an edge, we are held back from experiencing our self in a new way by ‘edge figures’ whose role is to keep us living in our old, familiar pattern, and who can be personal or cultural in origin. Sometimes an edge figure has recognisable qualities: we might recognise the tone or attitude of a parent or teacher in one. Perhaps it has a voice that tells you to “be brave, boys must
show courage” or “quietly please, it is not feminine to yell and be boisterous”. It is possible to step into new patterns by winning over, tricking, or even overpowering our edge figures and moving beyond what we have considered personally or culturally acceptable (Hatch, 2004-8). This fluidity can potentially make new behaviours, stances and energy available for life.

In my Ontology Chapter, I described the three layers of consciousness and reality of Process Work. Here I simply wish to list them as: ‘consensus reality’ (the material world), ‘dreamland’ (the psychological world) and the ‘sentient realm’ or ‘dreaming’ (a unitary world of basic pre-conceptual perceptions) (Hatch, 2003).

We use different levels of awareness for each layer of reality. ‘First attention’ helps us access content of consensus reality, ‘second attention’ connects us with dreamland and ‘third attention’ or lucid attention brings awareness of the sentient realm, while ‘fourth attention’ is a way of being that helps us freely access all realms of a process simultaneously (Hatch, 2004-8; Process Work Community, 2006). While writing, I use first attention to describe the ‘facts’ about Process Work, to notice that the day is cold and rainy and that our foster dog, Romeo, is lying behind my chair. I use second attention to dream into the staccato rhythm of the rain on the tin roof above me in contrast to the utter quietness of the large white dog’s relatively silent breathing expansion and contraction followed by a deep growly sigh. What does this contrast hold for my writing? The question lies quietly in my mind with no strong intention or direction. It might make sense to me at a later time. My third attention goes beyond the rain beating on the roof. Rain reminds me of my late father who had a deep love for me (and I for him). It takes me back to just after his death. I experienced an unexpected shift. Whereas while he was alive, I had sometimes felt Dad was ‘sitting on my shoulder’, critiquing much of my work, once he was dead, I had the feeling he could now be aware of everything in my life. To my surprise, instead of feeling oppressed by that ‘surveillance’ as I had been feeling, this sense of Dad’s constant overview brought with it a calmness and ease. The earlier, difficult aspects of his gaze lifted and his constant presence became a neutral part of life. I felt stronger and more autonomous. Rain reminds me of Dad because I was troubled, on the day of his funeral, about Mum’s extreme distress at Dad’s death and when rain fell as we buried Dad, the raindrops struck me as a communication or connection with him. Third attention is awareness of something beyond consensus reality and dreamland in a unitary realm, such as the stirring of intuition, moods or feelings at a preverbal stage. Fourth attention
helps me to be present to all levels with equanimity as a meta-awareness, allowing me to focus on all levels as I have while writing this last paragraph.

When I return to my earlier musings about the rain’s tattoo on the roof I feel meditative and warm sitting at this table to write, protected from the wild and cold weather outside. I start to make raindrops movements with my fingers and as they dance and jerk faster and faster, I need to stand up so my body can follow my fingers. What can this mean? I hope to let you know once my dance is finished. Wait please. My fingers need to cavort and flick all through space up and down, in front and behind. They are not content with movement but need to make a noise on the plaster walls and doorjambs, on the floor and table – all around. My body follows, jiggling wildly. I feel shy that someone might catch a glimpse of me, but no-one does. Then I feel like a rain sprite, who is everywhere. I realise that my second attention was not confined to the writing I am presently doing about Process Work. It had widened its awareness. I think the rain drops were a ‘flirt’ from the world that began as a sound, transferred into movement (of my fingers and body) and called on sound again to add more emphasis. As a sprite, I now imagine bringing the message I have researched to the world. That message concerns remembering the body as an ally, developing awareness and trust of self. Following the rain’s message has expanded my vision, from local to global.

The other half of my earlier awareness was of our new dog lying so quietly behind me. When I shape-shift into his big, calm, Maremma body, I am, confident the world is safe for me. I can sleep in peace. Very little disturbs or threatens me. If I am worried about an intrusion, I give a deep bark and resolve my concerns immediately. I can afford to be friendly because I feel substantial and strong, loved and respected. Why did Romeo catch my attention simultaneously with the raindrops’ plinking? I think I will have trouble sharing a message as a rain sprite if I cannot access a gentle, calm strength and decisiveness as well. First, second, third and fourth attention are freely available to us all the time if we can find the space to be aware of them. The most apparently mundane hint might hold a major message.

Fourth attention, or process attention is described by Mindell as:

… simultaneous lucidity and consciousness, that is, having a sense of origin of all things and simultaneously living with full awareness of the amazing diversity of the world (2000a, p. 36).
There is a great deal more to Process Work than I have so far been able to summarise here. Process Work can be carried out with individuals as inner work or with a partner or therapist. It can be applied in relationships between two people or a group, sometimes called Worldwork. Process Workers delve into symptoms, movements, natural phenomena dreams and disturbances. This way of working is transdisciplinary, bringing skills and attitudes from such fields as Jungian and Gestalt psychology, Taoism, alchemy, art, shamanism, dance, meditation, physics and bodywork to bear on situations that demand awareness of us. I find Process Work of immense help in my personal and professional life. For example, when my Father briefly slipped into unconsciousness as he died, I felt able to use my coma training from Process Work to stay in apparent communication with him (Arnold Mindell, 1989a; Amy Mindell, 1999). I think he was aware I was with him as he was dying. This sense of connecting with Dad was important to me, enabling a sort of ‘bridge’ between my Mother and Dad as he died.

I leave my description with the words of Susan Hatch, who provides a summary of the range of Process Work:

It is a form of inner work, it can be used to address illness and body symptoms … dreams and creativity, it is useful in working with couples, families, group process and organizational development…It has birthed a branch called “Worldwork”, a community and a discipline that regularly gathers large numbers of individuals to work on pressing world issues. It works with people in coma and near death, in extreme states, with addictions, and with organizational development and change (2006, p. 50-51).

Open Space Technology

When conflict is an issue and/or there is pressure for immediate solutions Open Space Technology (Owen, 1994) is at its most effective. All that is required physically is an uninterrupted space large enough for participants to sit in a circle, a wall to accommodate papers as a bulletin board and some spaces for small groups to meet. Having time to dream helps the process, so ideally an event will extend over one or two nights since conversations seem to deepen after participants sleep. An inclusive, passion-inspiring invitation to as wide as possible an interest group is vital, as is permission to attend the event or not. There are four principles and one law, which I repeat here for convenience:
Those who comes are the right people
Whenever it starts is the right time
Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
When it’s over it’s over.

The law of two feet states that if you are not learning or contributing to a group you are in, it is your responsibility to find somewhere else to be (Owen, 1994). Meetings can include from about five people to several thousand participants. They are inexpensive to organise, both in time and energy, and they always bear fruit when run according the their simple requirements. No prior training is required for facilitators and information is freely available on the internet (for example Ender, 2005; Owen, 1998) and in books (including Owen, 1994, 1997).

For instance, instead of seeing my practice as my own, through Open Space Technology, I acknowledge the input of clients, workers and my family as equally valid contributions to mine. I step back more when others offer services, keeping an overview, since I presently see that as my role, and accepting or inviting the wide-ranging talents of others. I think the practice has benefited from opening up.

An example of Open Space Technology use in my practice, as a part of its business structure, concerns my thinking processes. I invite and make space for a wider range of internal characters, or voices, now, to debate when thinking about as issue. This has happened during the fieldwork too. Participants were invited, at the outset, to explore and bring forward their own interests and to investigate them in their own way. I played my role and they stepped into theirs, each taking a different route through the similar territory provided by the bodywork and other activities. I did not need to try to control, or even know about, other people’s processes. For more information, see the chapter about fieldwork.

I now use Open Space Technology as a democratic and simple business structure. It brings forward the talents and enthusiasms of interested participants. It also fits my philosophy since it accommodates flexibility and fluidity, can handle large amounts of information from widely disparate sources, can welcome more than one view of reality and caters for comfort. The role of the facilitator is minimal, once Open Space Technology principles and law have been introduced to a group, the facilitator is welcome to leave. This is a business or meeting structure that welcomes and facilitates self-organisation. All groups self-organise, but sometimes meeting methods obstruct emergence and waste participants’ time. Software (Ender, 2005) has been developed for use with groups unable to
meet face to face, and has won the “Top 10 World Changer Award” for 2006, awarded by PoliticsOnline (Lee, 2006).

Occasionally I use Open Space Technology as a way to convene parts of me or aspects of my business, for example, where parts of me are unable to come to an agreement. In this, I see some similarity between Process Work and Open Space Technology. You can read one example of this in the Body as Ally chapter when voices in my head record their discussion about the validity of my use of Process Work. That discussion can just as easily be an example of Open Space Technology as it is Process Work: stakeholders were invited to bring their passion and responsibility to bear on an issue. They recorded their proceedings and made them available to elucidate a situation. Process Work with a group usually involves a more complex and intense involvement by a facilitator than Open Space Technology, where the facilitator can open and hold the space from a distance. In fact, the founder, Harrison Owen, recommends (and practises) taking a nap, often right away from the venue, once the space has been opened. Arnold Mindell and his colleagues, however, are generally present and actively involved during, for example, a Worldwork gathering (Process Work Community, 2006) that I attended in Sydney, conducted by a large group of facilitators in cooperation.

Similarities between the two modalities are that both are designed to be used in situations of conflict and passion. Both invite all the voices involved to participate. Both provide a structure in which participants use their knowledge, tools and metaskills to resolve conflict and disturbance. Both require participants to behave responsibly. Both methods have confidence in people’s ability to bring about resolution, although resolution is not a requirement. Both accept the importance of a level of chaos during the process.

I am a member of an e-list in which the pro and cons of Open Space Technology and Process Work have been discussed. Since I have not been conducting Open Space Technology events or attending many Process Work workshops for several months while I complete this thesis, I am leaving further pursuit of that question until later. At present I can only say that I have gained from my relatively limited exposure to both methods. Open Space Technology impresses me with its trust, simplicity and mobilising ability and Process Work appeals because of its compassion, open-mindedness, integrity, relationship skills and support for social action. I have room for both in my life. All the parts that I can
imagine might want a say are invited to show up and are given a chance to have their say.

Conclusion

This chapter explained the basics of the main modalities I use in my practice. It linked my work with theorists in other fields. Now I want to show how these modalities came into being in practical form in my fieldwork.

One way I have chosen to demonstrate the integral nature of the fieldwork is through the fieldwork section of the DVD accompanying this thesis. I invite you to now watch this part of the DVD.

Another way I showed how I used the modalities in the research fieldwork is through writing case studies and a general description of the project in the Fieldwork chapter.
FIELDWORK

Introduction

“Can I somehow reclaim the site of my body and re-narrate my experience on my own terms” (Payne, 1996, p. 50)? These words represent one possible approach to the fieldwork project undertaken for this research. A group of 9 participants, including me, used a story about a bunyip (a mythical Australian creature) searching for identity, as a metaphor for our own exploration of embodiment and self. A video of the bunyip story (Wagner, 1990) is contained in the DVD accompanying this thesis.

Research story

Late one night, for no particular reason, something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of Berkeley’s Creek. The fish swam away in fright. And the night birds in the trees hid their heads under their wings. When they looked again, something very large and very muddy was sitting on the bank.

After emerging from the mud, the bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek wandered off through the Australian bush to ‘research’ what he was. He ‘interviewed’ various animals who were rather unflattering in their opinions of him, and a scientist who was apparently busy with a quantitative, rational study of consensus reality. The scientist shocked him by telling the bunyip he did not exist.

The bunyip did not gain much clarity about his research topic until he took steps to care for his own need for reflective space. Once he found a space, near a muddy billabong (or remnant pool of water), he settled in and took a good look at himself. When something stirred near him in the mud of the billabong, and turned out to be another bunyip, the first bunyip was delighted.

**The Research Direction**

Like the bunyip, I began ‘formal’ research without a clear idea of which direction I wanted to take, or who I presently was, as the initiating researcher for this project. In order to find out, I followed a rather serendipitous process, within the structure of certain guiding principles I wanted to engage with. For example, I
wanted to do as I said. If I believed a principle was worthwhile, I wanted to see that principle in action in my research. Serendipity was one of my guides, formalised rather strictly, as I discovered, in Th’ L’zy G’rl’s M’th’d of R’s’ch (Baensch, 2002b), but also appearing less formally during the writing and research process. Respect for serendipity, sometimes described as ‘following the Tao’ (see LaoTzu, 1990), was one of the metaskills (like those described in Mindell, 1995a) of the research process.

Some of the people I talked to about my research greeted me with blank looks or incredulity, just as the bunyip received negative feedback from creatures he talked with in his search for knowledge. These people could not see my work as research, since it did not follow an experimental design. Their response rocked my confidence and I needed to regroup.

Just like the bunyip of the story, I spent “... a long time, lost in thought” (Wagner, 1990 p. 7). Sometimes that thinking bore fruit, giving me a new direction to follow, sometimes not. Like the bunyip, especially after an encounter that sapped my energy or confidence, I often sighed “... a long deep sigh.” and murmuring “[w]hat a pity ... what a pity, what a pity ...” (Wagner, 1990 p. 17) walking slowly back to my ‘waterhole’, in my case a desk, for a time of reflective thought. It often seemed to me that no one saw me go. Then I would find a quiet, still ‘billabong’ where no-one could see me and where I could “… be as handsome as I like” (Wagner, 1990 p. 21).

Occasionally, as happened today when Robbie Lloyd, a fellow student from New South Wales, rang to talk over our respective research processes (Lloyd, 2007), “… something stirred in the black mud at the bottom of the billabong” (Wagner, 1990 p. 23) and I would find someone sitting there also metaphorically murmuring “What am I, what am I?” Then, like the bunyip, I was able to jump in delight and shout, “You are a …” researcher, and exchange emails to prove it!

As I just explained, the bunyip story was reflected in the theoretical research, as I explored what my work was, how it related to other disciplines and thinkers, where it was located in the field and how it seemed from multiple perspectives. It was also played out in the fieldwork planning and execution. I met together with a group of other ‘bunyips’, who were interested, like me, to know more about ourselves. By asking ourselves who we were at the project’s start, and going through some shared bodywork and other experiences together, we found out more about ourselves and, like the bunyip, shared our ‘mirrors’ “…to prove it” (Wagner, 1990 p. 26). Some of our ‘mirrors’ were: conversations, stories, poetry,
art, video, charts, shared experiences, and the answering of questions. Unlike the fish and night birds of the children's book, who hid from the bunyip in fright, or the platypus, kangaroo, emu and scientist, who dismissed the bunyip, often in critical and hurtful ways, the bunyip was accepting of his new bunyip companion as she emerged from the mud and tried to find out who she was. He sat beside her in a friendly way, kept her company where she was, and was openly enthusiastic to be with her as she found out more about herself. Similarly, we co-researchers formed a supportive group where we could each explore the process of getting to know ourselves in our own way. Each had our own set of past experiences and a distinctly different way to go. We also had similarities. We shared the same location for five days, explored who we were, and learned bodywork together.

Fieldwork Choices

The research in general mainly revolved around becoming familiar with the philosophy and praxis that contextualise my work. The fieldwork was conducted as a way for participants to explore and understand an experience of bodywork, especially Ortho-Bionomy, on their body and sense of self. It helped me to broaden my knowledge of bodywork and of research, it provided another practical and theoretical spiral of understanding in the research and entailed two aspects. One was a group project; the other took the form of bodywork sessions for individuals. The latter helped me find some future possible directions for the practice and is not included in the thesis in detail, but rather in incidental ways, mainly in the DVD and concluding chapter. Those individual sessions served as a basis for inspiring future possibilities for my practice. They were conducted with members of my extended family, and friends with ethics approval and their informed consent. The amount of data I discovered was vast, and I believed the best use was as a store of ideas and reflections to prompt new directions in my practice.
What We Did in General

The group fieldwork project was carried out in November 2004. It was conducted at my then home in Healesville, a Yarra Valley town just beyond the North Eastern fringe of Melbourne. During this project I invited a group of eight adult participants, who had expressed interest in doing so, to stay with me in my home for five days while we learned and exchanged bodywork and other skills9. As I have said, the fieldwork was loosely based on the children's story written by Jenny Wagner, illustrated by Ron Brooks (1990) and called The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek.

Participants in the fieldwork, including me, shared and recorded responses to our experience together through art, video, photographs, written exercises, interviews, feedback with partners, and group meetings. Participants examined how they felt at the start of the project, and made a record of their impressions as they saw fit, using art or language. Participants began by asking themselves: “Who am I?” They asked that question using several of the following steps. Before they arrived participants had given me some information about themselves, by phone or email, which started their process of focussing on who they were. Seven participants were present with me at the beginning of the first day. The eighth participant flew in that evening.

During the first day, after some refreshments, all participants including me, met in a circle in a yurt (a round, domed tent made in Central Asia), which I had hired for our group gatherings and erected in the front garden.

9 Please see Appendix 1 for information about Ortho-Bionomy class contents and the invitation I sent to people who expressed interest in participating in the fieldwork.
We introduced ourselves. We then went into our lounge room, where most of the remaining five days of the project were conducted. There I provided materials for art, music and writing, and suggested some ‘exercises’. Participants chose their preferred materials and made their own way towards answering: “Who am I?” All who were present chose to do all but two of the exercises I suggested. One exercise declined by participants was to create a 2-D life-size replica of their body out of corrugated cardboard, dressing it as preferred using provided art materials such as paints and fabrics so it represented how they felt. The other was to measure the body and record measurements and angles. The participant who arrived during the evening of the first day, had earlier completed some of the activities for the day at her home. By the end of the first day, participants had all attempted to gain an appreciation of who and how they were at that point in time. (Perhaps time has no points - it might be more accurate for me to say ‘at that relative place and time’.)

After the first day, we all engaged in a four day series of activities including Ortho-Bionomy, Bowen Technique (Stammers, 1996), footbaths (based on a recipe given to me by Bak, 1992) and Process Work (along the lines of Hatch, 2004-8; Mindell, 1993a). The group process was set up using Open Space Technology (Heft, 2005b). I set the participants’ chairs in a circle, and walked around inside the circle as I described the four principles and one law of Open Space Technology (O.S.T.) (Please see the Modalities chapter for more details about O.S.T. and its principles.) This method fostered and enriched participant involvement in the research planning and management. Owen (1994, 1997) the originator of O.S.T. proposed that conducting gatherings in a circle, with no pre-planned agenda and following the simple principles and law, invites responsible, focussed, democratic and passionate participation by group members. One participant, later commented that she had felt a physical shift in the energy of the
group as I walked around inside the space, despite the fact that my actions were carried out in a quiet and minimal way.

The activities were interspersed with meals, refreshments and a trip to Maroondah Dam to conduct a walking exercise. On the fifth day, participants once again checked how they felt by asking themselves the question: “Who am I now?” Responses were recorded in languages, both written on paper and spoken on video, as well as through visual arts. Each person was encouraged to choose their own way of communicating their ‘voice’: their individual qualities.

Resources for Creativity

Everything I thought participants might need was made available so they could access materials easily, and work at their own pace and convenience. If someone wanted to express an idea or feeling at any time, the resources needed to be available, inspiring and varied enough for their purposes. I provided paints, pencils, charcoal and pastels with a variety of types and sizes of paper plus portable backing materials, musical instruments, space for movement and quiet areas for private reflection, both indoors and outside. It seemed important to cater for the expression of as many senses and moods as possible, not just the visual.

The group gathered at a different Healesville restaurant each night, as a way for participants to get to know each other in an alternative environment to my home. The days were broken up with refreshments for morning and afternoon tea. I provided mid-morning snacks likely to be conducive to concentration such as fruit, nuts, biscuits and cheese. Cakes were generally saved until afternoon tea, in case they caused a follow-on drop in energy. Participants were free, and encouraged, to change arrangements if they wished.

Aims of the Fieldwork I Conducted

In setting up the fieldwork project, I had several aims in mind. Some were a little vague at the start, and developed during the fieldwork, others became more pronounced and clear as I interpreted the data. I list the aims here:

To describe my practice as one way to:

reflect on the practice and learn about it in relationship with others

conduct a practice

communicate the work I carry out, with clients and the body, to others
To improve my practice in regard to:

individual sessions

facilitating bodywork classes

To discover and develop fitting methods to:

research my practice

train myself to do research

The Group Project

This section of writing was summarised from my research journal.

*On Tuesday 16th November 2004, participants gathered at my home in Healesville. We sat in a circle and introduced ourselves, as depicted in the accompanying DVD, then I summarised my view of the project and opened the space for participants to contribute to and take from the project in whatever way they wished.*

I made some possible exercises or activities available that we could pursue together and participants mostly took these up. Our theme was finding out who we were at the start of the project, then taking part in some bodywork training - mostly Ortho-Bionomy - and finally checking how we were after that process. Some of our activities were videotaped and I have provided excerpts of the video footage as part of the included DVD.

Assessment

Participants completed a comprehensive assessment of their wellbeing and sense of self. This incorporated a body map, where a small body outline was marked to show areas of pain, comfort, heat, cold, tension. The assessment also encompassed a High and Low Dream exercise from Process Oriented Psychology, which I received permission to use from Dr Arnold Mindell (1998). After the bodywork days were over, participants were invited to return to the assessment process and repeat their initial activities to see how they were by then.

At the conclusion of the project, each participant was videoed by Jim while they talked about their participation in the project and their writing and artwork that had ensued. Some of this footage is included in the accompanying DVD.
Group and Individual Bodywork

I taught Ortho-Bionomy to the participants, gave them a session of Bowen Technique as a group, an individual basic cranial session each, and provided nutritional footbaths each day. (Please see Appendix 3 for recipe).

Most of our time was taken up with learning Ortho-Bionomy. As the moves for each part of the body were demonstrated and practised, mostly in pairs, participants could access art and writing materials with which to record their experiences. Musical instruments were also available, but not used. Time and space were allowed for journaling and reflection to occur, or for walks in the nearby area.

Demographics

Eight participants took part, apart from me. Of these, two were male and six were female. One couple came from Tasmania, one woman from Queensland, a man from Canberra and four women were from Melbourne. All had some exposure to Ortho-Bionomy. This ranged from teacher training to having experienced one or more sessions of Ortho-Bionomy.

Occupations varied. Three participants were Ortho-Bionomy practitioners and one a practising teacher. Another was a trained Ortho-Bionomy teacher who had not, by then, completed her registration process. Two people were public servants, one employed by a university, the other working in natural resources management. One more was training to be a beautician. Ages ranged from early twenties to late fifties.

During the bodywork experiences, participants remained fully clothed, as is usual during classes and sessions of Ortho-Bionomy. A video showing the Founder of Ortho-Bionomy, Arthur Lincoln Pauls demonstrating some of the work was shown, as was a DVD I had prepared as an introduction to the research. Apart from that, and going as a group to meals, time outside daily classes was free, to be used according to participants’ preferences. A caterer provided wonderful, healthy lunches and some of our refreshments, at the house. Participants cooked their own breakfasts from ingredients I supplied. In the evenings, we usually ate dinner at a different local restaurant, although one evening, we bought take-away food to eat at the house. Evenings were times to relax and socialise or rest.
The Study

Participants in the study were initially recruited through a talk I gave at an Ortho-Bionomy practise session in Box Hill, about an hour’s drive from the venue for the project. Information also went out via the Society of Ortho-Bionomy newsletter throughout Australia and through word of mouth sharing. There was an amount charged as a contribution towards expenses such as food, art materials and cleaning. This amount was a great deal lower than what is normally charged for a residential training in Ortho-Bionomy. I did not charge for my setting up or teaching time. Each participant paid $180.00. They each received a package approved by the University of Western Sydney Ethics Committee containing information about the project, their right to cease their involvement at any stage and a contact for enquiries about ethics. The information included forms to sign regarding consent for video and participation. All participants were adults. Assessment was qualitative. Quantitative measures, such as the angle of shoulder range of movement were offered and not taken up (or not recorded) by participants.

Fieldwork Participants

Choice of participants:

My initial attempt to gather participants occurred when I spoke at a practice session for the Victorian Ortho-Bionomy at Box Hill Community Arts Centre on 15th August 2004. Several people expressed interest. I asked those attending to give me their preferences for dates or logistics. Preference was expressed for a five-day residential gathering rather than two weekends plus an extra day. Dates were suggested and I settled on 16th to 20th October 2004. Of those who expressed interest at the practise session, only one was later to attend. Others becoming involved through snowball sampling. Seven people booked ahead and one more rang on 15th October, asking to be included, bringing the total to eight. 26 people expressed interest in joining a residential in January when they could take time away from work, but I thought that would have delayed the fieldwork too long. So I decided to go ahead with the October date.

Returning to the Ortho-Bionomy practise session in Box Hill: I followed the suggestions of those present, by placing a paragraph about the research in the Ortho-Bionomy newsletter for Australia (see Appendix 2). I also spoke with and sent emails to recent clients to whom I had mentioned the research. Snowball
sampling occurred when the sole participant recruited at the Ortho-Bionomy practice session told her clients about the project, and two of them joined the group. The newsletter brought three participants, one of whom invited a friend, and the emails attracted one more participant. Prospective participants were sent letters giving information about the project (see Appendix 2), what I would provide and how they could withdraw if they wished.

People in the fieldwork group ranged along a continuum from those who knew me well and were experienced with Ortho-Bionomy to those I had never met who had less knowledge of Ortho-Bionomy. This was a useful range in respect to the aims of the research, since it was representative of both individual sessions and class groups. I give sessions to people who have never heard of Ortho-Bionomy before seeing me as well as to advanced teachers of Ortho-Bionomy. Similarly, classes contain a spread of students from beginners to experienced senior practitioners and teachers of Ortho-Bionomy. This mix keeps me on my toes as facilitator and seems to enrich the experience of class members. Fieldwork participants also commented on the breadth of experience represented by their group members as instructive and enjoyable.

On Day One

On day one I welcomed participants, offered a cuppa and we met in a circle in the yurt on our front lawn. There I expressed appreciation for being able to conduct the fieldwork on the land of the Wurrundjuri people, and for the care given to the land throughout history by the traditional owners of the land. Participants and I introduced each other and spoke a little about the fieldwork. We then moved to the lounge room and I talked about research in general, and ways we might choose to study ourselves. Introductions, and housekeeping details such as levels of comfort, locations of bathrooms and other facilities, breakfast arrangements and so on were important at the start. Then we joined the Bunyip of Berkeleys Creek in asking: “Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?” (see DVD video and Wagner, 1990).

On the first day, we participated in a day of discovery, asking ourselves variations of the bunyip’s question such as: Who am I? Where am I? How am I?, especially in relation to living in our body, in our particular environment. We explored how to find out about ourselves. Suggested ways of studying ourselves included some polarities such as exploring ourselves through: introspection and outer focus; quantitative and qualitative study; personal and mechanical; or close and distant study; free ranging and accurately bounded reflection and so on.
Research is something we do all day everyday and it is an incidental part of life. We constantly check and evaluate what is happening around us in order to remain safe and healthy. In the fieldwork we specified research to be the main focus for our week.

As part of the introduction, I made the following statement:

I have a preference for, and more experience with qualitative research that explains and fleshes out information, over research relying on measurement, graphs, numbers, etc. However I do not want to limit the project to my preferences. You are welcome to use any type of measurement you choose. My strong preference is that you only measure yourself in ways that feel beneficial to you. For example, if being weighed has unpleasant connotations for you, it need not be done.

The sort of research I have mainly done so far involves telling stories. Mostly I choose to do that in writing, sometimes as art – drawing, painting, computer designs, photos, video and occasionally performance. It is all performance in a way, if it is to be shared, or even if it is to be thought about privately by me. We are all performing a variety of roles and transforming over different roles from time to time, even moment by moment. We claim some roles and ignore or overlook others, for a variety of reasons.

I wrote my Masters thesis (Baensch, 2002b) about how I got to know myself, and gradually ‘took up residence’ in my body. As mentioned in the Preface to this PhD thesis the examiners of my Masters thesis both recommended that I should offer the process, which I had described going through myself, to a group of research participants. I have accepted their recommendations and made them the basis of the fieldwork for my PhD research.

It seems my Masters was unusual in its approach in several ways. 1. It considers the body, 2. it is set in a way of researching based on Ortho-Bionomy, 3. its spirit is one of integral research and 4. it is personal. Occasionally people study the body, but they mostly do so in a theoretical way and through observing the body as an object to be measured or discussed. I preferred to describe the experience of living in my body in practical ways, interwoven with some theory. It was important to me that my supervisor, Debbie Horsfall, allowed and encouraged me to go my own way during my Masters studies, and is still doing so with this PhD. Now I want to provide the setting and encouragement for you to do the same as you find more about yourself during this project.
That is why I am framing the project in Open Space Technology (OST). It gives each of us the opportunity to seek out our interests, abilities and enthusiasms, as well as taking up the power and responsibility for following our own process.

I strongly prefer you to take part in this study for your own purposes, not to be primarily involved for my sake. Yes, I would like feedback and information about your impressions of how you experience it, if that suits you.

Each person is likely to have assumptions about how this research will be and what they imagine their role to be. No doubt there will be some chaos and miscommunication on occasions. I hope the overall experience of being involved will be useful and enjoyable for each of you. Although I have some familiarity with aspects of the study from planning it and carrying out my Masters research, this experience is a new one for me too. I want each person to benefit from this project. Please tell me or Jim if you have questions, or concerns

I want to thank each of you for giving up so much to be here. Your time is very valuable and I appreciate your willingness to be part of this project. My belief is that Ortho-Bionomy has not been researched academically before. I have tried to keep this project as true to Arthur Lincoln Paul's vision as I can. Arthur, the founder of Ortho-Bionomy did not want Ortho-Bionomy 'set in concrete' in a book, but preferred an oral tradition in passing it from person to person. After weighing up his wishes, I spent five years developing and settling into a voice I considered appropriate to an oral style, and trying to develop a research methodology that does justice to Arthur's preferences.

I hope I am on the right track and that we can all learn together and eventually present the world with a little something that is delicious, inspiring and useful for us and other people too. Let us be prepared to be surprised!

I opened the space for our 5 days together by stating the 4 principles and one law of Open Space Technology as we sat in a circle together. I walked around inside the circle and invited participants to contribute in their own way to the fieldwork. We had a discussion about permission to withdraw at any time, data gathering methods, uses for the data, privacy and so on. We also explored the available materials and resources and participants chose any they wanted to use for journals and so on.

During day one, I suggested the exercises listed on the following chart.
Participants undertook most of them, as shown below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Exercises</th>
<th>Supplies needed</th>
<th>Undertaken?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High and Low Dream</td>
<td>Printed sheet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Myth</td>
<td>Printed suggestions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Maps</td>
<td>Body – A4 outlines key and pencils / pens etc.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Outline</td>
<td>Corrugated cardboard or fabric or roll of paper</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living sculpture</td>
<td>Massage tables, berets, smocks, demonstration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of motion</td>
<td>Metre rule (height), measuring tape (size), paper to draw angles, etc</td>
<td>Not recorded by participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 25: Day one

Body Maps for all Participants

Each participant filled in a body map at the start of the project and another map at the end. I provided blank ‘maps’ (body outlines) and coloured pencils, pens, pastels and fibre pens, plus a list of suggested categories to mark on the maps. Participants were welcome to add or omit categories and choose their own colours.
Days Two to Five

This chart lists the activities we participated in during the next four days of the fieldwork project. There is insufficient space to describe these in detail. Some examples of the activities we engaged with can be seen on the accompanying DVD in the Fieldwork section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day two</th>
<th>Ortho-Bionomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Psoas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Pelvis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* ‘Simple’ spine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowen session as a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Footbath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 26:** Day two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day three</th>
<th>Ortho-Bionomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Coccyx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Sacrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Breastbone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Footbath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 27:** Day three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day four</th>
<th>Ortho-Bionomy:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Walking Pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s at Maroondah Dam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Footbath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Workshop

Prior to the fieldwork I gained extra experience in the use of Open Space Technology by acting as an assistant to practised facilitators in my local area, running an event, attending and helping to organise the November 2002 Open Space Technology Conference: OS on OS in Oz (as depicted in the OST section of the accompanying DVD). I trained further in Process Work relating to group processes (Hatch, 2003, 2004-8) as well as reading about group facilitation methods in preparation for the fieldwork (for example Holman and Devane, 1999; Hunter, Bailey, and Taylor, 1998; Mindell, 1995b, 2002; Williams, 2004). I had hired a yurt and spent the best part of a day helping to set it up, thinking it would provide the best possible space for participants to meet as a group or to use as for private reflection. The yurt was not a place that participants wanted to go, and I asked for it to be taken away during the project so we could use the front garden space it occupied instead for other group activities.

As the main Ortho-Bionomy teacher during this residential workshop, I tried to convey bodywork skills clearly and ‘osmotically’ (as demonstrated by Kain, 1985) so participants would ‘absorb the skills through their skin and body’ until appropriate aspects became part of them as a praxis (see Baensch, 2002b; Bawden and Packham, 1993).

With this aim in mind, I paid attention to the language and style of my teaching, in order to have participants as comfortable and stimulated as possible during the gathering. I noted and made space for the different channels described in
Process Work, such as visual, auditory, proprioceptive and kinaesthetic as well as the composite relationship and world channel input and expression. There were, for example, charts and videos for visual learners, exchanges of hands-on bodywork for those with proprioceptive or kinaesthetic preferences, feedback given in pairs or groups for those more attuned to relationship and world channels (see following chart relating channels to my fieldwork).
"Channels are signal vehicles, which convey intended and unintended communication." (Diamond and Jones, 2004, p. 64)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channels</th>
<th>Channels in Fieldwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Proprioceptive Channel</strong> &lt;br&gt; (&quot;felt body sensations,&quot; (p. 64)</td>
<td>'Client' informs 'practitioner' about physical sensations before and during practise sessions eg. Participant describing discomfort before demonstration of bodywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Visual Channel</strong> &lt;br&gt; (&quot;... conveyed as images, fantasies &amp; pictures,&quot; (p. 64)</td>
<td>Practitioner notices client's preferred posture, eg. head turned to one side during 'Fold &amp; Hold' exercise or practice session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Movement Channel</strong> &lt;br&gt; (&quot;... a kinesthetic mode of experience &amp; expression,&quot; (p. 65)</td>
<td>Practitioner watches client walking to discern movement patterns eg. Maroondah Dam walking exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Auditory Channel</strong> &lt;br&gt; (&quot;... encompasses all manner of internal &amp; external sounds ....,&quot; (p. 66)</td>
<td>The sound of kookaburras laughing in the garden at breakfast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Channels 1 to 4 are irreducible channels - "... unable to be broken down into other, more basic channels." The remaining 2 channels are reducible composites of the first four channels "... made up of a combination of elementary channel experiences" (Diamond and Jones, p. 66).

| Relationship Channel | Relationships depicted in artwork or described in words eg. ATM's sketch showing importance of a particular, special relationship in her life |
| "... communicated through or felt in relationship to someone else." (p. 67) |

Reinforcing individual learning styles (Sharp, 1995) was one reason for providing access to a variety of art materials, cameras, notebooks and papers of varying sizes and types as well as musical instruments, and for encouraging participants to choose their most appropriate ways to express and record learning during the
project. I also wanted to supply full notes for the students, which required revision of my student notes, as well as printing and collating handouts during the project. These notes could be described as a palimpsest of layers, erased and overlaid with improvements over the years, in order to present Ortho-Bionomy in an accessible way, from many angles, to students and members of the public. Once again, the notes take into account and welcome as many ways of learning as possible through my inclusion of photos and non-technical language, to give multiple perspectives. This is in keeping with my interpretation of the Ortho-Bionomy way of creating a comfortable cave for people, not only in the physical body. I extend that respect for comfort to learning situations so participants can let go of expectations and past learning that they no longer need, while being present to the simple principles of the work they are seeing demonstrated, reading about, hearing described, performing themselves, and feeling practised on them. Ortho-Bionomy involves many of the twelve senses described by Steiner, such as: touch, balance, hearing, vision, self-movement, sense of ego, life, temperature, and language (Soesman, 1990). I included the senses of taste and smell through the choice of foods to complement the learning experience. These aspects of the fieldwork are simply listed because a full explanation would take a great deal of space and might crowd out my research learning, which is more central to this PhD thesis.

Following Open Space Technology practice, participants and I met for the fieldwork in a circle so our gatherings would be more like equal conversations than classes. Even so, I was aware of being the main speaker throughout the fieldwork. This became more apparent when I watched videos of the project filmed by Jim, and has been my biggest learning from the fieldwork about the way I communicate. Since I am facilitating bodywork, I would like to communicate my classes through the whole bodies of all those involved, not predominantly by my mind via my voice. Some stories, instructions and suggestions are likely to be constructive, and I would like to use my voice a lot less.

Videography

One of my methods of data collection was videography. As a research method for the group project, it proved troublesome. I logged all of the footage using a time line (and slow, unresponsive equipment). I analysed the footage by having the words transcribed into text, so I could read it. This was a massive task for
Jeannie, because of the amount of footage and the lack of a suitable microphone for greater clarity. I read the transcript and used it in two main ways:

Grouping statements according to themes over the group in general.

Drawing out the essence of case studies.

Then I checked through the footage and photographs for illustration of the chosen text. I was unable to manage the footage as a whole. It was too complex and fast-moving for me to catch snatches of it.

In order to record what went on during the workshop, I asked Jim to record the proceedings using a small, hand-held home video camera, which was mostly placed on a tripod. I was very conscious of not wanting to invade the space of participants, so I mostly restricted the videotaping to the introduction, teaching sessions and interviews at the conclusion of the project. I chose not to film social times such as breakfasts, morning and afternoon teas, meals or free time.

The videotaping had several effects. It provided a record of what went on each day while the camera was running. Because of my direction about what to capture on video, I was left with hours of footage, mainly of my teaching. This was difficult for me to watch because I became very self-critical, so watching myself was painful. The footage captured was out of balance – too much of me and insufficient footage of participants working together and expressing their experiences. This is an area where I tried to be in control instead of allowing participants to control how much they were filmed. I felt overly protective of participants, thus missing a record of valuable parts of the research. I think the video camera placed a dampener on participants and made them feel inhibited. It certainly had that effect on me, resulting in tension that I thought would lessen over time, but this did not seem to happen much.

Although I do appreciate having a video record of aspects of the research, I feel critical of my choice of focus for the footage. I asked for Jim to video my teaching, with a view to possibly compiling a web page to offer the bodywork content of the fieldwork for participants’ revision and public access. I did not think this idea out sufficiently. To complete such a plan would have taken more skill, time and energy than I had available.

As a learning experience for future research, I think this was a salutary experience. Recording the footage added to my roles (directing). I had insufficient energy for the process and could not be fluid in direction, responding
to events as they occurred and changing plans on the run. It was a burden for me to have so much footage to watch and use. The technology was also too challenging for me.

Photography

Jim photographed participants’ art at the end of the project, for example:

Figure 31: Tissue paper collage

Figure 32: Oil pastel drawing

The photographs were useful as a record of the art produced. I laid out all of the photos on a series of massage tables and a table tennis table in a large room in order to see the work carried out by each participant. This was useful since the paintings, drawings and collage pieces themselves were large and could not all otherwise be accommodated together in one space. The photography needed to be more specialised in order to record the art for publishing – lighting was too dull and sometimes at an angle that did not do justice to the art.

Where possible because of size and medium, I would scan art pieces for placing in the thesis since the results are clearer and more immediate, and the colours are more accurate. Large paintings and drawings and bulky collages could not be scanned. I chose photos or scans according to their fit with the words I had
selected, in most situations. Having the photos helped me to remember the art participants spoke about during their interviews. The photographs were much easier for me to manage than the video footage of the same material. I am unable to get an overview of a video, even after several viewings, whereas the photos could be laid out for viewing as a group, so I could choose one or several, at my own pace, for comparison.
Fieldwork Case Studies

H’s Case Study

I began with H, in order to write my first case study, because her data looked the least complicated. Not having a clear, predetermined way to proceed, I wanted to start with a case I hoped to be able to collect in my mind and respond to in a straightforward way, whatever that might mean. In retrospect, these are the stages I followed in order to understand H’s data. The stages were not ordered and linear as may appear from the case study. They came about by degrees in an interwoven manner, over several years.

Stages

1. Gather H’s materials and consider them in general. Gain an overview of what appeared to happen overall for H during the fieldwork. Paint my response.

2. Move to H’s body maps and describe them. How did H illustrate the effects on her body of five days of bodywork?

3. Write about H’s art, including her comments about her art in relation to participation in the fieldwork. What did H write about and how did she portray her experiences?

4. Reflect on what H’s comments mean for me in relation to my practice. How can I improve my practice, its sessions and classes through listening to H’s comments in relation to the workshop and looking at her art?

5. Consider this case study as a whole. How would I develop a future research design in the light of H’s experiences? In what ways did completing H’s case study help me to approach the next person’s case study and develop the method further?
Stage 1: general consideration of data

I carried this stage out by reading, and appraising what had happened, using H’s data to tell me how she experienced the residential workshop and to evoke my memories of the fieldwork. This was just to give me a general, rather hazy view.

I was not wishing to be diagnostic or evaluative in my approach. There is little point in my surmising what the data might mean, since I am not H and she is the one who took away whatever she learned from the experience. More and more I realised, as I looked at participants’ data, how little my opinion of H’s data mattered. What am I trying to prove by judging what outcomes H gained or took away? Her sense of the experience is hers. It is not static. It is not something I can accurately divine, all the more as it is necessarily always shifting. It is not really my business to pry into H’s experience, even if I give myself the label of ‘researcher’. We are still two people, each in our own relatively separate skin, behaving in our own idiosyncratic ways while linked by living on the same planet. I can get a sense of how H feels and what she might think, but can never accurately know how she found the fieldwork. Just as I cannot pre-empt how you will interpret this research. In order to drop my expectations of empathic interpretation through words, I decided to spontaneously paint my response to H’s data. That helped me to let go of detailed analysis, and respond in a more bodily way to my puzzlement regarding how to report about the fieldwork. I then proceeded with stage 2.

Stage 2: body maps

Pre Map

Marks on this map are clear and specific with no background colouring. Coolness or coldness was shown on the soles of both feet, the right kneecap and the fingertips of each hand. There were small discomfort or pain areas shaded over the right thigh and kneecap edge, the inner edge of the right shoulder blade and the right outer edge of the back of the neck. H felt tight or stiff in the outer parts of the right lower leg, pelvis and shoulder blade. Comfort, warmth or heat and flexibility or freedom, were not shown.
FIGURE 33: Pre Map

**Post Map**

Warmth was marked on the mid chest and discomfort or pain on the lower inner part of the left shoulder blade and the outer edge of the right knee. No other colours, for coolness or cold, comfort, tightness, stiffness or flexibility were marked.

FIGURE 34: Post Map

On the last day of the project, H suffered from a pain, with some warmth, in her chest. She said this had happened to her before under similar circumstances, after a residential.

**Overview of Body Maps**

The initial body map filled in by H displayed three colours: blue for coolness or coldness; black for discomfort or pain, and grey for tightness or stiffness. The toes, fingers and the right kneecap were coloured blue. Discomfort was shown around the right knee cap and up onto the front of the lower right thigh, right neck and beside the medial edge of the shoulder blade. Tightness or stiffness was shaded throughout the right side of the neck as far down as the spine of the shoulder blade, and the outside of the right leg from mid thigh to mid calf.

The second body map, on the last day of the fieldwork, showed two colours: red for warmth or heat, and brown for discomfort or pain. Red was drawn across the
middle of the chest and breastbone area. Beside the left shoulder blade’s middle edge was a patch of brown. The outside edge of the right knee was also coloured brown.

By the time of the second body map, the coldness was no longer shown in fingers and toes, the neck pain and stiffness had gone, as had most of the coldness, stiffness and pain from the right knee. Instead, there is “warmth”\(^\text{10}\) in the chest and pain in the left shoulder “like a stab with a knife.”

On the final day, after participation in the project, H wrote that she felt “more conscious of my body and its different parts” and “present as if I have made more connection with my body.” Later, during her interview she said she was feeling tired and worried about her knee and back injury. She noted that she experienced a similar stabbing pain following a meditation course she had attended elsewhere at an earlier date. After doing the chest exercise, as part of the fieldwork, the ache in her chest had gone.

Stage 3: art and words

H completed six pieces of art. Her first was the drawing of part of the trunk and some branches of an oak tree, which she described as being related to Ortho-Bionomy in general. Beside the large oak tree was a smaller young tree.

![Trees](image)

Figure 35: Trees

H wrote of this drawing:

\(^{10}\) Words in quotation marks are quotes from H during the fieldwork.
“An old oak tree, age old wisdom, that has always been there, deep big roots into the ground. A young tree beside it thin and spindly just starting to grow, tentatively spreading its branches in all direction, looking for the sun.”

Ortho-Bionomy is old – its principles have always existed in nature – perhaps the young tree represents H?

While working in the role of practitioner with the psoas, during the residential project, H said she was: “unsure about amount of pressure and pulling”. About receiving a psoas release from her partner, H wrote: “I was afraid for my knee and unsure how much I can have done, because I have recently had a knee injury. Apart from that it felt very gentle and unobtrusive.”

With the ribs, as practitioner, H wrote: “Doing the breastbone was easy, could feel client’s preferences. The general release was good as well. I had difficulties finding the ribs and even more so following the ribs downwards to release them.”

As the client for the rib releases, H commented “While done – felt okay. Afterwards I feel my chest tight, had to cough. When breathing I feel a slight burning sensation.” H commented during her final interview that the achy feeling in her chest went away after that exercise and her chest became “warm and comfortable.”

When taking the role of practitioner for the shoulders, H wrote that she had received: “lots of positive feedback, which was really encouraging.”

H described her experience after being a client for the shoulder work as: “my whole right side feels bigger and longer, especially my arm feels longer. Relaxed and warm.”

She wrote a comment about receiving some Phase 5 Ortho-Bionomy work: the flowing movements that follow the body’s energy patterns in a physical way, with contact (see Appendix 1 for more detail about Phase 5) when she was my model for a demonstration of this aspect of the work. The rest of the group observed, but did not practise Phase 5 during the fieldwork. These are H’s words to describe Phase 5: “It felt soft and warm, as if I had a second skin of silk covering me.”
For her second picture, H used bottles of window paint to print spots of colour onto a large sheet of white paper. The paint bottles were capped with porous material to allow the paint inside to flow out onto the painting surface. H printed the colours in concentric circles, starting with black and moving to dark blue, purple, green, red, yellow and finally a creamy white.

Her third and fourth pieces of art were of colourful shapes: one of lines with balloon-like shapes attached, drawing using felt pens on an A4 sized page; the other was of flowing, oil pastel lines which ‘follow contours’ and then cross over
two thirds of the way across the page. H described these two drawings as a “flowing of energy.”

She then painted another picture, like her second one, except that this one, printed on an A4 page, end with the yellow ring of dots which, along with the red ring, spills off the edges of the page. When compared, the dots and circles in this picture are larger and mostly a little more boldly printed than those in the second picture.

H described her sixth and final picture as “a bit of everything – head in chaos – new ideas.” It shows an assortment of balls, spots, and small dashes, drawn with felt pens. The balls, spots and dashes are of varying colours and sizes. H named her drawing “Floating in space.”
I was concerned about H and the pain she had experienced in her shoulder, and arranged with her partner, who also attended the fieldwork, that I would ring her after she had returned home, but I could not contact her. She had not wanted to be videoed during the project and we were very careful to ensure she was never in the video frame. I decided not to keep trying to contact her after the project because I did not want her to think her privacy was being invaded.

As usual, in my role as bodywork practitioner or teacher, I made no diagnoses of clients or students, so I cannot say what happened for H. Every client or student who comes to sessions or classes is just fine as they are. I do not try to ‘cure’, ‘fix’ or ‘change’ them. For that reason, I am not interested in interpreting H’s experience, except as it teaches me something I can use in my practice sessions or classes. I can be sorry that H felt a stabbing pain in her chest and pleased that H later showed less discomfort, coolness and stiffness and that her chest felt warm and comfortable after her experience of the program, but that is not an Ortho-Bionomy ‘requirement’ of H or me.

Stage 4: My Learning from H

As far as my learning for teaching is concerned, I can say H taught me to be sure to check that each person is clear about the tiny amount of pressure and pull to use as a practitioner. When teaching, I describe this and then try to demonstrate it with each student, but I know how much there is for students to remember and translate into bodily movements. So I would like to be even more careful to ensure each person has the idea, and the feel, of those pressures in their body, in order to perform them as confidently as possible with their ‘client’. This should be as close in time as I can manage to their turn as practitioner. I think this would have allayed H’s concern about her knee, too. As time went on, H realised how gentle Ortho-Bionomy is and I would have preferred that I got that feeling across to her before she carried out her first bodywork exchange.

Seeing that, overall, H felt easier and freer and was in less pain after the project left me feeling quite cheerful, since she was the participant I worried about most, in relation to her knee injury and other concerns. She had been rather quiet throughout the project, to my mind.

This reaffirms my experience over the years that overall, workshops leave people in a more comfortable state than they are feeling on arrival. Classes are intended primarily as learning experiences, not therapy sessions, yet I find they are generally helpful for students’ issues of comfort anyway.
I was pleased to hear that the “positive feedback” H received was “encouraging” to her and this reminds me to reinforce, to class participants, the importance of sharing constructive feedback with their partners in class.

Finally, although I was delighted to have H in the project, and appreciated her contribution, I learned that I need to be as sure as I can to arrange agreement with participants about filming permission, and so on, before a project starts, since avoiding capturing any footage of H with the camera made the videography part of the project much more difficult, and severely restricted the times and spaces I felt I could film.

In my zeal to be absolutely certain not to film H at all, I chose not to record breaks and mealtimes. I wanted everyone to feel free to mingle. Although I explained, in my information sheets, distributed to participants before the project began, that I would be recording video footage, I think in future I would ask for video agreements to be signed prior to arrival for the project’s commencement. I realise that participants can refuse to be filmed at any point during such projects and would respect that arrangement. For this project, I think I became overly protective of participants and set some of my own needs aside too much. I imagine H could have mostly made sure she was out of camera range quite easily, even if I had recorded more footage of participants. Or footage of her, if accidentally filmed, could have been erased. It would be possible to add words to a participant video agreement like: “I understand that if I am recorded, and do not wish the footage of me to be included, it will be erased”. That understanding might have reduced some of the stress involved in the videotaping.

Stage 5: Developing methods

After carrying out H’s case study, I realised it seemed a little ‘thin’ to me and based in consensus reality. I felt flat about it. Although I had learned some ‘mechanical’ ways to behave differently in my practice, I wanted to develop a richer approach to writing up a case study, I wanted more engagement in the research process, rather than interpreting from a distance. In order to achieve that, I looked at several books to gain more practical familiarity with integral research (such as Gebser, 1991) and earth-based research (see Mindell, 2000a; Mindell, 2006) and reflected at length about how to proceed. Over time, I reached across several approaches, adapting my method of interpretation to suit each participant, and my need for research into ways to study available data appropriately, according to the principles of my practice, as described in the thesis so far, especially in the Preface and Modalities chapters. Each method or
adaptation I used with the remaining seven case studies helped me to feel a little more satisfied, but none seemed to produce a big breakthrough. The advances I made did not compensate for the onerous nature of the process. Something in the fieldwork seems ‘out of kilter’ with the theoretical research I had undertaken. I am far from satisfied with the methods I have used, and ruefully observe that in conducting a project exploring comfort, I have experienced far too much painful soul-searching, even though I tried to process this discomfort throughout.
HG Case Study

This is the second case study I attempted, chosen because the data folder was the next one to hand, in the file after H's. The method I initially used in this case was instigated by the way my paintings, in HG's data file, which I had sketched some months before writing her case study as a way to understand the data better, came to light when I opened the folder. Seeing my sketchy paintings reminded me of an exercise, facilitated by Jytte Vikkelsoe, which I had experienced during a Process Work intensive (Schupbach and Vikkelsoe, 1994). This consisted of catching a ‘flirt’ (Hatch, 2003) from a scribble or drawing, in order to unpack an issue or question, and process it. In this case, within stages 2, 4, 5 and 6 (below) I used the steps I could remember of the exercise, and adapted them to this research purpose. Here are the stages I followed with HG’s case study.

Stages

1. View data about HG, and her art quite quickly, without dwelling on it or thinking much about it.

2. Take a thick brush and liquid acrylic paints, and apply paint to paper, without prior planning, in a spontaneous and immediate way.

3. Write my impressions of HG’s body maps.

4. Later, look at my paintings from all perspectives, and several distances. Seek a response or recognition in me via movement, vision, sound, language and so on.

5. Take that response and amplify it in any channel.

6. Check back, using any channel, with participant’s words and art for connections, patterns etc. Record my impressions.

7. Imagine what I might learn from HG’s case study about my practice and other research issues.
Stages 1, 2 and 3 Body Maps, Painting, Impressions

Pre Map

At the start of the project, HG reported feeling quite relaxed, although experiencing some tightness in her neck, spine, mid back, lower right arm and the palms of her hands. She was experiencing discomfort in her right shin. Her fingers, feet and right shin were cool or cold. The rest of her body felt comfortable to her.

Figure 41: Pre Map

Post Map

After the project, HG had become more aware of the tops of her shoulders and her right upper chest. She felt tingling in her ribs on each side and in the back of her right hand, she was flexible and free from her waist down.

Figure 42: Post Map

Stronger, more specific colours were used for HG’s second body map. Foot coldness changed to comfort. Tingling was added to this map, as well as areas of greater awareness. Most of the body had become free or flexible, whereas this quality was not marked on the first map. Tightness had changed to awareness of the areas marked as such, or flexibility/freedom.
Stages 4, 5 and 6 Respond, Amplify, Record

In looking at my three paintings, I had an instant response, which the critic in me immediately discounted as “too soon” “too predictable and therefore unimaginative” and the like. Recognising that these criticisms most likely came from ‘edge figures’ (Hatch, 2003), I decided to gather courage and persevere with my intuition. The response was as follows:

![Image of Painting 1]

**Figure 43:** Painting 1

In painting one, I saw bunches of yellow bananas, hanging from trees which were suggested by green banana leaves, on the right side of the painting (visual channel) (or edge figure).

Critic: “I am starting to have misgivings and am finding this difficult to write.” With determination, I set aside my qualms and continue writing.

![Image of Painting 2]

**Figure 44:** Painting 2

Painting two gave me an impression of red coral atolls in the sea, which was animated by lively yellow waves breaking around and between these islands (movement channel).
Critic: “Come on, this is too fanciful, these are squiggles on a page. Waves breaking? Give me a break. Anyhow, what relevance do your paintings have to HG's case study?”

Again I set aside these comments. Having come this far, I want to see the idea of learning from my paintings through, despite the misgivings of my inner critic. I notice the vehemence of this part of me and wonder at its investment in the research findings. Certainly I did have an education that especially valued rational thinking. Could that explain the strength of feeling from this critical part of me?

![Painting 3](image)

Painting three brought me home to Melbourne on a breezy autumn day. A flurry of brightly coloured red, orange and brown leaves is being blown, swooping across the page and down a black bitumen road (movement channel). This painting feels energetic: full of movement and colour. The banana yellow of the first painting has returned as a glow of golden leaves caught in a momentary flash of sunlight.

Critic: “Who cares?”.

What can this dreaming into HG’s data mean? How can my response, to her creative visual and language contribution to the research project, connect with HG? Is there any resonance between HG, the research and me? To check this out, I returned to my folder containing HG’s responses: recorded in words and art before, during and after the project; and then repeated stage 1, above, of glancing lightly through HG’s data.

My initial awareness came from looking at HG’s body maps and I quote from my research journal:
I notice the pre-map markings are clear to see and most of the body is marked as comfortable, though there are areas without awareness in the head, and some arm and torso places feel stiff or tense. The situation depicted in the post-map is different. I see more definiteness in the use of colour. Nearly all areas of the body are now shaded to represent flexibility/freedom, comfort or awareness. This apparent coming home to her body could explain the transition I painted in my three pictures from a close-up view of food (bananas) to the open spaces and freedom of the tropical islands and then an ‘autumnal homecoming’. What I see in HG’s body maps could alternatively be due to coloured pencils being closer and more easily available to HG for her pre-map and textas being chosen by HG for her post-map, making her second map appear more definite, because fibre pens make a more distinct mark than pencils.

I also notice HG’s responses to pre and post questionnaires. For example Her post-session response strikes me as more active and animated than her pre-session answer. Her response is located in the propioceptive channel.

Pre-session:

(Q3) my breathing is shallow and there is tension in my upper body … thoughts are continual at times of stress. (HG’s response to Q3)

Post-session:

(Q2) more awareness and sensation, clearer thinking, being able to let go of things, awareness of when I hold tension in my body, ability to check in with my body and then let go. (HG’s response to Q2)

However, I do not want to explain away HG’s responses in a trite way. The best way forward would be to check with HG, which I intend to do by sending this case study to her. Am I growing too far-fetched in my interpretations? Let me continue looking at the data about HG to see what else jumps out at me as I continue to battle my internal critic.

Now I wonder whether I should process my painted response in ‘my’ movement channel or ‘her’ proprioceptive channel. When I move like “living waves” or swooping leaves, I think of HG and her cheerful energy and interest during the fieldwork.
I notice I am bringing together the non-consensus dreamland (Mindell, 1996) aspects of my creative response (paintings) to HG’s case study data with information about her body maps (in words) that can partly be seen as consensus reality (Mindell, 2000b). My response feels repressed. It is as if ‘edge figures’ (Hatch, 2003) tap me on the shoulder from time to time as I write and say things like “perhaps the textas were closer to HG than the coloured pencils for her second body map”, or “forget those florid associations, this is, after all, academic research. What are the proven facts?”. Then I pull back into consensus reality and temporarily inhibit the dreamland connection. Because I am alone, and engaged in writing up a method of research, I have a structure of sorts to which I can return, which helps me to rebuff the edge figures or persuade them to come along and join forces with me, rather than dominating me and closing down the process, as they might under more tenuous circumstances. If someone else was with me, I might be too shy to share my flights of fancy.

Back to HG’s data, this time I am observing her visual art work: from the start I can see colour and movement in HG’s pictures, which fluctuated a little over time.

Figure 46: Drawing one Drawing two
Her second oil pastel drawing covered the page more fully than her first drawing.

Figure 47: Drawing three Drawing four
Her third drawing that day was in one pale colour and featured lines, an arrow and a spiral. Her fourth drawing was of a green spiral.
Then she moved to the use of paint and a larger sheet of paper to represent her pelvis.

Next day, after Ortho-Bionomy work on her shoulders, with a partner, HG drew a purple spiral over bright yellow sticky dots, used as labels when learning the eight Ortho-Bionomy shoulder release points, which we had studied that day. She added a message to her partner for that session, bringing relationship into the drawing. From that point, HG changed from using her chosen shaped pad of paper and pastels, to using new media on loose sheets of paper. She drew patterns, using yellow, red and blue as well as green or black, in pencil on an A4 sized sheet of paper. The pattern covered most of its page.

Her final individual piece of art was a collage of scrunched up tissue paper, glued to a sheet of A3 art paper.
Both this collage and the foot painting HG did as part of the group excited her. She could not explain her excitement except as a link to her childhood.

I can make a connection between HG’s visual art and my painting process. Her pictures began quite strongly and colourfully, then became less vibrant, or less solid in colour, a bit ‘quieter’, and smaller on the pages, then once again they grew bright and varied in colour, and changed their form of expression, becoming larger, stronger in line, finally assuming a vibrant, multi-coloured, three-dimensional, sculptural form. My paintings echoed that pulsation from strong line and colour (bananas), to a more wispy, pale (islands) painting and finally a return to stronger (autumn leaves) colour.

**Stage 7 Learning for my Practice and Research**

What do my reflections and comments say about this method of research? I think this method of connecting with the data, through a process work exercise, helped me to come closer to HG’s process. I drew out aspects I had not noticed earlier, such as the shifts in colour and energy I could see after comparing my ‘dreaming into’ pictures with HG’s art. This way of entering into the painting process helped me draw out questions I would like to know about HG’s process. So it reinforced a need to leave plenty of space, in the research methods I use, for reflection and some exchange of views and opinion. Doing my own responsive paintings (created in answer to viewing each participant’s data), materialised my process of association, so I could compare that process with the data. Even so, I feel as if my comments lack enough substance. Yet I see little
point in being diagnostic. That is not the way I work. I am struggling to develop
another way to conduct research and I feel critical of my efforts as ungainly and
empty.

I would be interested to discover more about whether HG sees her visual art in
any way representing how her body might have been feeling or historically
inscribed, and whether her approach to creative expression was affected by
bodywork on particular regions of her body. These questions are more particular,
personal and embodied than the ones I asked during the fieldwork, such as
whether the fieldwork had an effect on participants’ sense of embodiment. These
new questions could arrive at a similar destination as the ones I originally asked,
but I think they might be more effective in helping me convey to participants
specifically what I wanted to know, without using concepts such as embodiment,
which may have been unfamiliar or disconnected from the fieldwork experience.

In this case study, I located myself in consensus reality, as I crystallised and
illustrated research learning from the literature. For example, using an illustration
from the fieldwork, I have given practical examples of employing the theory of
Process Work, in relation to forms of reality such as consensus reality and the
dreamland aspect of non-consensus reality, described earlier in the Ontology
chapter. I looked through the lens of one Process Work approach, and an
exercise, in order to understand the data from HG, and I will use different lenses
for other individuals. What I saw, and how my observations were coloured and
flavoured depended on which lens I chose to look through. More general
comments about the case study appear later in this chapter.
WW Case Study

The data folder for WW was next in my file after HG’s. My first two steps, taken some months ago, were to regard WW’s data and sketch my impressions of his experience using paints and a brush. Unlike my approach to HG’s case study, I did not use these paintings of mine directly in regard to WW, but no doubt my doing them had an effect on my familiarity with, and understanding of, WW’s data. Next, I looked at WW’s body maps and described what I saw. This description has been placed below the list of steps for the case study.

Two ‘flirts’ (or signals) (Mindell, 2004) around which to constellate a method for working with WW’s case notes jumped out at me, as soon as I sat with his data in order to write. The first was that WW’s thoughts and questions revolved around the concept of comfort, and the second flirt was that I thought his art seemed very lively. To consider the first flirt, I chose to adapt one of Amy Mindell’s exercises (2006, p. 256) from her chapter called “Magical Patterns & Creativity” (pp. 253-261) see stage 3 below. With regard to the liveliness of WW’s art, I wrote my response following my notes about Mindell’s exercise.

Stages

1. Look at the data for WW.

2. Write what I notice in his body maps.

3. Adapt (and respond to) steps from Mindell’s exercise (2006, p. 256) as follows:

   a. “Reflect on WW’s autobiographical case study. Write what you notice as a question.”

   b. “Think about yesterday or a day last week. Where did you go? What did you do? With whom did you interact?”

   c. “Now ask yourself whether there was something that made you feel well, comfortable, happy that day … Perhaps it was something awesome and wonderful … [or] very small that you would normally overlook.”

   d. “What was that experience like? What is its essence, its basic quality?”
“e. … look at the question you wrote down, and consider how this essence might help you resolve it somehow” (Mindell, 2006, p. 256).

4. Discuss my response to WW’s art.

5. What did I learn from this (i) method and (ii) case study?

Stage 2 – Body Maps

Pre Map

WW had flown to Healesville from interstate, in order to participate in the fieldwork. He wrote no comments to accompany his body maps. Instead he relied on his use of colour. His attention was drawn to his right knee, and neck. He was mostly comfortable through his body except for his lower legs, lower right arm, and shoulders. The left chest and most of his head were tight or stiff. His feet were cold and hands were warm.

Figure 51: Pre Map

Post Map

His areas of comfort: from the top of his head to below his knees was comfortable. His hands, feet and spine were warm, as was his solar plexus. His wrists were marked as feeling flexible or free. A line of tightness or stiffness was marked at eye level. The knee pain as marked on the first map was now marked as stiff rather than painful.
Figure 52: Post Map

There was a dramatic change in the definition of the post map, with the use of darker and brighter colours to accentuate the comfort and warmth/heat. These areas encompassed most of his body, which had freed up considerably. No cold areas remained. Pain had changed to tightness or stiffness. Most tight or stiff areas had become warm or hot.

Stage 3 - Working Through the Exercise

Step (a)

When looking at the notes WW wrote about himself and his art, I noticed both the frequent references to comfort and the energy of WW's pastel and painted art. I decided to use a question written by WW during the workshop and see if I could respond to it through the exercise. The question I chose was:

“Can you increase your wellbeing by concentrating on the comfortable areas” [of the body]? [my words in brackets]

The reason I chose this question is because I have great resistance to what I call ‘positive thinking’. Instead, I prefer to imagine the worst about a situation, finding that focusing on pain in my own body generally helps it to ease. Although I do ask clients to notice areas of comfort in the body, and did so early in the fieldwork project, the idea of asking: “Can you increase your wellbeing by concentrating on the comfortable areas” is anathema to a big part of me. I generally suggest to clients to particularly note and report any between sessions pain to me, if they wish. Expressions such as WW's question, seemingly favouring comfort, stimulate me to defend discomfort.

So I thought that this exercise might help me to understand WW's data and possibly even achieve a little more balance and equanimity in my attitude.

Now I will quote from my fieldwork journal.
Steps (b) and (c)

Thinking about yesterday, I begin to remember a terrible discomfort when I fell asleep with my granddaughter (then 2 years old) and woke up fifteen minutes after I should have left home to pick up my two grandsons, aged 10 and 5, from school. It was the first time I have ever been late to pick them up from school and it shocked me. Am I just being contrary by remembering this jarring experience so readily, instead of the comfort requested by the question in Mindell’s exercise? Now I will try to remember some comforts too … When I woke up and saw the time, my granddaughter was deeply asleep and so I woke her as gently as I could. She emerged immediately from her sleep, in such a sunny mood, and climbed quickly into her car seat. That was a relief, and I was appreciative of her co-operation. I was also tremendously relieved to find the two boys were both still safely at school, playing with plenty of other children and parents, and I was proud they had done all the right things when I was not there, such as going to the school office, and telling one of their mother’s friends, who was collecting her own children. It was great to realize they knew what to do in an unexpected situation.

Step (d)

What was the essence of the comfortable and happy feelings I had that day? If I sink into my pride, relief and appreciation and go deeply to the essence of the experience, I would say it was a great, heart-warming feeling of love.

Step (e)

Now if I sit in that love, feel it again, and look at WW’s question, what happens to me? I need to put down my pen so I can focus on the question from inside an experience of love.

According to Process Work (Mindell, 2000b), the essence part of me resides in a unitive place beyond polarities such as comfort and discomfort. What I get from the perspective of my excursion into my own day yesterday, and its essence of love, is an expansive sense of detachment. From that perspective, it is okay for WW to focus on comfort and even okay for me to be more connected to discomfort than he is. I do not need to try to ‘convert’ WW to the perceived advantages of my point of view, or to think I should be swayed. Both ways have their merits. Do I have an answer to WW’s question? I think my answer is “yes”. I have managed to shift towards comfort and happiness from my remembered
experience of shock and distress when I woke and looked at the clock, and I can see some merit in being able to shift, though I do still retain a fondness for recently unfashionable ‘negative’ feelings, and focusing on the worst possible outcomes. Both perspectives (and many others too) have their place. I need not be so one sided and see positives as negative.

Stage 4 - Art

Most of WW's art pieces are pastels on paper slightly smaller than A4 size.

Figure 53: Two Body Drawings

One, in the middle of the series, is painted, not drawn.

Figure 54: painting

It seems to me there were three processes expressed that move from apparently specific forms to more colourful abstract patterns. Both the figures and patterns are vivid in colour and display a lively energy.
Figure 55: Another body and abstract

Figure 56: Patterns

Figure 57: More outgoing
I am unable to interpret what this might mean for WW, but am aware of feeling
enlivened by looking at the pictures, and intrigued by their development over the
course of the project.

Stage 5 (i) Learning from this Method

My final question, this time to do with the research method I used in WW's case,
is to ask how useful the method was. What have I learned, if anything, in relation
to the fieldwork and the research in general?

I think this method, of going to the essence behind polarities has given me a tool
to support my fluidity as a practitioner, teacher and researcher, which could well
prove useful in my practice. As I think about becoming locked at one end of a
continuum, I think about my rank, especially as a teacher or facilitator, and
realise the importance of flowing with, and being responsive to feedback. It
encourages me to accommodate positions other than my own with equanimity.
As far as research is concerned, this method has shown me how to drop deeply
into the essence of a process, so I can start to connect with a matrix or unitary
awareness, beyond dualities. This is not to discount consensus reality and
suggest the only or best level of awareness should be 'essence'. Each part of
reality has its place in my research, practice and life. I can take comfort from
finding this method of accessing the essence behind an issue, easier to use than
I expected, and be gentle and patient with myself if I am self-critical about not
using it frequently, or well enough.
Stage 5 (ii) Learning from this case study

I have a greater appreciation for aiming towards the ‘positives’ in life. When I have clients who want to pursue positive goals, I am more understanding and less evangelistic towards balancing their aims with some ‘negatives’.

If I offer students the opportunity for creative endeavours of one sort or another, I would be interested to go further, through asking students what their words and pictures mean for them. There is no need for me to know, as such, but this project has made me curious, and discussing what emerges for class participants could lead to improvements in my practice, such as new ways to facilitate learning, or more suitable materials to offer students or clients. Or it might simply assuage my interest to know what lay behind participants’ creative expression. Over time, I might notice patterns developing that explain students’ reactions to learning. For example, art forms created after learning shoulder releases might explain why this area of the body often takes the longest to learn. Or they might give me an inkling about better ways to demonstrate shoulder or other releases during bodywork classes.
LR Case Study

When I came to LR's data, I found a new challenge. While WW inspired me to enquire into a new relationship with comfort, LR brought me an opportunity to face my ambivalence about discomfort in a ‘client’ (or participant). Reflecting on WW’s case study made me more alert to my prejudices, and more open to learning from LR.

Stages

1. Gain a general impression of LR’s data

2. Describe LR’s body maps

3. Select and adapt a method or exercise based on my response to LR’s data
   Follow steps from Amy Mindell’s selected exercise (Steps 1 to 5 below)

4. Reconsider LR’s data

5. Reflect on my learning from this method

Stages 1 and 2

Pre Map

Before the project, LR had cold feet, knees, lower back and hands. She had discomfort or pain in the left side of her head, right shoulder and left shoulder blade, the front of both arms, and in her spine, buttocks and abdomen. Both elbows were stiff. She experienced the centre of her chest as flexible or free.
Comfort was marked on the map at the legs and feet, the lower arms and hands, front and back of the chest and the left side of the head. Comfort was also marked as shading all around the outside of the body's perimeter. A thin blue line marked coolness or coldness at the back of the waist. Warmth or heat was drawn across the eyes and forehead. Brown markings denoting discomfort or pain were placed above the left temple, in a band around the upper and lower neck, on both elbows, right kidney area, left groin, the sacrum. Flexibility or freedom was shown throughout the body as well as beyond the body.

Figure 60: Post Map

**Body maps Overall**

The most striking change is the expansion of comfort and flexibility/freedom through most of the body and its surroundings in the second body map compared with the first. Tightness/stiffness had almost completely disappeared as had most of the original discomfort.

**Stage 3 - Discomfort and Meditation**

Wanting to work with my attitude towards LR's pain during the project, I searched for an exercise to help me focus and gain another perspective.

The following process is adapted from an exercise called “Discomfort & Meditation (in pairs)” (Mindell, 2006, pp. 212-3). Instead of experiencing the exercise with a partner in the flesh, I plan to work through it alone in relation to LR's data, adapting the exercise to enable me to focus on my awareness of one participant. Here I record the steps I followed, interspersed with comments about my process for each step.

**Step 1.** Pay attention to LR's data, consisting of written words, two paintings and a drawing, and two interviews. My role is that of researcher, becoming familiar with the data in any way I like.
I do this through spreading the pages of writing from LR, her art work and the transcript of her interviews on my massage table and looking at the choice of words and colours used by LR, in a general and slightly unfocused way.

Figure 61: 1. Initial drawing

**Step 2.** “[N]otice any slight feelings of discomfort, uneasiness or sensitivity... [I have while paying attention to the data]” (Mindell, 2006 p. 213) [My words in brackets].

I feel a little internally conflicted about LR’s discomfort during the fieldwork in two ways:

LR experienced some discomfort when I demonstrated the Ortho-Bionomy shoulder releases with her, in front of the group. I discovered her discomfort when I read her notes after the fieldwork was over, and feel dismayed. I was surprised that I did not notice her discomfort during the demonstration. Now I wonder how I can invite participants to tell me, or their partner, if anything causes them even the slightest discomfort. Or how I can make such an invitation, and step back.

During the fieldwork project LR suffered from quite a lot of pain. She said one thing she had learned from participating in the fieldwork was to accept pain. Part of me wants LR to experience no pain.

**Step 3.** “The helper asks the client for permission to make a little space to explore her or his feelings of discomfort. The helper meditates and reports on what she or he is feeling” (Mindell, 2006, p. 213).

I am fond of LR and feel sorry to hear she is hurting. Another part of me sternly tells myself that, as a practitioner of Ortho-Bionomy, it is not my business to want
a particular outcome for LR. My job is to offer possibilities and allow space. Her journey is her own.

**Step 4.** “The helper goes back over what happened at the point when she or he became uncomfortable, trying to recall each thing that occurred what signal made her or him feel shy or uncomfortable, and guesses at their essence. The helper then offers this to the client in a compassionate way” (Mindell, 2006, p. 213).

Then I realise how valuable it has been for me over the years to be patient, at times, with pain. I can simultaneously celebrate the rightness of LR’s process, admire her capacity for self-reflection and acceptance, and feel sad to see her suffering the pain. I feel similarly, in relation to the discomfort LR experienced during my shoulder demonstration. If LR wanted to tell me the demonstration felt uncomfortable she would have, I feel sure. I do have a lingering concern about not feeling the ‘clinks’ LR described as I demonstrated with her shoulder. At the same time, I know I was taking on too many roles during the fieldwork, which may have compromised my awareness.

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 62: 2. Pain and bleeding (left half) and shoulder demonstration (right half)*

**Step 5.** “If the client disagrees with the helper’s perception, or would like to investigate her or his own signal, the helper then asks the client to go back to that moment and meditate on the essence of what he or she was trying to express. Together, helper and client unfold this aspect of the process by getting to its essence and discussing how this essence might be useful to the client’s life as a whole” (Mindell, 2006, p. 213).

I would like to ask LR for feedback about what I have written. Perhaps we can unfold this together? Basically, I have an unresolved internal conflict, which became more pronounced as I paid attention to LR’s participation in the fieldwork
and her resulting data. I need to sort this conflict out myself. It was prompted by my interchange with LR, but it is not her issue.

Stage 4 – Consideration of Data

Figure 63: 3. Painting

The conflict I am experiencing is almost but not quite being fought out between two parts of me, which I can flesh out as characters. Bringing the conflict out into my awareness more definitely, may ‘relieve the field’. By this I mean that this inner conflict can be said to be my own issue, and simultaneously to represent conflicts held by other people in our ‘field’ or community. Resolution of such conflicts sometimes seems to help ease tension in the wider community. The two parts of me in this ‘argy bargy’ are (a) a practitioner or researcher who does not want her client or participant to suffer from pain, and wants to be able to help get them out of pain, and (b) the role of LR, who said she came to accept pain and understand it more fully, during the fieldwork. Part (a) is not limited to me, since I believe many practitioners and researchers feel compassionate towards their clients or participants and want them to experience comfort. However, an important step in being a practitioner or researcher is to allow clients to follow their own process. Part (b) represents anyone who is able to step over an edge between their former identity and a new way of seeing or expressing themselves.

Although I have known that it is important to follow my process, and allow clients to do the same, I have also had lingering attachment to helping people to be free from pain. Learning to focus on and allow pain, when I was in my early thirties, brought big rewards. Not only did it show me that allowing and engaging with pain helped me to fear pain less, and let my body repair the underlying causes of the pain. It also led me to eventually begin my present practice. Wondering at the body’s capacity to heal set me on my path to bodywork.
Despite the knowledge that pain can be a wise teacher, I still retained a desire to protect clients from pain. By identifying the two roles of ‘protector from pain’ and ‘pupil of pain’, I already felt clearer about my role as researcher – to facilitate the process of participants without intention. What remained was for me to appreciate my concern for LR and compassion for her pain, rather than disowning that role, so I can step back from it enough to discern the client’s process. For example, am I following a participant’s intent to be pain free, or do I risk interfering in their desire to become more familiar with an issue such as pain? Does this person wish for space, or companionship, or another option? How can I listen without presumptions?

I can simultaneously accept people’s pain, believe that comfort is queen, and that there are ways of healing that are available to everyone, without trying to impose them on others.

Stage 5 – Overview of Learning

Initially, during the writing up of the case studies, I was confronted by my own stereotypes to do with the value of pain (to LR) and of comfort (to WW). In each case, when I settled to exploring the detail of their responses, I discovered more complexity and wisdom in their data than I had remembered, which breezed away my stereotype. I was able to avoid simplifying and labelling these participants and their case studies and mentally ‘setting them in concrete’, by understanding myself first, then dropping some of my assumptions in order to see more clearly. It has helped me to notice my tendencies and be open to working on them, so I can move on as a practitioner, to provide greater complexity and detachment in my approach.
GH Case Study

Stages followed in this case study:

1. Be mindful of my learning so far, particularly from earlier case studies

2. Consider, and briefly describe, GH's pre and post body maps

3. List and comment on:
   a. GH's written comments
   b. GH's visual art and poems

4. Search for a method of interpretation and summarise the process

5a. Employ an inner work exercise (to some extent)

6. Engage with a word play

5b. Continue the inner work exercise

7. Record the internal argument between my heart and my will.

Stage 2

Pre Map

GH was just getting over a cold and had travelled some hours in the car from interstate, to get to the fieldwork venue. A sore throat and stiff, sore back remained following his trip. His knee hurt after drinking coffee. No areas of comfort were marked or stated. The left eye was gravelly and painful, and the left pointer finger was restricted.
Post Map

GH described feeling far more aware of his body. “My body has relaxed into a general tiredness that is comfortable, like holiday mode.” He was experiencing “almost no pain” and slight soreness at his left thigh, a tight right shoulder and mid upper thoracic spine and neck.

Stage 3 (a) Written Comments

GH wrote that he found the accommodation arrangements catered for his personal needs for privacy, comfort and exercise. He thought the food “was exceptional” and believed that “the footbaths were good for the individual and also the group.” Time for reflection was important: “I think we need these stillness of the soul periods.” Originally critical of the 9.00am start, preferring 8.30am, GH later was “glad 9.00am had drifted back to about 9.15am” as he relaxed into a more leisurely pace.

He was unaware of background discomfort/tension in his body at first and later gained “far more” awareness of his body during the project. Several specific discomforts were not marked or mentioned on the second map although they had appeared on the first: both knees, left pointer finger and left eye (that GH had described as “gravelly”) were no longer marked as problematic. His left hip was still sore and he was aware of some shoulder, neck and spine pain. Comfort and flexibility/freedom were not marked on either map, but were written about in words describing more presence and awareness of “minute variations”. He said “I am probably lucky that I am in almost no pain, otherwise I would probably notice my body more.” He did not think he has a high pain threshold: “as the dentist hurts me.”
Stage 3 (b) Visual art and poems

Figure 66: Coloured pencil drawing

Figure 67: Paint print

Figure 68: Oil pastel drawing

These three pictures show variety of style and medium – coloured pencil in A3 format, paint printing, and oil pastel drawing. I have no way to interpret them and GH said he did not know why he had drawn as he did.
He wrote two poems: the first poetry he has ever felt free to write, as far as he remembers.

The bird is light brown
it loudly laughs and laughs and laughs
the bird makes me happy

The bush is so inviting
trees, ferns, birds, animals and babbling brooks
nature in its heavenly splendour
I am struggling to find appropriate ways to work with the data of four participants.
GH is one of those.

Stage 4 Search for a Method

When I think about GH, I think of learning styles. There are several reasons for this. My introduction to learning styles happened at the University of Western Sydney during a class with Agriculture students. I noticed that Kolb’s (see Chapman, 1995-2008) learning styles became popular with the Agriculture students who were working for Government departments and used them in their work. GH worked in a similar field, he spoke about his ways of learning, and made comments about his preference for practical and grounded consensus reality. Taking that into account, I decided to see if I could select a method of interpretation that began with that type of practical approach, at least as a starting point.

When looking for more information about Kolb on the internet, I accessed three main sites (Chapman, 1995-2008; Clark, 2004; Smith, 2001). On the businessballs.com site (Chapman, 1995-2008) I also found information about Gardner’s (2003) multiple intelligence theories model. I have these sites’ pages printed and arranged in front of me as I write. Without having both more familiarity with these theories and having GH present, I am unable to place GH in one or other category suggested by either theorist. Categorising GH is not my aim. What I want to do is to begin more or less where GH seems to be and then see where the process takes me/us. In order to understand Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Model, I have undergone the test (provided at Gardner and
Chapman, 2003) on the internet. I see that my scores range from 29 – Linguistic and Intrapersonal to 16 – Spatial-Intrapersonal. I realize that this information, of itself, does not contribute much to my research. Similarly, when I found my strengths and so on with Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theories & Cycles (Clark, 2004, pp. 1 & 2) many years ago I did not use them in my work or life in general. As a result, I am searching for another method of considering the date.

Looking at these theories, however, prompts some thoughts about GH’s written data. I notice, as I have mentioned, that it appears to be mostly represented in consensus reality, for example:

“the course made me far more conscious of the individual parts instead of the whole, but then it makes the greater whole”

“It was a lovely break away from life and work. I don’t mean life meaning, like being killed for a week, I meant by that my structured life in Canberra with my work and other responsibilities.”

“a lot of things aren’t observable unless they’re at least at 10% improvement over a long period. It’s very hard to, ah, put your finger on exactly what you get out of these things. And if you got 30% improvement in one aspect, like physical strength of the left finger, you would notice it. But get 3% improvement over your whole body of hundreds of bits you wouldn’t notice it.”

“I’m a scientific person not a humanities person.”

The quotes above give examples of the factual way GH spoke when interviewed, facts that could be shared or verified by others, hence mostly in consensus reality. Since I want to start where GH is situated, I will use consensus reality as represented by GH’s primary process (the way he describes himself) as my initial base for exploration. Two possibilities come to mind. One is a way of identifying the channels a person temporarily inhabits, by attending to their language, movements and so on. The other is a suggested exercise in Amy Mindell’s book (2006) Alternative to Therapy. The latter feels more appropriate to me because GH expresses enthusiasm about creativity in his data, and Amy’s book is centred on creativity.

**Stage 5 (a) Employ an Inner Work Exercise**

When I consider GH’s data, I see a clear distinction between his primary process (how he sees himself to be) and his secondary process (what happens to him in
life). As I said, above, Amy Mindell has an inner work exercise in her book (2006) about accessing the primary process in order to welcome the secondary process into conscious awareness. I notice I am searching for the right way to understand and write this story. As I think about using the exercise, I feel a bit hopeless and pressured. I wanted to have each fieldwork participant’s story finished and sent to them by now. Instead I find myself stuck. Instead of trying to follow my primary process, and do the exercise in what I see as the ‘correct’ way, I notice what is happening to me, in other words, I become aware of my secondary process, which I recorded in my journal:

Romeo, our big, quiet, slow Maremma has just pushed open the door and stood close to me, appealing for a gentle stroking. As I stroked Romeo, I thought about the comments GH wrote on the fifth day of the fieldwork project. “Part of me wanted, at the start, to have more instruction fitted in, but I now think it was as much as we could do. I think we need these stillness of the soul periods.”

By padding unexpectedly into the room and asking for some care and tenderness from me, Romeo forced me to stop and make space. After only a minute or two, he turned his back, left the room and sauntered back to his bed. I decided to stop trying to work for a moment, to see what happened if I played with words instead of putting them to work. As I played, the words came together into a verse.

Stage 6 Play with Words

What stillness might my soul desire?

A space to play, avoid the fire

Evade my inner critic’s ire

Deflect the pressure with a game

A game of fun, with no known name

I think of Arthur Pauls in class

With toys, distractions. What a farce!

We learned O.B. that way alright …

What games can I employ tonight?
Perhaps a limerick will do?

Or, like participants, haiku?

Stage 6 (b) Inner Work Exercise Continued

At this point, I deem it best to stop writing. I feel somewhat nauseous and my chest hurts a bit. I notice that writing in verse is starting to become an effort, and I feel reticent (embarrassed actually) about sharing my words, so I return to Amy Mindell’s book and step 3 of her exercise. She suggests the following:

Step 3. ‘The therapist keeps his or her periscope (meta position) up, and at the same time, watches the feedback of the clients, and unfolds what occurs in any way that is useful for the client’ (Mindell, 2006, p. 261).

That phrase ‘useful for the client’ brings back the feeling of pressure to me. How can I tell what might be useful for GH? Then I remember the conference paper I am due to present in two weeks, and how preparing for it felt very tough, at a time when I have so much else I want to do. The sense of difficulty mounted to an almost unbearable level until I took stock (and remembered that my thesis is about comfort!). Then I simply looked at the abstract that had been accepted for the conference, noted what I had promised to deliver and wrote what would be fun for me to offer. It involved steps I plan to write about in the Conclusion chapter, and followed my heart instead of what I thought I ‘should’ do for an ‘International Conference.’ I sorted the paper out in five minutes. What a relief! Resources supporting my presentation came to light and my worries went away. How might that bring clarity to GH’s story? What do I know already that feels pleasant and easy?

If I send up my periscope, what can I see? “Maybe I have no more to do?” I ask myself. Bold, descriptive words on the back cover of Amy Mindell’s (2006) book catch my eye. They say, referring to the book’s contents: “A journey that is shamanic, challenging, and unfailingly practical.” That is what helped me with the Gebser Conference paper – being practical.

Stage 7 Argument

I notice I am having an internal argument between my heart and my will. Allowing and recording that argument is one practical way to challenge myself in this case study, to follow the process in me rather than trying to fight it. Perhaps research
need not involve diligence and hard work? Perhaps those qualities dull my awareness? Let’s see what emerges when I focus on my internal argument.

Heart: “Stop trying, you’ve already done enough. I’m hurting from all this effort.”

Will: “But I have no clear result.”

Heart: “Maybe you have come to some conclusion. Look back and see what you have done already.”

Will: “Okay, since I am tired and you got me off the hook with the Gebser paper, I will look back over these notes with you.”

Heart: “What do you notice?”

Will: “I see a lot of effort and many different approaches that seem to lead nowhere.”

Heart: “Is there anywhere you need to go?”

Will, angrily: “We are supposed to be doing research.”

Heart: “Yes. Perhaps we have done it already. Look again. What can you tell me from your point of view?”

Will: “I know I have tried hard. Now that is something I almost never notice about myself, especially if I do not come up with a clear result.”

Heart: “That is fantastic! It is true you have been really striving to do this research and find the best approach for Gh’s story. Both of us have. And for the two of us to appreciate the effort we have put in is heartening (pardon my pun). Maybe GH will have some thoughts or feelings about where we have got to? Our words might have meaning for him. Or if not, time might allow for more awareness. Let’s see what happens?”

Will: “Yes. I am reminded of GH’s wise words: ‘I think we need those stillness of the soul periods’. I would like to make some space for reflection and stillness, even though it’s my nature to push for a conclusion. Let’s take a break now.”

In view of these final words from my “Will”, I will risk leaving the case study here, without summing up what I have learned.
ATM Case Study

These are the stages I went through when writing ATM’s case study:

Stages

1. Consider the date provided by ATM: her body map and art, her written notes and the transcripts of her interview. Begin to look for a research method in this case.

2. Write down my impressions and responses in relation to the data.

3. Refer to the synoptic table and motifs of integral consciousness provided by Jean Gebser (1991) in conjunction with ATM’s data.

4. Explore the data using Ortho-Bionomy Phase 6 as a research method. Record my notes in research journal.

5. Write the learning from this method.

Stage 1 Consideration of Data

Pre Map

Figure 69: Pre Map

ATM showed flexibility as a ‘halo around the outline of her body. Her right ear was uncomfortable, as were her left shoulder, elbow, hand and foot. In her right hand, foot she experienced warmth. Both shoulders and the fingers of both hands were stiff. Green for comfort is shown on the face and front of the torso.
In her second body map (sent to me after I had written up this case study), ATM's body is again outlined with yellow for flexibility. This time, most of her body is shaded with green, standing for comfort. She shows discomfort at her right shoulder and stiffness at points in her shoulders, middle fingers and left wrist. Warmth is displayed in areas of the shoulders, left elbow, right thumb and heels. It is difficult to discern whether brown or red has been used for some of these marks. At the right elbow, a red mark has been labelled ‘brown’.

I would say that both body maps show a similar situation, with a tendency towards slightly more widespread comfort and less pain and stiffness in the post map.

**Stages 2 and 3 Responses to Data in Relation to Gebser**

ATM spoke and wrote at length about receiving and translating spiritual experiences through the body during the fieldwork. Her form of expression brought Gebser’s (1991) integral structure of consciousness to mind, so I collected ATM’s art, writing and the transcript of her interview with two ‘tools’ from Gebser’s (1991) book: his synoptic table of consciousness structures and the motifs he listed as manifestations of the aperspectival world (Gebser, 1991, p. 361). I had decided to try integrating the data with those two tools.

I began by reading ATM’s notes and transcript and looking at her art. I noticed that this material was holistic, had integrity, described spiritual experiences concretely and so on. Yet when I went to quote ATM’s words around these topics, or place and interpret her art in that context, I felt as if I were invading her

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privacy, which I do not want to do. “Who” I also ask myself “am I to decide what expressions represent integral or mythical consciousness?” Even if I felt confident that I had correctly located similar qualities to parts of the data from ATM in Gebser’s structures of consciousness, what would be the point of doing so? I could say that I think these words belong to ‘integral consciousness’ and these ones are ‘mythical’ in origin. I could say that this painting seems to show oppositional duality, so can be thought of as representing a perspectival world, and that this drawing is open, free, multivalent, and emphasizes conscious spirit, so it may be an aperspectival drawing. Does telling you how I label ATM’s words and art deepen your experience of my practice or help me communicate it more effectively? I doubt it.

Another issue arose: Where is my consciousness located when interrogating whether ATM’s expression is integral in nature? Presumably I ask such questions from a rational, perspectival place: from the mental structure of consciousness. One of Gebser’s “fundamental considerations” (1991, p. 1) in developing research, concerned the use of methods appropriate to the consciousness structure being researched. He wrote words to the effect that neither magic consciousness nor integral consciousness can be authentically examined using methods derived from mental or mythical consciousness. As Gebser explained about integral research:

Contemporary methods employ predominantly dualistic procedures that do not extend beyond simple subject-object relationships; they limit our understanding to what is commensurate with the present Western mentality … Our “method” is not just a “measured” assessment, but above and beyond this an attempt at “diaphany” or rendering transparent (1991 P. 7).

I am not claiming to be researching from within integral consciousness – that claim in itself strikes me as dualistic or perspectival, which would quaintly countermand any temporary claim to doing integral research. All I feel able to do, as a researcher, is to be present with what I have gathered from reading, relationships and research, and allow thoughts, feelings, inspirations, sensations and connections to draw my awareness to them (or not). To achieve my aims, I share such fieldwork data as I can, and interpret it. I need to feel as if I am in relationship with ATM and comfortable with how I proceed. ATM may have no qualms about my approach, but I still need to feel as if my direction is appropriate, even if I were to obtain ATM’s approval. I ask myself again: how.
should I proceed? Assuming ATM and I are connected, even if only because we both inhabit the earth, what feels right to me?

Having reconnected with Gebser’s “fundamental considerations” (1991, p. 1) as I wonder how to work with ATM’s data, I relax my earnest search for a ‘method’ somewhat and open some space for less academic and more concrete ideas. (Here I struggle for a word. Writing ‘academic’ seems to suggest I believe ‘academic’ ideas would exclude practical methods. The word ‘formal’ does not fit here either. I can only apologise for taking the term ‘academic’ in vain for now.)

Stage 4 Ortho-Bionomy Phase 6 and ATM’s Data

When I cast my net to other areas, I think of Ortho-Bionomy and in particular of its manifestation in Phase 6 (or energy work). One of the Phase 6 ways of working with a client’s energy system(s) is to move around the client, who is usually lying on my massage table, until I find the place where I feel most at home in my body and in the room (or even outside the room on rare occasions). What I do is to notice my body, as I walk slowly around the client and the room, turning this way or that, and noticing especially my internal feedback in relation to the client on the table. This could be described as the proprioceptive channel in Process Work. Both of us, client and I, often close our eyes as we experience Phase 6, since this helps us focus internally, but I tell clients they are welcome to have their eyes open at any stage if they feel so inclined.

How do I discriminate between this location or that? The choice of my physical location has to do with sensations or moods in me. Sometimes I feel gloomy, or free, or clear, or a little nauseous, or tense at one place in the room or the other. Depending on what I sense, I might inch closer to or further from the client, or revolve on a spot, noticing whether the sensations in me stay the same or are relieved or increased, Then I choose to stand in a location where I feel most at home – comfortable and at ease, or on rare occasions I might explore a spot further where I experience some discomfort. Once I have found a place that feels appropriate, I focus on specific Phase 6 work. This means that I make myself available to notice what I reckon seem like the effects of a relationship between the energy of the client, the space between us and me.

In practical terms, this might feel like holding a plank or shelf across my arms and allowing it to attain balance by following its fluctuations such as see-sawing a little, until the imaginary shelf or plank comes to rest.
Who knows if anything beneficial is actually happening? As a recalcitrant sceptic, I am unsure of myself. So I interrogate clients after I do any (rare for me) Phase 6 work. In almost every case, clients say they feel physically lighter and deeply relaxed during their few minutes of Phase 6 as part of a bodywork session. Some say they can feel their symptoms shifting and lessening as I work.

How does this type of energy work apply to ATM’s case study? My research journal gives an answer:

Fieldwork Journal Excerpts

I plan to put ATM’s notes and artwork on the portable massage table, that I have been using as an extra desk, and relate to them as if ATM were lying on the table herself. I will walk around, see if I find a spot of comfort, and then follow my intuition as to what I can do next. Then I will report back to you. This may seem like a strange research method, (it seems unusual to me) but if I do not try it, I will not know if it can be useful. Mindell (2007) is now teaching Process Work based on participants location in space, by suggesting that it is possible to work through issues, or at least gain understanding, by walking vectors (or paths) related to how people feel in relation to issues. Since the location in space of both client and practitioner has always played a big part in working with the body using Ortho-Bionomy, I am interested to explore location in relation to the fieldwork data.

Now I have cleared the files and papers from my massage table and installed ATM’s notes and art (see photos below). The topic in my mind when I do Phase 6 in response to a client’s physical symptoms is the client’s general wellbeing, or a nominated, symptomatic region of their body. As much as possible, I hold no intention in my mind, but rather have an open awareness, paying particular attention to any sensory-grounded responses in my body, or any images or ‘flirts’ (Mindell, 2000b) that I notice. I have no expectation that this will produce any insights. In fact I feel a little shy about doing bodywork without a human client on the table. Mercifully I am alone in the room! The notes and art are spread out and I am settling down, becoming more present with ATM and her data.
I walk around the table, feeling as if I am mentally ‘in the dark’, and I am also physically in the dark, since the room is presently dimly lit. When I come to the
western end of the massage table. I continue to walk towards the west where the sun will soon set. The day has been cloudy, but now the sun is suddenly streaming through the room’s west window and warming my face. I try to return to the table, but feel strongly drawn to the sun’s golden wash across my closed eyelids. As I stand with my back to the massage table and my face in the sun, I rock my weight from one foot to the other, accentuating the sun’s glow over my eyes as I move through its rays. I remember ATM’s collage of a star and a person with yellow rays of light or energy bathing them. Not wanting this experience to float too far away from my sensory-grounded experience and from ATM’s experience, I decide to read her fieldwork comments about that particular collage, spread over two pages, that she titled “Anchor”.

Here are her art and her words:

![Figure 74: Anchor pages 1 and 2](image)

“I’ve come with a process I’m already working with, so I’ve moved from that process into, (which is very psychological, very esoteric in a way) back into my body and, ah, so the process that I was working through is about divine love really being the source of all, and I happen to be blessed at the moment, with a really strong reminder of that.

And, this was the first thing I went outside and saw, and because this is the divine love and it comes from the other realms, and it’s coming at the moment, I’m experiencing it through somebody, and the gift of that, through that person to me till I actually begin to embody it. So that’s those drawings.

Yeah, I actually want to really know this love, I want to know this …

I just don’t want it to be something to know about, I want to actually be it”.

Stage 5 Learning from this Method

The sun’s breaking through the clouds just as I went to the window gave me a concrete, physical sense of the picture ATM created during the fieldwork, in my
own body. Doing this Phase 6 exercise helped me to imagine, and partially encounter ATM's fieldwork experience more fully, albeit in my own way. It showed me that entering into a situation that seemed a bit artificial or strange, had the potential to be instructive, if I was prepared to engage with it and persevere. Using Phase 6 in this new, more conceptual (rather than hands-on) style, might be another way for me to identify further with clients and their experiences, while doing bodywork. Phase 6 need not be limited to energy work for physical purposes, I can see a use for it in my practice to deepen my understanding of concepts and occurrences during sessions or classes, using other senses apart from balance and touch, which I presently use for energy work. In this case, I used the senses of warmth, movement and vision as well. This can also be seen, in Process Work terms, as taking the experience into new channels such as the visual, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, relationship or world channels (see, for example Diamond and Jones, 2004) in order to discover more about the situation, and possibly gain further insights. It is a topic that I am interested to explore in other situations to see if it can be of use for clients.
LL Case Study

Stages

1. Consider the data

2. Describe what I notice about, and engage with, the data – any observations?

3. Open Space Technology Principles and Law – how might they apply?

4. Conclusions – what have I learned for my practice?

Stage 1 Consideration of the Data

First I looked at, and described, LL’s body maps:

**Pre Map**

LL’s head, backs of lower arms and hands and right calf to the ankle were comfortable. Warmth or heat was experienced in the palms of the hands, the feet and right chest. She felt electric in the left side of her entire body. The back of her left knee was tight or stiff as was the edge of the left back of the pelvis. Her left shin was cold or cool.

**Post Map**

Most of the body was experienced as comfortable except for a little numbness on the left outer edge of her body. The back of her right hand, the upper outside area of her right foot, the sole of her left foot and both kneecaps felt warm or hot. The palms of her hands and the tops of both feet were cool or cold. Her right
shoulder, her spine and right around the top of the pelvis felt flexible or free. A grey spot marked a tight area on the upper pelvis at the back.

Figure 76: Post Map

LL used clearer colours for the second body map, to accentuate the regions of sensation she experienced. Comfort, which had been restricted to her head, right lower arm and right calf, was now displayed through most of her body. Her numbness and alienation had transformed to “a little numbness” and her “nervy electric” areas were still there, “but a bit calmer.”

Stage 2 Observations

When I look at LL’s artwork, I see highly organised, distinctive and attractive art, which brings together words and images in a balanced and meaningful design.

Figure 77: Mixing Musing Melding

LL has used colour to highlight important elements of her experience in an artistic and eye-catching way. Her written words are clear and perceptive.
Figure 78: Whirls Twirls Swirls

Figure 79: Whirling

Figure 80: Clarity Energy Enthusiasm
Because she was unable to be with the group on the first day, LL filled in her pre-session interview questions at home. I have summarised her answers to the pre and post-fieldwork questions as well as some of LL’s comments in her notes as a ‘found prose/poem’, using parts of her answers, interspersed with words from my questions. I think LL has created her own case study and see my role as facilitating its transmission into the thesis. My words are shown in a teal font, LL’s responses to questions, and her other written comments from her fieldwork journal and incidental notes are added in royal blue, below. My choice of fieldwork offerings and resources, LL’s words and the way I place them, and your impressions sparked by LL’s work, all affect the meaning and process of the case study. We all contribute to it, of course, but in the main, LL gives us the heart and flavour of her fieldwork experience.

**Before the Fieldwork: Pre-Questions**

Your body connection?

Like meeting an old friend.

Familiar.

Muscles, organs, blood flow

Tense and relaxed areas, skin texture.

Present in your body?

Yes, quite present

Sitting in my hips

But left side shoulder, head

Threatens to ‘fly away.’

Body awareness?

Sitting lop-sided toward my right

Due to no left hip joint.

Left side tense, weaker than the right

Shoulders relaxed,

Lumbars a little stiff,
Jaw tightens as I chew
I hold tightness in my jaw.

Concentration?
Easy if I like the task
For housework I need CD’s playing
I avoid a task that doesn’t feel comfy

Stumbling and bumping?
I trip rather than stumble
A little leap in the air
I rarely bump into things with my legs

Mood swings?
My moods usually fairly centred
I don’t get really angry any more
I tend more towards being elated
Nowadays my moods don’t swing so highly.

After the Fieldwork: Post-questions

Body relationships now?
Organic, comfortable
Any tendency to leave my body…
Has gone.
Flowing freer
Deeper knowledge of my internal functions –
Adrenal, liver, blood flow.
Since your first session?
Where to start?
Sensory input at all levels
Being more in my body
Dropping down into my hips.
A sparkling of messages

Any discomfort?
I bashed my left forehead
And have a huge bruise
After cranial work.
The left side of my cranium moved back
Sphenoid and ethmoid.
Sinus area more contracted -
But today it's good
My hay fever isn't as bad.
Left sacrum stiffness when walking
Resettling after realignment

Bodily changes?
Cranial
I could feel my left side and right side
Less tightness at left cranial base
Internally unwinding
Across my forehead
And the back left side of my cranium relaxing
Right scapula much more relaxed
Hips freer
Generally greater fluidity
Re-orienting my body in a different way to the world

Present in your body now?
Very
I feel present
And connected to every fibre
Deeper into my hips…
I feel deeper within myself today
Memories of my childhood flood in
Feet in milk/honey/eggs, we sit in a circle
Like little children we giggle, chat, make jokes

Stage 3 Open Space Technology Applied

Thinking about LL’s participation led me to consider not just LL’s words, but also an overview of her participation through the lens of the four principles of Open Space Technology. Here I list each principle or law in green, and the relevance I think it has to LL’s contribution to the fieldwork in black:

Whoever comes is the right person

LL was the last person to join the research group, arriving during the evening of the first day. She was exactly the right person to join the group. How do I know that? Well, she is a very warm person, interested to learn about others, and she helped the group form and become more cohesive through her sociable, engaging style of communication. LL is knowledgeable about Ortho-Bionomy: she is one of Australia’s first teachers. Coming from Northern Queensland, she helped increase the geographic representation of the group so that all Eastern states, from Queensland to Tasmania, were represented. As a fellow grandmother, I enjoyed hearing about LL’s grandchildren. And LL was keen to participate in the fieldwork, an important factor because participation meant giving up 5 days of her own bodywork practice in order to contribute to, and hopefully gain from, becoming a member of the group.

Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
This principle allowed us, as participants in the fieldwork, to stay present rather than wishing things had been different. Although I was very upset to hear that LL had bumped her head so hard, at the conclusion of the fieldwork, I knew there was no way to reverse that once it had happened. To my surprise and relief, LL emailed to say that the sinus tightness she experienced following her head jolt had gone away, her hay fever had lessened, and the base of her head felt more relaxed than before the incident.

Although hitting her head is not something I would have recommended to LL, it hopefully has had no long-term ill effects and may even have produced a partially useful change. That is not for me to say. I can learn from LL’s bump by questioning how I might have arranged events and furniture differently, for example, by placing a bed under the bookshelves so it is not possible to walk near them. That still will not change what happened for LL, but should prevent the chance of a similar incident in future.

Whenever it starts is the right time

For LL, the fieldwork started a day ‘late’. She had commitments that dictated her starting time, and in her notes, she expressed some trepidation about arriving after the other participants. Together we managed to cover many of the group’s experiences by email, for example LL completed the written pre-questions and a body map before her arrival. As well, she arrived in time for our first dinner together at Poppy’s Thai restaurant, not far from our house, (depicted in the Fieldwork section of the DVD). LL was thus able to meet group members in a relaxed atmosphere, so her timing was impeccable.

When it’s over it’s over

It is not possible to dictate the boundaries of creativity and instruction. Although the fieldwork occurred during a finite period of five days, its effects rippled out in time and space. In LL’s case, some of those ripples were documented. They included having time with her daughter in Victoria, and attending a meeting after her return home while declining to put herself under pressure to perform when that felt inappropriate to her. It involved her attitude at her impromptu Christmas party, where the easy atmosphere had a ‘self-care’ effect on one of the young guests when she later attended another gathering, found it was not to her taste and left rather than spoiling the mood she was in following LL’s party. As well, LL wrote an article for the SOBA Newsletter, which was read by many people interested in Ortho-Bionomy. So, for LL, it seems the fieldwork had some follow-
on influence in her life well after the conclusion of the event itself. Perhaps the event is still not completely over for LL?

The Law of Two Feet

LL exercised the law of two feet before she joined our group by arriving a day after the rest of the group gathered. She chose to complete whatever else she needed to do before flying interstate to take part in the fieldwork. Had she decided to join us on the first day, she might have been only partially present, thinking instead of whatever else was on her mind. Once LL arrived, she fitted into the group smoothly and became involved in our activities. Like other participants, LL participated in the fieldwork as it suited her – I did not expect or want participants to do things that did not feel right for them. Like other participants, LL did not use the yurt, so I asked for it to be removed so the space in the garden could be used for painting and other creative pursuits. By following the law of two feet, we were all able to go to activities which were appropriate for us and avoid those which were not so suitable, and so get more value from our time. We could follow our passions rather than doing as we thought we should.

I am still being affected by LL’s artwork and comments as I write about her participation in the fieldwork now, many months after the apparent conclusion of the project itself. For example, thinking about LL in relation to Open Space Technology principles shows me how these may be noticed in day-to-day relationships within my bodywork practice. I am also struck by the change in LL from highly organised, as displayed in her art, to laid back, demonstrated by her unwillingness to stress herself by giving a presentation at the gathering she attended after her return home from the fieldwork. She was also pleased about the effect of her impromptu party on at least one of the guests. In the past, she said, she would never have put on a party without careful preparation.

Stage 4 Conclusions: Learning for my Practice

Engagement with these principles during the fieldwork and data interpretation encouraged me to open more space in my practice for the expertise and creativity of clients, as well as for my own intuition and reflection. Bringing Open Space Technology principles to bear on LL’s case study reinforced my resolve to play with offering individual clients and students a chance to consider following creative urges that inspire their passion following, or possibly during, bodywork sessions and classes, I see my practice becoming less contained by my former prejudices and assumptions. How? That remains to be seen, although I do now
have one possible model from the fieldwork project: that of offering class participants the resources and space for creative expression during bodywork classes. Other models may arise as I recommence my practice work. Since completing the fieldwork, I have sometimes offered art materials to individual clients for use after a session, if they wish. So far most clients have not taken up this opportunity. Perhaps creative expression belongs more in a group situation? Or maybe I need to offer it in a different way? I am still exploring this issue.
MB Case Study

Stages

1. Consider MB’s data

2. Record my observations based on (a) body maps and (b) art

3. Consult books (such as Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to develop a suitable research method

4. Follow the process inspired by nature and record it in my fieldwork journal, quoting relevant sections in the case study

5. Gather conclusions

Stage 2 Observations (a) Body Maps

Pre Map

MB wrote that she experienced stiffness, mainly in her upper back, cramps from the Achilles tendon area to the mid calf, cold toes and fingers and that her body felt heavy. On her map she also marked stiffness in the tops of her shoulders, the fronts of her thighs, her outer shoulder blades and the insides of her arms. She showed warmth or heat on her upper abdomen, comfort from her hips to her knees at the back and right side, as well as her outer arms, with flexibility and freedom in her arms and hands, but not her fingers.

Figure 81: Pre Map

Post Map
MB commented in writing that she felt “comfortable in my body and … lighter.” Her calves were experienced as tight or stiff, her fingers were cool or cold, her feet were warm or hot. Her shoulder blades and shoulders were flexible or free. The remainder of her body was comfortable. No discomfort was marked on this map.

In general, MB marked a great deal more comfort throughout most of her body, on the second body map. Her choice of colours to demonstrate her comfort, warmth/heat and flexibility/freedom was more dramatic. Her fingers had remained cool/cold, and were marked as such on both maps.

Figure 82: Post Map

(b) Art

MB created two initial paintings on large sheets of paper, plus a diary of paintings and drawings. They told the story of MB’s experience of the fieldwork. Some examples follow:
Figure 83: One large painting

Figure 84: Page one of visual diary

Figure 85: Page two of diary

Figure 86: Drawing following shoulder work
Stage 3 Literature Check

In wondering how to work with the data for MB’s case study, I looked at Strauss and Corbin (1990) to discover whether returning to the first book I had consulted about qualitative research, at the start of this PhD, would help me complete a circle (or continue a spiral) of learning. On page 252 I found a section about “the research process” which talks about making judgements about research process components that contribute to a publication. This thesis is a publication, so I wanted to explore MB’s data from a new angle, before writing it up as a case study. I tried answering the questions suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 253) as seven criteria. I answered number 1: how the original sample was selected and number 2: about the emergence of major categories in the research. These questions were useful as a general overview, but the answers did not seem to lead me far in this specific case.

Stage 4 Nature ‘Intercedes’

Just as I wrote the last sentence, above, I heard and felt an enormous, explosive and startling crash on this house where I am writing. I was upstairs in a house situated on a hill, and I wondered what ever could have hit the house with such force. Looking out the front door, I could not see anything on the upstairs landing or in the garden. My chest was aching and sore and my heart pounding from the fright I had experienced at the noise. I went out onto the upstairs verandah to the North of the house and there, lying on the floor, was a most beautiful dove, quite dead, with a broken neck from hitting the window, it seems. It must have been flying somewhere at great speed when it crashed into the window. I felt very sad about the death of this glorious bird that had been so free and powerful, moments before its collision with the glass.
Did this incident have a message about MB's data? I was struck by the fact that nature and especially birds were a most prominent symbol in MB's art and writing.

The bird on the verandah was lying in a similar position to the bird MB drew (see below). Its left wing was under its body, right wing a little outstretched. It had a similar face and beak to her drawn bird. It looked peaceful. A plover flew onto the verandah and walked past and around the dead dove.
The spirals MB drew for the bird's eyes used the same symbol that cartoonists use to suggest a shock or collision in their animal characters. Is this sudden stop represented somewhere in MB's participation in the project? After the five-day workshop, when I sent information and requested feedback by mail and phone, I received no response, from MB. That felt like a sudden stop, and I retreated, not wanting to invade her space. I am casting about for connections, and would prefer to be writing this in relationship with MB. My hope is to contact her and check how she feels about what I have written about her. I think it would be best to talk directly with MB to discover whether we can write her case study together as a conversation. I will see if that can come to fruition. (Despite several further attempts, I have been unable to make contact with MB).

While searching for a way to discover a possible meaning in my encounter with the bird, I tried making puppets out of three characters in the story: the bird, the house and me. Amy Mindell uses puppetry quite often when teaching Process Work and writes about the value of puppets (Mindell, 2005, 2006; Mindell and Mindell, 2002-5) in understanding processes and stories. When I bought and gathered materials for the puppets, I found I was unable to make puppets that felt satisfactory (described in more detail below), so I kept searching for another method.
In process work terms, the bird’s arrival came in the world channel. It is an unexpected and dramatic ‘flirt’ from the environment. The bird insinuated itself so strongly into my awareness that I felt a need to unpack its meaning. MB also arrived unexpectedly to be a participant in the Fieldwork. When she rang to book in, at the last minute, I confused her with a client who has almost the same, rather unusual for me, first name. I returned MB’s call to the client, to find her driving to the airport to meet some visitors and feeling baffled about my call. It was not until she arrived at my house that I discovered MB’s actual identity. Similarly, it took me a while to find the bird that crashed into the house, but are these happenstnces meaningful?

In two journal entries, I noted:

1. What does the bird have to say about MB? How can I find out? Many thoughts are running through my head about MB’s case study. How can I make sense of them for me, let alone record them to share with MB and readers of the thesis?

2. Today I had a process work consultation by phone with Susan Hatch (2008b). Because I was having such difficulty with my writing, I talked over my stickness with Susan. The crash and death of the dove has been on my mind because of the sadness, beauty and drama of the experience.

I felt that my writing difficulties and the dove’s death were significant and required further understanding. Several potent experiences have occurred during my postgraduate studies and I have responded to them in the following ways.

Firstly I have actively ignored them, such as a dream I had many years ago to do with study, when I was told “Do it, you have no choice”. When I pointedly chose to distract myself and go back to sleep, the voice returned, booming at me: “DO IT, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!” This time I listened, but was unsure what “IT” was, eventually thinking the voice might have been referring to my needing to write a thesis.

Secondly I have tried to ‘nut out’ what flirts and signals from the environment meant. For example, when working with ATM’s data and having the sun break through the clouds, providing me with an embodied sense of light, movement and warmth, I wrote my responses into her case study while trying to make sense of them.
Thirdly, I have simply reported synchronicities, without trying to interpret them. For example, GH rang me from interstate at the exact moment when I picked up his body map, in order to begin his case study. He had not contacted me for many months. I thought: “That was a bit weird” and let it go.

Now I am finding these synchronicities too strong to ignore. I have wondered why I longed to drop the writing of my thesis for several years, especially when I could not see it being useful in my life, since I am too old to ‘require’ a new qualification, and two Masters degrees are more than I need as I near retirement age. I wonder about the coming together of events such as the bird crashing into the house. One part of me feels awed, about the number of synchronous events related to my PhD. Another, no-nonsense part is horrified I should be writing so ‘romantically’ about non-consensus aspects of my research. Then I remember my chest has been aching since the bird’s crash, some days ago. Does that physical symptom partly exist to draw my attention to something noteworthy?

Talking with Susan Hatch\(^1\) about the experience helped me identify with it more fully. Instead of trying to interpret it as being part of MB’s case study, and trying to learn more about her from it, I realised that the experience was had by me, not MB. That frees me from trying to understand it mainly in terms of MB and her data. The world channel, through which the bird’s crash and death came to my awareness, is a multiple channel, made up of several others, for example: movement (the bird’s flight), sound (the crash), vision (the dead bird) and relationship (between the dove and the plover).

During my Process Work supervision session, which took place by phone, I decided to take the bird’s crash into the house as my topic for the session. In order to do that safely through movement, since I was sitting in a small room, Susan suggested imagining a pillow as the house, and my hand as the bird. Movement is a useful channel for me, because it is somewhat removed from thinking, and helps me to bypass the hovering edge figures that sometimes derail such an exploration, through their/my sceptical thoughts. I had experienced these edge figures, when I tried to understand the crash by creating puppets of the bird and me (based on Mindell, 2006). As I drew each puppet character, I thought “That does not look like the bird – the beak is too short – no, now it is too long and the wings look clumsy” and “This is not the same size as a

\(^1\) Susan Hatch signed a confidentiality statement for the sessions she has given me in relation to my research. There was no need to identify any of the participants to Susan, since I was dealing with my own processes around the research, rather than participants’ details.
dove, make your puppet bigger – no, not that big.” I talked myself out of the mood for puppetry and stopped the process. Through using movement, and with Susan’s encouragement, I had more success.

Now I return to my research journal:

With a pillow against the back of a chair to represent the window of the house, I flew my hand (as the dove) towards the pillow and noticed what happened, especially inside me, when my ‘bird hand’ crashed into the ‘pillow house’. As the bird, I was shocked to hit the window and fall down dead with a broken neck. In amplifying what it meant to be dead, I lay down on my curved wing and waited to learn what death would bring me. Today was rainy and very cold, with dark grey clouds overhead, so the room was dull despite its curtains being open to the North. While I lay, with my eyes half closed, as the dove had done, the sun suddenly burst through the clouds. It lit up my eyes and the room, and warmed me.

The phone I was using was a speakerphone so I could hear Susan and speak to her with my hands free. While I was still lying, Susan (Hatch, 2008a) suggested I widen my awareness beyond consensus reality, and then even wider, beyond dreaming reality, to drop into “big U” or “process mind” (Mindell, 2007). I gave my imagination free rein to find out the meaning of the burst of sun, temporarily suspending my edge figures’ objections, and shape-shifted (transformed myself) into the warmth and light of the sun. I experienced myself as the energy of light and warmth radiating out into the world. My sense was of being in the local community and offering to open space for gatherings such as the planning group for a new community garden proposed for our town. Another imaginary experience was of going to two small primary schools, each within about 100 metres of our house and asking whether they might like my involvement, for example in facilitating bodywork classes and sessions for students and staff. I could imagine the possibilities that might spread out from the sharing of sustainable practices, if they are wanted.

When experiencing myself as radiating warmth and light, it made sense to me that signals, coincidences and synchronicities are happening with greater regularity to me now, especially as I write up the fieldwork case studies. I can see how each fieldwork participant contributed her or his individuality to the project. For example, GH brought his strong grip on consensus reality, his willingness to open his mind to new ways of expression for him such as art and poetry, and his phone call at the exact moment I began his case study. ATM
offered her spirituality and interest in following her own path. During exploration
of her data, the universe brought me an embodied experience of her art through
my being bathed in rays of light as I focussed on the energy of her pictures. MB
showed me her shining, youthful beauty during the fieldwork and her immersion
in what I suggested as exercises. Her data perplexed me until I was jolted into
awareness by the dove’s shocking death, which seemed significant and
warranted unpacking.

The bird looked utterly beautiful to me. I felt terribly sorry that this dove, flying at
what must have been an amazing speed in freedom, hit the window and lost its
life. Then my feelings became complex. As I stood next to the bird on the
verandah, I just wanted to appreciate its great beauty. Simultaneously I felt the
pressure of finishing this final case study, the shock of the unexpected crash and
the coincidence of the bird emblem in MB’s art. When I wondered about the
significance of the dove, I thought I was being disrespectful of the bird’s life and
death. When I just appreciated the bird, I felt anxious that time was limited and
passing. In the end I just walked away. Jim returned to the house and
photographed the bird’s body next day for me while I was away. He found a
collection of mixed seeds in front of the dove’s beak (not visible in the photo).
Where did they come from? The verandah is upstairs and not accessible to
people other than Jim and me. Did the bird vomit quite some time after it died? I
doubt it, since there was no hint of fluid with the seeds. Did its mate bring the
seeds, or did the plover, which had been so interested to walk up and down the
verandah around the dove, deposit them? It is a mystery to me. I like to think the
bird’s mate brought the grains.

Stage 5 Conclusion: Relationship Space?

This idea reminds me of something else my PhD research has shown me. In my
task of sharing sustainable and emergent ways to bring comfort, increased
flexibility and wellbeing to the community, I need to be in relationship. That
means I need help and engagement from community members and friends. This
type of research is not meant to be a solitary task. Like Arthur Lincoln Pauls, I
might need to gather a ‘family’ of helpers. Perhaps this will be an organic
process. Jim and I wanted to be part of a community garden and wondered how
to begin. Yesterday a leaflet was placed in our letterbox, asking if we will join a
group proposing to set up such a garden, and asking local residents for our
ideas. Perhaps I need to allow a group to gather, should that occur, rather than
trying to deliberately work towards that end. Self-organisation cannot be
controlled. It emerges in its own way.
Fieldwork Findings

Now I come to the question of what I learned in general from the fieldwork. What patterns did I notice during and after the research? How might my observations influence my future work?

Not only did the research about my practice take the form of a bricolage, so did my interpretation of data collected during the fieldwork. While still focussing on conducting and writing up research, I am not fully engaged in my practice. Once I return to teaching and seeing more clients, I think more learning will become apparent to me. Doing research has opened my mind to new possibilities in my practice, it has broken me out of the rut in which I may have become stuck. My attitudes about what constitutes research have expanded, as has my approach to facilitating learning. I have tried to imagine how it is possible to do integral research (Gebser, 1991) and to conduct my practice in a way that invites integral consciousness. There are also other realisations I have come to from undertaking research as I did, and some follow, under a variety of themed subheadings.

Qualitative Risks: Data collection and analysis

The use of qualitative research not only brought advantages, as I described in the Methodology chapter, but also risks. When I began my PhD fieldwork project, I felt singularly inexperienced. My Masters research almost entirely involved self-portraiture as its research method. For the PhD, I was broadening my field of interest to include other people and felt a different sense of responsibility: that I needed to take extra care with my choice of relevant research methods and the way I wrote the results. Yet I decided (or the research ‘decided for me’) that I had to allow the methods I used for conducting and understanding the research to emerge from the research process.

It was not until I had almost finished the research, and most of the thesis, that I discovered a paper called “Qualitative Data as an Attractive Nuisance: The Problem of Analysis” (Miles, 1979). In it, Miles reported experiences similar in some ways to mine. The research he described in the paper differed markedly from mine: his was a study called “... The Project on Social Architecture in Education ...” (p. 591), which focussed on six public schools as new organisations, from 1974 until 1978. It was a far larger project than my fieldwork, involving many more stakeholders, and it seemed better prepared than mine, in that a team of researchers, with some experienced members, worked together to
prepare and carry out the research. But even so, it encountered similar problems in terms of analysis of its qualitative data. Some of these were summarised by Miles as being:

a highly labor-intensive operation, often generating much stress, even for top-quality research staff ... [and] traditionally demanding even for the lone fieldworker, accountable only to the data and his or her discipline; (Miles, 1979, p. 590).

The data tend to: “overload the researcher badly at almost every point ...” (p. 590) because of the

... sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the volume of notes, the time required for write-up, coding and analysis can all become overwhelming. But the most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated (p. 590).

This aspect Miles contrasts with quantitative data, which he says has “clear conventions the researcher can use” (p. 590). He asks about qualitative data analysts: “[h]ow can we be sure that an ‘earthy’, ‘undeniable’, ‘serendipitous’ finding is not, in fact, wrong?” (p. 590).

During the four years of the project, Miles and his fellow researchers began with “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). They found a tension between the need to remain open to slowly evolve a research framework and a need to be clear and focussed, requiring an early and malleable “... rough working frame ...” (p. 591). They were more afraid of gathering “an incoherent, bulky, irrelevant, meaningless set of observations [that] may be produced, which no one can (or even wants to) make sense of” (Miles, 1979, p. 591).

In my fieldwork, I could not say I had “a rough working frame”, nor did I eventually follow grounded theory. What I had was an idea that I would look into the importance, or otherwise, of being embodied, and the effects of the fieldwork, if any, on relative embodiment of the participants. It was not until the end of the fieldwork that I realised my idea seemed not to have been shared by my fellow participants, or at least, that I could not find much reference to my idea in the data I had obtained. It took me a while to let go of my preconceived ideas and look for other frameworks around which I could understand the data. This is one way my fieldwork differed from Miles. He was not worried that his team of researchers would blind themselves by having “a rough working frame” whereas
I think I did become blinded or somewhat immobilised by my fairly loose idea, and masses of data.

Miles and his team simplified and expanded their original “rational designer” (p. 592) model and still found the researchers were overwhelmed by data, that they tried to reduce using a revised coding system. The fieldworkers “… hated the job” (p. 593), it was “eventually abandoned” (p. 594) and evolved into less formal methods such as “site summaries” and updates which took several forms. One was a brief report with “… a minimum of inference and analysis” (p. 594), another longer, more interpretive and integrative of the sites.

An additional difference between the Miles research and mine was that they integrated quantitative and qualitative data and found that fruitful. I used almost no quantitative data, because that type of data did not emerge naturally from the fieldwork.

There were, however, several similarities between the projects. I, too, was overwhelmed by the quantity of data and found coding too difficult. When reading on the topic of data analysis, I too had difficulty finding suitable techniques described (p. 596). As it happened, I used some similar steps towards analysis to those distilled by Sieber (in Miles, 1979, p. 596). For example, I intertwined analysis and data collection to some extent, during and after the five days of the fieldwork, although I thought that was limited by my sense of overload.

I also identified themes by linking concepts and noticing what aroused my curiosity. For example, I filled my (large) computer screen with the typed transcripts of interviews and assigned a colour to each person’s text. I was then able to search for recurring themes, drawing out phrases or sections and placing them in a document for that theme. This gave me a much clearer sense of the frequency of, and language around, each theme in the interviews. I gave examples of those documents as ‘found poems’ in the Fieldwork chapter, following the case studies.

Like Miles, I also found that “… the actual process of analysis during case-writing was essentially intuitive, primitive and unmanageable in any rational sense” (p. 597) and that

… the analysis process is more memorable for its moments of sheer despair in the face of the mass of data, alternating with moments of achieved clarity, soon followed by second-
guessing scepticism (‘Would someone else come to the same conclusion?’) (p. 597).

The way I resolved this difficulty was to eventually relinquish my goal of a single research method for each case study and to design or select a method to suit each case. This meant that I could not compare cases researched within the same method, and I was not sure whether this would affect the validity of my findings.

Now, on looking back, I think my research needed to be more heuristic than I realised.

Parts of me were initially caught up in trying to obtain rational results that could be comparable to the findings of others. Other parts of me were happy to let go and see what happened. I needed to go through a process to come to terms with new ways to conduct research. Perhaps I have partially moved through that process. Although I do not have neat, crisp results from this research, I do have a wider view of how research into a practice like mine may be conducted in the future. I also have ideas about how my practice might alter as a result of my research, as I describe in the Conclusion chapter.

Case Study Methods

Working through the fieldwork case studies, I have felt a need to select the method of inquiry that suits each participant best. This was partly to avoid boredom from repeating a set research method eight times. It also came from a wish to deal sensitively with the data entrusted to me by participants. I felt most uncomfortable about interpreting other people’s data as if I am an expert in others’ experiences. So I created a lot of space (for example by not committing to firm methods for many months), and then I followed my whims and yearnings to choose methods of engaging with the data that I could live with. Some methods may seem capricious or ‘against the rules’, and perhaps they were exactly the right way to go. Some were responses to flirts from the environment, and what could be more scientific than observing the environment’s signals, including flirts, synchronicities and non-local happenings and enquiring into them with an open mind?
Impressionism in the Fieldwork

Remembering that this research and thesis are impressionistic and integral is helpful at this stage. I am not trying to prove a hypothesis, which is one reason why I did not choose to conduct a double blind experiment. The thesis and research are fluid and represent more than rational consciousness and consensus reality. During the research years I have been feeling my way forwards, sideways and backwards as I formed and experienced and discovered how to develop appropriate integral research and how to report it. There were times I felt confident and more times I experienced uncertainty and chaos. To my sorrow and joy, when following the principles behind my research, especially those of Ortho-Bionomy, I made progress.

I say sorrow because sometimes I wanted to speed the process, control parts of it, or head towards an intended outcome, to no avail, since the research made its own way, at its own pace, and took me with it. Writing this I am reminded of the process in the human body that returns the body inexorably to balance, under appropriate conditions, against physical resistance, for example, the soft yet insistent resistance I provide when I am holding a client’s cranial bones out of balance and waiting, wondering if they will respond. This balance is not something I take for granted even though the body’s reliable process of self-organisation consistently surprises and delights me.

The research joy I say I experienced came from the realisation that the simple principles of Ortho-Bionomy, Process Work and Open Space Technology, and my research, work across systems. They have worked as a basis for my life and practice and more recently for research.

Why I say that remembering the impressionistic and integral nature of the research is helpful at this stage is so you are cognisant of the fact that:

I am not attempting to prove anything (as I have said).

I cannot provide a complete picture of such a diverse field of endeavour but simply give impressions from this point of view or that, generally without evaluating them.

It is not my concern to assess or interpret the participation of members of the research group or individual clients who were involved. This refers to their experiences in relation to the research and their visual and language arts output. Even if I did evaluate, assess and interpret their efforts, you would make your
own interpretations anyway. So I am cutting out the middle person – me – to some extent. Of course, completely cutting out my interpretation is not possible. All aspects of the research and thesis are coloured by my involvement from how I designed the project, wrote the thesis, selected data to include and so on. It is just not my desire to make interpretation a focus or strong intention in the research.

Since the research was carried out during my PhD candidature, it was designed to help me learn to do research. The thesis consists of glimpses into the discoveries and transformations I came across on the path. Most of what I found out has not been mentioned at all. Reminders of it sit as pencil marks or post-it notes inside hundreds of books and papers on shelves lining my walls, as well as book-marked web sites, and radio and television program notes I have made. Most of the books I read have had no mention in this thesis. There were too many for my hand to rush across the page and make notes. I was afraid the thesis would become too chaotic if I tried to incorporate any more of the areas of study that have grabbed at me as I travelled past them. Paddy Plasto’s (2005) PhD thesis is a case in point. It really struck a chord in me, because it is about integral creativity, yet I came across it quite late in my process and feel as if I cannot do justice to its similarities to and differences from my work. At least I gave it a brief mention, unlike other experiences that have been completely excluded.

Some of my impressions are taking the form of charts that give a brief peep at ideas, summaries, confluences, possibilities and the like. I hope they are a quick way to compare, contrast, give substance to, ground and align ideas that might otherwise seem less substantial or clear.

For example, I came across Kolb’s Learning Styles (Sharp, 1995) in the mid 1990’s. In the time available, with so many topics jostling for space, I feel as if I cannot do justice to Kolb’s ideas, yet I think they are relevant here. So I have briefly made a connection with how Kolb has influenced the way I work, especially my teaching methods. To Kolb’s learning styles, I have added examples of how I cater for students of Ortho-Bionomy who might locate themselves in one or other learning styles category. On the ‘Perception Continuum’ I have added ‘Taking notes’ to the ‘Abstract Conceptualisation’ box. Students with learning strengths in Abstract Conceptualisation would most likely benefit from taking notes of ideas presented during class, and making diagrams of the bodywork demonstrated. At the other end of that continuum I have placed
storytelling to denote a way of connecting Concrete Experience and Feeling. Stories told in class by the teacher or fellow students help to make ideas more practical, meaningful and grounded in life experiences. On the Processing Continuum, people who learn by doing have many opportunities to practise the work demonstrated through hands-on work with a partner. Those who learn by watching, most likely benefit from demonstrations given in class. Students also learn something from examples of learning styles that are not their own, but I have tried, for many years, to provide material that accommodates all learning styles during classes, including the research project.

There are many other considerations in learning. One is to provide ‘food’ for the senses. Learning via the senses was one of these styles. Ortho-Bionomy is a form of tertiary education that teaches using most senses. This is how I incorporated the senses in this research project, basing the chart on Steiner’s twelve senses as described in Soesman’s (1990) book “Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senses</th>
<th>Examples in the Fieldwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL SENSES</strong> (Directed at own physical body)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Touch Determining one’s boundaries (P.145)</td>
<td>Experienced through giving and receiving hands-on bodywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Life sense Growth and decay of own constitution</td>
<td>Assisted by receiving bodywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-movement sense Handling/expressing oneself through body</td>
<td>Practising bodywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Balance Gravitational orientation</td>
<td>Balancing of the body in Ortho-Bionomy, especially cranial work and posture exercises during the Maroondah Dam walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUL SENSES</strong> (Relation of man (sic) in the world)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Smell Emptying oneself and being filled (materially)</td>
<td>Plays a less obvious role in classes via a subtle sense of others’ smell. More clear during breaks: smelling the fresh air, garden and bush, tea, coffee and foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Taste Controlling the ponderable: what forms my body (microcosm)</td>
<td>Particularly emphasised at breaks. I consider nourishing and sensuous catering to be a major ingredient of classes – well-combined and tasty, organic foods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary, what can I tell from the data?

Following their experience of bodywork, all participants reported feeling more comfortable. They also described learning more about themselves. I discovered how each participant differed in their experience of the fieldwork and where they placed their focus. Having a group of people responding to the bodywork together, at one time and place, underlined their individuality, as did employing art as a medium of expression. For example here are some of the differing focal points I noticed in the data of individual group participants:

HG: creativity and pleasure – foot painting and tissue collage

ATM: spiritual experience

GH: writing poetry and painting for the first time, winding down, and awareness of the body, beyond using it as a tool

LR: acceptance of pain

LL: balance in her pelvis, and afterwards a letting go of effort
WW: awareness of comfort as a way of life
H: depicting Ortho-Bionomy as an old oak tree, with a sapling
M: development of focus

My Learning from this Research

When I watched the videos of the group and individual fieldwork sessions, I was shocked to see how much talking I had done. Consequently I am now interested to try facilitating Ortho-Bionomy mainly through silent class demonstrations, although I do realise that stories can be important in learning. The other salient learning came from noticing responses from participants in the group fieldwork. They derived such obvious pleasure from, and told me of the value to them of, the time devoted to their creative expression through language and visual arts, that I would like to include those in my future bodywork classes.

Plasto, when using creative expression in her particular way, said:

*In its developmental unfolding this method expresses, as each structure is successively integrated, many of the capacities associated with the Archaic: sensation and perception, Magic: image and symbol, Mythic: concept and rule and the reasoning capacity of the rational (Plasto, 2005, p. 207)*.

I also learned more about Gebser’s structures of consciousness (Gebser, 1991) in the art created by participants (and me):

All of my roles, which I have given as examples of the work involved before, during, and after the practical research required reflection and revision during the fieldwork, just as in life we are constantly shifting and altering roles in response to our inner and outer environment. This involved a hermeneutic (see Powell, 1998) process of awareness of my circumstances, willingness to be consciously immersed in the situation, and openness to allowing meaning to develop through osmosis and reflection in order to gain knowledge about what happened. Afterwards, when considering the literature of Brooks (1984) to do with intention, Dingwall (1994) in relation to health research planning, as well as Janesick (2003), and Marshall and Rossman (1999) regarding research design, I saw ways in which the fieldwork could have been designed and implemented differently and conceivably better. Some examples follow. I believe that this learning will lead to my employing more effective strategies with future research projects in which I might be involved.
Dingwall reminded me of the importance of achieving process evaluation of qualitative research in the health care arena “...by means that command the confidence of the policy audience” (1994, p. 163). Although I was interested to research my work and practice for its own sake, and to make a study of Ortho-Bionomy open to public view, not to effect funding or policy change, and although I see my study as located in the field of education more than health, there is some overlap. At another time, my needs might differ, so Dingwall’s ideas were a salutary reminder of further considerations, and gave me pause for thought about my practice, and about how I might report this research. He suggests asking, about “...any human service organisation”: is it “efficient”, “effective”, “equitable”, and “humane” (1994, p. 162)? On immediate reflection, I would say that my practice meets the second (effectiveness - evidenced through consistently good reports by clients from 1985 until the present, regarding symptom resolution after sessions with me) and fourth (humanity - reportedly providing relief from pain and restriction to people of all ages from many backgrounds and preferences) criteria strongly. The practice is relatively efficient (except that I allow time and space around each session so I can give more than an hour to clients, which might be seen as far from cost effective). I think my practice is partially equitable (for example I tell clients they can send money whenever it becomes available, if they need a session and experience financial pressures, they need not hold back because of a lack of money), but I notice that the majority of my clients are white and middle class. I want to address the issue of working with a broader cross-section of the community, if that should be appropriate. Dingwall’s questions have given me a new perspective on my practice. His suggestion, of taking three aspects of organisations into account during assessment: “...structure, process and outcome...” once again sent me back to my research data.

I think structure formed an important part of my research, as did process (clearly vital to the entire research). What about outcome? Some outcomes of my research were: a description of my one-of-a-kind practice as an example for others wishing to set up a practice; a bringing together of the three modalities of Ortho-Bionomy, Process Work and Open Space Technology both in my practice and in its research; a distinctive research model recorded for future students of research to use or avoid; responses expressed by research participants; and a new approach to teaching for me, incorporating fewer words from me and opportunities for more self-expression and reflexivity for students. On reflection, after reading Dingwall’s chapter (Dingwall, 1994), I am surprised at how well my
research stood up to assessment against criteria designed for health policy research.

Marshall and Rossman (Marshall and Rossman, 1999) reiterated suggestions from Dr Debbie Horsfall, and from my earlier reading, that I had implemented in my research already. Seeing them written again brought them back into focus and let me see them from another time angle. Some opportune reminders during the writing up stage were: to state the limitations and boundaries of the study; and to revalue the literature search and resultant learning (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 42 to 43). I also found later chapters of the book helpful in relation to managing and analysing data, through models of report writing, genres of qualitative writing, noting different types of graphic representation of data through the book, and so on.

Triangle or Crystal

Ideas expressed by Janesick (2003) comparing researchers with choreographers helped me see how I might have approached the continuous design and redesign of the research as if it were an ongoing dance, with less heartache and stress. For example, early in the design process I struggled with the idea of triangulation, which, simply expressed involves approaching a research issue from several data, investigator, theoretical, or methodological perspectives (after Janesick, 2003, p. 66). Janesick’s explanation of the term “crystallization” gave me “… a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know” (Richardson, 2003, p. 518). The concept of triangulation provided me with a more complete sense of the research than one represented by merely a single view, however it did not accurately enough reflect the myriad, unpredictable experiences I encountered during the research. A triangle is too stable a concept to evoke the fluidity and changeability of the research. I needed a more complex metaphor or model such as that of a crystal, which has numerous facets that meet at many different angles and reflect a variety of views to an observer.

A crystal is distinct from a triangle, which is a two-dimensional idea, rather than a solid, material object; a crystal has substance, growing and changing during its lifetime. As a metaphor for my multi-faceted, evolving research, which I have reflected on from many directions in space and time, a crystal fittingly suggests the possibility of growth and fluidity. The research developed over time, and I found the need to enlist fresh methods to study and record what was emerging. When I became aware of this need for impromptu methods, I questioned whether
such a fluid approach was valid. Triangulation gave me the impression that 
almost three premeditated methods of considering the research would be 
valid, but many more would be excessive, and left me feeling uncomfortable and 
somehow fraudulent when I found a need for improvisation as I continued the 
research process. I asked myself questions like: “Surely, if I had designed my 
research well enough, I would have foreseen most eventualities and designed for 
them? Why am I now seeing a need for unexpected methods? Am I so sloppy in 
my research that I cannot keep it within set parameters?” These questions made 
me hesitate, and held me back in my process. I now realise that I had no chance 
to pre-plan the research I did. The study was complex and involved many other 
people. Asking myself these questions and trying so hard to ‘do the right thing’ 
undermined my confidence.

Irigaray helped me to drop back to myself to discover what was organic in my 
research and its description, so I did not need to measure myself so much 
against other researchers and their paradigms:

If you/ I hesitate to speak, isn’t it because we are afraid of not 
speaking well? But what is “well” or “badly”? … If you want to 
speak “well,” you pull yourself in, you become narrower as 
you rise. Stretching upward, reaching higher, you pull yourself 
away from the limitless realm of your body. Don’t make 
yourself erect, you’ll leave us. …

And don’t worry about the “right” word. There isn’t any. No 
truth between our lips. There is room enough for everything to 
exist. (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 213).

A Pilot

I had put in a lot of preparation for the fieldwork. In previous years I had already 
conducted what could be described as informal and partial pilot studies for this 
project. I had run many workshops to teach gentle bodywork and personal 
development, set up several ‘family days’ to share Ortho-Bionomy with families 
in Healesville, Maidample/Mansfield and Warranwood in Victoria, as well as 
Mittagong in New South Wales, and had arranged and facilitated Open Space 
Technology and Process Work group experiences on several occasions. Each of 
those experiences taught me something that helped me plan the research. For 
instance: over the years I had learned ways to produce more understandable 
handouts; how fast to teach groups with a variety of experience; and how much 
content to offer in a day. This learning gave me a good general background as a 
starting point for the fieldwork project.
On reflection I realise that an ‘all-in’ pilot project specifically for this research would have taken some of the pressure off me to carry out so many steps and aspects for this project. It might have helped me to collect targeted data I could analyse more easily. I may have been more selective and focussed in what I chose to record. I do have rich data but worry that I might not do it justice, and that other data may have represented the participants and processes more appropriately. Despite being easier, however, such steps may have taken away from the integral approach and made the research more customary and less ‘in the moment’. Conducting a pilot project might have allowed me to let go of the research process more. If I should conduct another round of this research in the future, I would set it up differently and more simply. For example, I could have provided more basic handouts for participants: what I gave out was far too detailed. Perhaps the fieldwork could have been conducted at another venue so I did not need to empty most of the furniture and so on from our home. The yurt need not have been hired. Participants could have brought their own bedding and special foods. The videotaping of sessions could have been left out completely, replaced with photographs, or conducted by an independent person. While the footage was interesting and helpful as a research tool, I think it required far too much work and focus on my part, as an untrained and completely inexperienced videographer, for the benefits it provided. Another saving in time and energy would have been to provide only one footbath session plus a recipe, so participants could continue the series at home if they chose to.

There were several aspects of the research, which, with the benefit of hindsight, produced research gains that now seem out of proportion to the effort involved in setting them up. As it was, I managed the fieldwork as well as I could under the prevailing circumstances. I was pleased to do what I did, hoping the low cost and the way it was set up would make participation easier and more welcoming, not realising that the energy cost to me of each extra aspect would mount up as it did.

**Reflexive Research**

Human research has been going on for as long as people have been going on. Life requires reflexive research. We would not live long without awareness of the ongoing feedback from our inner and outer environment. Feedback loops have helped people to cross the road safely, chop wood, avoid being attacked by wild animals or falling over cliffs and to cook meals in relative safety. For a while, ‘formal’ research became very specialised, at least in a Western cultural outlook, and was often associated with experimental method (described in Graziano and
Raulins, 1993). Now researchers are broadening their approaches. Researchers are realising that life and research are more complex than experimental method suggests (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a; D'Cruz, 2001). Those who tried to simplify and control variables, and to create a repeatable program for research might have been well intentioned. Further reflection and research have shown, however, that research factors cannot be controlled (discussed in Crotty, 1996; Horsfall, 2001; Mulligan, 2001). Observers (including researchers) are a variable. They influence research outcomes (described by Gleick, 1987; Mindell, 2000b). People observe in their own way. The same person even observes differently from one moment to the next. It is not possible to control research or life. What a relief! In the face of this teeming, momentary, chaotic, complexity, our lives can be simple. Since we cannot be in control, we can let go of trying. Instead of trying to keep track of data and convoluted learning, we can drop a lot of accumulated knowledge and relax.

This need for letting go and for paying attention to feedback helped me to tune my research reflexivity. When I began writing up case studies, I felt a bit stiff. I looked for rules or previous examples to guide me. Gradually I let the data guide me.

By the time I wrote a case study for GH, I was more willing to follow his experience and my internal process with greater trust and fluidity. I included outside resources more peripherally, rather than relying on them as central.

Research does not need to be hard work. It can be a pleasure. It can add to researchers’ lives instead of exhausting us. Now I am listening. According to Mindell (Mindell, 2000a) the trick is awareness and letting go; awareness has to do with attention to the process of life and noticing feedback from both human and non-human parts of our environment; letting go involves following a process rather than trying to control it.

GH was also instrumental in helping me to lighten up. While writing his case study, when I felt exhausted and stuck, I allowed myself to have fun with words. Just as GH allowed himself to begin to scribble and write poetry, so I felt able to let go of some of my costly earnest endeavour and risk fresh approaches that required less effort.

There is a saying about teaching that ‘one teaches the subjects one needs to learn’. During my fieldwork and its follow-up, I had so many details on my mind, and so many emotions tied up in it that I frequently felt unable to let go and allow
the research to find its own way. I think I often did a good job in many ways, under demanding circumstances, but I can see that trusting the process, and letting go even more, is an enticing possibility.

Speaking at conferences and colloquia

This has been a way of learning to present information about my topic in a congruent, concise way. Each conference has taught me something about research conferences (for example in, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; for example in, 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2002 a). The most helpful early paper was finalised after the Centre for Research into Professional Practice, Learning & Education (RIPPLE) Conference in Albury (Baensch, 2005), where I found the peer review of my paper helped me to understand more clearly what is required of me in academic writing and how to go about it. The Jean Gebser Society’s Integrality: Truth, Reality and Globalisation Conference and the paper I wrote for it (Baensch, 2008) was another great for learning about writing, and a motivator for expanding the horizons of my future work and its presentation. The friendliness and open attitude of the academics and other delegates from Australia, India, USA, and Canada, and the standard of theoretical content creatively and integrally presented at that conference, by other speakers, inspired me. My original plan was to present a relatively reasoned, cerebral paper. Instead, I took a leap of faith, combining a practical demonstration of the theory I wanted to present, with multimedia layers of expression. Having my paper warmly appreciated by conference participants gave me great heart and renewed confidence in sharing the praxis of my work with diverse audiences.
I could sense that audience members were attending to what they experienced, and getting a feel for the subtleties of mood and movement I wanted them to perceive. They were present, with what seemed to me like an expanded focus, to notice and absorb the metaskills, (or the ‘something(s) in the air’), that might otherwise have drifted by beyond their awareness.

**My Practice Learning**

I hope:

- to do less talking when I facilitate classes,
- to consciously cover many styles of learning and senses during class
- to ask more of participants
- to do, and try to control, less
CONCLUSION

I began this research to learn more about my practice and work. Doing the research taught me about philosophy, consciousness, praxis, politics and education, particularly at a tertiary level. My enquiry kept opening out despite my attempts to limit its parameters. The situation reminded me of the folk tale called The Sorcerers Apprentice (von Goethe, 2006, p. 1) concerning a lad who was troubled that every time he cut a broom in half, each half become a whole broom and started to sweep, creating a nightmare influx of sweeping brooms. While writing this thesis, I repeatedly cut most of my field of study away, leaving perhaps a quarter of it. That quarter immediately expanded and I cut again, to no avail. The research and its report somehow had a life of its own and my job has been to report it, but not control it.

Despite dissatisfaction and uncertainty during the research years, I have experienced enjoyment and satisfaction at various stages, and mercifully am at one of those stages, as I conclude my study for now. I begin to see what I now think I was really studying, and why I put so much time and energy into the work. Frustratingly for the part of me that wants to know where I am at any time, and why I am doing what occupies my time, this realisation has come only two days before the first draft of my thesis is due to be sent away to my supervisor. What I realise is that I have not only been looking at my own practice and work, although that is an important part of the research. I have also been surveying possibilities and gathering knowledge towards the locating of my work for future training purposes. Not only do I need to be familiar with my own local circumstances, and leave a partial record of what has happened in my particular practice, and its relationship to theory and other practices, but I also want to consider how this work might be continued on. What needs to be incorporated into the training of future gentle body workers? How can their training be designed to accommodate the principles of the work? My basic conclusion is that less needs to be incorporated into the training program. I need to make more space in classes to allow students to become aware of their existing knowledge, and encourage them to expand, develop and follow their existing talents and passions. That expansion and development will be catered for, during training, through time, space and provision of varied materials to help inspire reflection, conversation, and creative expression.
This research has been busy, messy and sometimes superficial. Its thesis demonstrates these descriptions through the way it touches on so many assorted topics and often has little space or time to expand on them. How much more satisfying might it have been to seize on three or four topics and dive deeply into them? I did keep trying to cut down the areas of exploration, as I have said, and as fast as I did so, new themes burst upon the scene. On several occasions I used my daughter Kate’s advice, originally regarding a conference paper, and cut the notes for my thesis in half. Each time I did so, I had written in the vicinity of 100,000 words, about the upper limit for the size of a PhD thesis. Whenever I achieved that difficult act of surgery, I had a rush of enthusiasm for writing, and vital topics appeared before me in papers and in radio and television programs. I would then get excited and set off on another journey of exploration, most of which remained unwritten or were excluded from the thesis, and some crept into the thesis.

As Debbie said: “Your research is about everything, Allison” (Horsfall, 2007). Of course I have not written about everything, although my research context could include most themes, but I have written about topics that have come to hand. I removed sections that were unclear or loosely linked to others. I asked several people to read drafts and delete parts they found hard to understand or inappropriate. In this way, I became less possessive of the thesis, and recognised more and more how writing cannot be owned by one person. Generally through, readers could not recommend cuts to be made.

This has been an initial scanning of the general terrain around my practice, not a specialisation in one aspect. The research did cover a lot of ground. It considered the past, present and future of my practice: its setting and aspects of sustainability; its simple bookkeeping procedures and the hands-on and background modalities I employ. Fieldwork participants provided their impressions of group and individual experiences of those modalities. I gave my perspectives and reflected on how the research and my practice could be improved. The research embraced several structures of consciousness.

It brought writers and thinkers from many disciplines to bear on the topics of my practice and how to communicate my work to others. I stepped into visual and language arts, and new ways to share my belief that the body is our ally in life and learning. Throughout most of the research I tried to ground practice in theory and demonstrate theory practically, especially using the main senses we have.
I have felt very frustrated that hundreds of relevant writers and topics have necessarily been neglected. Nearly every day I experience surges of excitement about information I think I have discovered for my thesis. Partly because my topic is broad, much of my daily experience can add to the themes in the thesis. Both mercifully and frustratingly, because of a lack of memory or time, I could usually not record these insights, probably par for the course when doing research. Today, for example, when searching for an old file using Spotlight, a search program on my computer, I found a discarded document I wrote in 2003. In it I was planning my fieldwork and musing about how other people might join me in the research. In that document I began to wonder how the practice of health might take the guise of a circus, in order to lighten the topic a little, in a liminal way.

The idea led me in two directions. One was to consider setting up festivals in rural areas, perhaps funded by VicHealth a State Government health body, who had grants available at that time for such events. The festival, I imagined, could have the energy and mood of a circus. Gentle bodywork skills would be shared without the seriousness that often accompanies health issues. I thought about a transportable venue and considered a tipi, but realised one I could dismantle and move would be too small. This had led me to hire a yurt as a gathering space for the fieldwork, which did not live up to my expectations for it. In the process, I read about tipis and yurts and had several conversations with people who make or import these structures. None of this process is detailed in the thesis because it was crowded out by other happenings (until now).

There are many books about education as another example of thesis omissions, that are not, or hardly, mentioned in the thesis despite a great feeling of connection when I read them and lots of underlining and sticky tags marking relevant passages. Education was one direction I had hoped to investigate more thoroughly. Its treatment here could only be quite minimal. The books lining my walls bristle with tags that link me with ideas that thrilled me to the bone when I read them. I mourn the loss of these thoughts and excitements in my writing, although I know they exist somewhere inside me. All is not lost. I cannot wait to somehow step solidly back into my practice and put the ideas to work. Much of what I have learnt is far from my conscious awareness and may never surface. Some might yet guide me, from that unconscious place.

I have learned where my work fits within the theoretical and practical fields where I have looked.
Long before I learned Ortho-Bionomy, I established a primary school. It was a small, family-sized school where the children were provided with tools for independent learning. I was the principal and main teacher. Daily, each student at the school discussed their learning for the day together with me, and together the two of us listed their planned activities in their work diary. I looked for balance between the physical, the creative and the intellectual in diary entries, and for a thorough coverage of all basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, as well as the inclusion of other subjects of interest such as geography, science, arts, crafts and so on. Children were keen to learn in this easygoing, personally supervised environment, and made good progress. Those who had been unable to read or were reportedly poor at Maths at their former school, moved ahead to become confident and proficient in these curriculum areas within a few weeks. I did not know, at that time, how to specifically teach the children to trust their bodies, and follow the messages communicated through symptoms and their intuition. However the children at my school had a lot of freedom to move around, and I tried to make their environment safe and comfortable, and to connect their learning with the natural and social world around the school as much as I could. The students seemed to gain self-confidence quickly.

If I were to set up another school these days, following this research, I would approach the task differently. My first priority would be to cater for the students’ physical needs. They would have access to receiving and sharing gentle bodywork sessions and classes. Tables and chairs would be built appropriately to suit individual growing bodies. Organic and biodynamic foods would be made available to eat and grow in the school’s garden. There would be a choice of healthy exercise offered that did not rely on competition or pushing the body past its comfortable limits. Once I had set the physical scene, other priorities would drop into place. Skills for conflict resolution, and meeting social and emotional needs, would be catered for through modalities such as Process Work and Open Space Technology. The school would be set up along Open Space lines with regular meetings of its community for the purpose of day to day administration, planning, and sharing news. In that way the school would have some similarities to Croydon Community School in Victoria, which my daughters attended for much of their secondary education. Many avenues for gathering information would be available through excellent library and information technology facilities as well as vibrant links with members of the local and global community. The emphasis would not be on gathering information for its own sake, but rather on allowing ‘busy-ness’ to drop away, unless it was underpinned by passionate engagement, Pauls (2003) encouraged his students not to learn and accumulate
new techniques of Ortho-Bionomy but instead to let go of knowledge and simplify. Owen (1994, 1997) has a similar attitude with Open Space Technology. He recommends that facilitators do one less thing each time they hold an Open Space event.

In general, I believe children (and adults) willingly learn in their own independent ways. People cannot be taught, they can only learn. As their designated ‘teacher’ or co-learner, my main role is to set up circumstances (if necessary) and hold open some space for learning or transformation to take place. No amount of disciplining will make a person learn. If their circumstances are inappropriate, difficulties will arise. Those difficulties guide us to discover how we need to proceed more appropriately for each student. Open Space provides a structure where passion for life and learning is as free as possible to be expressed and acted upon, bounded by responsibility and respect.

This research has taught me more about how to proceed with future bodywork classes, and how to approach my practice, with greater awareness of clients’ and students’ ability to self-organise. I do not need to take such an active role, and can minimise my input into classes, using my body rather than words to get my message across, and creating clear spaces for learning. The research has also emphasised the centrality of trusting my own body (self). I cannot facilitate processes that I am disavowing. I need to embody every part of my work, not simply talk about it.

The Future and Time

In a certain sense, when I wrote it, I was (and still am) unaware of what the future of the thesis was going to be. Somewhat like Paranjape, quoted below talking about a paper he wrote to present at a conference, I have been, and am still, writing in a melding, moving present towards a future moulded by the past.

Now that that future has almost become the present, I can only narrate its past as best as I can, as I have done in the preamble disguised as a travelogue above. To that extent, the very coming into being of this paper illustrates how our existential journeys, nay, the existential destinies of even the papers we write, have “always already” been shaped by a past that we can never totally leave behind. Similarly, the future into which we may wish to head off heedless of the past will always be incomplete because we are, in Martin Heidegger’s famous phrase, “thrown projects”: thrown out of a past “we cannot get behind” into a future “we can never get beyond.” (Paranjape, 2005 p. 3).
As I bring the thesis to its conclusion, I can feel how time has played with me. My awareness of time has expanded and become more fluid. Where I could once categorise time into past, present and future once, I can no longer clearly see the location or direction of its influence. Gebser spoke of the ever-present origin (Gebser, 1991) and I can tell that I am now much more perceptive in noticing the continuous presence of origin in my life, just as I can sense multiple structures of consciousness in evidence around me. I can be simultaneously gripped by and freed from time in each moment.

*Whether we like it or not, our lives have been forestalled, preempted, seized, even usurped. By whom or what? By Time itself, which is the essence of being, which is ever present in all our endeavours.* (Paranjape, 2005 p. 4)

**Future Now**

Blithely writing a paper for the 2008 Conference of the Jean Gebser Society, while also writing a draft of this Conclusion chapter for the thesis, it began to dawn on me that preparing (and later giving) the paper gave practical evidence of much of my conclusion.

It met several of my research aims by:

- **demonstrating the body’s role as ally in simple, practical terms and bringing the body into relationship with concepts and philosophies.**

by explaining linked concepts and philosophies as I demonstrate gentle bodywork.

- **exemplifying mutations that go some way towards new research approaches, befitting humanity’s shift into integral consciousness.**

through aperspectival demonstrations of integral motifs (for example in the DVD) and pointing to the ‘secular spirituality’ in the mundane miracles of the body, concretely experienced,

- **bringing together multi-facetted perspectives rather than speaking from one authoritative voice**

in helping delegates: to feel their body’s preferences and listen to “its” voice (as part of their inner voice); and to notice the varying views of the other delegates.
- being tolerant of uncertainty and fluidity.

through expressing my doubts as they arose during the presentation, and by processing what happened in the moment.

- employing many forms of knowledge and ways of learning in conjunction with technologies and use of practice and theory.

by sharing hands-on experiences with delegates that put the theoretical into practice, as simple ways of life.

- blurring the boundaries between practitioner and clients, academic and non-academic, professional and layperson, between and beyond disciplines, between me and our environments, and between me and ‘not me’, you and ‘not you’.

as an experience of sharing modalities like Open Space Technology, Process Work and Ortho-Bionomy together, and by going beyond boundaries to the unitary essence of issues: finding our transitory, multi-faceted place in the field.

- inviting and celebrating both consensus and non-consensus realities.

evidenced by the shared creativity of fieldwork participants and by inviting the creativity of delegates into expression, for example through devising ways of using ‘my’ ‘paper’ revelations in their lives and using graphic or musical representations to inform the gathering of their plans, if they liked, as part of the open space created during the session.

My paper for the Gebser Conference gave me a miniature version of how I had proceeded in my PhD research, helping to encapsulate what I had done so I could grasp and summarise my process. Here is an example from the fieldwork as well.

**Gebser and Ortho-Bionomy**

I researched ATM’s data from several angles (for example: my painting; Gebser’s writing; and Ortho-Bionomy), which showed me some ways to consider clients’ or students’ responses. Using Ortho-Bionomy Phase 6 as a method to understand data more fully was an unusual way to approach academic research. Perhaps this method will provide insights into integral research in the future. Presently I cannot say more about this case study without feeling as if I am forcing connections. In future, finding a time and space of physical ease in which
to be with data seems a sensible and sensitive way to be more present to the richness they hold. This approach might blend with Mindell’s relatively new earth-based psychology (Mindell, 2007) procedure of “walking the vectors" (Hatch, 2008c).

During this research, I have only had a little experience of vector walking through private sessions with Susan Hatch (2008c). Until I gain more understanding, I have not wanted to use the method in my research. What I have gathered from working with ATM during the fieldwork, and her data now, are possibilities such as being open to descriptions of spiritual experiences and encounters. Multifaceted respect for another’s process, and allowing space for understanding to develop, with awareness of the conjunction of time and space, are the factors that helped me follow ATM’s process, and accommodate new meaning in my life and practice.

In research, I have learned that I need not necessarily come to a result or resolution immediately. Given time and space, realisations may rise to the surface and make themselves known. Maybe ATM is the one who is responding to this exercise I have been carrying out with her data? I plan to phone her shortly to ask for any insight she has had. Perhaps I was working in a Phase 7 (non-local Ortho-Bionomy) way with ATM while I performed Phase 6 with her data?

Another example of my (integral?) research follows:

Feeling simultaneously stuck in my research and uncomfortable and unwell in my body inspired me to ask Bruce Stark, an Ortho-Bionomy teacher from Sydney, if I could be a model for his Ortho-Bionomy jaw and ribs classes, (Stark, 2007) as described earlier, in my journal entry on page 135. This led to the understandings I described in the Praxis chapter. On further reflection, more realisations have come to mind. In particular I think of space. While Stark was demonstrating techniques such as jaw releases, I was given a lot of time and space in which to integrate the work done on and with my body. It felt like a great luxury. Stark would demonstrate a piece of work on my jaw then the students would exchange that piece with their partners. During the practise time, I was free to assimilate, and reflect on, what was happening to me, following the demonstrated work. Now I wonder about devising ways to work with a client so they have similar time for integration. How could that occur? My rooms are ideal. I could have up to four clients, each in their own consulting room. Then I could do some work with each client while the others rested. Those who were resting
could have access to their choice of music as well as writing and art materials, in case they preferred not to rest completely and in silence. During my later PhD candidature, I have offered the opportunity of creative expression to individual clients, without the offer being taken up. This might result from the way I made the suggestion, or from the expectations of clients. This is an area for me to consider. Perhaps I need to initiate such a possibility as spacious sessions or creative expression in relation to bodywork sessions in a brochure? I do not want to interfere with my practice unnecessarily, since it works well now. I think some prospective clients might be put off having a session if they believed they might ‘need’ to ‘be creative’. One thought is to offer a selection of work session types. At present I could suggest a choice of:

1. ‘Plain’ individual sessions as I have offered in the past, using Ortho-Bionomy and/or Bowen Technique in some combination.

2. Leisurely individual sessions, where I rotate between consulting rooms and people have time to rest, integrate and create in their preferred environment, perhaps with their choice of music, essential oils and so on.

3. Group sessions where I work between tables in one large space, clients have more chance to interact, and their costs are lower.

4. Classes of gentle bodywork that are spread out to allow an easier pace and include the resources time and space for expressing and integrating what is learned during class time.

Another group of possible practice changes refer to a change of space in a geographic and social sense. This relates to working with clients in a more familial, regional way, where I would go to a community and immerse myself in the work and social aspects of a client’s life (or a group of clients’ lives). Two examples of this are firstly working with J, S (and family) at their rural horse stud and getting close to the work they do. Secondly I went to the communal property of R and J and experienced their lifestyle, including giving sessions at their home, and helping to build a section of their straw-bale house. Some images of these parts of my fieldwork appear in the DVD accompanying the thesis.

Both of these session variations to do with a client’s sense of place gave me a more complete sense of the clients’ lives, how they used their bodies, what their everyday work felt like and the circumstances of their natural environment. This is very different from my remaining in my consulting rooms and having clients
travel to see me. It gave me an opportunity to understand how injuries may have developed and what environmental factors can be altered or enhanced to lead to greater wellbeing of clients.

Both of these variations on the theme of my practice put me in mind of the Peckham Experiment (Stallibrass, 1989) conducted in the London suburb of Peckham before and after the Second World War. This is one of the topics I removed from my thesis because of a lack of time and space to give the subject its due. Now I feel sorry I did not include it, because the Peckham story inspires me, and I want to touch on it now. I cannot possibly do justice to such a broad research project as the Peckham Experiment here, so will give a few details as context for my practise conclusions.

This experiment involved families, within pram pushing distance of a health centre in England, being given certain rights to medical advice, plus the free use of the health centre for a modest monthly fee. The health centre provided a place to meet and have refreshments as well as a space for children to play, plus other activities such as the growing of vegetables for consumption, and eventually a swimming pool and gymnasium. The experiment found that participants received all sorts of social and health benefits from this low cost service. It took place before the introduction of a national health service in England.

When I lived on the edge of a rural community, and my children were of pre-school age, I set up a cross between a neighbourhood house and the Peckham Experiment in a minimal form. I took a clipboard and pen, doorknocked around one block of twenty or thirty houses one Sunday afternoon, asking local residents whether and how they would like to use the nearby, neglected scout hall. I came up with enough activities, and interested participants, to establish a community centre in the hall, and to run it for a year. Together, fellow users and I set up a gymnasium, where thirty children came for after school activities sessions each week, and a thriving parent-involved playgroup, as well as craft classes for adults. Then local government set up and funded a ‘real’, neighbourhood house and a before and after school childcare program. Both council facilities struggled and could not match the numbers of attendees we had, despite having a purpose-built, new, neighbourhood house, and funded coordinators. All this is to say that a naturally occurring, informal network, designed by stakeholders sometimes strikes a chord in a community, and fills its needs better than one imposed from ‘above’.
My interest is in loosely combining these possibilities of basing my practice temporarily (say for a week or ten days and if invited to do so) in a suitable, probably rural, town space such as a hall, either publicly or privately owned. I would ‘open the space’ and local people would be invited to raise issues on their choice of topic and make use of each others’ and my skills and resources as they wished. This might lead to any number of possible outcomes, singly or in any combination. Some might include:

1) Simply an Open Space Technology gathering for the airing of issues alone or also for the development of local action plans around a particular topic.

2) Private bodywork sessions for individuals, families or groups in one of the forms described earlier in this Conclusion.

3) Bodywork classes to give people the skills to deal with minor stresses and pains in a community setting. Having local classes makes practise sessions with peers much easier to arrange and more likely to happen. Classes might happen two or three times a year in the one location, so more regions of the body can be covered in class, and so revision is possible.

Some of these options were provided to participants in the group and individual aspects of the fieldwork as partially depicted in the “Vision” section of the DVD.

Concluding Overview

The results of this research can be seen from several perspectives. Here are seven of them:

**Firstly**, it provides insights into an unusual bodywork practice, for other practitioners or trainee practitioners to select suggestions for practising gentle bodywork, or running a practice. These selections might indicate behaviours to adopt or avoid. For example, I have concluded that I would like to place more emphasis on demonstration, ahead of talking, when facilitating learning. A reader/viewer of this thesis might realise the importance of more storytelling in their own practice and form an opposite conclusion from mine. Another might choose to combine the three modalities I use, in their practice.

**Secondly**, the research points to appropriate research methods for my unique practice. It sets out how I chose and developed ways to study and contextualise
my work through: attending to my body as an ally; searching through the literature as it became available; trusting ‘flirts’ from the environment; writing as a way to create understanding for the reader and me; videography as a potent method of focus and scrutiny, inspiring and enabling an affective and detailed response to footage and so on. These wide-ranging ways of interrogating and contextualising my work have helped me to gain new perspectives. The thesis can hopefully offer research methods, individually or in combination, to people in similar circumstances to mine such as those needing to research a topic or modality requiring a fluid or multivalent approach.

**Thirdly,** the process of research has provided an emergent tool for personal growth. Because of the space I allowed both myself and the study to ‘range around in’, I think the research found its own way. The voice and imperative will of the research guided me away from some research practices and metaskills and towards others. No doubt this ‘will’, which I attribute to the research, was interwoven with my own will and whims. It showed up through corporeal signals, such as physical discomfort, restlessness, aversion, forgetfulness, losing files, thoughts and so on, and its grip felt mighty strong. As a corollary, I think it shows how strong is my own grip on myself, one reason to ensure that I place value on treating myself kindly, and do not overlook my own needs and comforts.

**Fourthly,** this research brings together transdisciplinary fields of study and demonstrates the value of ‘combining’ body and mind theory with practice, words with images, the creative and the sensual with the intellectual, consensus with non-consensus reality. I wrote ‘combining’ in parenthesis because these fields and qualities are not separate, so they cannot actually be combined. They are already one.

**Fifthly,** the body and its wise voice assumed pride of place in the research. When I have spoken about the body, I have not been speaking of a concept of embodiment, but rather from the aliveness, cells, fluids, movements and processes of the flesh-and-blood body. This perspective has (these multiple perspectives have) underscored the wisdom, reliability and vitality of the body as ally. It reminds me of the obvious fact that my body is inseparable from me and comes with me wherever I go. I might as well appreciate and celebrate its power, generosity and self-organising abilities and learn from its wisdom. ‘It’ is at the root of all I do, and all the communications I have with my world. My surprise is that, despite many years of focussing on the bodies and their talents, I still find
myself overriding my body’s guidance from time to time – simply oblivious to its pleas for care and attention.

Sixthly, doing the research has trained me as a researcher. With that aim in mind, I have felt reasonably free to try new ways of designing, conducting and reporting research – new to me at least. I have tried not to be guided by results, but rather by intuition and by exploring leads and opportunities that held some risk of ‘failure’, whatever that might be. The research strategies I used took me into uncharted waters and demanded that I should develop new skills, such as videography. Although I feel as if those skills were unpolished in this instance, having the courage to try unfamiliar techniques awakened me to new fields. I found this training far more effective than purely theoretical training. In the field, I was presented with aporia to try to solve, and felt the stretch of juggling ‘too many’ tasks at once. This brought home to me the wisdom of simplifying tasks more than I ever thought feasible. The research experience sharpened my focus on simplicity. Now when I hear Harrison Owen say he opens space for groups, then leaves the venue and takes a nap (Owen, 2009), I sit up and listen, because I know some of the ill effects of overdoing work. Owen trusts people to self-organise and to learn. He believes they do so better when denoted authority figures are absent. Despite (or actually because of) receiving a fee for facilitating these open space gatherings, Owen leaves them, and looks after his own needs, knowing that having space to self-organise will benefit those participating in the groups he facilitates.

Arthur Lincoln Pauls was similar. When I gave my presentation of teaching Ortho-Bionomy in Switzerland, I was training with Pauls to become a teacher of Ortho-Bionomy. Pauls, who was ‘examining’ my presentation was rockling, some distance away from the class and me, in a huge hammock. I found that somewhat disconcerting at the time, considering it was my only opportunity to travel from Australia to Switzerland in order to study and be assessed. Pauls, however, had formed his opinion of my teaching from many earlier views of me during the training, and then apparently felt able to take his ease. He was also most likely paying attention to my demonstration in his own way, at the time. Once I got over my initial apprehension about Pauls’ apparent inattention, I was able to focus on my demonstration to fellow students, without worrying whether Pauls was looking over my shoulder. He gave me space to be more present.

Seeing video footage of myself facilitating the fieldwork group has reinforced what came home to me in my body during the fieldwork project. It reminded me
that ignoring my own needs resulted in poorer facilitation. Students are far more resourceful than I expected. I can set the scene for learning, and step back. As long as I am reasonably available to answer questions if required, I need not over-extend myself. Having an opportunity to regard my work from new perspectives through reflexivity, writing, use of video, reading others’ views and discussion has enriched and challenged my approach to my practice. If Ortho-Bionomy or other bodywork students, practitioners, or teachers read this thesis, they might discover hints for their own practices as I did from observing, and reading about, Owen and Pauls.

**Lastly,** I am surprised by how many aspects of this research taught me about my practice. This is my final main point. I learned a lot more, which was less central to my work, such as how a right-brained individual can cope with filing, in order to retain some sanity and effectiveness. But the final point I wish to list here has to do with self-knowledge. During the course of dabbling in the disciplines touched on in the research, I leaned about my ways of learning and knowing. That gave me the chance to gather resources and approaches to help me learn and communicate more effectively. For example, realising that I often operate divergently, and from my right brain (creatively) (explained by Edwards, 1982; Rico, 1983; Springer and Deutsch, 1993) has offered me the chance to consciously follow creative and less structured working methods. In the past I have not seen myself as creative. I can now go easy on myself around logic. I value logic too, but my heart has a new fondness for creativity. So now I need not try to stay on the straight and narrow path of logic.

Now we have arrived at the end of ‘my’ thesis. I thank you for accompanying me on at least part of my research journey, and for inspiring me to continue until I arrived at this stage. It is not possible to predict exactly how the research will affect my practice and life in future.

**Postscript**

With a feeling of gathering apprehension, I began to notice that whenever I worked on my thesis in its last stages, I became uncomfortable or ill. My supervisors reassured me that it is commonplace for PhD candidates to become weary of their thesis as they bring their research to a close. In my case, this was more than lethargy: some of my symptoms have been quite marked. For example, my blood pressure, which had always been low, became very high while I wrote, and I picked up infections, like the flu, which made me more sick than usual. When I set my thesis aside for any length of time, I became well
again. As soon as I returned to writing, I immediately grew ill again. I was close
to abandoning my research during its last few weeks.

Process Work had been most illuminating in clarifying issues I had struck during
my research, so I tried using it, both with and without supervision, in order to
understand what was disturbing me. For once, Process Work did not seem to get
to the root of these difficulties. In the absence of a way to deal with my
symptoms, I decided to plough on regardless to finish my thesis. This is not my
preferred way, but I felt a need to complete my studies as soon as possible, in
order to have more space for family members and other interests. I still feel
perturbed and frustrated by this situation, after being guided by comfort and ease
for so long in my research. Hopefully I can gain more clarity about this
conundrum once the thesis has been submitted for examination.
## APPENDIX 1

**PhD Project 1**  
16th - 20th Nov 2004

### Ortho-Bionomy Class Description

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Ortho-Bionomy Class Description

Phase Four
This foundation class covers the history, philosophy and concepts of Ortho-Bionomy and provides an overview of the basic release techniques for each major joint in the body. Movements and positions of comfort are demonstrated to facilitate the release of muscular tension and overall stress by stimulating the inherent, self-corrective reflexes of the body which help the body create structural alignment and balance from within.

Phase Five
The focus of Phase Five is to move to a more subtle level of awareness of the practice and principles of Ortho-Bionomy. Specific techniques develop and increase the student's understanding and proprioceptive sensitivity to the self-corrective movements initiated by the client. Through the practice of observing, following and supporting subtle movement patterns, muscular tension is released, range of motion is increased and pain is reduced. In Phase Five, students are encouraged to do less and let the client be the guide for his/her exploration of change. Prerequisite: one or two Basics/Phase Four classes.

Phase Six
This class is designed to help participants access and track sensation and energetic perception in themselves and in their clients, and to learn how to make contact without necessarily engaging physically. Techniques will be presented that monitor and acknowledge the inter-relationship between energetic, emotional and physical levels, and that demonstrate how energetic shifts can affect changes in physical patterns. Prerequisites: Phase Four and Phase Five.
Phase Seven

This class demonstrates the principles and applications of the Phase Seven pattern to assist with self-correction. The pattern addresses all levels of human experience and teaches participants a non-forceful, elegant way to approach problems of many kinds. Prerequisite: Phase Four, Five and Six.

Exploration of Movement Patterns

Exploration of Movement Patterns adds a dynamic dimension to the positional release techniques. Participants will learn to recognize and palpate patterns of joint and muscle movement in order to facilitate increased range of motion to promote a general sense of well-being in the body. By gently exploring and supporting preferred patterns of movement or stillness, the client is invited to actively participate and recognize their patterns. Prerequisite: Phase Four.

Postural Re-Education and Post Techniques

In this class participants learn to evaluate and address inefficient postural habits through accurate observation and simple exercises. Techniques to work with spinal curvatures and scoliosis are presented and practiced. Post techniques focus on assessing and releasing areas of tension as well as integrating the work done in a session. In addition, exercises are taught to facilitate the client's ability to maintain balance through the neuro-muscular re-education of postural habits. Prerequisite: Phase Four.

Isometrics

Isometric and isotonic techniques for working with inefficient muscular tension patterns as well as underdeveloped muscle tone are presented and practiced. Through the use of restraining movement while the muscle is engaged, self-correcting reflexes are stimulated and habitual holding patterns can be released. Participants learn how the conscious use of obstacles can help promote change from rigid physical patterns to greater mobility and allows the client to actively participate in the session. Prerequisite: Phase Four.
Chapman's Neurolymphatic Reflexes
This class presents the Chapman's Neurolymphatic Reflexes system of identifying and stimulating reflex points to facilitate lymphatic drainage and the balancing of the organs. The class also focuses on the relationship between the neurolymphatic reflexes and the endocrine system and its affect on structural balance as well as the individual's physical and emotional well-being.

Ethics and Emotional Issues
Participants learn skills for addressing emotional responses that may arise during a session in an appropriate and professional manner. In addition, participants discuss the guidelines for professional conduct and review the Society of Ortho-Bionomy International's Code of Ethics. Prerequisite: Phase Four.

Elements of a Successful Practice
This class addresses the business side of having an Ortho-Bionomy practice. Participants learn about issues such as marketing and advertising, developing a business plan, setting up an office, setting fees, and attending to tax and legal issues. The class also covers communication with clients, record keeping and staying within the scope of practice.

Demonstration Skills
In this class participants learn how to describe and present Ortho-Bionomy to family, friends and the public in general. Participants are encouraged to find ways to communicate the "unexplainable" and practice presenting Ortho-Bionomy in a clear and accurate way. Techniques for building confidence and for improving public speaking and presentation are included. Prerequisite: Phase Four.

Residential
Residential training programs provide participants with the opportunity to broaden and deepen their understanding of Ortho-Bionomy techniques and
principles through an in-depth immersion for five or more days of uninterrupted study. Residential allowances time for learning and personal growth as well as relaxation to facilitate the integration of technique, philosophy and the qualities of "Be-ing" rather than "doing". Prerequisite: Phase Four and Five.

Practitioner Training Seminar: This seminar addresses issues and questions that arise for individuals completing the Practitioner Training Programs and helps participants synthesize their entire training experience. The class format includes time to discuss questions or problems that arise during a session, an opportunity to receive feedback and supervision about difficult cases, and information on how to best structure a session, set fees, and communicate with clients. Participants can also discuss their changing role in the community as they move from being a student to becoming a professional in the health care field. Prerequisite: Phase Four.

Anatomy and Physiology: Anatomical and physiological structures and functions relevant to the practice of Ortho-Bionomy are presented in this class. Both general classes as well as classes which focus on specific systems or body parts are available.

Study Groups

Study groups are tailored to the participants needs and give students a chance to review techniques, receive clarification about the application and principles of Ortho-Bionomy and to gain insight about specific client cases or situations that concern them.

Electives

The principles and techniques of Ortho-Bionomy can be applied in many different circumstances and situations. Elective courses provide participants with more specialized techniques and applications. Elective topics include: Self Care Work, Cranial Work, Ortho-Bionomy Approach to Whiplash, TMJ and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Visceral Work, Men's Care, Shock and Trauma Resolution, Pelvic Stabilisation, and others (Goldberg and SOBA Committee, 2004).

Since the majority of my work concerns physical work, I have refrained from giving a detailed explanation of other aspects of Ortho-Bionomy, which contains
a wealth of knowledge applicable to a wide variety of health issues. It is an educational modality rather than a health intervention because of its philosophical approach. When Pauls (1993) developed this bodywork, he had in mind people with no prior training. His belief was that the less formal training his students had, the less they need to let go of in order to be present with a client (Pauls, 2003). I think he was a phenomenologist at heart.
Invitation

I would like to invite you to join a study that forms part of my Ph D research through the University of Western Sydney, Australia. It is planned to take place from Tuesday November 16th at 9 am, until about 4 pm on Saturday November 20th 2004. After these dates, there will still be one more day during which participants will gather and review results of the project. These dates are still under negotiation and may be slightly flexible.

During 2002 I completed a Master of Science degree. In my thesis I described my process of gradually settling into my body throughout my life, with the help of modalities such as gentle bodywork, especially Ortho-Bionomy®. The examiners of my thesis both recommended offering a similar process to a group of people in order for them to notice and record their experiences.

Participants who would like to be involved will meet in a group. We will notice how we feel at the beginning. Then we will spend half a day working with each region of the body and learning some basic gentle bodywork. During that time, which will take 5 days, we will describe our experiences, using a variety of ways. Later on, we will take a 6th day, to check again how we feel. The study will be participatory. No previous knowledge is required and I invite both newcomers and those who have experienced Ortho-Bionomy to take part.

Dates and times will be arranged through negotiation between the participants and me. My initial suggestion is to hold the process over 5 consecutive days, plus another day after 2 or 3 weeks, for a check on progress. Basic accommodation will be available for participants at my home, if required, and I will provide details of other local places to stay, for participants wanting more stylish accommodation.

The group will consist of about 12 to 16 people. If more than 16 people apply to take part, I will select participants on the basis of including a wide variety of levels of Ortho-Bionomy experience, and willingness to record the process and contribute to the study. It might be that the group will consider making a video and/or photographic record of the process. The venue for the group will be in Healesville and exact details will be provided to participants. Group participants will need to be adults who enjoy reasonable comfort and health.
The opportunity also exists for up to 12 individual participants, of any age, to each have 2 private sessions of gentle bodywork. These sessions will be spaced a week apart. If children participate, one parent is requested to be present throughout each session attended by their child. The work is described in my brochure, which should accompany this invitation. Should you want further details about my work in general, or the study in particular, you are welcome to ring me at (03) 5962 2558 or on (03) 5251 5114.

Any participant is free to withdraw from the project at any point without needing to give reasons. Please let me know if you are interested in this project. I can be contacted at (03) 5962 2558, by email at mbody@iinet.net.au

or by writing to me at: 2 Old Fernshaw Road, Healesville 3777 Victoria.

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you have any difficulties with the conduct of this research, you are welcome to contact:

The Researcher, Allison Baensch at (03) 5962 2558 or (03) 5251 5114,

My Supervisor, Dr Debbie Horsfall at (02) 9678 7159, or the

Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee: 02 4570 1136.

Kind regards,

Allison Baensch.
APPENDIX 2

PhD Project 1  16th - 20th Nov 2004

2.1 PhD Project Description

2.2 CONSENT FORM  PARTICIPATION (a) Group

2.3 Audio and Video Consent Form PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECT

2.4 RELEASE FORM

2.5 Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

2.6 PRE-SESSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

2.7 BODY MAP

2.8 Audio and Video Consent Form

2.9 PARTICIPANT DETAILS

2.10 PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECT RELEASE FORM
PhD Project Description

I am studying towards a PhD at the University of Western Sydney by distance. The topics I am considering are questions 5 and 6 of the following 7 issues:

Is my body wise?

Does my body have a way, or language, to demonstrate what it wants and guide me to look after it/me?

Can I listen to my body, thus becoming more aware of its/my preferences?

By doing so, can I learn to trust my body/me?

In a similar way, can I help other people learn their body’s language, just as others helped me learn mine?

Can these people learn the preferences of their body/themselves and come to trust their own process more?

Is it possible for these people to safely and effectively pass these skills to others?

In 1995 I began a general exploration of these 7 questions by completing a Master of Applied Science (Social Ecology) degree, considering an overview of the questions. My Master of Science (Honours) degree in Sociology and Justice Studies followed, and was completed in 2002. I studied questions 1 to 4, in order to provide future researchers and me with a background for future research, founded on the principles of Ortho-Bionomy®, the gentle bodywork I had based my work on. The Masters thesis, called ‘researching a researcher: an embodied, ethical, personal praxis’ provided insights into the issue of embodiment in relation to me as a person and as a client of gentle (or integral) bodywork.

Presently I am working towards a PhD in order to widen an understanding of questions 5 and 6, exploring them with other participants and sharing our findings. My project’s working title is “Embodied Relativity Explored”, and it refers to my interest in the importance of being relatively present in the body.
The research is being carried out in three strands:

A group study of gentle bodywork, based in Open Space Technology.

Individual sessions of gentle bodywork.

Personal reflections as a form of autobiography.

People who would like to take part in the research will join a group to study their own response to gentle bodywork, especially Ortho-Bionomy. This study will be based in Open Space Technology Event, a participatory way to co-create research or run organizations, developed by Harrison Owen. Then group participants will share their experiences, if they wish. This sharing might take several forms including discussing the work, writing, drawing, and so on.

Other people may choose to have two sessions of gentle bodywork at the Fernshaw Centre. The bodywork we will use is holistic, gentle and respectful (please see the brochure of the Fernshaw Centre for more information). Occasionally, people who experience the bodywork, despite its gentleness, can feel some tiredness, stiffness or aching after the first session. If it occurs, it usually goes away within a few days. I will provide all participants with a list of practitioners and counsellors who understand the research and are willing to see any participants who feel a need for their services.

I am inviting people formerly associated with the Fernshaw Centre, as well as other interested participants to join me in reflecting on the philosophy of Ortho-Bionomy in the context of my practice. Together with the participants who volunteer to be part of this study, we will observe and consider the effect on our lives of encountering Ortho-Bionomy principles, (such as the gentleness of the work and its trust in the body’s responses).

Any participant is free to withdraw from the project at any point without needing to explain their reasons.

The University requires that all subjects are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may
be given to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred, to the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Research and Consultancy Unit, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury 2753, telephone 02 45701688

If you have any difficulties with the conduct of this research, you are welcome to contact:

The Researcher, (Allison Baensch) at (03) 5962 2558.

My Supervisor, Dr Debbie Horsfall at (02) 9678 7159

Or the Executive Officer,

Human Research Ethics Committee at: 02 45701688

Or at the address above.
Consent Form

PARTICIPATION (a) Group

I have read the information about the PhD research project entitled “Embodied Relativity Explored” being conducted by Allison Baensch through the University of Western Sydney.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree that research data gathered for this project may be published, provided my real name is not used unless I give permission.

Participant’s Signature  
Date

Participant’s Name

Researcher’s Signature  
Date

Researcher’s Name

UWS Ethics Form  AB PhD  November 2004
Audio and Video Consent Form

PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECT RELEASE FORM

I hereby agree to be interviewed for a video on Ortho-Bionomy and I agree that the interview may be used by Allison Baensch in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- educational material
- electronic versions including CD-ROM, DVD or video

NAME: ...........................................................

SIGNATURE: ...................................................

ADDRESS: ....................................................

DATE: ..........................................................

UWS Ethics Form  AB PhD  November 2004
Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

I understand that Allison Baensch has guaranteed confidentiality to the research participants in her PhD research study entitled Embodied Relativity Explored at the University of Western Sydney.

As the transcriber, I agree to transcribe audiotapes with headphones if research tapes would otherwise be overheard.

I agree that I will not discuss the contents of the tape or reveal the identity of any participants. Files will be password protected.

I accept an hourly rate of $19.66 for transcription work, and will keep accurate records of time spent on this work and submit them to Allison Baensch on completion.

Tape files will be saved in RTF.

Jeannie Roberts ............................

Date ..............................

UWS Ethics Form  AB PhD  November 2004
PRE-SESSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Realising that the body is not separate from the self, all the same, I want to temporarily distinguish one from the other for the purpose of asking these questions.

When you pay attention to your body, how would you describe your connection with it.

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Do you feel present in your body?

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What do you notice in relation to your body?

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How easy do you find it to concentrate on an activity or a task?

How much do you stumble, bump into or drop things?

Please describe your degree of mood swing.
Body Map

These requests will be made verbally to both individual and group participants…

Please pay attention to your body.

How does ‘it’ feel at present?

Please mark those aspects on your chart if you are aware of them in your body.

1. Warmth or heat (red)

2. Coolness or coldness (blue)

3. Discomfort or pain (brown)

4. Comfort (green)

5. Tightness or stiffness (grey)

6. Flexibility or freedom (yellow)

7. Anything else you notice (please note in colour and words)
Audio and Video Consent Form

I understand that Allison Baensch is a PhD student at the University of Western Sydney. She wants to record some sessions for use in her research by means of photographs, video- and/or audio-taping. I have read the description of Allison’s research and agree to have my group and/or individual sessions with Allison Baensch recorded under the following conditions:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may withdraw permission to be recorded at any time, including during sessions. Having my sessions recorded is not a condition of participating in group or individual sessions.

I understand that the photographs, video- and audio-tapes of group sessions may be shared with other group members and be made available to others during and after the research project.

I understand that the recordings will be labelled by code only to protect my identity, and that the tape will be stored securely.

I agree to be recorded under the above terms and conditions.

Participant: ........................................

Date: ....................

I agree to meet the conditions specified above

Facilitator: .................................

Date: .....................
PARTICIPANT DETAILS

It would help me to have some information about you before I work with you. Answering these questions is voluntary.

NAME..............................................................................................................................

ADDRESS ..........................................................................................................................

Postcode ..............................

PHONE H ........................................... W..............................................

Mob ..............................

EMAIL ADDRESS
..........................................................................................................................

DATE OF BIRTH ..............................

OCCUPATION/Amount of
EXERCISE.................................................................

..............................................................................................................................

1. Who is your main health carer? (doctor, homoeopath etc.)
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2. Do you have any health conditions I need to know about? (Such as heart concerns or diabetes)
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3. Please list any surgery you have had and when it was
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4. Please list any past injuries and when they happened
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5. Do you take any medication? If so please name it
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6. Do you wear contact lenses? ....Yes/No........

7. Do you suffer from pain?.....Yes/No....... If yes, where and how often?
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8. Could you possibly be pregnant?....Yes/No........

9. What are you wanting to gain from coming to see me?

(a) this session
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(b) in the longer term
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I will work with participants in this project to discover what feels right for them during the session. Almost all of my work is gentle. At the same, I want you to tell me immediately if you feel even slight pain or discomfort or if you become anxious during the session.

Signature......................................................................... Date..............................
PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECT RELEASE FORM

I hereby agree to be interviewed for a video on Ortho-Bionomy and I agree that the interview may be used by the Producer (imaginACTION Pty Ltd) in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

· advertising and promotional material for the video
· educational material
· electronic versions including CD-ROM, DVD or video

NAME: ................................................................................................................

SIGNATURE: .................................................................................................

ADDRESS: ....................................................................................................

DATE: .............................................................................................................
APPENDIX 3

Nutritional Bath Therapy

Bath therapy does not sound too strange any more. Therapists and patients begin to experience the healing forces of herbal substances dispersed in a bath of water. Very good for this purpose is the use of etheric oils of healing plants. They work best when finely dispersed in a bath of water so that the very small oil particles can enter the body via the skin and heal the disease. Not so well known is the use of the so-called nutritional bath, which we will talk about in this article.

In my practice room I see a lot of children from baby age till VCE, and there are times that I feel that homeopathic remedies will not completely provide all that is needed for the child. Something more is necessary. How can I bring back a rosy glow on the cheeks, a healthy appetite at mealtimes and full interest and joy in life?

I advise nutritional baths for children with chronic ear infections, children with allergies, or with a lack of appetite, for children that have gone through an emotionally upsetting time, either because of separation of the parents or death in the family. Moving house can be a traumatic experience. In all these cases, the bath therapy helps the child to make the transition. Mothers that have been feeding a baby for some months can benefit from this nutritional bath; Cleopatra baths, as I call them myself.

Now here is how to do it...

We give our child patient a course of **seven baths taken twice a week**. The course therefore lasts three and a half weeks. Once the days of the week are chosen, say, Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday, we stick to those days.

We **mix together** in a bowl, **500mls non-homogenised milk** (ask your milk bar proprietor to order it in for you, if he doesn’t have it), **one egg and a dessertspoon of honey**. Mix it well and pour it into a **bath of water of 37 degrees C**. The child stays in the bath for **15 minutes**, with only its head out of the water. Then **without drying**, we cover the child with a big towel or
flannelette sheet and carry it to a warm bed. Don't dry the body because the substances on the skin need to be absorbed through the skin while the child is resting.

So the child lies in bed, well-covered and relaxed for 20 minutes, while father or mother tells a fairy tale or other beautiful story. Do not read exiting stories but relaxing stories about life in the country, for instance. The series of the “Little House" books of Laura Ingalls Wilder are good books for this purpose.

Adolescents or adults can sleep after the bath for half an hour, and then resume work or have a good night's sleep. Children can be dried and clothed after 20 minutes, either to go on with the day’s activities, if the bath was given in daytime, or go to sleep if the bath was given at night.

Through these nutritional baths we place the patient in a warm, protein-enriched fluid environment, not unlike the womb once was. A warm rest afterwards gives a child a chance, and often the parents as well, to work through stagnations and to take hold of the world again.

Although it very seldom happens, there is a possibility that a child has a reaction, that it shows anger or starts to cry and sob. These reactions are positive - something has been stirred up which can be worked through. They disappear after the second or third bath.

The effect of these baths over three weeks is absolutely wonderful. Every time when I see the children again after the bath course, I see that they are so much more relaxed, at peace with the world, and better in themselves, than they have been in a long time. They eat better and their chronic infections have disappeared. So, old or young, I wish you a happy bath course.

by HELMA BAK

For more information, ring Helma Bak: 03 5424 1702

or Allison Baensch : 03 5962 2558.

(It is possible to use this recipe in a footbath if a full-sized bath is unavailable.)
Book List:


Alexander, C. (1966). The city as a mechanism for sustaining human contact. [Berkeley: Center for Planning and Development Research, University of California].


Daly, M. (1992). Outcourse: the be-dazzling voyage: containing recollections from my Logbook of a radical feminist philosopher (being an account of my time/space travels and ideas—then, again, now, and how) (1st ed.). [San Francisco]: Harper SanFrancisco.


Giotto (Artist). (1304 to 1306). View of the Interior towards theapse [Fresco].

Goodall, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.


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Pyett, P. M. (2003). Validation of Qualitative Research in the "Real World". *Qualitative Health Research, 13* (8), 1170 to 1179.


Rizzo, E. (2007). My introduction to Ortho-Bionomy. In A. Baensch (Ed.) (pp. A story of how Elisabeth was introduced to OB by her cousin who had never attended a class, but had received one session from a practitioner.). Healesville.


