A Heuristic and HSSI Exploration of Experiencing Interplay between Spiritual Guidance and Synchronicity within Person-Centred Encounters

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

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This research has been a study in amazement. Initially an agnostic physics graduate, the researcher undertook training in the person-centred approach (pca) to self-development and counselling, during which she came to experience strange personal experiences which she could neither gainsay nor fit into her then worldview.

Sketching these briefly, exceptional human experiences (EHEs) and synchronicities increasingly happened until (shockingly) they declared a seeming spirit guide (Mungo) to her, also juxtaposed in time with her first-ever chance encounter with dowsing. Thereafter these phenomena, combined with randomisable image-cards, tutored her into a physically observable method of ‘discussion’ with them (alone or with another) conducted with pca values. This PhD involved researching that phenomenon-complex through ‘discussions’ with 35 participants. The methodology used was heuristics and its heuristic self-search inquiry specialism (HSSI) whose attention to personal experiencing, indwelling to contact tacit knowledge, and incubatory rest phases to foster illuminatory new ‘ahaa!’ apprehensions suited this nascent mysterious subject.

Both participants and researcher experienced coincidences weaving the ‘discussions’ and their wider lives together. Thus synchronicity became equal-partner research-topic, being studied as it occurred and, through affecting certain choices, becoming part of the methodology itself. The phenomenon-complex was experienced as fostering ethical living, creativity, personal development and science-spirituality interconnection in ways well-pitched and paced for each experiencer. The phenomena were also experienced as synergizing with each other, and as fostering integration within and between persons.

After work on the participant sessions was completed, the writings of further thesis-chapters were ‘butted into’ by in-the-moment relevant synchronicities, not just singly but in flows and patterns in which the researcher found herself discerning overarching meanings. Given this exceptional opportunity the researcher (in effect doing a bonus research-section) tracked her experiencing of these synchronistic flows and her responses thereto wherever they led, using Sela-Smith’s first-person heuristic self-search inquiry (HSSI) methodology. Each synchronistically-influenced chapter was experienced as exploring certain themes, with themes building as the thesis progressed.

Heuristics and HSSI are usually transformative. This researcher was transformed from the ground up from agnosticism to credence in ‘something more’ through her experiencings (both alone and inter-relationally with participants). Their ‘package deal’ presented personal shadow-work alongside help in life difficulties, and great fascination but darker times too. In total she came to feel part of an interconnected, spiritually-intelligent and compassionate cosmic domain, and existentially happier.
Declaration

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Tarot images in this thesis are from the Robin Wood Tarot:

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Inheritances – both personal and financial – from my mother Anna and father Charles (auf Deutsch, Anni und Carl) gave me essential wherewithal to do this research. I dedicate this work to them and my sons Peter J and Michael I – our family vicissitudes helped grow both me and my research. Older now, they are kind, helpful people. I thank them all.
The Author

Educational training and life experiences have both played into preparing the author for this research carried out in her fifties and sixties, starting with being born of a British-soldier father and German mother shortly after WWII. Her reasonably standard early decades saw her gaining a Physics BSc and one of the early ‘green’ Masters, an MSc in Environmental Resources. Thereafter, though, a chequered career included teaching, cycle-touring writing, life modelling, parenting and lone caring, all of which developed faculties later relevant to this research. After decades as an agnostic, and having trained in person-centred counselling at fifty, her counselling work with prisoners and NHS clients coincided with a spiritual awakening which engaged both her heart and her intellectually curious mind.
I am opening my thesis with a hand-drawn five-point star because its creation, despite involving direction-changes, is nevertheless a single journey of pen on page. It heralds that this thesis departs from the classic linear PhD-structure (introduction, literature-search, methodology and findings etcetera), tracing instead a structure truer to its actual time-sequencing which evolved thus both for methodological and circumstantial reasons and responsively vis-à-vis the phenomena themselves. There are precedents for atypical chapter sequencing (Wardle 2008), and indeed a preface to set an overarching unconventional scene (Yusef 2007).

This thesis’s shape and style individualities are consonant with the methodology it adopted, but also stem from my initial unlikeness as researcher of its phenomena. Early on I was both a non-believer and ignorant about them, much surprised by the coming to me of a seeming spirit guide, dowsing and other strange things. Heuristic methodology (Douglass and Moustakas 1985) privileges the researcher’s own experiencings, and my early naiveties and developments out of them surely brought special experiencings that a non-naïve, already believing and knowledgeable researcher could not have. The methodology requires full-bodied communication of experiencings to readers, hence my prequel’s naïve telling of a long personal story before much academic writing the better to mimic and deeply communicate that special naïve phase of astonishments and puzzlements.

Another key peculiarity of this research is that, despite starting with just one topic (person-centred encounters open to seeming spirit-guide input), during its explorations data also emerged involving another topic (synchronicity) so richly as to claim equal and interpenetrating import, this pairing of phenomena furthermore begging broadened perspectives (and different thesis-structure). My dilemma was whether to heed general advice about keeping narrow focus the better to explore in detailed depth or, sensing a vigorous growth tendency in my very data itself, to give it its head. Emboldened by organic-research precedent (Clements et al 1998) and heuristics’ own instruction to let the learning follow its own unfolding path (Douglass and Moustakas 1985) I allowed the growth, following the seemingly more special research opportunity.

So, being naïve about synchronicity too, my research now also entailed experiential discovery thereof as a ‘fresh slate’. Furthermore I (and participants too) remarked resonances between events developing sometimes into themes which could uncannily interweave or even loop back
through time. Eventually a way to depict both this and my overall research-process structure to readers emerged, in a manner that asked for my naïve early-days story to first be quite plainly told.

However, just the briefest sketch of heuristics (Moustakas 1990) is appropriate here (expanded later) as it offers academic lenses pertinent to that naïve-phases story. Heuristics’ six phases are:

- An initial, gripped interest and *engagement* with the phenomenon.
- Dedicated *immersion* of the researcher in the phenomenon by all possible means.
- Deliberate conscious resting from engagement to allow subconscious *incubation*.
- The researcher’s deeper self bringing forth some new apprehension or *illumination*.
- The new apprehension’s deliberate teasing out or *explication*.
- The fashioning of a *creative synthesis* to convey the phenomenon’s essence to others.

The naïve phases I shall shortly narrate are those of my initial *engagement*, from the earliest events which drew me through to where that engagement flowed into *immersion* – indeed, acting heuristically prior to knowing that methodological concept. The story’s ethos also matters, showing my curiosity married with a moral impetus to immerse more, researching ‘properly’.

The above-mentioned factors and others (explained later) rendered this ‘star-drawn’ research individualistic in both the doing and the telling. Yet innovative methodologies enabling ‘edgy’ experiences to be researched are developed by, say, Braud and Anderson (1998) and Bickel (2006). Whilst my methodology-quest eventually settled on heuristics (later including HSSI), Jenkins’ (2006) valuing of storying as truth-conveyor heartened my prequel’s writing.

The thesis-structure which evolved to best serve and present the research runs as follows: Preface; Introduction and Prequel; Methodology and Methods; Participant Experiencings; Experiencings of Synchronicity; Immersion in synchronicity texts; Immersion in spiritual-guidance texts; Creative Syntheses; Ethics; Discussion.

The thesis presented here is a resubmission thesis, re-written in light of examiners’ comments and further developments in experience and thought. Change to the Introduction and Prequel was not requested so, although I have improved a diagram, a consideration-of-terms section and some relatively minor wordings, overall I have deliberately kept the thesis-1 version’s structure and character such that it firmly portrays the ‘before’ and ‘around starting’ pictures of myself and my research’s pre-history – benchmark-pictures to the ‘during’ and ‘after’ pictures later chapters present. Otherwise my post-viva-1 time has allowed this thesis to be re-formed more thoughtfully and more organically throughout, as befits the methodology.

I shall now proceed to my begin-at-the-naïve-beginning account hoping to convey a vivid grasp of my experiencings’ qualities, for it is just such living first-person knowledge-communication that heuristics requires.
I shall start this chapter with enough of my early-phase story for discussion of my title terms to make sense. After discussing them and philosophical stances I shall continue the early-phase narration, leading into the methodology chapter.

**Seeds of this research:**

Exceptional experiences can change people's lives (White 1998). This research was seeded by a run of them bringing me surprise after surprise during my two-year diploma in person-centred counselling. My official research and my learning about methodology only started later so, importantly, I experienced the seeding naively. I shall now sketch that seeding.

I started my person-centred diploma aged 48, having been agnostic all my adult life. Soon I was being repeatedly astonished by events such as I had never before even imagined possible. They caused two great enlargements of my cosmic view and my conceptual possibility space (Tolman 1996).

Firstly extraordinary experiences (EHEs, Belz 2009) like ‘impossible’ knowings which proved to be relevant to imminent situations, and (as I now know to call them) altered states of consciousness (ASCs, Rowan 2005) gave me to think myself living not just in a physical world but also within some other fascinating, complex domain whose extent or diversity I knew not. Secondly so many strange, helpful or striking timings occurred that, in order still to value myself as having a scientific, evidence-heeding bent (my BSc being in physics), I had to accept that time could ‘do’ these weird yet meaningful things – despite not really knowing what I meant by that. (My learning about synchronicity only came later.)

I was largely bemused and inchoate about these experiences to both myself and the few others I dared mention them to because, being mostly beyond the world of my prior ken or even inkling, they were also beyond my vocabulary, never mind practised discourse (Tart 1981). But experiencing them and the very idea of their existence as wonderfully intriguing I didn’t block them off, and they widened their repertoire and increased. Writing now I face the related problem that some of ‘all this’ is still inchoate for me and/or about experiences so individualistically quirky that readers might not have fitting practised discourse, yet I must try to communicate and discuss near-ineffability as best I can.

To this end I shall state certain things boldly and baldly, sometimes sacrificing what would otherwise be appropriate tentativeness (like as I experienced it such-and-such happened) or academic situating (like A.N. Academic suggests the interpretation that…….) lest asides encrust and obscure what is already difficult to communicate in itself. In that plain-speaking spirit I shall now relate how my initial research phenomenon arose.
Meeting Mungo:

Some months after my diploma, during a weekend in Glasgow I visited its Kelvingrove Museum and shop. There I was drawn by a postcard picturing a lamp-standard, its crook-shaped top enclosing metalwork motifs – bird, bell, fish, ring and tree. Throughout the weekend I spotted the same motifs in many versions and places but could discover no explanation of them despite much searching and asking. But just before my train home I visited the cathedral and its crypt. There a tour-guide became momentarily free whilst her group members explored individually, so cheekily I asked her my question. She told me stories associated with the lamp-standard motifs, all having a flavour of people fouling up but then getting second chances, to which I warmed. They were about Glasgow’s patron saint Kentigern, nicknamed Mungo meaning ‘dear friend’ (Davis 2000).

As we talked I only vaguely noticed some altar-like thing with a beautiful cloth beside us. When the tour-guide re-gathered her group and left I noticed a low sign beside me, saying that this was actually Mungo’s tomb. Three things then happened for me in very rapid succession, culminating with huge impact. First I was impressed by the unlikely fluke that I should consistently fail to discover these Mungo stories for two days of trying, only to hear them at my eleventh Glasgow hour right beside his tomb. Next I had not merely the idea but also a sense that, in some unfathomable way, through the tour-guide Mungo had told me the stories himself. There followed immediately an exceptional experience utterly beyond all my life’s experiences and imaginings to that point, and beyond adequate description. Nevertheless I offer the best I can for the ineffable: I felt enfolded in a wave of love of astounding tender strength and simultaneously suffused by it, the curious thing being (I realize in retrospect – it all felt ‘natural’ at the time) that the suffusion seemed not a feeling of my love-for-another but of another’s love received directly inside – an enfoldment within, if you will. This lasted for about a quarter of an hour, during which I could only sit in a sequestered corner with tears flowing. Then it ebbed away, leaving not grief for itself but an afterglow. (I now recognize other therapists to have described similar experiences which they experienced as spiritual (West 2000, Thorne 2002a).)

During that same Glasgow visit I also chanced upon my first ever meeting with a dowser. She seemed ethical and un-pushy, so I entertained the possibility that she might be a right teacher at the right time for me and gleaned some basics from her.

During the following months two streams of events happened. One was of coincidences about Mungo so striking as to re-affirm his centre-stage position in my thoughts and feelings. The other was of teachings, involving both inner sensings and pendulum-indicated outer physical objects or picture-cards, as to how he could accompany me (and later others also) in navigating and weathering life’s storms. This Mungo-communication system gave me (or them) a held, pertinent spaciousness within which to explore issues in a manner akin to person-centred counselling. I shall detail this more later.

I shall, though, already state that at this time of writing I don’t assume all or any of the events described above or elsewhere in this thesis certainly come from an erstwhile man upon this earth, the supposed Celtic saint nicknamed Mungo now acting as a spirit guide. However I did mostly
conceptualize him thus to begin with after ‘meeting him’, including during PhD participant sessions. Although less naïve now I admit I can still entertain, and indeed like, that possibility.

Since ‘meeting Mungo’ in Glasgow cathedral I have experienced ‘him’ showing me communication techniques, allowing me to practice and settle with each new step before the next, the whole ‘course’ giving an impression consistent with it coming from the same skilled, sensibly-pacing ‘teacher’ throughout. Whatever it may be that has done this, whether it be one energy or entity or whatever or several, it or they need a working name in this research. This is what I shall henceforth mean by ‘Mungo’, except when specifically saying I mean either the supposed historical man or his returned spirit guide.

The relating of myself and others with Mungo is the phenomenon this PhD initially set out to research.

**Consideration of terms:**

I have now related enough of my experiences for consideration of my thesis’s title terms to make sense.

I could be accused of a form of reification in clustering various spiritually touching or teaching experiences under the name Mungo, but opt for it nevertheless as shorthand to avoid cumbersome writing. As thesis title-term, though, ‘spiritual guidance’ now seems a better term than ‘spirit guide’ (or ‘spirit guidance’) because it does not imply that an entity exists as source of all or some of the experiences, as the latter terms more likely would. Instead it can embrace the various experiences whether any are entity-caused (which is un-attestable in this research), or if all are happenings (which participants and I can attest to) and nothing more.

The question then turns to meanings of ‘(the) spiritual/spirituality’. There are many definitions of or attributions of aspects to spirituality in the literature (Lines 2002). Authors generally include connection to both a beyond and a person’s deeper self, whether these be said to involve respectively the Divine and inner life (Schreurs 2002), the transpersonal and the real self (Rowan 2005), the transcendent and values (Elkins et al 1988) and so on. Others also include meaningfully connected relationships (Fuller and Strong 2001). Swinton (2001) succinctly names the three areas of spirituality as the interpersonal, the intrapersonal and the transpersonal.

The breadth the three areas encompass suits exploratory research like mine which needed to be open to new event-types arising or coming to seem spiritual (as synchronicity eventually did for me) rather than their being excluded by tighter presuppositions. Other researchers in these areas who intentionally kept presuppositions to a minimum in order not to blinker themselves to unexpected possibilities include Jenkins (2006), Hastings (1991) and Hay (1982).

I turn now to the person-centred approach (pca). Although person-centredness was not one of my research foci I conducted encounters in its spirit. Importantly Mungo’s inputs also seemed compatible with it. The pca mattered to this research as both influence and yardstick, so mention of its most salient aspects is in order. It trusts that each person is known best not by a therapist
expert but by themselves at the centre of their own full, complex reality, as was bespoken by Carl Rogers' then innovative term ‘client-centered therapy’ (Rogers 1951). He posited that therapists could best help not by steering but by providing certain core conditions – empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard – which would promote the person’s own process towards mending and/or growing powered by the overall health-ward drive of their actualizing tendency.

Over the decades the pca has held to those and other foundational principles whilst also developing and diversifying (Sanders 2012). ‘Client-centred’ changed to ‘person-centred’ as the approach was adopted in other sorts of groups besides the client-therapist dyad, and as the inner phenomenological worlds and states of being of both/all the encountering people and their relationships’ quality were increasingly recognized as crucial (Mearns and Thorne 2013).

Two developments of the pca resonate with this research, one being of modes using non-verbal expression and communication such as visual art and movement (Brown 2012). The other embraces spirituality. Late in his career Rogers came to experience times in relationship when, relaxed into his deep intuitive self, he found himself behaving in strange ways which nevertheless proved right for the other person(s). Relationships seemed transcended, as was also sometimes experienced by and/or between members of groups he worked in. He wrote:

*I am compelled to believe that I, like many others, have underestimated the importance of this mystical, spiritual dimension*  
(Rogers 1980,130).

The above-mentionned selection of the person-centred approach’s foundational concepts and developmental directions suffice here.

I turn now to the term ‘synchronicity’. Its very coining came about because Carl Jung himself and/or numbers of his patients experienced meaningful coincidences in which, strangely and impactfully, the person’s inner psychic state was matched by a corresponding outer event with no discernible causal connection between the two (Jung 1972/1952). Needing an umbrella term under which to present and discuss such events Jung coined ‘synchronicity’ from roots meaning ‘together’ and ‘time’. Only some involved straightforward simultaneity though, Jung also listing types involving outer events either at a distance or in the future whose correspondence to the experiencer’s inner state could only be noted later (Jung 1976/1951). He also discussed runs of resonant events, including his own experiencing of six separate fish-related events in a single day as somewhat numinous (Jung 1972/1952). Furthermore he presented observations and hypotheses regarding synchronicity’s relationships to both therapeutic development and philosophical worldviews, work which others have since expanded.

Returning to consideration of the term itself, I note that Jung’s synchronicity publications (Jung 1976/1951, 1972/1952) explore diverse cases and aspects but, taken overall, dictate no definitive ‘edge’ to what may come to be included. Rather there is the common ‘central’ factor of meaningful coincidence of two (or more) events, patterned or ‘falling together in time’ (Jung 1972/1952,27) but not necessarily simultaneous, involving correspondence between a person’s (or people’s) inner state(s) and external events.
The above common factor remains relevant today, having held in work expanding knowledge about synchronicity by many writers since Jung, for example regarding its phenomenology (Marshall 1987), therapeutic use (Reiner 2006), philosophy (Haule 2011) and spirituality (Main 2007b). That common factor is what I mean by my title-term ‘synchronicity’.

I shall now consider philosophical stances before continuing with my early-phase narration.

My stances:

I have already described how new types of experiences (like ASCs and meeting Mungo) surprised me during my person-centred diploma and afterwards, rupturing my worldview. Because my initial engagement with a greater cosmos of seemingly beyond-the-physical and time-defying events happened when I was both spiritually agnostic and ignorant regarding human science, I then lacked entirely or knew only superficially many of the concepts and words with which I (Christa-now) shall reflect on who Christa-then was and how she developed.

This ‘greater cosmos’ piqued the same strand of natural curiosity as had motivated my physics BSc. Also when Mungo ‘arrived’ and seemingly enhanced my personal development and coping with life (and later – by their own accounts – assisting others), the same strand of natural desire to see potentially helpful modes checked, expanded and if appropriate used to good ends was piqued as had motivated my person-centred training.

Tong, Sainsbury and Craig (2007) note qualitative researchers’ close engagement with their work, its findings’ credibility therefore improving when researchers are transparent about their characteristics and attitudes such that readers can better assess researcher influences on the work. For this reason and because in heuristics’ special case researcher experiencing also is a finding (as explained later), I admit, for example, to having felt wowed to have a project so special. Conjecturing that my socks were probably much more blown off (and myself thereby energized) by this greater-cosmos-plus-Mungo because of my agnostic start-point, and that perhaps I might explore these things differently to how an established believer and/or already-versed academic could, I felt a sense of special position bringing a special opportunity whose wasting would be a shame. But I also recognized a need to be circumspect about who I mentioned this to or risk disdain from both agnostics/atheists and the religious, friends included (which was a self-care issue).

My personal attitudes inclined me towards exploring communicating with Mungo seriously enough and involving others’ scrutiny enough to satisfy myself and to render whatever I might discover less likely to be summarily dismissed as ‘flakey’ (Natiello 2002). A PhD seemed the best idea.

On becoming a novice in the human sciences I was bemused by the very existence of diverse methodologies – no tutor ever even mentioned philosophy at Imperial. My hard-science BSc had steeped me in the experimental method and logical positivism (Heppner et al 2008), but
inspirational physics stories also valued initial exploratory curiosity of the *hey look! and so what happens if…?* kinds. So I felt strong and ‘properly scientific’ in approaching my phenomena-combination fired by a plain *hey look! and so what happens if…?* spirit, even if PhD study increasingly showed me its innocence regarding philosophical and methodological concerns.

Another wellspring of my pre-PhD attitudes was the person-centred approach (pca) of my training and work, including its propositions about people reacting as organized wholes to the phenomenal fields they experience and perceive (for me including ‘all this greater cosmos’ by then), and people being best understood from their own internal frames of reference (Rogers 1951). Phenomenological methodologies’ emphasis on personal experiencing (McLeod 2011) seemed kin to pca-based efforts to receive a client’s self, experiencing and ‘takes’ as undistortedly as possible, notwithstanding that they must be doubly distorted through the client’s (or participant’s) individualistic, incomplete expression and the counsellor’s (or researcher’s) receiving of them through the filter of themselves (Fontana and Frey 2005).

Thus I was primed (albeit unsophisticatedly) for pluralistic attitudes towards both ontological concerns like whether realities were, say, objectively real or humanly constructed, and epistemological concerns about discovery systems’ modes and pitfalls like, say, when an inquirer might reach greater certainty via methods kept supposedly independent of their personal characteristics (as in classical physics) or reach better understanding through methods utilizing their individual self (as in counselling) (Silverman 2005).

It is of import that at my PhD outset I settled on heuristic methodology and started participant sessions quite quickly (for reasons explained later) whereas improving on my basic philosophical priming through study, including of postmodernism’s levels of pluralism and skepticism (Gellner 1992, Appignanesi and Garratt 1999), took longer. It matters because an unusual factor in my meetings with participants brought about an unforeseen philosophical-position shift. Heuristic researchers often immerse by meeting participants to explore experience as remembered (Moustakas 1990) without instigating new experience. However most of my participants agreed to try experiencing Mungo (as outlined later in my methodology chapter) during our meetings because otherwise how could they discuss it. Eventually I realized that through this shared Mungo-experiencing they had become participants who could, besides discussing, also bear witness (or not). This informs the following paragraphs.

Now trying transparently and reflexively to display my philosophical pluralism and shifts I shall borrow an image that Karl Popper (1959) offered in defence of post-positivistic realism. Arguing that even if no description is ever completely accurate yet it may become more accurate, he likened a scientist to somebody driving piles into a swamp to provide a house-foundation. Although no piles reach bedrock some bear weight better through being more straight and true, symbolizing how though no theories ‘reach bedrock’ some are ‘truer’, better weight-bearers. Popper thought the idea of ‘truer’ theory implied realism – that a reality exists whose full description we might never achieve but which we could progressively approach, whilst valuing good enough research and hypotheses at any stage along the way.
I own to having mused on Popper’s piles-in-the-swamp image around paradigms besides the post-
positivistic for which he intended it. Ponterotto (2005) invites us to consider philosophy-of-science
parameters across four paradigms which all speak to my development and diversity, so I shall
consider each briefly regarding me and the swamp (admittedly ignoring their other aspects),
stressing that I am showing not concluded ideas but mulling in progress. Together Popper and
Ponterotto give me a way to explore in prolonged uncertainty, as befits doctoral engagement.

Ponterotto starts with positivism, an aspect of which is the notion of an objective apprehendable
reality. Adapting Popper’s image, bedrock exists below the swamp, true-enough piles do touch it,
and (for example) classical physics such as I studied can produce true-enough piles by methods
and logic I enjoy. I also value many results of positivistically undertaken research and actions
backed by it, such as the saving by medical expertise of both my sons’ lives. I need to recognize
this paradigm’s presence and value in my life.

Ponterotto next considers post-positivism which holds that an objective reality exists but human
intellectual limitations prevent it ever being perfectly apprehended, as Popper symbolized by piles
never reaching bedrock.

Ponterotto considers constructivism-interpretivism next. It posits absence of external reality (or
bedrock), but presence of individual, relativistic realities constructed in people’s minds. Here I
imagine a bottomless swamp with each person bestriding their individual floe, partly above the
surface (their known and conscious truth) and partly shelving further out below (as yet unknown
and/or unconscious).

Put starkly, whilst planning and piloting my participant protocols I managed to ‘inhabit constructivist
floe-land’ better by realizing and relinquishing (at least for research purposes) some thinking and
doing modes that were proper, instead, to swamps with (post-)positivist bedrocks. However as
more participants reported experiencing, say, remarkable timings alongside my own experiencing
thereof, I could not prevent this sharing (or co-bearing of witness) from also exciting the post-
positivist me. Ironically the piles we plunged into the swamp, potentially contacting below-surface
floe-sections (or previously unconscious personally-constructed apprehensions), also drew my
mind into suspicions of possible bedrock down there after all. Ironically again, this was partly
through quantity-assessing (a hallmark of (post-)positivism) albeit intuitive – surely so many
striking, co-witnessed, partially-tangible instances couldn’t all be chance, I felt.

Ponterotto presents the critical-ideological as his last paradigm-exemplar in a paper (Ponterotto
2005) which proved potent for me opening my eyes to various of the paradigm’s basics which,
overlapping a little yet resonating much with things I had felt, prodded me to admit them as past
components of my stance. He writes, for example, that ‘the paradigm is one of emancipation and
transformation’ (ibid 129) which seeks actually to change participants through awakening
engagement; that the researcher uses her work ‘as a form of cultural or social criticism’ (ibid 130);
and that ‘criticalists conceptualize reality and events within power relations’ (ibid 130). The person-centred approach (pca) is also concerned with transformation of power relations through awakening engagement (Rogers 1978). I experienced the emergence of ‘it all’ during my training pca-espousal, and Mungo ‘arrived’ soon thereafter whilst I was still a newish ‘convert’ to the benefits claimed for self and society of pca-style relating (Rogers 1970). At some level I liked rather too much the idea of pca personal development being good ‘soil’ in which valuable ‘fruits’ like Mungo might grow. As my PhD started it was as if I on my pca-valuing floe (or rather, a more vague layer of my self than that overtly attempting the PhD) wanted my research to demonstrate such a soil-fruit connection, encouraging others’ floes to become more pca-valuing too – a messy, novice mix-up with some positivistic and criticalistic leanings alongside ‘researcherly correctness’.

Writing this stances section has rung warning developmental bells for me, fostering my reflexivity (Etherington 2004a). My current overview is that this research is centred in constructivism (especially regarding each participant and myself as individuals), but can at least also entertain post-positivism (regarding participant and other experiences en masse). Apropos any positivistic or criticalistic leanings or tensions I might have around them I need to remain self-aware, vigilant to exclude them from my researcher stance yet reporting any arising of them in my human self when relevant as findings (as heuristics requires, as explained below).

**Narrowing the research project:**

Having decided to put ‘all this’ up for serious wider scrutiny through a PhD I had to find an academic supervisor both competent and interested to take it on. At interview with William West I was relieved at how matter-of-factly he listened to me about Mungo. He then went the further step of engaging with Mungo and me, which brought a powerful experience whose qualities inclined him towards accepting my project. The telling event with Mungo figured large and explicitly within the interview – and hence the rest of ‘it all’ (like synchronicities and ASCs) less. Given that PhDs generally need tight-enough focus anyway (Phillips and Pugh 1994) ours thus stayed with Mungo as we reached mutual contentment with a provisional title about *person-centred counselling encounters open to a spiritual third voice in the room*. However I emphasize (for reasons emerging later) that the interview was like a narrowing PhD gateway, with Mungo getting through but without the rest of ‘it all’.

Researcher and supervisor must be happy with a project’s methodology too. During that interview we concurred about a phenomenon so experientially rich begging a qualitative approach. My next chapter will detail my choice of heuristics, but my ‘star-drawn’ strange-sequence research journey asks that I already sketch another key aspect of heuristics because it applies to this chapter’s prequel content. Briefly, then, whilst qualitative methodologies generally recognize that the researcher’s characteristics can profoundly affect the research direction, experiencing and interpretation, heuristics goes the further step of *using* the researcher’s self as the central discovery tool of first-person knowledge. Having personally plumbed some aspect of human existence the heuristic researcher presents *their own* lived experincings. As Douglass and Moustakas
(1985,43) say, ‘phenomenology ends with the essence of the experience; heuristics retains the
essence of the person in experience’. Revealing my inner reactions, feelings, thoughts-that-arise
and so on, as I shortly shall in my unusual pre-PhD prequel section, is not merely congruent with
heuristics but asked for by it.

**Widening again beyond the narrow gateway:**

After the topic-narrowing at my PhD gateway, remarkable meaningful timings and other exceptional
experiences (EHEs) eventually reclaimed inclusion, widening the project again.

![Diagram showing the twofold experience of phenomena widening out](image)

**Figure 1. My twofold experience of phenomena widening out**  (E and F are explained below.)

Now I request my readers’ willingness to await a pattern’s gradual emergence as I try to present a
‘knotwork’ of events in time. Stripped to its barest essentials, a synchronicity occurring late in my
PhD process (at dot E in the diagram) bolstered my decision to present a particular personal
narrative featuring the research process-story itself from a much earlier pre-PhD stage (from dot F),
yet that very F-to-E narrative is key to understanding my heeding of that late, bolstering event at E.

Readers may not grasp the ‘knotwork’ all at once. I hope that the diagram and F-to-E narrative will
help each others’ comprehension, albeit requiring the extra work of patience and back-and-forth
attention. Yet precedent exists: in his introduction to Jung’s *Man and his Symbols* Freeman (1978)
remarks a kindred mode:

> Jung’s arguments (and those of his colleagues) spiral upward over his subject like a bird circling a
tree. At first, near the ground, it sees only a confusion of leaves and branches. Gradually, as it
circles higher and higher, the recurring aspects of the tree form a wholeness and relate to their
surroundings. (ibid x)

Now, and deliberately in the non-academic, more heuristically immediate style (lightly edited) in
which I first captured it, here is the remarkable-timing late event:

> “It is mid-February, and daylight has lengthened enough for return to a study-mode important
to me. I take a 2½ hour top-deck bus-ride into Lakeland, my alternate reading and musing
somehow enhanced by the unfolding scenery, then walk the fells allowing myself to mind-
drift or think at will.
"I reread the introduction that cost me much effort long ago. Though sections seem fair, overall it won’t do. Trying simultaneously to show a lived unfolding yet also cover my academic back, it jumps around too much in both time and conceptual space - in short it loses the reader-friendly plot. Fell-walking in Lakeland, my mind circles the conundrum, continually recontacting this sense – the very flow of experiences on my research journey, the way they have patterned with each other and within time, is one of my findings. This tale of complex elegance can, I think, neither be presented truly nor followed so clearly unless told largely uncluttered by frequent academic comment and in the order of its happening, especially at first. Most riskily that requires starting it long before my PhD’s commencement with a sizeable prequel, also uncluttered by much academic justification yet.

“This feels necessary though vulnerable ...... but is it right? The fells hold me in their beauty whilst I seek and invite an understanding – perhaps an analogy – of whether I should indeed story within my introduction thus. Then, descending towards the little town, an analogy comes which seems to answer my streamlining time-patterning needs, but I shelve it till later since my bus will be an hour yet – time enough to visit the Oxfam shop.

“There the first book I see, prominently displayed, is subtitled A Pattern out of Time (van der Post 1991). The blurb promises ‘a true story of people, events, themes and relationships which together have formed a special pattern in Laurens van der Post’s life’. He himself opens by discussing:

*the trouble when writing about the truth as we have experienced it,* (in comparison to) *the storyteller* (of fiction who) *has all sorts of advantages which the reporter of the truth, with which I am concerned, does not possess. Take this matter of beginnings. The storyteller (of fiction) can choose his moment of entry into this awesome continuum of time and space and all its relativities, compelling their obedience ....* (ibid 1)

“Later he asserts *the truth of life will only yield to the truth attained in a pattern that has been lived* (ibid 1).

“Standing in Oxfam I smile, delighted with the book’s relevant content, the timeliness of the ‘meeting’, and van der Post’s potential as an ally who has also debated issues around when to start a time-patterning tale. But I am not stunned as I would have been at my story’s ‘start’ (F in Figure 1), my chosen moment of entry into this awesome continuum of time and space, since a key *truth of my life (and research) attained in a pattern that has been lived* is that such synchronicities may come giving a sense of accompaniment, rightness or help. Helpful here (at my E-moment in Figure 1) is van der Post’s offering at his story’s beginning an analogy for its patterned nature that he surely cannot have perceived until the story was advanced, an analogy (of invisible cosmic bodies known to humankind only by their influences on other stars) that was his *nearest kind of metaphor, inadequate as it may be, for what happened .... and navigated me ....* (ibid 2).

“Well then, I am encouraged also to bring my *nearest kind of metaphor, inadequate as it may be* back from late in my story where I could discern and value it to offer at this start of my telling, hopefully helping my reader to relax into trusting pattern to emerge.”
The overarching metaphor that arrived on the fell:

Imagine somebody ignorant of all athletics who can walk, and who comes to notice others running. Maybe they stand still awhile to watch and to sense their own balance and then try running slowly. Perseverance, trial and error coach them, till they can accelerate to their personal maximum. Running thus they happily notice that, actually, they do improve further, but then comes astonishment at a new bounding fleetness which surely is beyond them! Puzzled but thrilled they run with it. Then, mysteriously, they find they have not only in their hands a pole but also within themself a sensing of how to use it. And there comes a vaulting-bar, impossibly high – unless, maybe, a kindred ‘magic’ to that which put wings on their feet and a pole in their grasp raises them yet further. They have choice, either to prefer the down-to-earth, declining the bar, or to risk in trust of their responsive relationship with the mysterious ‘magic’ though they might fall or, in succeeding, find themselves or their worldview turned upside down.

The metaphor of the surprise pole-vault came to me whilst fell-walking as an heuristic illumination after dwelling in my research’s broad sweep by alternately thinking and incubating. The metaphor helps me portray the natures and time-positionings of various phases in my story of personal development, experiential growth and research entwined. For instance my daring the vault itself symbolizes attempting a PhD. I have derived virtually all my grasp of human sciences from that ‘vault’, so to present my actually naïve run-up (or prequel) much interrupted by academic comment would be both untruthful to its character and obscuring of its energy and flow. My choosing to show my run-up prequel, and in an uncluttered powerful manner, has four rationales.

Firstly it was very formative of attitudes, modes and tentative beliefs I brought to my PhD, so readers will be better briefed to consider my work given clearer understanding of my start-point ‘lenses’. Secondly, my eventual choice of heuristic methodology required me to immerse myself in my phenomenon by (it turned out) travelling a heuristic journey, so given that I experienced the ‘run-up’ and ‘bar-attempt’ as seamlessly joined parts of one journey, presenting the latter only would be false by omission. Thirdly, later parts of the run-up relate the heuristic engagement and early immersion which gave me both direction and willingness for what followed. Fourthly omitting the run-up would risk implying, falsely and unethically, that certain developments of the bar-attempt (which I report later) happened without prior readying, as if a standing jump had been achieved.

As already mentioned, extraordinary experiences burgeoned for me during my diploma, which involved self-reflective essays, personal-development statements and journals. Consequently I have many documents (or ‘data’) that captured run-up experiences whilst they were fresh or, if concerning things already past, how their recalls impacted me during that formative diploma time.
The run-up: introducing the researcher:

Whilst ‘just walking’ (as above, and during the just-physicalist-life section in Figure 1) during my younger decades I was trying to find my way in life and get on with people rather blunderingly, with scant psychological insight. Yet certain personal characteristics or formative situations from then are foundations of me that may well have influenced my research, not only directly but also by impacting my life then and therefore the holistic me. The following sketch of just-walking me – partial and slanted by my perceptions, choices and blind-spots though it must be – gives some idea of myself both as eventual heuristic tool in the making, and as ‘lens’ through which this research has been executed and noted such that readers can better know what to make of it in that light.

Born shortly after World War II of a German mother and British father, experiences like playing enjoyable but different games with English schoolmates and German cousins gave me a basis of ease around difference (to a level) and optimism about diverse groups’ desires and potentials to get on –often an asset, but with risk of being unrealistic or foolishly rushing in where angels fear to tread.

I experienced my Catholic mother and non-religious father with his *live and let live* stance as never talking deeply about this difference or indeed anything, and very quickly closing down or walking away if I tried to. Maybe that primed my tendency to lock horns with things-being-ignored – not so much ‘listen to me’ as ‘listen to this stuff you’re trying to deny through silence’.

I renounced Christianity at sixteen (though pragmatically not saying so at my convent school), being thenceforward agnostic and ardently of the opinion that observed fact should rule and minds be open enough to accept whatever observation might reveal. Seeing no reason to explain the universe’s admittedly mysterious existence by some extra ‘layer’ behind it – some ‘God’ for which I had never encountered convincing evidence – I was stunned to stumble upon ‘pantheism’ in a dictionary defining it as any doctrine regarding God as identical with the material universe – *there’s a word for the idea I’ve thought about logically; you mean I’m not alone? Yet back then ‘spirituality’ and ‘philosophy’ were words I barely considered, thinking them nothing to do with me.*
I valued science’s reality-questing endeavour and enjoyed its content. At Imperial College I read physics (deliberately) and (coincidentally) mixed almost entirely with the scientifically-minded. Given also my tiny, non-discussing, newspaper-avoiding family, my scant counterbalances were novel-reading and a half-year with an artistic boyfriend keen on William Blake. Interesting, but insufficient to undermine my scientific and logical outlook. I scarcely met other subjects’ mindsets, or even realized beyond laughing along with cheap jokes about sociology degrees and toilet paper (which now is embarrassing) that they might exist.

At school I could be a relatively high flier, my then quiet home (no siblings, few chores) allowing me time to study enjoyably without conflict with anything else. But in the multiplicously demanding world, from Imperial onwards, I lacked the mental speed and stamina to live up to my school successes. My time-consuming, tiring slowness and my high worldly ignorance combined to render me over-faced around trying things (political discussion, say) with peers who were way ahead of me. Thus my limitations worked against their own overcoming, allowing me little connection to beyond-myself mind: I could (almost) only think inside the box with only me in it, which kept me inside the box.

Being behind-the-game and slow also beset me later as both single parent and only child to my elderly parents. People seem better to understand how, being reasonably bright, I can be so unversed and slow, if I explain myself as like a car with a Mercedes engine but a Beetle tank. I have to take the ‘Beetle tank’ seriously: several bitter experiences have shown that protracted ‘Mercedes-sized’ overloads borne principally alone can make me mentally ill, including the symptom of ‘cognitive dysfunction’. Such dysfunctional inability to do even simple things for myself and my dependants for months at a stretch is a human-condition limitation which has informed and impacted my PhD.

That concludes the just-walking sketch of me as a moderately normal and spiritually oblivious individual, which baseline to later developments is a part my thesis’s full picture.

Love of reading and a few friendships were saving graces in my introvert life. My ‘running slowly’ started through book-browsing, where I encountered the very concept of deliberate ways of improving self-knowledge, behaviour and relating. Later I got better at noticing and pondering about others being less (or more) touchy, say, than me, sometimes ‘stealing their tricks’. My twenties and thirties were a fits-and-starts time, with curiosity and desire to improve but no plan. Learning bits here and there helped, but slowly, partly because (I now think) it was mostly mind-learning rather than psychological nettle-grasping understandings with others.

During that phase I experienced three events which normal science couldn’t have explained. It intrigues me now that although they wowed me they didn’t challenge my worldview as they ‘should’ have done. It was as if I had accepted them into myself, but within isolating vacuoles. One of these, captured in a diploma essay, can exemplify those events including my small, receptive part:
But even then ….. just occasionally the universe gave me kindness – though I didn’t know that it was that then …….. Once ….. I was walking alone in the South Downs. A country church and its yard formed an enclave in a field I was crossing, and my map clearly showed that the right of way only just clipped the churchyard corner. And yet my body walked to another part of the wall (my mind perplexed but allowing). Reaching it I looked over. There was the grave of Mervyn Peake, an author who meant a great deal to me, and the epitaph read ‘To live at all is miracle enough’.

Some months after my first child’s birth I started training as a National Childbirth Trust breastfeeding counsellor. It involved exploration of one’s own experiences, prejudices, limitations and so forth, in groups and alone, so unwittingly I had joined a faster self-development stream. I liked it, and the deep engagement with parents and babies in distress – experiential learnings which helped me ‘run better’ in my own life too.

This encouraged me towards ‘proper’ counselling. As my younger child approached 7 I started my pca diploma course. It involved much personal writing which came to capture strange events then gearing up in my life, to a rate at which I could no longer ‘isolate them into vacuoles’ and affecting me profoundly. My reflections on this – the bemusement and the ‘bounding fleetness’ it brought to certain processes – in my final personal-development (PD) statement now seems like ‘heaven-sent’ multi-faceted data from my pre-official research phase. Indeed, those data have this precious rarity: they were gathered when the researcher was naïve and unaware that a research project was imminent, thereby capturing pre-aware qualities which could never be deliberately ‘caught fresh’. Presenting excerpts (lightly edited) here sketches how events – whether by any teleological design or by fluke – prepared me for and launched me into this PhD.

Diploma statement data:

During ….. the diploma course I have several times felt an urgent need to blurt out something that had happened to me because, quite simply, it was just too big to contain and yet go on with other things. There was shock for me in these events, and in hindsight I can now name them as submergings into or revelations of the spiritual domain. But my experience of telling the group was, not totally but in large part, one of being laughed at or simply not heard. I was often left with an acute sense of loneliness. ….. I was put in mind of the natives of New Zealand who, when Captain Cook’s ship anchored in their bay, could not see this object so alien to their conceptual framework. ….. In the Cook’s ship parlance, I want to know about as many sorts of vessels as I can, and that there will always be vessels I have no inkling of, so that clients are less likely to quit me in loneliness, frustration, disheartenment or disinvalidation.

Someone wrote that, whilst all process takes energy, the move into greater multidimensionality that can occur in the spiritual domain may be subjectively the most cataclysmic. A voice in me says ‘too bloody right!’

Sometimes the sheer rate at which life (especially its spiritual aspects) comes at me and flows through me threatens me with being swept away in the spate, or spinning off into space. That’s how it feels anyway. I have to stop, or step into the mundane, or cry in the woods, or hold my pair of stones. One has lines like a funneling back down to earth and the other has a grittiness that is here-and-now and rooted in physical realness. This is immensely important to me. To play on Meister Eckhart’s words (I can’t imagine that he would mind) I need sometimes to come down from heaven to give myself a glass of water too.
Yet I was neither swept away with new, mysterious experiences nor scared into mere clinging to my logical, reality-checking side, but actively desired it to remain part of me:

…… I think here of a pair of splendid carthorses I saw ……, harnessed to a carriage outside a stately home. Their names I at first thought oddly assorted: Starlight and Count: but later I came to think the combination perfect. Starlight for inspiration that is given, the ineffable, the wondrous. Count (as in maths, not aristocracy) for the intellect, curiosity, the right-feelingness of sensible discipline. The two horses were equal in stature, and harnessed with equality, and the carriage ran true. May it be so. Or rather, may it progress towards becoming so.

…… The carthorses can serve as example of how life gives to me, with staggering generosity, powerful symbols at the right moment to release something within me, or to move me on, or to help in my relating to or caring for others. Yet I recall, not many years back, asking an art tutor about the symbolist painter Marc Chagall, 'But what is symbolism? I don’t get it.’ That part of me, then, was not yet born.

The above extract shows how I wanted my thinking side to be in a mutually cooperative relationship with the given, ineffable and wondrous. The following extract-story shows me ‘in dialogue’ with events-in-my world, and whether that be conceptualized as the events being intended to offer me dialogue or as me just using whatever came along, either way it is a pre-figuring vignette of what later happened often on my PhD path:

Death and the Poinsettia: In January we stayed with friends who run a plant nursery. They had surplus poinsettias left from Christmas, and I took a big, beautiful carmine-coloured one home with us, putting it carefully in front of the car passenger seat. At home I found one branch knocked off, and put it in a vase. The next day the plant looked sad, with lower leaves drooping and dropping, but the single branch still looked well. During the next day or two I could find no change of water, light or temperature to perk up the plant. Leaves fell apace – but still the single branch looked well. Capitulating to the obvious, and by way of experiment, I cut the branches from the plant, put them in a big vase, and tapped off the weakened leaves. From then on the branches lasted well for over a week. The original single branch held too, longer than any of the others.

Why did this happen? Discarding various ideas, I eventually could not escape the hypothesis that the plant branches had been dying because the roots were somehow telling or enabling them to. It was as if the plant had experienced something and realized, ‘there’s no mileage in this particular emergent life: it’s not worth the risk: retreat to your embedded source, the better to rest, to husband resources, and maybe have another go later’. But of course the single branch could not retreat, having no root anymore, and its best bet was to stay with this particular emergent life with its chance, though slender, of fruition.

This felt like a heaven-sent symbol for where my own thoughts and feelings seemed to be going about human death and my own death. Not a harsh, cold end for struggling against in fear of losing one’s only existence, but a repose and return to the whole, to be accepted when it comes and towards which one could indeed actualize. I’m not saying I’m in this happy position, but I can sort of see it as something quite solid in the distance. And now in the act of writing it feels like this: I do feel fundamentally OK about the prospect of reaching it, but that isn’t now for me: there’s a lot of this life’s pattern for me yet to fulfill. That might sound like me pulling wool over my own eyes, and maybe there is a bit of that in it, but fundamentally – or right inside – it feels right.

Some days after these thoughts, at a friend’s house, I chanced on the book ‘How we die’, and a certain chapter fell to my hand. I read there: ‘In response to the presence of the circulating toxins (due to a stress to the body eg infection after trauma or a severe illness), the lung and other organs seem to create and release certain chemical substances that have a deleterious effect on blood vessels, organs, and even cells, including the elements of blood. Oxygen transport becomes less
efficient, organs fail further, and this septic shock overwhelms its victims with a mortality rate in the range of 40 to 60 percent.

My god, such mechanisms exist!

I read the whole chapter. The writer nowhere says anything like, ‘and so bodies know how to help themselves die when their chips go down’? Who am I to think such a thing? I can’t help it: it comes, and so I look at it. It seems to make good sense from an evolutionary standpoint, releasing other members of a social species from expending the energy of prolonged care, both physical and emotional. As to the individual, I feel it’s humane – although I’ll bet it’s not only human. Perhaps it makes spiritual sense too: when I think of going with it, albeit maybe after grappling with a specific source like an abscess that could be sorted by something other than a war of attrition, the word ‘harmony’ comes to me.

But who the hell am I, a casual reader, a novice in this domain, to dare think this way?

The day before these notions I had bought a second-hand Jacques Cousteau book for my children and myself. Later that day I found in it, ‘More than a century ago Charles Darwin, who had seen coral atolls but never explored them, correctly surmised how they were born and grew’. Other theories looked better, put forward by people who had been to atolls, but drilling in Bikini in 1945 proved Darwin right. So, Darwin had ideas and dared speak from a position of relative ignorance!

Who the hell am I, to even dream of thinking, ‘if it’s OK for Charles Darwin it’s OK for me’? But an idea should be judged on its own merits. If I silence myself about it just because it was me (though maybe very far from only me) that it came to, who the hell do I think I am then? The great arbiter? No way!

This is diabolical!

But Scott Peck wrote that ‘diabolical’ comes from roots meaning to throw (for example, aspects of something) apart. So is it diabolical? Or is it integrative? Or just empty sound and fury, signifying nothing?

Well, it does signify this at least. This I really can say with certainty, despite scaredness and challenge to my life’s story of discussing only with safe friends but not authority figures unlessbidden by them: I want dialogue, with people who can go in this terrain. And where is a single mother and life model with zilch professional status likely to rub shoulders with such people, never mind dare to claim their time or to speak?

I cast my bottle, with its message, into the ocean waves.

And now, as the wave of writing energy recedes, I feel sheepish, embarrassed, revealed, vulnerable, laughable. Tough! The bottle stays.

In the above story-extract Life (seemingly) dialogued with me in a ‘normal’ real-time way. But the following extract shows me experiencing Life as validating me neatly post-hoc, an example of powerful timing, again pre-figuring my PhD path.

I have lost all track of how often events have happened with me with blessedness in their timings. For example, I might think a question or form a hypothesis in my mind (and maybe write it or say it, which later convinces me that I really did think it), and in a very short time the answer to the question, or solidarity from reading a writer with a resonant hypothesis, is somehow given. Both the proximity and the sequence in time lend power to the experience. For example, one New
Year’s Day I was walking a canal towpath some miles from home. I was musing over whether to continue as a breastfeeding counsellor, thinking, ‘You never hear if it ever helps, is there any point, shall I go on?’ In the next moment a voice rang out (from someone who had just turned a corner onto the towpath): ‘Hey, it’s Christa isn’t it? Do you remember me? You came to see me about breastfeeding last summer. It made all the difference to us, the difference between giving up and carrying on’. Even as I write this now, years down the line, I feel ‘Wow!’ and ‘Thanks!’

The above extract clearly shows not only that I intellectually perceived (whether rightly or wrongly) potent timings and sequencings, but also that they gave me feelings which I found good. The following quote is resonant but looks at a bigger picture.

…… the process (of doing this essay) was something like this: I stepped into the stream of the subject, and at that it turned into a river. A river with regard to which I had only two choices: either step back so that just your toes dabble in it; or let it take you …… and all along the way I have let it take me. And now, today, I have reached the point where, suddenly, I know I should get out before all sorts of other things fall around my and my children’s ears. That having been said, however, it very much feels that the river and I are parting for a while as friends.

I read tonight that I should ponder what I have learnt from doing the essay. I suppose the allowing myself to be taken by it has in itself been an experiment in daring to trust such processes to a deeper degree.

To the best of my self-comprehension I would say not merely that the (seeming) timely surge in flow described above pre-figures my PhD, but even that the success of that daring to trust (the essay satisfied both assessors and myself, and nothing bad resulted otherwise) gave me my own permission to risk trying again on the bigger PhD scale.

As the next extract suggests, even then I had a sense of growth, though not only in scale. (To brief my readers, the mossy old milestones bit is about me experiencing good adages becoming, through my process, more deeply understood, and my feeling as if that indicated – like roadside milestones – this far you’re on the right path):

…… Also it does seem that my life this far has brought me no great expertise but a more than usually wide spread of fair-to-middling knowledges. …… I can’t help but see pattern. Maybe it’s not there, but still I can’t help perceiving one. Not far off tabula rasa in my early years; then sketched in, in scant detail but pretty entire; and now something curious that is expanding and yet focussing too. And it feels as if my life’s path, if I do keep on passing those mossy old milestones, is not far from some greatly significant place.

What on earth am I talking about?

Am I running mad?

There I am shown with a puzzling inner sensing which I dared to write, notwithstanding that I hadn’t come across the concept of such sensing or ‘knowing’ then. Now I would certainly assess it to have been right, my greatly significant place being ‘meeting Mungo’ in Glasgow cathedral.

My closing PD-statement prequel extract is a lived narrative whose lyricism delighted me, and whose penny-Pfennig synchronicity felt like approval for the Pfennig quote which supported a ‘go
for it’ attitude in me, in turn fostering my daring a PhD. Opening with my ‘body walking to the churchyard wall’ experience as already recounted it continues:

……. There was the grave of Mervyn Peake, an author who meant a great deal to me, and the epitaph read ‘To live at all is miracle enough’.

In recent months I have put words to my response. Yes …… if you live in an alive sort of way …… like the tall grasses that dance to the wind but do not break …… although some of them do …… there is both vitality and risk in that.

But how can one do this? What are the nuts and bolts of it?

Some months ago I found a penny on the pavement, and noticed that this time I didn’t think, ‘Oh, maybe a lucky penny’, but ‘That can go straight in the children’s money pig, because life is sending me luck without need for a penny’. After my errand I nipped into a charity shop. A slim book stood out to me – by Pfennig, the German equivalent of Penny. With not even time to assess it, I paid my money and rushed off to school. Later, with time, I read the back-cover quote (which I try here to translate from the German):

‘Why are you afraid of losing yourself? The less armoured and armed you give and open yourself, the more you will shine, and fall ever and again into your own lap as you own star-coin (lucky penny).’

(Warum hast du Angst dich zu verlieren? Je wehrloser du dich hingibst und öffnest desto mehr wirst du leuchten und dir immer wieder als dein eigener Sterntaler in den Schoß fallen.)

Jörn Pfennig (1984, 45)

Yes, that’s it. And, in the German, enchantingly put.

Pfennig tells of the nuts and bolts of the thing, but what is it that tells about screw-threads and handednesses and metal-working? I have no doubt as to the answer to that for me: it’s the person-centred approach.

In his old age Carl Rogers had put to him in an interview ‘You feel much more at peace with the idea of reaching the end of your life’. He responded ‘Definitely. One aspect of that too is that I feel I have been very, very fortunate. I have lived. I feel that the people who are most afraid of death are those who haven’t. I feel “God, I’ve lived. I really have.” and it’s a very satisfying feeling.’

I feel blessed, and beloved by I know not what, and gifted – having been given inexpressibly wonderful gifts – by events such as these: the mysterious and the mundane.

Peake and Pfennig and Rogers: I agree with them all. It is my life’s quest, really (this sounds so pompous, but I can’t help that), and if ever I can have the honour of helping it happen for anyone else, that would be blessedness indeed.

With my heart in my mouth, over and out.
How many personal examples to give?

That ends the excerpts from my diploma-essay data. Before continuing this prequel (or pole-vault run-up) into my post-diploma time, I pondered how many examples to give.

Indwelling that issue brought me to clearer heuristic apprehension that both the range and the frequency of extraordinary experiences then happening to me had a holistic effect on me greater than the sum of its various events. It was like ‘music’ giving a taster of different ‘instruments’ (or event types), with a tempo (of events happening) that kept my wonder and fascination alive without swamping me. Were I not to portray this ‘musicality’ and its persuasive, energizing effect on me this prequel would lack a truth of my experiencing by omission. Therefore I shall depict it by choosing (hopefully) just enough examples, trying to transmit my first-person experiencing of both individual events and the whole, as follows.

Although during those earliest ‘bounding’ years wonderful events often helped or grew me, I also experienced it all (as I jouralled it then) as like a white-knuckle launch down the slipway into some other-dimensional ocean, so probably a powerful altered state of consciousness (ASC) would have over-faced me then. But I did experience some gently strange occurrences inside myself (in contradistinction from things coming strangely in the physical world outside me). Occasionally I was given innerly to see (or so it felt) an image whilst relating to another diploma student, only for their conversation to turn and include that image or, if I offered the image, only for it to prove richly meaningful for them.

I would feel a pleasant wonder after their responses. But my first ‘vision’ (I knew no other word to call it by) gave me feelings with it as it occurred. An account was captured at a study-day, much nearer to it in time than now (Gorsedene, anonymously in Thorne 2001):

…… there came a time when I was, if you like, stretching myself: my children needed my tenderness and urgent care and a friend, whom I knew nobody else could help, needed my tenderness and urgent care. …… I was back to the wall, stretched to the limit, and it was at that moment that I experienced a vision, which was – in words it doesn’t sound like much – but I saw around me a circle of people and thoughts and activities and ideas which was a complete circle, and I had reached a point where they were enough to always hold me. And in that moment a couple of them were already coming forward and I didn’t know who or what they were, but I knew I was being looked after. And that was an utterly pivotal moment in my life. And it strikes me as no accident that that happened on my life’s journey as I was learning to become a counsellor ……

I marvel now at how well-pitched that vision and its accompanying feelings were to me then. I also think it prepared me enough to receive more power safely on reaching my greatly significant place beside Mungo’s tomb in 2001. Although already sketched in Seeds of this Research, being key it bears revisiting, preparatory to further aspects which I can quote with good certainty from a personal development statement I wrote in February 2002:

…… in Glasgow I soon came across postcards of certain ornate lamp-standards, bearing within their upper crook-shaped curves a stylized tree, with robin, bell, and fish with ring in its mouth.
They pleased and intrigued me, but I could track down nothing further than that they bore Glasgow’s symbols to do with Saint Mungo (despite looking keenly for the next two days). Until at last I came upon a guided party in the cathedral crypt. When the tour guide invited questions, and then her party members wandered off to look around awhile, I grabbed my chance. She told me the stories (which are full of warm-heartedness) with – well – I suppose warm-heartedness. And then she left, and (now looking about me) I realized that I had been told these lovely things about Mungo right beside the very tomb of Mungo. It felt as if he had told me, and (directly after that) I felt – words fail me, I do my shadowy best – overwhelm (but kind), and wonder and tenderness, and I had to sit in the dark of the crypt, with tears welling, for quite some time.

At last I resurfaced into mundanity to a degree, though I sure needed a quiet coffee in the museum of religious art beside the cathedral. After that I saw several objects that moved me in the museum, but it was special with the Shiva: the great brass Shiva dancing in his circle of fire. That one there, in Glasgow, is ‘my’ Shiva. That evening, back at home, I told my neighbour. She said ‘Oh, I did my university thesis on Shiva Nataraj, the Lord of the Dance, and his symbolism – here you are’. Thus it was given to me to (B) learn the symbolism so timely, and yet (A) have my own direct experience of the Shiva without cluttering knowledge, and (C) feel that the cosmos was saying that this encounter with Shiva was more than passing significant.

I felt as if Mungo and Shiva, Celtic Christian saint and Hindu God, had touched my depths with intended harmony between each other and myself, a German-British person with a heart in appreciating and bridging differences. Being yet themselves, they seemed also to betoken all good-hearted religion and ecumenicalism – and curiously I loved that, despite being neither religious nor a full-out believer in a beyond but only, if you will, an expanding agnostic. I also liked how my Shiva-encountering’s three stages hadn’t (as I then felt) merely respected but even valued and used my naïveté. All-in-all, though I couldn’t intellectually explain ‘all this’, it felt and seemed to the best of my discernment to be glowingly good, and had ‘it’ said outright would you like to work with us on these principles I would have answered yes please.

Dowsing ‘arrives’:

During that same Glasgow visit, whilst staying in the Youth Hostel I chanced to meet – for the first time in my life – someone who mentioned in passing how pendulum-dowsing had helped her make a decision. Having in recent months experienced many fruitfully timed events I wondered if this was ‘meant to be’ (though unsure if such a principle even existed) so I asked her about it, simultaneously open and wary. She described three ‘golden rules’, namely not to become obsessed, not to use it for profit, and to check that (in her terms) it wasn’t a trickster. Impressed by the seeming wisdom of these and her lack of pushiness, I felt I might have met a right teacher for me at that time, and was willing to carefully try dowsing back at home.

The pendulum (or the energy behind its movements) taught me stage by surprising stage both a variety of swings with different meanings, and how it could direct individualistic layouts of objects (like tarot cards whose symbolic personal-development use a diploma tutor had introduced us to), the layouts developing dialogically between my responses to objects so far and ‘it’. I was both willing student and fascinated but assessing observer of this teaching, impressed and indeed delighted by its skilfulness – even whilst another part of me baulked: can this really be happening? The delight and baulking were each writ larger when, by a further so-skilled ruse involving objects,
the pendulum ‘told’ me that it was Mungo moving it. However was I to believe such a thing, both in itself and in that I, with all my shortcomings and a single mother and life model with zilch professional status, could be ‘talking’ with a saint! But further extraordinary experiences happened linking me with Mungo: something, be it what it might, was going on.

Exceptional experiences’ diversity:

Mungo entered my life in Glasgow cathedral via a synchronicity and a powerful altered state of consciousness (ASC). Thereafter I experienced a year or two’s phase of roughly thirty diverse EHEs. I enjoyed them – even the few which had painful aspects – because (in my terms of then) I found it thrilling to see these other things the cosmos could do. I also experienced a pleasing sense of being somehow honoured or approved or chosen, besides intrigued delight in what they seemed to mean or even be saying. The individual EHEs often gifted distinctive wonderful feelings too.

ASCs happen only infrequently for me nowadays. That rich phase soon came to look like a time of me being taught, which in itself gave me to feel myself encouraged and safe in the hands of inspired accompaniment from I knew not what. The ASCs were so varied, as if I were being given a selection of tasters. One result is that I can now more deeply believe in and have an inkling of ASCs that others (including counselling clients) mention, including types I haven’t tasted myself, which enabled me to meet several of my research participants better. Also they developed me, individually in specific ways, and en masse by shifting me far along the scale from ‘mere’ worldview to far vaster cosmic view.

As I experienced it the circle-of-helpers vision was an EHE whose accompanying given knowledge and feelings (rather than my cognition’s interpretation with feelings following accordingly) lifted it into the ASC class. I shall betoken the power, diversity and individuality of the thirty-odd EHEs by presenting just two more and what I learned from them.

Dozing in bed one morning I heard a front door slam shut in my street. As I heard it I simultaneously had a strong sense (rather than a seeing) of shape, specifically the curve-tailed droplet typical of Paisley pattern. The sense was much more real than I could have imagined, as if it had entered into me rather than arising from myself. I was much struck, and also thought something like Aah, so that’s what synaesthesia is like. Later that day, in a charity shop, I came upon an unusual metal plate. Centre-stage in its embossed picture three musicians played whilst, as if from afar, another woman listened from within a curve-tailed Paisley-like ‘droplet’ leaning in from the plate’s rim. I bought and still cherish the plate. In experience-sequences like this a tangible synchronicity seemed to confirm my ASC as real rather than just strong fancy, boosting my own belief that something was really going on. I needed such vindications to keep me persuaded that my involvement with ‘all this’ wasn’t a wild goose chase.
The second example involved a circle-dance day at the close of which the teacher put on one last piece of music, saying we could move any freeform way we each fancied. Like the others I started moving to the music, but soon felt I wanted to stand still looking out of the window. Soon my view rose, and (though I was also still in the room) my sense of personal position rose too, and then I felt myself moving swiftly forwards as fields and woods sped past below. I recall having the conscious thought that by standing still I was moving fastest. Then ceased my one taster of I-know-not-what (astral travel? shamanic flight?), but I was wowed. I’m glad that experience loosened some preconceptions I hadn’t even known I had. I realized I had barely consciously clumped astral travel together with ‘dubious stuff one sees books on in New Agey shops’, at some level dismissing the ‘clump’ as not for really entertaining as possible, intellectual intent to have an open mind notwithstanding. The experience helped me listen better in my explorations, to doubters and believers alike.

The same time-span saw both Mungo entering my life with skilful teaching and help, and my wonderful ‘course’ of EHEs. I experienced the co-incidence as tending towards convincingness, my credence in each aspect and its probably essential goodness being bolstered by it seeming part of a whole with the other. They also seemed to hang together with synchronicities – both those in general life as already experienced, and now with symbolic ‘card-talks’ in the mix too. This good hanging-together and a characterfulness in the ‘card-conversations’ (for example of someone enjoying word-play with me) had the notion of Mungo as the spirit of a once-living person sitting well with me – whilst simultaneously blowing my mind!

Journalling often to discharge amazements and to think on paper, I needed a brief but encompassing name for ‘all these wonders taken together with all other things and processes, whether I know them or not’. (At that naïve time I understood terms like spiritual, transpersonal and paranormal (Daniels 2005) insufficiently to debate with them, and would besides not have wanted to constrain that-which-was-emerging with a possibly limiting label). I borrowed from Douglas Adams’ Life, the Universe and Everything (1982), abbreviating to ‘LUE’ the ‘all that’ or ‘it all’ which, again, was demonstrating that moving into greater multidimensionality…… in the spiritual domain may be subjectively the most cataclysmic. At least the move this time seemed a ‘reasonable’ further flowering of the earlier diploma phase, but now I had no fellow students as support.

Therefore I dared, heart-in-mouth, to ask a friend to hear me out, co-experience a card-talk with me, and please write a sheet of responses so that, if in the wee small hours, say, doubt of my own experiencing beset me, I could hold and see the sheet and be steadied. That steadying became enough at eight friends’ sheets. Thenceforward I could use such card-talks, with whatever aspects of LUE joined in, to explore around life’s problems for myself and occasionally others. It seemed to us that better ‘seeing’ resulted, whether of finer key detail or crucial broad view or creative possibilities. In the pole-vault metaphor, I had been handed some sort of ‘pole’ or ‘baton’ as potential help in life.
How helpful that baton, but also how beguiling! I could see how someone, having once experienced such seeming power or connection, might overplay it or try to continue even if it faded or soured. Since I was ‘Mungo-talking’ about people’s real situations deserving ethical respect, burning questions for me were Is this (remaining) good? and How – including in the big scheme of things – can I possibly know?

I had other questions too, often nebulous through lack of adequate words or concepts, and besides, my EHE glimpses suggested that I didn’t even remotely know the diverse nature(s) of the seeming other-dimensional cosmos I was asking them in. Nevertheless I had questions, like why had this LUE-development happened, and why to me? How did it all work, and where might it yet ‘want’ to go? Given my scientific bent it was like breathing for me to ask what might this say about the cosmos? But I liked that question ethically too since, I believed, the better one knows the setting within which one tries to act kindly, the likelier it is not to go awry.

My appreciation of this baton was also tempered with wariness because of recent encounters with a few people professing spiritual giftedness, some seeming actively ethical but others seeming
either deluded (and deluding) or grandiose or mixed up with dubious stuff too. What murkiness might collaboration with 'my' baton take me into? Yet 'my bit' of LUE had brought the starkest of these warning meetings through an ASC-then-synchronicity sequence – as if deliberately alerting me – or was that double-bluff – what should I think or do?

Then, remembering how we never know the full results of anything in the big scheme (counselling itself being a prime example) I re-reached the notion that the best one can do is one's vigilant best within the picture – vague limits included – that one knows. Therefore, although reasoning inductively from benign baton-use thus far could not give certainty, continuing non-obsessively with it was my vigilant best, and trying to enlarge the picture through research seemed morally good.

So, now wanting to enlarge this baton's scrutiny and its space for possible monitored development, I felt a PhD might answer. But in whatever sort of department? And how could I ask around without the repeated nerve-racking trial of coming out (for so I felt it) or being dismissed as, say, just a New-Agey 'flake'.

One sheet-of-responses friend pointed out my living near a strong religious studies department. Two academics agreed to meet me, one then expressing surprise that I (and my spiritual connection) wanted to do research – just trust and do workshops and books like, say, Gill Edwards' *Stepping into the Magic* (1999). This antagonist enabled me to crystallize my desire to marry 'batons' with personal development, damage-clearing and supervision – gifts and rigours of the counselling milieu (in which, besides, my baton had grown). As to 'just trusting', I didn't want to – I wanted to test trust in a baton which wanted and even promoted my own discernment and its scrutiny. Then a chanced-upon children's book gave me staunch companionship through this passage:

> My father …… came across the room to where I sat at the desk …… and glanced at the ledger. “You work with much rapidity,” he said. “Six pearls weighed and valued since I left this morning.” He wiped his hands on the tail of his shirt and took a pearl from the tray. “For this one,” he said, “what is your notation?”

> “Round. Fair. Weight 3.5 carats,” I answered.

> He rolled the pearl around in the palm of his hand and then held it to the light.

> “You call this one only fair?” he asked. “It is a gem for a king.”

> “For a poor king,” I said. After four months of working with my father I had learned to speak my mind. “If you hold it closer to the light, you will see that it has a flaw, a muddy streak, about midway through.”

> He turned the pearl in his hand. “With a little care the flaw can be peeled away,” he said.

> “That, sir, I doubt.”
My father smiled and placed the pearl back in the tray. “I doubt it also,” he said and gave me a heavy pat on the back. “You are learning fast, Ramon.”

(O’Dell 1971)

By teaching through deliberate occasional falsity Ramon’s father is maturing him, as I experienced Mungo and LUE doing with me. Their ‘talk’ sometimes struck me as wrong, nonsensical or time-wasting, say, but thus far if I said so forthrightly, then in responding to that it would come good again, albeit maybe after several back-and-forths. I valued this, wanting not to be infantilized. Furthermore I felt the book-finding’s synchronicity approved my trust-testing way.

Quality ‘hard’ science is also a testing adult endeavour. To be honest (to a level that feels dreadfully exposed) I admit I couldn’t help extrapolating (I’m made that way) from what was happening to picturing (and liking) the possibility of some scientist(s) or intellectual(s) to whom ‘this stuff’ was a blind-spot or deliberately closed and/or berated bad book nevertheless engaging with this. They might be interested by the trust-testing me and mine with our tangible process-markers, as against just-trust spirituality repulsing them. (No wonder I liked a story of Carl Rogers saying of the famously doubting Saint Thomas (gist-wise) ‘Aah, my patron saint’ (Thorne 2002).)

Having drawn a research-opportunity blank at that religious studies department, I seemed faced with scouring Britain, but things took a different turn. Mungo and LUE kept ‘talking about’ spirituality and sexuality and, knowing Brian Thorne’s resonant writings, contacting him came to feel right. But I was a tied single parent and bread-line life-model in Lancashire, many expensive miles from this Norfolk professor of great repute and in great demand – so I couldn’t see how. Then I rang my Liverpool friend about something completely different. Eventually she mentionned in passing a nearby talk by Thorne that weekend, a snip at £10, but sold right out. Oh my! Hurdles of childcare and travel and entry and nabbing him somehow – but for something so seemingly in tune with LUE’s flow (whatever I meant by that) better to go and maybe fail than feel if only I had for ever more.

Amidst the flurry of begging childcare favours and organization came a moment of feeling an impelling (as I called them, knowing no pre-existing term) such as I had been experiencing sometimes since diploma days. ‘It’ wanted me to blindly open and point in my new Pictorial Guide to the Quaker Tapestry (Milligan 1998) (whose 77 picture-pages I didn’t yet know) so, seeing therein no harm but another chance to explore such impellings, I did. My finger rested on mention of (romantic legend of) George Stephenson’s unheralded arrival at a (fatefully decisive) meeting. This put a smile in my heart alongside the nervousness and tenterhooks, ‘accompanying’ me kindly to Liverpool. From then the following sequence flowed:

I made it to Sarah’s in time.
Her friend had just phoned saying she couldn’t go, so here was a ticket.
The other hurdles in my path dissolved just before I reached them too – an exciting, amazing run.

Brian Thorne’s talk on What really matters was good,
but why did the hall have to be semicircular, with various aisles and doors like that?
How might he leave, and how could I possibly intercept him?
I don’t know how, but I made it (without treading on anyone’s toes).
But then, oh dear,
How could I say this stuff to him, in the throng, and so briefly, and my heart so racing?
Why should he believe me about Mungo?
But he found us a space and listened well,
and said that if I wrote a fuller picture to him within a year he would read and answer it.
Phew!
Sarah gathered me up, took me back to hers and administered cups of tea!

I didn’t write a letter only
but a personal development statement also, to clarify things and do them justice,
and of course that discipline was good for me too,
as I explicated the types of teaching Mungo offered, say,
and where I hoped it might go.

As it turned out
my friends soon gave me the wonderful gift of a week’s retreat in their Norfolk cottage.
This timely and narrow window of golden opportunity
egged me on beyond my normal don’t-pester-people limits.
Wording it so carefully I wrote to Thorne:
If there were any possibility of us meeting,
for something a bit more than 5 minutes at the back of a lecture hall,
I would jump at the chance.
My PD statement wasn’t yet finished so with the letter I sent my final diploma essay
so that he would know much more what sort of animal I am.

Somehow the combination did the trick
and when we met there was depth and special things happened
(and later he told me the Carl Rogers and doubting Saint Thomas story).
When soon afterwards I received Brian’s letter saying
… how moved I was by all you had to say and by the experience we shared together …
I was thrilled to bits, and so encouraged on my path

That winter meeting prompted a further two the next summer.
Whilst I shall be forever so grateful to my personal counsellor (a Buddhist)
who skilfully and warmly midwifed me through
my early years’ spacings-out, puzzlements and whatnot with LUE and then Mungo
(how could I have made it without her?),
meeting Brian was opportuné for a different scale, depth and angle on things.
Eventually, having learnt that I contemplated a PhD,
he suggested I contact William West, adding and you can name-drop
with a twinkle in his eye.

Accordingly I never searched through universities or academic writings for a tutor
(nor, being humanities-ignorant and internet-illiterate, could I have easily done so).

Contacting West I gained an appointment.
I could only prepare by resolving (with Mungo) to be openly myself (or ourselves),
‘tarot-talking’ included,
but LUE and Mungo themselves had (though I didn’t know it) recently readied me.

In a recent Mungo-session a troubled friend,
asked to quieten and receive an inner experience,
had done so and ‘seen an inner video’ of symbolic helpfulness.
So when, during my interview demonstration, William was asked to do the same
I could ride out my minutes of in-the-dark waiting
with less having-of-kittens than I would have otherwise!

William reported a remarkable experience both on emerging and in later letters:
... it felt like a real healing (and) demonstrated to me ... what you were about...
... it was extraordinary but I was unphased by it which is interesting ...
Further communications and then the crucial letter:
Your proposed study sounds interesting and doable.
Since my surprise pole-vault analogy came I’ve studied pole-vaulting on the internet:
that letter was the firm plant of the pole in the box in the ground
before the PhD bar.

Therewith my prequel ends.

The official PhD begins:

So far I have related experiences showing some ‘run-up’ qualities I perceived during my ‘pole-vault’
stages up to the plant. Beyond that comes the official PhD, whose protocols, findings and so on I
detail in later chapters. Here, though, I continue with the pole-vault analogy to explain how two
reconceptualizations of my research eventually bore in on me.

Rise, inversion and twist:

An actual pole-vault is a wonderfully complex process, the inversion and twist being more
integrated than in my simplified diagram (as you-tube clips of, say, Yelena Isinbayeva’s record-
breaks show). As the vaulter rises they invert such as to turn upside-down and they twist more-or-
less around their own lengthwise axis, coming to face back the way they came.
This satisfies me as a metaphor for my work, the rise symbolizing the research I set out to do on encounters open to spirit-guide input. My inversion was my later shift towards feeling that synchronicities and time-patternings deserved equal status in my thesis, as climaxed and bolstered by my Lakeland pattern-in-time illumination and synchronicity with van der Post’s book. There also my twist, flowing with the inversion as in a real pole-vault, was an allied coming to sense my thesis begging not only findings-vignettes as already envisaged, but also broader-sweep stories – meaning-making stories of timings and fluid developments, prequel included. I emphasize that neither ‘inversion’ nor ‘twist’ nullified the ‘rise’ (or spirit-guide research), but emerged from and added to it.

Facing a fine decision now, I am choosing to lay out my inversion-and-twist stages here already (rather than after chapters describing my research’s ‘rise’) partly to bring readers to that Lakeland moment E (in Figure 1) which is, after all, my justification for starting this thesis-story with its prequel. Already presenting it here brings the advantage that readers may know and better consider that ‘inversion-and-twist lens’ as this thesis progresses interwoven with notable timings (although a case for presenting the other way around, allowing people to read ‘clean’ of any such suggestion and resonate with it afterwards (or not), could also be made).

My ‘vault-turnings’ involve a progression of notions regarding the role of synchronicity in my research. Although the organic progression spanned many years I shall list a sequence of ten viewpoints or thought-shifts quite briefly, deliberately uncluttered by descriptions of overlaps so as to present clear ‘snapshots’ of the turning.

1. On starting my PhD I knew synchronicity had been hugely instrumental in getting me there but, accepting the need to focus onto a sufficiently narrow topic, I chose to research encounters with Mungo (who could be construed to have encouraged this choice by ‘sending’ William such an extraordinary, quite extraordinary experience at my university interview), with synchronicity unmentioned.

2. Participant encounters produced many striking and/or meaningful coincidences which interwove inextricably with other encounter processes and were remarked by participants themselves. The data simply had to include many synchronicities and remarkable timings.
3. Some participants and I experienced the within-encounters synchronicities to interweave also with life outside and/or between encounters. Increasingly it would have felt false – a fracturing of interconnectedness – not to include this too. Worried, though, that this might be deemed methodologically unsound, I calmed myself by arguing with imagined critics by analogy: were I a chemist who, on mixing test-tube contents, observed only what occurred in the tubes whilst ignoring gases then set a-swirl in the laboratory, I would be failing the truth.

4. Indwelling the data around this return of synchronicity into my research-writing I came to wonder this: if the phenomenon of image-card layouts ‘speaking’ sensibly with people were synchronistic, then by using such layouts (however derived) with my participants perhaps I was opening the door to synchronicity (albeit unspokenly) from the outset, thereby implicitly inviting more of it in.

5. Soon afterwards I chanced upon a charity-shop book making a similar link, On Divination and Synchronicity (von Franz 1980). To my surprise it was not New Age but by a respected colleague of Carl Jung. I felt supported in my above conjecture by this synchronicity, but also glad I had gone through my lone indwelling process first.

6. Further pondering led me to feel my participant encounters’ capturing of synchronicities was very fortuitous – and precious even, for how could one possibly deliberately design research capturing such real-life coincidental phenomena even as they happened? Also I had discovered nothing like my project in literature searching yet. This led me to value my findings around synchronicity more, feeling that not to make it equal partner in my thesis would be wasting this gift.

7. A rare week alone gave me time to sift my PhD journals for synchronicities, listing them and pondering their varied characteristics regarding, say, process, atmosphere such as gravity or levity, and seeming result and/or purpose. I was amazed at the diversity.

8. Heuristics, though, wanted a deeper understanding of how the synchronicities or their sequences were experienced by people, whether participants or myself as the central ‘tool’ of this research. Once I started a synchronicity-experiencings chapter it grew organically, further synchronicities happening that meshed in with it and had me writing my responses to them in their very first flush.

9. I experienced that entwining of experiencing and writing as wonderfully lyrical, even being prompted tentatively to look at my whole ‘pole-vault’ from a fresh viewpoint (though not relinquishing others). Put in the vernacular, how clever of LUE to have thus engineered a synchronicity study ‘caught live’ with Mungo as ‘front man’ – maybe.
In thus entertaining the possibility of synchronicity as main and served by Mungo in my research I was, notably, considering the inverse of my position at point 1.

10. Dwelling in a tentative understanding of my whole research journey as a living synchronicity-study prompted my twist towards seeing the overarching story as essential. If timings did have greater stature in my research, then I sensed (albeit nebulously at first) that only the complete sweep of story could communicate that with full justice.

The ten points above tell a meaning-making story of mine, sketching the process which ‘twisted’ me towards the whole research’s flow-story becoming – as a deeply felt, encompassing response I experienced towards all-that-happened – a key heuristic finding to be shown rather than only intellectually mentioned. The culmination of my inversion was also my twist or, if you will, a kind of personal ‘narrative turn’.

Now I shall connect my metaphorical twist at inversion’s culmination to the event it represents (at E below). Though described earlier, I now sketch it for re-encountering with story-changed eyes.

Figure 5. Book-finding synchronicity at E encouraged telling the F to E story

It is mid-February …. Bus-riding and fell-walking in Lakeland, my mind circles the conundrum, continually re-contacting this sense: the very flow of experiences on my research journey, the way they have patterned with each other and within time, is part of my data. This tale of complex elegance can, I think, neither be presented truly nor followed so clearly unless told largely uncluttered by frequent academic comment and in the order of its happening, especially at first.

……. A metaphor comes to me, and then my synchronistic chancing upon van der Post’s book, with its comment that the truth of life will only yield to the truth attained in a pattern that has been lived (van der Post 1991,1). He found his nearest kind of metaphor (ibid 2) which navigated him.

Thus did I find, and the book-finding synchronicity bolster my pole-vault metaphor to help me navigate, encouraging me to start this story-braid as far back as I did (at F) for wholeness’s sake. Herewith is the circle closed.

In summary I have now presented my prequel and shown how it and my official PhD years taken together seemed one integrated unfolding development, symbolized by the pole-vault metaphor. The prequel provides the backstory and context necessary for understanding developments in the following chapters.
Methodology and Methods

My prequel sketched my pole-vault-turns from spiritual-guidance research only through to my responsively integrating it with synchronicity as co-equal topic and my research story’s fuller sweep. However I had no inkling thereof at my PhD’s start, the topic-narrowing neck to which I now return to present my interrelated choice-processes regarding topic(s), methodology and methods in detail.

One point needs making first though. Generally a literature-search chapter precedes the methodology chapter in doctoral theses. However, within a few days of entering my official PhD-time, life circumstances conspired to delay literature searching (caring around a suddenly-arising, serious, ramified and long-lasting child’s illness ethically blocking university attendance etcetera) and to hasten participant encountering (a fortuitous early piloting volunteer and quick flow of synchronistically-flagged, golden-opportunity participants thereafter). This chapter is therefore positioned correctly vis-à-vis actual occurrence of work phases. (An appropriately positioned literature-search section comprises this chapter’s end.)

Initial research-topic choice:

PhD research needs sufficiently narrow focus to reach enough detail and/or depth (Bell 2005). It made sense to choose for exploration the one phenomenon I could actually instigate (albeit never certainly knowing if it would work) namely open-to-Mungo encounters with pendulum and image-cards. This was also the phenomenon amenable to sharing with participants. My supervisor, having also experienced Mungo-encountering of quality, thought this to be interesting and researchable.

Readers now need enough idea of Mungo-talking as context for considering methodological issues. So, from my Thresholds article:

When I meet with (somebody) we either choose an issue to explore or let Mungo flag something. When it feels right in our conversation, we ‘open the line’ to Mungo who dowses to me a picture card or array for us. (To clarify somewhat: when the participant and I agree that we have talked enough between the two of us, I pick up the pendulum and, always speaking audibly enough for the participant’s hearing, I ask Mungo one question at a time (for example whether cards need shuffling; how many cards should be taken from the deck and laid down to face us; what relative positions the cards should have etcetera. Answers are shown by the pendulum’s angles of swing. The participant knows they can chip in and/or object at any time.) The pictures are neither predictive nor answers on a plate from ‘on high’. They are Mungo’s contribution, inviting our responses and whatever conversation (informed by person-centred values) ensues, perhaps leading to more pictures from Mungo until a right-feeling end-for-now arrives. It is a richer, more responsive process than just adding pictures to a two-earthly-people meeting, and responsibility for discernment stays firmly ‘down here’.

(Gorsedene 2007,10)

Such was the intended basis of my research encounters. William and I reached agreement on a working topic-title of person-centred encounters with the potential of a spiritual third voice in the
room. The third voice was unspecified to avoid presupposing that Mungo, or Mungo only, would arise.

**Methodological choice issues:**

The above sketch shows how I was clearly involved in the phenomenon, whose reality was therefore not ‘out there’ with me objectively observing it. Instead the processes involved multiple and subjective meaning-makings which were co-constructed and evolving (Myers and Newman 2007) – a far cry from reliable, precise realities as sought in positivistic research. Furthermore, although designing quantitative research would have been possible involving, say, participants rating qualities of open-to-Mungo encounters after their experiences, the diverse richness which had already shown in prequel encounters would thus have been missed. Altogether, this research begged a qualitative approach.

McLeod (2001) advises researchers not to foreclose quickly with a methodology but to seek one congruent with both phenomenon and researcher’s cognitive style. Being well practiced in heuristics William offered it, and intuitively I liked it. However I considered the early influential qualitative method, grounded theory, which aims to let theory arise clean of preconceived ideas from texts (of participants’ words, say) broken down into meaning units (Rennie 2000). Charmaz warns, though, that that process risks breaking or losing some holistic totality through ‘fracturing the data’ (Charmaz 2000), which risk seemed inappropriate given the interconnectedness in my experiencing so far.

I considered further methodologies, including with Denzin and Lincoln’s *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies* (2005), Silverman (2005), Crotty (1998), Kaplan’s (2003) venture into allowing the Divine to lead his research, and Braud and Anderson’s *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (1998). Some offered relevant aspects (White’s (1998) scientific exceptional-experience autobiography, say) but lacked others I desired. On re-considering heuristics, though, I saw it could simultaneously honour the inner, the relational, the sometimes surprisingly growthful and the wholeness of any pattern that might emerge, plus it fostered and valued ‘ahaa’ realizations – all key features amongst Mungo-sessions so far. It promised well.

**Heuristic methodology:**

I present this now with the increased understanding of heuristics I have reached through conducting my project and continuing literature study. Others report similar growth through engagement and further study (Sela-Smith 2002, Meents 2006) – growth in both nuanced comprehension and critiquing of heuristics. But the fundamentals stand, and I start there.

Heuristics is ‘an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985, 39). They differentiate it from phenomenology’s encouragement of detachment, emphasizing that ‘self-experience is (heuristics’) single most important guideline’ (ibid 46). The subjective is vital: the researcher follows it ‘past ordinary levels of awareness’ (ibid 40) through dedicated inner searches around an experience of passionate,
energy-giving interest to them. Thus ‘(p)henomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience’ (ibid 43).

Moustakas presents six phases which together form heuristics’ full process (Moustakas 1990). I describe them thus:

**Initial engagement:** A human-experience issue engages the researcher so fully that they commit to a long, unpredictable, personally-stirring quest to answer their passionate need to know.

**Immersion:** The researcher must really live the question (West 2004a,126) by full-bloodedly engaging deliberately with writings, conversations, artworks and so on to do with it; opportunistically with, say, comments overheard or chance-seen symbols; and attentively to experiences arising from themselves like dreams, related moods or hunches. Dwelling with and in these things fosters the researcher’s intimacy with the issue.

**Incubation:** The researcher rests from conscious engagement with their topic, whether through focussing elsewhere or relaxed agenda-less time (West 2004b). This phase, lasting however long it takes, allows their subconscious to process and/or reconfigure the topic in deep, tacit and intuitive ways.

**Illumination:** Incubation fosters illumination, the breaking through into conscious awareness of a fresh experiencing or perception of the topic. As in the classic example of Archimedes’ *Eureka!* moment (when, ‘switched off’ in his bath, he saw how the volume of an intricate object could be measured simply by its water displacement) illumination may be sudden, or come ‘in waves of awareness over time’ (Sela-Smith 2002,67).

**Explication:** The researcher teases out their illuminatory understanding, discovering further aspects, nuances or angles by paying attention to their thoughts, feelings and sensings as they explore. Their self- and/or world-views may shift in consequence, in turn causing further process and reintegration at various levels, the whole cascade of experiencing and attempted expression bringing ‘a more complete apprehension’ (Moustakas 1990,31).

**Creative Synthesis:** By now the researcher holds a rich, multi-layered and innovative personal understanding of their topic whose essence needs a portrayal-that-speaks for it to touch others. They invite creativity by patient solitary meditation within which their tacit and intuitive powers may alchemize from the welter of experiencing a synthesis (be it story or painting, diagram or hypothesis, dance or whatever) which expresses the whole.

Pondering these phases I felt senses of fit. I was already *initially engaged* and *immersing* through lone and shared Mungo-encounters, their influences in my life, and my deep interest therein. Also, knowing that mulling issues over often led to my seeing a solution only once I had switched off I felt confidence in the *incubation-illumination* sequence. I was also passionate, not least since I knew Mungo-talk card-image arrays could, through perusal and mulling, elicit new ideas dawning *from*
within the inquirer (as against read off the cards), somewhat like mini-heuristic-processes. I valued these mini-processes, knowing experientially that ideas dawning from them had helped me with ‘impossible’ family-care concerns. So all-in-all I experienced congruence between heuristics, my phenomenon, my tutor’s expertise, myself, and motivating appreciation of the phenomenon.

The person-centred approach and heuristics:

I had also experienced fruitfulness for myself and others in my person-centred pre-PhD Mungo-meetings with my sheet-of-responses friends, so it was good to discover person-centred valuing of heuristics. Rogers, founder of the person-centred approach (pca), had noted a prior lack of methodologies fit for researching the ‘living, acting, whole human being’ (Rogers 1985,8). He then celebrated heuristics’ advent, deeming it ‘a disciplined but intuitive search that explores, by every possible subjective means, the essence of personal experience’ (Rogers 1985, 11). Eschewing phenomenology’s detachment, heuristics also emphasizes relationship and connectedness (Douglass and Moustakas 1985). These attributes resonate with the connections I experienced as fostered within and between myself and others in person-centred Mungo-encountering.

Besides the six phases above, Moustakas also presents seven core concepts and processes of heuristic research (Moustakas 1990). Hiles has synopsized these (Hiles 2001) as below (in italics). To each point I add (in upright script) a pca-related reflection and/or something of my self-perceived PhD-start position:

Identify with the focus of the inquiry: The heuristic process involves getting inside the research question, becoming one with it, living it. (I was already Mungo-encountering, gripped and affected by it.)

Self dialogue: Self dialogue is the critical beginning, allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to one’s own experience. Knowledge grows out of direct human experience and discovery involves self-inquiry, an openness to one’s own experience. (The pca concept of the fully functioning person (Mearns and Thorne 1988) values openness to personal experience. I had seen my sheet-of-responses friends encountering Mungo with openness, an experience which, touching their concerns, worked with their self-reflection. Also I had self-dialogued about both my experiencing of Mungo-encounters and issues it had aired by, say, journalling and posing myself questions.)

Tacit knowing: In addition to knowledge that we can make explicit, there is knowledge that is implicit to our actions and experiences. This tacit dimension is ineffable and unspecifiable, it underlies and precedes intuition and can guide the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning. (This chimes with the relaxed Rogers behaving in strange ways that nevertheless benefitted others (Rogers 1980) and with my occasional ‘knowings’. It also ranges widely from, say, subconscious associations to mundane know-how like bike-riding. I wondered to what extent the tacit was sometimes transpersonal or spiritual.)
**Intuition:** Intuition provides the bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge. Intuition makes possible the seeing of things as wholes. Every act of achieving integration, unity or wholeness requires intuition. (I took the sometime arrivals of ‘ahaa’ ideas arising from pondering Mungo-talk image-spreads as examples of such integration.)

**Indwelling:** This refers to the conscious and deliberate process of turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of a quality or theme of human experience. Indwelling involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some aspect of human experience. (I related this to empathy which checks and adjusts itself in encountering self or another, ever-seeking a closer, better nuanced understanding.)

**Focussing:** Focussing is inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the central meanings of an experience. It enables one to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with awareness and insight. (This overlaps Gendlin’s (1981) pca-embraced notion of focusing as contacting one’s ‘felt sense’ (often in one’s body) of a personal issue, with shift towards a core of the issue occurring on getting the felt sense right. I had experienced this phenomenon.)

**Internal frame of reference:** The outcome of the heuristic process in terms of knowledge and experience must be placed in the context of the experiencer’s own internal frame of reference, and not some external frame. (Frame of reference is a key person-centred tenet. I had experienced my Mungo-encountering to be as if Mungo ‘got’ my frame. This flagged a quality to consider regarding participants too.)

The concepts and processes above entail growing intimacy with both the topic-phenomenon and the self. Indeed, the researcher subjectively ‘crawling inside the self’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,44) is the central discovery tool, their experiencing being heuristics’ object and their awareness of it being person-centredness’s congruence. On many counts heuristics and person-centredness were compatible. Was heuristics also compatible with my topic and myself?

**Heuristics’ exploratory nature:**

Douglass and Moustakas emphasize that heuristics defies conventional shackles, allowing learning to find its own path as it unfolds guided simply by desire to best illuminate the phenomenon, open to midstream shifts if they so serve (Douglass and Moustakas 1985). It explores ‘without the restraining leash of formal hypotheses and free from external methodological structures’ (ibid 44) or, as Moustakas (1990) says (drawing on Roads 1987), it involves letting go to fall in the river to swim in an unknown current. Having experienced surprise developments, both on the big canvas of Mungo experiences overall and in vignette open-to-Mungo encounters, I felt I needed a methodology of such spaciousness.
Many qualitative methodologies require a guiding research question to be settled upon before active research starts (Maxwell 2012). Heuristics’ convention-defying, leashless case is different, the researcher’s full-blooded exploration of their phenomenon often having to be lived through before the encompassing question becomes clear. Sela-Smith (2002,58) makes a resonant point:

Heuristics can be used……. in any research endeavour where the inquiry is on the cutting edge of new territory being explored. When there is no idea of where the researcher or the territory is going……. then exploratory discovery, rather than testing hypotheses, is the goal. The inquiry is open-ended……..

Sela-Smith (2002,58)

I knew I was exploring at my own cutting edge of experience. Also, having never yet read or heard of a working combination similar to that of Mungo-talk via physical objects, I could consider Mungo-engagement as an extraordinary human experience (EHE) possibly at some more general cutting edge too. Resonantly Hiles’ consideration of heuristics vis-à-vis transpersonal research sees hope for what has been conventionally unresearchable:

The promise of heuristic inquiry is that it offers a systematic way of incorporating the self into our inquiry methods, and, therefore, some of the most significant, exciting and urgent life events and extraordinary human experiences can be researched more closely

(Hiles 2001,13).

Self-incorporating research is demanding, passionate engagement being vital, says West (1998), to give enough energy to stay the course. Living through my prequel had indeed fired me, including with three energy-giving curiosities which, in the interests of researcher transparency (Tong, Sainsbury and Craig 2007), I should declare:

1. Is ‘all this’ (Mungo-with-LUE) good?
2. What might it tell us about the cosmos?
3. What would happen if it were given more scope?

Naming these to myself I saw my curiosities’ potential non-neutrality and their objectivity as rooted in my BSc training, enabling me reflexively to shift instead towards intrigued self-incorporated experiencing fuelled by ‘passionate equanimity’ (Wilbur 1991).

Heuristic self-incorporating processes require discipline and rigour, placing ‘immense responsibility on the researcher’ (Frick 1990,79). Furthermore the personally-experienced phenomenon cannot be ‘crawled inside’ without the researcher growing in self-awareness which, benefits notwithstanding, can be gruelling. Marshall (1987), for example, experienced anxious feelings at breakthrough realizations; Djuraskovic (Djuraskovic and Arthur 2010) became haunted by painful refugee memories and identity struggles; West (1998), Scott (2011) and Etherington’s (2004) co-researcher had senses of drowning in the process; and I suffered sometimes near-incapacitating overwhelm in intense, lived-experience synchronistic entwining of life with research, as did Sela-Smith (2001).
Such ‘crawling inside’ or reflexivity can be transformative (Etherington 2004b). Sela-Smith’s analysis in light of her research and studying Moustakas (1990) finds that a key, intrinsic component of heuristic inquiry is ‘…… transformation (that) has taken place by way of a “story” that contains the transformation and may transform those who “read” it’ (Sela-Smith 2002,69).

Discussing long-term change in the researcher’s knowing and being, Moustakas (1990) quotes from philosopher Polanyi’s ‘Personal Knowledge’: Having made a discovery I shall never see the world again as before……. I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently. I have crossed…… the heuristic gap……. . This can be an existential matter say Douglass and Moustakas (1985). I had indeed been transformed through living my prequel “story”, crossing a heuristic gap to a worldview embracing a spiritual and/or transpersonal beyond-the-physical aspect within which, existentially, I felt more connected. Given such resonances continuing heuristically made sense.

Methods regarding participants:

Conversation with others who have experienced the research phenomenon is a potent form of heuristic immersion. I shall now discuss my recruitment of participants and my protocols with them.

First though, an ethics comment is necessary in the interests of candour, itself an attribute of ethical research-reporting (Connolly 2003). My development apropos specifically research ethics came late on my PhD timeline, which story and its ethical ramifications I shall present positionally later in this thesis. For now it is right that I tell readers that my ethics-related thinking shown in this chapter resulted, in academic naivety, from ethicality developed mostly through ordinary life and pca-counselling’s values.

Moustakas describes the use of one-to-one dialogues with participants (Moustakas 1990). In planning my participant work I could draw on his academically-accepted interviewing advice but, I soon realized, not simply so, because my research’s involvement with Mungo – a phenomenon that many would find unfamiliar or weird – brought special considerations.

Having lived through phased introductions to EHEs and Mungo-meetings, I had learnt experientially that the processes might be shocking, ‘incredible’, complex to fathom and relate with, alluring and/or repulsive and so on. I might have avoided such participant-reaction complications had I chosen to recruit the ‘already converted’ through, say, the New Age press, but my interest lay in meeting a more diverse range including ‘the unconverted’ (such as I had been). However there was no obvious place or way for recruiting ‘non-converts’ – unless I tried my own acquaintances. That was the approach I chose. Mungo and my supervisor (William) concurred.

(I recognize that up-to-date ethical research guidelines would disapprove this decision with its risk of coercion. I was, however, researching before their introduction (my PhD has spanned 14 years due to breaks caring alone for chronically ill family members). Some heuristic researchers do report choosing acquaintance-participants for research-serving reasons (Meents 2006, White 2008). Supervision back then could approve convenience sampling, trusting counsellor-training sensitivity vis-à-vis potential participants’ autonomy. How I tried to do so follows.)
In light of my experiential learnings as above I planned to approach potential-participant acquaintances tentatively, just chatting sketchily about my research initially. Only if they showed interest would I ‘gently-approach’ through steps of telling them increasing detail towards full disclosure. If I sensed them becoming wary at any step, I could adjust my approach or stop outright before telling as much as an information sheet would en bloc. Ethical principles of avoiding harm to others and self-care (BACP 2015,2) both underlay this strategy, safeguarding people from unwelcome or badly-paced disclosure and protecting myself from, say, ridicule or horror. Also if as acquaintances we met each other again, uncomfortable or damaging memories could arise had my approach been insensitive. (One case of gentle-approach stopping did occur, the person voicing well before full disclosure that they felt my topic wouldn’t chime with them.)

If the tentative gentle-approaching went as far as my disclosing Mungo and the person did choose to become a participant then further ethical considerations came into play, some specifically because we were acquainted. They might therefore want to please me more warns Britten (1995), whilst Ellis (2007) discusses relational ethics like role conflicts (does one’s ‘master status’ fluctuate between researcher and friend, say). Gabriel (2005) addresses power imbalance in dual-role relationships – potentially exacerbated here if my ‘having’ Mungo were perceived as raising my status by either friend-participants or, subconsciously, myself. Braud (2011) discusses cons regarding prior researcher-participant acquaintanceship but considers pros too, like greater ability to disclose due to already existent rapport. Indeed, already existent trust in me was later explicitly and spontaneously named as crucial to their even participating, witness Jean:

……. if I didn’t trust you, or I didn’t feel I could cope with it, then I wouldn’t be here.

If having heard about Mungo an acquaintance did want to participate, I then tried to ensure that they really grasped what sort of things it might involve or provoke in themselves by demonstrating a session between Mungo and myself. I also gave them my Information for prospective participants in my PhD sheet (Appendix 3) which I had made as down-to-earth as I could. I hoped it explained fully enough for an honest start without being off-puttingly long, about both Mungo and the pca, so that they were briefed and encouraged to reconsider their involvement (or withdrawal) at any time. These were ethical issues: in short I was trying to enable informed process consent (Elliott and Williams 2001).

I aimed to recruit eight participants. Ideally one wants enough to bring diversity but few enough to allow time for reaching detail and depth in later processing, avoiding ‘too much to handle in a meaningful way’ as Kvale (1996,178) warns. Moustakas recommends ‘perhaps as many as 10-15 co-researchers’ (1990,47) but that seemed too much as, unlike him, I intended not one but a series of meetings with each participant. My reasons were that, besides conversing as is common in heuristics, my participant and I would also spend time in lived cards-and-pendulum Mungo-encountering. This would need careful leading up to and later debriefing (one ingoing and one outgoing session). Also in light of prior experiences Mungo-talking might involve process unfolding over a bigger timescale than one session, perhaps including the bringing up of personal issues needing more opportunity to reach rest (three central sessions).
Special considerations were also needed in my research because its encounters, being tripartite between participant, myself and Mungo, might involve more complex inter-relational dynamics than in a dyad. Alertness to, say, mutual respect would matter.

Furthermore, should the sessions be ‘sealed containers’, or should I be receptive to ‘hints’ possibly pertaining to them dropped by Mungo and/or LUE outwith sessions? Prequel experiences were relevant here, open-to-Mungo encounters sometimes having made sense only when outside occurrences had informed them. As an example simple enough to put across, yet standing also for others more complex and subtle, suppose a synchronicity had linked objects A and B for me, and shortly afterwards an open-to-Mungo encounter with someone had involved A. If the other had no response to A even given time and encouragement, I might have briefly told them my synchronicity, whereupon the A – B link might have spoken to them, the encounter then continuing fruitfully.

It emerged that effects on sessions from without could come otherwise than via me. For example before Helen’s session I experienced an inner knowing to use not my usual card-deck but the Osho Zen Tarot (Ma Deva Sarito 1994) instead. One of our encounter’s cards pictured complete blackness (uniquely amongst all my decks’ cards). Also Helen, having dressed that morning, had felt a curious urge to change into entirely black clothing which she had even had to retrieve from her laundry basket. This coincidence affected our encounter meaningfully. The interconnectedness between our separate outside-of-sessions knowings and our shared within-session process was both data and of method-import, making more likely my future attending (with ethical discernment) to ‘hints’ from outside that seemingly ‘wanted’ to flow in.

I came to learn experientially about myself sometimes blocking such ‘hints’. Benedict and I co-experienced fully five striking coincidences (his word), any two of which would normally have flagged ‘consider him as potential participant’ before I noticed myself ignoring that. Thus my fear of how, knowing him, he might respond became conscious and I could override it (with Mungo’s agreement). I had been mistaken. Benedict became a rewarding participant. Furthermore his consequent curiosity about my research caused my disclosure of a puzzlement hampering me regarding analysis, and his of having taught philosophy – where all previous expositions had confused me his brought understanding, clearing my next step forward just in time. I experienced this sequence as resonant with the prequel-phases’ unfolding relational and helpful tendency in ‘it all’. Again, the event-stream was both data and a honing of my noticing ‘hints’. That outcomes like those with Helen and Benedict affected my methods thereafter was reflexivity regarding process.

Thus actual research had indicated that dissecting Mungo-sessions from such linkages would be, one could say, a deliberate change to studying them ‘in vitro’ rather than still ‘in vivo’ with flow (of ideas or energy or whatever) between them and LUE noted and sometimes discerningly used. In theory the in-vitro option could be clearly framed for neater reining of the research, whereas in-vivo connections – which thus far had seemed to foster development – might burgeon ‘unreasonably’, making the research too voluminous and messy. But since in practice linkages were occurring in other ways than through myself, there seemed to be no authentic research-option but to flow with this ‘unknown current’ (Moustakas 1990). And even if the sessions-only ‘in vitro’ approach had
been possible, it would have felt churlish towards Mungo (if he is a sentient intelligence), and impoverishing of the phenomenon and therefore potentially the whole research.

This shift from the sessions-only idea to the ‘in vivo’ inclusion of their interconnectedness with outside-of-sessions events was the first main widening in my research.

This in-vivo decision affected my participant sampling. Two acquaintances became my first participants through the intended recruitment sequence of casual chatting, interest shown, my gently-approaching them up to Mungo-disclosure, agreement and then sessions. But they both commented of themselves on remarkable timings (which I also perceived) between things within and outside the sessions. Thus my participants’ perceptions, which as researcher I could not ignore, also seemed to be emphasizing that synchronicity ‘wanted’ to link sessions with wider life in an in-vivo manner. Consequently when chance meetings with two other acquaintances each involved a synchronicity concerning my project I inclined more towards inviting them to participate. However I checked privately with my seeming teammate Mungo beforehand, asking via an inwardly voiced question and pendulum whether he wanted these people in the research (after all, how likely was he to co-operate in an open-to-Mungo encounter he had not approved?). He ‘said yes’. I asked them and they became rewarding participants, as did some later people whom I would not have considered had it not been for synchronicity flagging them up. In short, synchronicity had become part of my participant-choice methodology.

Here some comment on my language is needed. I recognize my fuzziness apropos what I call Mungo, LUE, ‘it all’, ‘hints’, flow, synchronicity and so on. This reflects my own fuzzy understanding – in this research I have ‘groped’ in domains I cannot ‘see’, yet to report it I must use words however provisionally, vaguely, and shiftingly. The vague and/or inchoate may be expected in cutting-edge inquiry where thought and lived experience co-pioneer (Rakesh 1992; Sela-Smith 2002).

This point touches on how I spoke with participants which was a quality in my method. Whereas to readers I can indicate how philosophy could expand these issues, for instance stimulated by Wittgenstein’s (1921) dictum *Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent*, with participants I ‘contracted’ them sounding fairly sure. Partly that was admittedly due to my own over-sureness then (as I see it now), but still my and/or our using nouns without much questioning (depending on the participant) enabled us not to wander overly into philosophy or bewilderment, but do the experiential research instead.

I would not have had such language quandaries had I believed unwaveringly in an established cosmology and/or spiritual ‘take’ which stated ‘surely’ what Mungo, synchronicity and so forth were. Instead I was, as an ‘expanding agnostic’ researcher, trying not to assume but to discover through experiencing. Realizing in retrospect how my terms for occurrences and seeming agencies vacillated, I reflexively developed a deeper awareness of doubting and uncertainties (Etherington 2004a). Nevertheless it helped me both decide and explain (including to participants) my actions to have an as if model, particularly when new circumstances cropped up. For instance, when a participant wanted no further cards before Mungo had ‘said’ no more I realized my tension between
honouring both the participant’s choice and Mungo. Thinking in the moment within my ‘as if Mungo were a person’ framework, I explained to the participant that I needed in courtesy to address Mungo in her presence out loud (to be transparent), and if he wanted more cards then I would ‘talk’ openly with him but she would not be forced (I reconsidered this ethically later, favouring sensitively offering the decision about Mungo-engaging to the participant in any such future situation). Transparency requires me to note that I experienced only very few uneasy tripartite moments.

I couldn’t just act formulaically in these sessions, having often to ‘wing it’ as just instanced – a method of sorts – partly because the sessions brought such surprises. But also an overarching consequence of not having discovered other research accounts of phenomena similar to Mungo-encountering’s tangible-intangible mix is that my research confronted me with unusual issues where I had to decide on methods (‘gently-approaching’, say, or ‘as if’) without benefitting from debate with others’ ideas. Therefore this section has presented relatively many method-quandaries of my own addressing (involving mistakes and developing know-how), but scant other-author references.

**Participant sessions:**

However, conduct around participant sessions is well discussed. For example, an open, safe research-interview atmosphere conducive to depth, reflection and disclosure matters normally (Kvale 1984), but especially so with strangeness like that of Mungo-encountering to the participant. There were many balances to strike, such as between talking straightforwardly about Mungo myself (rather than sheepishly, which I knew I risked) yet holding space for, say, participant dubiousness through both empathy and maybe also self-disclosure of my own wobbles, prior straightforward talking notwithstanding.

I also felt Mungo’s strangeness heightened beyond the level in ‘average research’ the task of balancing steadying time-boundaries for meetings against time-spaciousness (the participant knowing I had time potentially available) in case, say, not only many questions, emotions and needs for ‘breathers’ came up but also perhaps disorientation or shock from experiencing a new domain. Such balancing and space-holding tasks called on my counsellor training (Ankrah 2002).

I have already described giving each participant as good an understanding as possible of what Mungo-talking might bring, in itself or within themselves in response, through chatting, demonstration and giving them my Information for prospective participants in my PhD sheet (Appendix 3). We might then proceed to contract, using my consent form with its clarifying and protecting purposes (appendix 4). Next I would ask permission to start audiotaping, ready for our pre-session’s semi-structured interview whose question sheet (appendix 6) I would use as prompt. Its aims were to settle us through conversing in a comfortable tone about ‘big’ or ‘weird’ topics, establishing that they were unabashedly mentionable here; to orient us gently towards the participant’s current state or concerns in case they wished the Mungo-encounter to address them (I emphasize that Mungo-sessions were not counselling but encounters informed by pca values); and to gather about their moral, spiritual and ‘other dimensional’ experiences and/or attitudes a broad picture as baseline for whatever might happen with Mungo, since that range of possibilities was
also broad. My devising of the open-ended questions was congruent with heuristics as, having thought consciously about their aims as above, I noted ‘suggestions’ arising from my lifetime’s tacit knowledge of what curious questions might pragmatically work.

I made it clear that the participant could withdraw or have the recording stopped at any time, reminding them particularly at the start of any further meetings. In line with process consenting (Elliott and Williams 2001) I would check their willingness to continue, and if anything was left over or had come up for them around the previous encounter. If so we would attend to it – it never happened that there was distress requiring, say, that I refer them to somebody else.

As soon as possible after the meeting I would write in my research journal, logging what had happened and giving myself untrammeled space to process my feeling and thinking about it, which was crucial since I continued learning experientially as participant-sessions continued. This included my multiple roles and handling shifts between them – sometimes giving counselling-skills attention imbued with person-centred core conditions to the participant if they explored ‘their stuff’, sometimes mutual debater if the participant wondered about the phenomenon, and sometimes relatively expert interpreter of what certain occurrences (pendulum swings, say) probably meant. Also I would invite Mungo’s post-meeting communication and journal about that too.

Participants chose what research names they wanted to have. Confidentiality and/or wanting to be openly themselves played into their choices.

**Moustakian analysis:**

I have now sketched my full process of recruiting and sessions with participants, special considerations due to the tripartite Mungo-meetings and outside-sessions ‘hints’ included. Piloting it with my first participant worked well. After fruitful sessions with eight participants I started following Moustakas’s data-analysis protocols.

Moustakian analysis does not involve coding. Instead ‘the researcher enters into the material in timeless immersion’ (Moustakas 1990,51) such that tacit processes can play their part alongside conscious ones in reaching apprehension of the participant’s experiencing both as a whole and in detail. Such use of the researcher’s tacit self cannot but involve a level of their subjectivity but, West says, productively so, and ‘none of us can truly bracket and thus we always need to know who did the research’ (West 2011,43).

In practice such analysis involves transcribing recordings, deep and repeated reading of all written data (transcripts, notes, anything the participant offered (a poem, say), journals etcetera), and listening to recordings several times. Rest intervals enable the researcher’s tacit processes to work, and awaken fresh perspective and energy (Moustakas 1990).

Experientially I discovered my own good way of listening suiting my stronger attentional modes. First I listened principally intellectually, noting all topics arising by jotting key phrases on A4 paper widely spaced to allow insertion of things noticed during later listenings (appendix 8). Next I listened holistically, dwelling fulsomely in the recorded encounter, and alert for voice changes like
tones. I found that a third listening tried the same way jaded me, whereas if I listened whilst doing a simple, repetitive handicraft (which, I remembered, had helped me in exam preparations at school) it was as if a restless part of my mind was calmed and, therefore, my attention fresher.

A key feature of this research overall is that synchronicity could ‘butt into’ and potentially affect any process. My handicraft-aided listening idea provides a ‘butting-in’ example. When the idea occurred to me I worried about its acceptability, having seen no justifying academic literature. I mentioned the quandary in passing to a participant. She soon happened upon a supportive Times article (Broadbent 2005) and passed it to me. Its evidence-based content encouraged me, but also (I note heuristically of my experiencing) its fortuitous and timely arrival seemed to approve my continuing thus forthwith (without diverting to academic searching at that juncture) – so that synchronicity did interweave and affect my research’s process.

Once I was ‘with’ a participant in head and heart from listenings I studied my jotted tape-lists selecting passages for fuller transcription, including tripartite dynamics and the participant’s experiencing of not only Mungo but also unforeseen EHEs, whether expressed through their actual words or their timbre. My selection was thus analyst rather than data driven (Braun and Clarke 2006). Next I dwelt in all their material through several readings, attending to what arose in me including potential themes – subjective processes, where another researcher might well have constructed other findings (Frost et al 2010). Indeed, heuristics’ immersive and incubatory method encouraging the tacit might better apprehend elusive qualities (like permeating but unnamed wonder, say) compared to coded methods’ strengths (Rennie and Fergus 2001).

Moustakas describes three presentation-protocols for researchers to fashion from their whole-and-detailed apprehensions of the data (Moustakas 1990):

**Individual depictions:** The researcher constructs a depiction of each participant and their experiencing of the research phenomenon’s qualities and themes. The depiction is checked by the participant who may require amendments or offer additional points only thought of since their session(s). Back-and-forth amendment and development between researcher and participant happens until mutual satisfaction is reached.

**Composite depiction:** Having done all the participants’ individual depictions the researcher immerses (with rest intervals) in them all together, eventually internally understanding ‘the universal qualities and themes’ (Moustakas 1990,52). They then consciously create a depiction including excerpts that ‘accentuate the flow, spirit, and life inherent in the experience’ and its ‘core qualities’ (ibid.52).

**Exemplary portrait:** Again through immersion and analysis of individual data the researcher selects two or three strong examples, expanding them into ‘profiles that are unique to the individuals yet characterize the group’ (ibid.52).

These portraits and depictions, together with a creative synthesis (created as outlined on p47) are intended to transmit vitally-sensed understanding to the reader (Moustakas 1990).
I spent several months producing and checking individual depictions for my eight participants, but did not compose composite or exemplary depictions as outlined above. I have nevertheless given the above outlines to show that Moustakas’s heuristics ‘bible’ (1990) gives such protocols, and to facilitate discussing what I did instead, beyond a crucial crossroads on my research journey.

**My research crossroads:**

The way a motorist’s overall direction changes in traversing an unfamiliar town via a complex of turns, signs and other influences is, actually, a better metaphor for the unexpected phase of shifts I now entered, eventually emerging on an unforeseen route (like a motorist opting to visit a newly learned-of attraction). My ‘town-traversing’ phase took weeks, involving both influences on me and cogitated turns made by me, all co-affecting each other. (Later in this chapter I shall discuss how my ‘town-traversing’ relates to evolutions in heuristic methodology. That discussion is better left until then, partly because it will make more sense once the intervening pages have been read, and partly in order to communicate my heuristically way-feeling research-journey more realistically to readers.)

The main factors I shall detail were:

- Mary’s letter
- me-at-the-centre
- participants’ speculations
- Richards’ research and wren
- critiqued heuristics’ two versions

I shall start with factors of my own experiencing, shading towards strongly academic factors:

**Mary’s letter:**

I chanced to meet my acquaintance Mary who expressed interest in my research. We arranged a meeting during which I ‘gently-approached’ towards telling her about Mungo. We had a taster Mungo-session and she agreed to experience more later. Soon afterwards, though, she delivered a withdrawal letter, explaining that it was due not to anything about me but about stirred-up spiritualistic family memories. This stimulated me to ponder how data from people wanting nothing to do with Mungo might be interesting, a healthy counterbalance to participants appreciative of Mungo and indeed potentially pertinent to counselling of people previously touched by ‘such stuff’.

**Me-at-the-centre:**

Long dwelling ‘with’ my eight participants and their individual depictions produced in me the slow illumination that only I, as the sole person to have co-experienced all their sessions, could conceivably register an overall experiencing of more than the sum of its parts. My reflections were highlighting my rich trans-participants experiencing, particularly as I considered composing exemplary portraits or a composite depiction – the eight’s happenings had encompassed such diverse variation that ‘exemplary’ portraits couldn’t realistically exemplify, and a composite depiction would be a paltry shoehorning. The research deserved a more commensurate way.
Participants’ speculations:

I have already mentioned that participant sessions involving not just conversations about an already-experienced phenomenon but also an instigated new experience are rare in heuristic studies. Indeed I have still never encountered any (although Semetsky’s (2005) study on integrating tarot into counselling sessions exemplifies with-new-experience phenomenological research). Strangely no tutor or student-colleague ever remarked this difference, and I didn’t consciously realize it until years into my project. Nevertheless I had strayed from ‘normal’ heuristics – but that departure had borne the fruit that, besides participants using Mungo-sessions to help explore whatever issues they wished, they had also spontaneously speculated about Mungo, which speculative wonderings, possibilities and concerns (besides being participant data) impacted and developed me.

Richards’ research and wren:

Richards’ (2006) was the first heuristic study I encountered where the researcher, stimulated by converse with participants, nevertheless wrote his thesis on his experiencing, not theirs.

Richards also learned experientially how essence – which in phenomenology may be a reducing down rather than an expanding of personal understanding (Meents 2006) as it ‘ends with the essence of experience’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,43) – in heuristics ‘retains the essence of the person in experience’ (ibid 43). Academic engagement had taken Richards only so far, a profounder comprehension coming through direct encounter with a wren:

….. sitting in my garden……. (I saw) a small wren in the periphery of my vision.…… I assumed it must have a nest there……. it was industriously making repetitive visits there……. as secretive(ly) as possible. The following morning, a fledgling wren was discovered inside the house. The (doors were) left open….. it must have lost its way to the nest.…… the wren, so……. furtive the previous day was now strident and visible……. tak(ing) up prominent positions……. mak(ing)……. repeated calls. This behaviour continued all afternoon. The longer it went on…… the more I connected with it.…… I could feel a growing hurt and tension…… in my chest. I wanted it all to stop. Then suddenly I understood essence. I (had) understood the meaning of the wren's activities, albeit within my own interpretive framework……. The essence however, was in the way I connected with the wren’s story. It was a direct communication that lay in the performance of the wren…..

(Richards 2006,164)

Richards’ wren-experience was crucial for him, and similarly my experience of his wren-story was crucial for me. I, in turn, connected with his self-revealing first-person narration – his performance of his own experiencing (wren-performance style) – which deepened my senses of self-revealing’s power and of essence.

Critiqued heuristics’ two versions:

I came upon a substantial paper critiquing Moustakas’s 1990 heuristic ‘bible’ (Sela-Smith 2002). Puzzlement and floundering during her own PhD eventually led Sela-Smith to see disparity in the ‘bible’. Its early chapters describe and philosophically justify the researcher’s own free-fall surrender to heuristic processes on a leashless path that cannot ‘be hurried or timed by the clock
or calendar’ (Moustakas 1990,14), whereas later chapters (which Sela-Smith calls the application chapters) describe a ‘leash’ of protocols for working with and presentation of participants.

The one key paper that predates the ‘bible’ introduced the then new heuristics to academe’s notice as thoroughly subjective and free-fall. It was ‘not intend(ed) …….. to present a “how to do” focus ….. (as) competence and skill can be learned only through practice’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,40). Thereafter Moustakas alone fashioned his proscribed 1990 application with analysis-protocols for participant data, which is creditable in that many useful researches have resulted. But it is different to subjective surrender-to-heuristic-process research, and Moustakas presented both in the one ‘bible’ without naming that disparity. Having realized it after floundering, Sela-Smith reviewed 28 heuristic research documents, finding free-fall quality in only three.

Similarly Meents struggled to clarify her research question, her attempts all feeling intuitively incorrect until she found the rub in Moustakian confusion between ‘experience’ as a noun (drawing phenomenological inquiry with participants), as against ‘experience’ as a verb (drawing first-person heuristic inquiry). She adds ‘Moustakas seems to lose the essence of the person-in-experience in favour of the experience itself’ (Meents 2006,66). She too had perceived the stance-conflict within heuristics’ ‘bible’. Resonantly Richards found Moustakas to develop ‘the heuristic inquiry as a process of discovery on one hand’ (vulnerable, fluid) ‘and meaning-making on the other’ (more objective/definitive) (Richards 2006,163).

To gather these critiques I turn to McLeod, noted counselling-research writer who says, “Sela-Smith is reporting…… that those who have sought to use a heuristic approach in their research have tended to slip back into the phenomenological roots of the approach rather than adhering to the more radical research agenda, focused on the ‘I-who-feels’……… (McLeod 2011,208).

The critiques above and the power for me in the ‘wren-performances’ (both the wren’s own and Richards’ first-person story of his experiencing of it) resounded within me concerning where my research might focus (on participants, and/or on me at their hub). I continued studying.

All three critiquing researchers had cogitated on verb-voices and knowledge generation. Richards draws on Buber’s (1958/1937) work, differentiating between an ‘I’s experience of the ‘It’ world as objective, discrete, reliable and familiar, and the ‘You’ world typified by connectedness, transience and change. He writes ‘…. when the wren moved from being an It, an external object….. (to) where ‘It’ became a You….. the boundaries between myself and the wren had become blurred, and I felt connected at the core of my being…..’ (Richards 2006,164). Resonantly (drawing on Reeder) Richards considers experience as ‘the most intimate subjective knowing’ (Reeder 2002,62).

Sela-Smith teases out how writing as an ‘I’ can be in one of three languages having different stances. One is that of the experiencing ‘I’, the internal I-who-feels, alive in the moment: it is ‘the language of surrender implicit (in) the beginning (chapters of) Heuristic Research’ (Sela-Smith 2001,113), and thoroughly first-person. The second ‘is “reporting” oriented….. an external language even though it may be the individual making a self-report’ (ibid 113), a third-person abstraction with feelings discussed objectively. The third language involves ‘my generalizations
about myself’, a third-person, external language yet further from first-person ‘foundational felt experience’ (ibid 114).

In Sela-Smith’s research her academic work, internal processing and lived life braided together as she sought heuristically to plumb and resolve her obesity. Moustakas’s application-chapters’ verb-voices and stance blocked her unfolding process (distancing her from her felt experience), whereas surrender (as in Moustakas’s early chapters) promoted it, simultaneously addressing her obesity and developing her heuristic self-search inquiry (HSSI) research variant. She ‘discovered that surrender to the process was in fact the method and the demonstration of the method was (part of) the dissertation’ (Sela-Smith 2001,(Roman-numeral page xx)) – to wit, 136 consecutive pages telling her first-person self-search story, written intimately in ‘the language of surrender’. This personal story-demonstration was also its own HSSI’s explication, ‘intended not only to provide a tool but also to demonstrate a “felt” sense of the use of the tool’ (ibid 23). Furthermore it ‘evidence(s) that transformation (release from obesity in this case) has taken place by way of a “story” that contains the transformation and may transform those who “read” it’ (Sela-Smith 2002,69, drawing on Moustakas). Sela-Smith further supports her self-focused research and intimate first-person story as worthwhile through engagement with philosophers (particularly Vico, Hamann, William James and Ken Wilber) concerning the need for inclusion of first-person experiential knowledge, self-transformation and knowledge accessed through feelings if human knowledge is to be integral.

Meents reached a verb-voice turning-point on realizing ‘the awful truth….. (that) there was no alignment between what I thought I was doing and what I was actually doing’ (Meents 2006,24). Whilst initially using grounded theory with participants as an intersubjective second-person approach she – without overviewing awareness – had constantly asked herself how the processes illumined her own experience of her topic (intuition), thereby ‘generating a subjective, first-person understanding’. Recognizing first-person research to be her passion she changed course, finding fit-for-purpose methodology in Sela-Smith’s HSSI, albeit partially re-tailoring it. Where Sela-Smith avoided participants, for example, Meents reframed her grounded-theory interviews ‘as influential conversations in terms of my first-person HSSI ……’ (ibid 116). Such adaptations were well and good: ‘each heuristic study is a unique, creative challenge….. requiring methods that fit the particular investigation’ as Douglass and Moustakas say (1985,42).

Apropos verb-voices Meents felt ‘it would be too easy to slip into researching the experience rather than researching me experiencing (verb) the experience (noun)’ (Meents 2006,92) unless her research question’s wording bespoke her desired perspective, hence her ‘How do I experience intuition?’ (Hence also the ‘experiencing’ in my finalized thesis title).

**The research question:**

Meents only finalized her research question when already far advanced, as did Sela-Smith whose research ‘involved a “dance” between method and research focus where both shifted as each embraced the other’ (Sela-Smith 2001,3). This is true to the leashless/surrender-version of heuristics – Douglass and Moustakas (drawing on philosopher Polanyi) value the vague in both the
promising problem that starts an inquiry and intuitive processes involved throughout its stages (Douglass and Moustakas 1985), whereas Moustakas’s ‘application-version’ working with and presenting participants as main focus begs more pre-immersion and pre-recruitment decidedness (Moustakas 1990).

I also did not find my final research question until I had “danced” my method-and-focus learning-and-groping way considerably further than this, but disclosing my final question here will reassure readers that one did emerge and offer them a key lens through which they may wish already to regard process from here on. My final question developed into:

**What is my experiencing of interplay between spiritual guidance and synchronicity within person-centred encounters?**

In summary, Sela-Smith, Meents and Richards found fundamental stance conflicts between the first-person surrender-advocating chapters and the participant-focussed application chapters in Moustakas’s 1990 ‘bible’, *Heuristic Research*. The disparate versions were recognised and/or selectively used or adapted by others later (McLeod 2011, Ferendo 2004, Djuraskovic and Arthur 2010). I shall now continue my ‘town-crossing direction-change’ account, reflecting presently on methodological shifts it entailed.

**My research crossroads-process continued:**

I have now outlined my experiences regarding:

- Mary’s letter
- me-at-the-centre
- participants’ speculations
- Richards’ self-focussed research and wren-performance essence-learning
- critiqued heuristics’ two versions (first-person leashless/surrendering version; third-person presenting-participants application)

The above factors all arose for me around the same time, seeding new thoughts and feelings which developed and/or shifted, not linearly such that I processed each one separately before another came but in entwined process – I had indeed entered a vague intuition-favouring state (Douglass and Moustakas 1985). Yet I also found this entwining combination interesting and even alluring because, besides Moustakas’s next steps of exemplary and composite depictions (the value of doing which I was doubting), now alternatives seemed to exist.

Overviewing my research process to that point, now with the benefit of better-grasped critiques and hindsight, I see both heuristic versions. On starting my official research I had followed our PhD-colleagues-group’s norm, with participants to eventually depict using Moustakian protocols. But then synchronicities had widened my research beyond participant Mungo-sessions and into our lives in unforeseen ways, and I had allowed such surprise widenings – I had surrendered to what synchronicities offered. In so doing I had shifted somewhat away from the application-version towards the leashless/surrender-version, albeit without that conceptualization then. (I shall
presently show my later reconsiderations, meanwhile readers can ‘journey alongside me’ through my confusions and way-searching “dance”.

Sela-Smith’s and Meents’ own flounderings and direction-shifts exemplify how heuristic inquiry can involve ‘a feeling of lostness’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,47) and that as it ‘unfold(s)….. guided by a desire to illuminate the phenomenon…… it is appropriate to change methods or procedures in midstream’ (ibid 45) if that serves. Resonantly, Mary’s letter gave me pause. Was it synchronistically fortuitous? Its very existence and timing were both neat.

Prior to our chance meeting I had finished individually depicting my eight participants and didn’t need more, but on hearing of my research Mary spontaneously voiced desire to be involved – it seemed rude not to at least have one off-street meeting. Hence, without my seeking or asking, I now had letter-form data suggesting a potentially enriching new turn, a midstream change, just when the idea of making further application-chapters-style portraits from my so-diverse depictions felt distorting and wrong, and just when the other factors (finding Sela-Smith and so forth) had shaken open my methodological thinking. Did the new turn ‘want’ to happen? (Was it a timely hint from LUE?) Did I want the new turn to happen? To try it would be leashless surrender-to-process in LUE’s flow and my curiosity (which was strong, as heuristic engagement requires).

A consequent nexus of thoughts and feelings gradually unfolded in me. Data from people wanting nothing to do with Mungo could be interesting, balancing, and pertinent to (counselling of) people touched by ‘such stuff’. This would be sampling in a newly emergent ‘particular dimension’ as discussed by Coyne (1997,624). If I encountered more ‘refusers’, that might touch other depths of me, a heuristic ‘I-who-feels’ (Panhofer 2011). If I opened to the possibility of more ‘refusers’, then what about revisiting my sheet-of-responses friends from prequel days, or others with special expertise? Would all this be overloading myself? Yet if the emphasis were on my experiencing, then diversifying my immersion would surely enrich it – and ‘one is not only free but obliged to follow the path that holds most promise for disclosing truth’ say Douglass and Moustakas (1985,49).

I decided provisionally (with Mungo concurring) to seek such encounters, albeit generally only one per participant given time limitations and my first eight participants having already covered longer multi-meeting development. Were it to prove too difficult or slow I could revert to my prior plan, but if it generally flowed well, seemingly ‘wanting to happen’, then I would continue. My experience was that the latter occurred, with synchronicities and EHEs easing and enriching it. I therefore carried on, and basically my participant numbers became as in Table 1. (I say ‘basically’ because some participants became pairs, such as when a participant’s adult daughter visited unexpectedly mid-session and participated meaningfully too.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and type of participant</th>
<th>Term I gave this group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 original PhD participants, each having 5 sessions</td>
<td>Series group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 participants wishing not to encounter Mungo, at least at first</td>
<td>Shadow group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 sheet-of-feedback friends, revisited to become participants</td>
<td>Revisited group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 participants with special, relevant expertise or prior experience</td>
<td>Specialists group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. The four participant groups**

This fresh decision did countermand my previous rationale for eight participants, but a timely email thread amongst doctoral colleagues concerning data saturation (Coyne 1997, Bowen 2008) and/or richness captured me vernacularly expressing my new rationale considering thoughts:

…….. with a phenomenon as emergent and growthful as mine, I suspect I would need infinity/eternity to reach saturation! But I’m glad I’ve got representatives in each of the four rows of my possible participant-types table….. The question then becomes, have I thought of all the main possible types?

Reflecting again I still notice no crucial participant-type missing. However, my sample of 35 was inevitably limited by the pre-existing nature of my acquaintanceship circle. Some sample characteristics are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>All white Europeans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>All adults, ranging from their 30s to their 70s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>26 female; 7 male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief or value system</td>
<td>The sample included adherents of Buddhism, Christianity, Paganism, New Age, Daoism, Agnosticism, Atheism, Humanism, Philosophy, Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant professions</td>
<td>11 counsellors; 13 from professions with a significant, ethical counsellor-like elements e.g. teacher, social or health professional; 11 without significant counsellor-like aspects to their training and/or work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Brief delineation of participant population**

Two concerns regarding this diversifying participant-population enlargement were my time-limitations (having ‘sailed’ my 8-participant voyage and neared PhD-completion port I was now time-demandingly venturing to sea again), and risking trivialization through too-muchness. Again, I
could try, and if necessary retreat.

It transpired that three enrichments accrued. Firstly great diversity in both open-to-Mungo participant-sessions and their surrounding conversations about ‘such stuff’ enormously enlarged my heuristic immersion in line with Moustakas’s (1990,28) instruction ‘to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding of it’. Secondly some participants voiced potential dangers to people around ‘such stuff’. I value ethical alarm-bells rung vividly in their words (as presented later). Thirdly many new resonances, interweavings and synchronicities between participant sessions and our wider lives both strengthened synchronicity’s status as research co-topic and diversified aspects of its experiencing.

One such experiencing emerged as I provisionally wended my more-participants way. Along that way I repeatedly ‘met’ saving-grace synchronistic helps in my principally lone, devilishly near-impossible caring for both my ailing father and post-accident children. For that non-academic reason I felt I could not in conscience retreat, academic time-limits notwithstanding – except, being synchronistic, the reason was academic within the terms of my research – an exemplar, even, of the kind of ‘feedback loop’ of method-choice, experiencing, method-adherence……. that near-bewilderingly hallmarks it.

**Methods regarding synchronicity:**

At my PhD’s outset I had neither intention of researching synchronicity nor methodological ideas about it. On eventually accepting it as co-equal topic I first thought of extracting from my PhD journals a synchronicities-and-timelinesses log to devise a typology of them (which activities were tantamount to heuristic re-immersion and indwelling). I was frankly amazed at their far greater diversity than I had registered before. When I started writing their chapter, though, it took on a life of its own, with actual synchronicities occurring. I followed its dance, weaving together the remembered and the current (which, it being more in-the-moment and first-person-fresh, I prioritized), whilst deliberately showing my responses and their effects on the dance as, by now, I knew leashless/surrender-heuristics required. Following that surprise chapter-dance was, I believe, both experiencing and method, whereas presenting it (in its own chapter later) is both depiction and demonstration of HSSI long ‘transformative-story’ living (Sela-Smith 2001).

A second method was only possible when I experienced synchronicity. If it seemed to the best of my discernment to suggest a particular non-harmful course I could follow that course, (whether action, cogitation or holding the experience in mind) thereafter noticing what happened. I later found Main (2011,147) resonantly suggesting we experiment by stepping into the assumptive world of synchronicity……. (to see if that) yield(s) insights that would not otherwise or so readily have been available.

Neither method could originate with me: both entailed my responding to synchronicities-that-came.

**So what methodological version(s) am I using?**

To address the above question I shall overview heuristic-research’s history and landscape
diagrammatically and in writing.

Douglass and Moustakas's seminal paper (1985) presented heuristics to academe as ‘learning…..(having) a path of its own….. self-directed, self-motivated….. open to spontaneous shift….. defy(ing) shackles of convention….. push(ing) beyond the known….. without the restraining leash of formal hypotheses, and free from external methodological structures’ (ibid 44).

Thereafter Moustakas presented, together in the one ‘heuristics-bible’ book (1990), the surrender-version (reiterating Douglass-and-Moustakas’s mode) and his application-version whose proscriptive protocols others’ later studies frequently used.

Eventually Sela-Smith critiqued Moustakas’s conflicting versions’ existence and effects in the research-landscape in her seminal paper (2002) which both reaffirmed Douglass-and-Moustakas-like first-person leashless/surrendering-heuristics, and reported her PhD’s (2001) development of that leashless-heuristics’ mode in a particular direction, creating and demonstrating her first-
person, therapeutically-deep, transformative-storying Heuristic Self-Search Inquiry (HSSI).

Pondering my own research processes as this far described herein, I note that the ways I approached and worked with participants (gently-approaching, say, or process consenting) were respectful and necessary irrespective of which heuristic lens(es) I would consider sessions’ data through. My embarkation onto application-version protocols occurred when I executed Moustakas’s (1990) proscribed individual-depictions creation, and therewith my application-version use ended since I avoided Moustakian exemplary-portrait and composite-depiction creation, considering them incorrect for authentic portrayal of our experiencings. My sojourn in application-version ‘territory’ was brief – my research was effectively entirely leashless-version (the individual depictions being compatible therewith). When my studies encountered Sela-Smith’s HSSI (2001), I affiliated my research to hers because of our common experiencing of long sustained stories-that-transform, and certain debates between her work and mine that will appear as my thesis progresses.

I am not alone in adopting yet adapting HSSI. Glad of Sela-Smith’s reaffirmation of first-person heuristics, Meents (2006) classified her surrendering-to-process research as HSSI too, but ‘custom design(ed)…… (it to) a place of total resonance with (her)self’ (Meents 2006,72) through methods able to register her intuitive events and delight as against Sela-Smith’s tracking of suffering through resistance to source.

Between the entirely-surrender and entirely-application versions (exemplified respectively by Sela-Smith 2001 and Jenkins 2006) middle ground has developed. For example, some application-dominant participant-emphasizing researchers court self-realizations, witness Djuraskovic who committed ‘body and soul to the research (with co-researchers, which also brought) creation of (her own) life-changing understanding’ (Djuraskovic and Arthur 2010,1585). Indeed, Djuraskovic’s writing demonstrates that presenting one’s own and others’ experiencing in one document can work. (Similar two-ness co-evolving in one space occurs within person-centred relating’s simultaneous congruence regarding oneself and empathy regarding the other(s) (Mearns and Thorne 2013).)

Hybrid methodologies have also developed. Richards’ (2006) research also drew on action research but, finding heuristics taking a surprising but right-feeling lead over him, he prioritized it. He gave his story-rich mostly-surrender variant no special name. White (2008) however augmented his initially lone HSSI research by teaching systematic self-observation (of research-topic mindfulness) to co-researchers to enhance their reporting and reflection, dubbing his methodology Self Observing Heuristic Inquiry.

As to my research, comparing my post-crossroads synchronicity-attending work to Sela-Smith’s improves my seeing of both, which organic process still continues. Her HSSI advocates attentiveness to the I-who-feels, arguing also that integral knowledge must include first-person I-who-feels knowledge, whereas my I-who-thinks thoughts-arising (rather than cogitated thoughts) has been key, being likewise party to integral knowledge. She calls her self-search internal but often narrates outer events (including synchronicities) affecting it. Conversely my research might
seem mostly outer-directed but I strive to track my inner responses, seeking patch-wise my inner-self’s relevant aspects. (Vis-à-vis relatedness of search for self and search for whatever-one-finds employing attention to self, relevant is the pca finding that as a person becomes more fully-functioning – more them-self – their inner self becomes less a static construct and more a personal process open to experience including the external and their responses to it (Rogers 1967).)

Sela-Smith’s HSSI’s first-person-knowledge emphasis has her thesis including her 136-page-long personal-development story told directly from herself rather than, at some remove, about herself. Such long-story attention seemed vital also to unfoldings my research was engendering. Principally due to this communality I considered my research to be an HSSI-variant including its Douglass-and-Moustakian surrender/leashless heuristics basis. My work is first-person/surrender-dominant through its ‘taking hints’ from synchronicity, Mungo and other EHEs, and through my sole ‘at-the-hub’ experiencing of encountering all participants. (This is fortuitous regarding synchronicity-study, since application-dominant doctoral research of it already exists (Marshall 1987).)

Advice to readers unfamiliar with heuristics:

A ‘misfortune’ due my research’s exceptionally long time-span has become a boon. Being a physics BSc with no humanities-research Masters knowledge (which odd PhD-situation is explained later), and being in a heuristics-colleagues PhD-group, I knew not how challengingly different heuristics could be for other academics and/or readers. However, long years, staff retirements, and UK heuristic-world shifts have brought me to having now a non-heuristic-expert (but sterling) supervisor, Pauline (and, potentially, non-heuristic-expert examiners). The boon is that, through discussions with Pauline, I am ‘pre-experiencing’ my writings' likely pitfalls in ‘meeting’ other non-heuristic readers.

I offer this anecdote to make vivid a pitfall-type. For years a (sentimentally meaningful) green-rabbit model has ‘guarded’ my study-attic’s entrance, whilst my downstairs living-room has been displaying a rabbit-painting, the cover-art on the book (in German) The Poisonous Rabbit. I consider myself a pattern-noticer. Yet only days ago did my mind ‘exclaim’ (gist-wise) Oh!! The book-rabbit is green – funny – green rabbits ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ my home. But how did I not notice before? Aah, maybe knowing the rabbit was poisonous blocked my consciousness from dubbing it green.

Similarly I think Pauline sometimes doesn’t initially see what something is within heuristics because she already knows it as something else, like seeing my first-person responses to events- or literature-immersion, say, not as self-search ‘mosaic-tile’ heuristic apprehensions of myself but as ‘reflexivity’ only. Another example is depiction-with-explication narration of ‘a “story” that contains
the transformation’ (Sela-Smith 2002, 69) being seen as ‘raw data’ only. So my first advice is ‘beware green-rabbit non-seeing of within-heuristics import’.

My second strong recommendation is to read Sela-Smith’s excellent heuristics-reviewing, Moustakas-critiquing and HSSI-introducing paper (2002) which, at 34 pages long, has space to clearly present, exemplify and consolidate aspects. Reading it would near-certainly reduce jarring with methodological preconceptions and/or facilitate more comfortable fluent sense-making of my work.

**Literature searches and applications:**

I have now shown that heuristics (HSSI included) is an inherently questing methodology. Projects go not where they ‘should’ (application-version protocols excepted) but where, nose-followingly, they must, without researchers foreknowing all the literature- scape’s spaces their experiential explorations will visit. Consequently literature searches may be presented not in one early chapter-lump: instead ‘a layered approach is taken where (the) experience of the research question is placed alongside the data, the unfolding analysis and the literature’ (Kenny 2011, 13).

My own literature-searching was delayed due to family-care misfortune, but thereafter its layering due to the above factor combined with effects of my phenomena. Not only did my research use texts in two ways as all heuristic researches do (for academic engagement, and for heuristic immersion), but its texts came from two sources (deliberate literature-searching, and through synchronicities or other EHEs). Either source could contribute to either use, as in Figure 8.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts found by academic search methods</th>
<th>Texts used for academic engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texts ‘received’ through synchronicities and/or other EHEs</td>
<td>Texts used for heuristic immersion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

*Figure 8: Two literature sources; two literature uses*

Furthermore, much unexpected literature-searching arose throughout in response to phenomena-events, with suggestions from synchronicities, Mungo or other EHEs sometimes chaining onwards together with texts in synchronistic flows, as in Figure 9. To exemplify, had my EHE-strong connection-feeling towards ‘my’ Shiva in Glasgow (p69) not been synchronistically informed by my neighbour’s dissertation, I would have sought information (for itself, and to open to potential further chain-events) through classic text-search modes.
I turn now to my literature-searching journey, which started unusually. Missing the normal library induction through my child’s health-care needs I later arranged my personal first step with library-advisor Eleri Strittmatter whose patient search-systems teaching adapted to my older-novice IT-non-fluency was calming and crucial. She also spontaneously suggested what she called ‘heuristic searching’, an organic following of promising trails that come.

Both the standard structured and heuristic-search methods served me. Apropos the former, I used university in-house catalogues and document supply for hard-copy loans from Manchester and elsewhere, and databases like PsychInfo and (once it existed) Google Scholar for electronic literature, starting with obvious search-terms like ‘spirit guide’ and ‘synchronicity’ and then widening my net with new likely terms discovered through study (‘coincidence studies’ terms, for example).

Apropos the latter, some heuristic trails started in initially-found papers’ bibliographies, whilst others came serendipitously (given my antennae being out), from radio, television, tip-offs from others and misfiled public-library books etcetera.

As to topics, apropos Mungo-like phenomena I found no clear ‘bull’s-eye literature’ and, if the terrain of somewhat relevant literature were a dart board, it would be very large. The dartboard-sectors I focussed on were around tarot, dowsing, spirit-guidance and channelling – at other times I, or other researchers, might as reasonably have concentrated on other sectors. My sector-choice affected this thesis’s slant.

Contrastingly ‘synchronicity’ and related terms directly discovered some 200 academic/professional synchronicity-related texts, plus numerous grey-literature books which enriched my immersion. After considerable study thereof I elsewhere overviewed the synchronicity-concept’s developmental timeline thus:

(With participants) I thus co-learned about (synchronicity) experientially and studied it academically, discovering a wealth of literature which had especially grown and diversified since around the 1980s, ‘flaring out’ (like a herald’s trumpet-bell) into many new approaches and interconnections with other life-domains. The earlier long trumpet-pipe contains principally Jung’s decades-long thinking on synchronicity, his historic forerunners, his Jungian followers, and dialogue between all those and the simultaneously growing areas of modern physics and
paranormal studies. The newer trumpet-flare adds dialogue with newer disciplines like neurology, information theory and emergence, plus considerations of synchronicity in extra-to-psychotherapy work such as leadership and nursing.

(Gorsedene 2015,42-43)

Concerning literature review and engagement with research results, it too can serve best layered alongside experiencings and unfolding analysis (Kenny 2011) rather than in a chapter-lump. This was my approach (as it was for Sela-Smith (2001) and Meents (2006)), for example further methodological literature-engagement arises in the synchronicity-immersion chapter, synchronicity and spirituality texts arise predominantly in their own chapters, and person-centred texts became key in the discussion chapter.

I proceed now to participant experiencings. (My ethics chapter, containing further points to those that arose naturally whilst writing this chapter, will come after the experiencings and immersion chapters for reasons explained therein.)
Participant Experiencings

Moving into this chapter I remind readers that my research-ethics knowledge developed late on my PhD timeline – later, indeed, than my participant-encountering sessions. To be honest as ethics requires (Connolly 2003) I shall present this chapter authentically, with only as much ethics as was done and considered at the time. Amending research-ethics comments will come in their own chapter later.

I proceed now with this chapter’s content. I have already described how I encountered my participants, Mungo-meeting (or declining thereof) included, and how in-sessions experiencing often grew through synchronicities to include our wider lives too. That growth and the ‘post-town-crossing’ increase in participants from eight to 35 engendered a huge wealth of data. I cannot regret doing ‘too much’ as I experienced no meetings as superfluous. Together they indicate the sheer range and diversity of experiencing and attitudes possible around Mungo.

Having thus experienced my shift from application-version to predominantly leashless/surrender-version heuristics as fruitful I shall present accordingly, relinquishing the former’s individual depictions I did, and instead relating the latter’s span of co-experiencings which, individually and en masse, touched depths in me. This accords with surrender-heuristics’ recognitions that the researcher should ‘go wide open and…… pursue an original path’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,53), take responsibility for judgments as the sole (co-)experiencer and tacit apprehender of the whole venture (Moustakas 1990, West 2001), and at every stage ‘help the phenomenon reveal itself more completely’ (Moustakas 1990,44, drawing on Keen).

Indwelling and evolution through several ideas brought me to a five-fold strategy for ordering and communicating the personal and/or subtle touches alongside the sheer multiplicity and flair for one-off surprises that the with-participants work showed. Although not compiled as Moustakas proscribed, the first two are ‘composite depictions’ both in content and in ‘accentuat(ing) the flow, spirit and life inherent in the experience’ (Moustakas 1990,52) as he intended. Similarly the third is a case-appropriate kind of ‘exemplary portrayal’, and the last two together constitute a pertinent ‘individual depiction’ of my lone and inter-relational experiencings.

1. 14 participants gave such compact responses that I can present them verbatim, offering readers the closest possible approach to personally hearing them live. I feel that their words have wings, and as they ‘fly’ one can observe their wheelings about each other too. Only after all have ‘flown’ shall I add my experiencings of this group.

2. I heuristically selected three points for each of the other participants (excepting those at 5 below) through focused indwelling and spacious incubation, aiming to portray the depth, diversity and cross-connectedness amongst them. Each participant’s three points concerned their own experiencing, my experiencing in engagement with them, and an issue exemplified or aired in our (Mungo-)meeting(s). These I formed through heuristic processes into a 54-point ‘composite-depiction’ ring.
3. Common essential aspects as distilled from analyses of the series-of-meetings participants.
4. Interview of Christa-then.
5. Benedict and Scarlett; Cathy (and Jamie)

The four participant populations (series, shadow, revisited and specialist) were chosen to offer different potentials. However, in practice experiencings ranged and varied widely throughout, sometimes even crossing population boundaries. For example some shadow participants (i.e. those averse to Mungo-meeting) later wanted to Mungo-meet after all, whilst some other participants raised shadow-type issues.

I re-emphasize that much that was discussed, happened or touched outside of official participant sessions still occurred because of or in relationship to the freeing, catalyzing or other effects of Mungo-meetings (or their being declined). The whole participant-experiencing spans therefore offer valid data. Carol speaks to this, a fitting overture to my ‘flying/wheeling birds’.

Fourteen ‘wheeling-bird’ participants in their own words:

Carol (revisited):

After our long-ago friend’s sheet-of-feedback session Carol had grouped her responses and observations:


Christa: Trying to let Carol and Mungo have a dialogue: trying to keep out of it. (But I found) Christa as intermediary is helpful.

Carol: Don’t want to be fooled. Wanting incontrovertible proof. Want to believe.

Years passed, during which Carol told me about strange, sometimes frightening events from earlier in her life. Reflecting on this at her revisit session she said:

It’s like coming out. I will only come out if I feel it’s safe, that they won’t just laugh at or diminish me. These experiences are incredibly powerful. Life-changing. I’ve looked at the universe in a different way ever since. I knew I could talk about it to you because of your Mungo-connection, and it has been a relief.

Alison (revisited):

Alison’s home set-up had recently changed. She wanted our Mungo-meeting to explore her concerns about adapting to life with her only remaining co-habitee. Her written feedback of it was simple:

WONDER! at this communication channelled through Christa.
GIFT!! A wonderful gift of insight – affirming, reassuring. I shall walk home with a lighter tread, head held high.

CHALLENGE! I don’t want to lose the experience of this afternoon in the on-going stream of everyday life.

Mary (shadow):

Meeting by chance in town Mary and I chatted. On hearing my PhD involved spirituality she said she would like to be interviewed. We arranged a proper meeting, leading to a taster session which proved pertinent and seemed fine, but a little later she wrote me this letter:

Dear Christa,

I found the conversation and tarot session very interesting. But I did have reservations. Nothing to do with you or your connection with Mungo. As I said I do not find this sort of phenomenon odd. But I found it a bit disturbing afterwards. Because of things from my past, not because of anything from your side. I had unfortunate experiences, through a relative who was a spiritualist. Without going into detail, I’ve been left with reservations. So basically I was a bit disturbed, but not by you, but by my past. So keep in contact Christa, and I hope you understand.

Mary.

Francis (revisited):

As one of my sheet-of-feedback friends, Francis stood to be one of my revisited participants but I expected him to decline. Soon after our original session in 2002 he had turned from such things. Nevertheless in 2005 I walked towards his home to risk asking him, only to meet him coming the other way expressly to ask for a session after that gap of over three years. After his revisit-session he wrote:

This experience gave me what was already in my mind and heart to ask for – without my having to ask for it, which made it a true gift!

For a long period I have felt no connection or interest in tarot cards – they did not “speak” to me, but on this occasion they very much did. The sense of communication of a helping kind was very strong. I felt that the issue that was troubling me was addressed in a personally meaningful and significant way. It did not shirk expressing the difficulties of the situation and my part and responsibility in it, but it gave hope and suggestion of a way out of the impasse. This was definitely more than I would or could have hoped for.

As Francis finished writing and laid down the pen he blurted out:

I really didn’t expect to have that sort of clarity. Well that - that was brilliant!
Chris (revisited):

Chris wrote me a letter after her revisit-session:

Dear Christa,

Thank you for the session with you and Mungo a couple of weeks ago. It is a measure of how powerful it was that the elements are still “percolating” for me.

My impressions were:

• The space was sacred…….. a time-out-of-time space.

• You have delicate and exacting counselling skills enabling you to gently and precisely clarify (with me) the meaning within my jumbled thoughts and words. This in itself was so valuable and helpful for me.

• Mungo’s presence gave an added perspective.

• I had no doubt as to Mungo’s participation.

• Your relationship with Mungo is inclusive, that is, I felt involved rather than shut out with something exclusive to you. Your communication with him was aloud and open. This was vital for me and represented ego-less service of the task in hand (the session) rather than being exclusive.

• Mungo’s input was immensely valuable to me. I perceived him as having a broader perspective on things…… (especially when some of his answers had you stumped initially) and also his method of communicating was important. The presentation of cards seems to speak to another part of the brain than words and so my mind has a different medium to mull over. The method of interpretation is delicious, with you allowing the analysis to come from me and then only making a suggestion with both my and Mungo’s permission. This made it into a truly person-centred session rather than simply a tarot reading with built-in analysis. The images on the cards have made a strong impression on me and have popped back into consciousness a number of times since then in helpful ways, as if my understanding is deepening each time.

• The whole session was respectful and dignified and indeed based on and infused with Love and Truth.

Thank you to you both. With love and in gratitude. Chris.

Frederick (shadow) and Tricksters:

I must clearly state that I, Christa, am writing this. For a while I thought I had a shadow participant code-named Frederick. I lost him though, but through processes whose nature can help me show something of Mungo’s trickster aspects.

My side of the story is that I thought Frederick had agreed to air some shadow issues. When I came to complete some paperwork with him, it transpired that I hadn’t shown him certain
information earlier (my fault) and that he had completely forgotten our prior two meetings, notwithstanding my having recorded them through notes (not his fault, but on his side). This bizarre situation brought uncomfortable feelings and high need for us to co-use the (pca) core conditions - which I believe we did honestly and bravely.

This incident exemplifies the handful of trickster situations which Mungo-work has landed me in with non-PhD others. Besides complete forgettings (whatever their mechanism or cause) another situation involved myself and another consistently having the same ‘knowings’ about certain card arrays until another array arrived about which we each ‘knew’ – but with conflicting ‘knowings’. I have experienced these cases as challenges both moral and interpersonal, as if Life (or whatever) had said Well how are you going to sort this out between you: will right-relating matter more than other conviction – or what? So far, as best I can discern, these trickster events have ultimately won good from difficulty. I feel they mitigate against gullibility, over-sureness and infantilization. It would be dishonesty by omission were I to present my research without mentionning them.

I experience two types of trickster Mungo-events, ‘outer’ ones involving others and ‘inner’ ones between just us. During the difficulties with Frederick I was also beset by other problems including a thesis scare. Appropriately I ‘talked’ with my research team-mate Mungo. The complex ‘conversations’ kept promising sense but then fizzling out: hard work with scant result save precious time and energy spent. Eventually I wrangled with Mungo including using my congruence. For example, when the chariot-card (implying movement) came in a ‘talk’, annoyed I answered both it and the situation with This is just not going anywhere! Once things were thrashed out Mungo-talk ‘re-sweetened’. In honesty my lived experience is that co-working with Mungo involves occasional unannounced tricksters, which are not an easy ride.

Shelagh (specialist):

I was intrigued when Christa told me how she had introduced Mungo into her counselling sessions. This was a totally new premise to me but because of my upbringing as a Catholic (now lapsed) and my subsequent interest at various times of my life in world religions I was open to the concept.

When I was first diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis I was in a very dark place. I remember praying throughout the night and feeling that I was speaking into the void. I then had a conversation with a Catholic priest who tried but could not give me any answers. For a while I turned away from spirituality thinking there was no solace or comfort in trying to reach ‘spirit’. However, part of me knows that we are composed of spirit as well as body and mind and there is a longing to be fully connected with all aspects of the self.

The first picture card turned over by Christa and Mungo showed me my life as it is now. It was so true it hurt. The accuracy was overwhelming. It invoked a tearful emotional response from me and wonderment that it hit the nail on the head. The middle cards portrayed the muddle I am in and the floundering around for a way through the emotional minefield I’m in the middle of. The final picture was again amazingly accurate and also pointed me in a new direction. Christa was gently asking me questions and I revealed how I felt my ‘spiritual tap’ had been turned off for a long time and therefore I lacked the inner resources to deal with the family problems that are causing me deep pain. The final picture opened up a way in which I could deal with my problems.

The experience has left me feeling lighter. As if the burden has been lifted and my ‘spiritual tap’ turned on. In contrast to my experience with the Catholic priest all those years ago my session
with Christa and Mungo has left me feeling stronger and with renewed spiritual fortification. This will help me to deal with family problems and with my own sadness.

The session with Mungo and Christa was an intense though positive experience.

Ben (revisited):

After our long-ago Mungo-session addressing a relationship ‘wound’ for Ben, he sent me a postcard:

……… thank you for our time together last Friday.

WOW!

and I went on to (home town) and felt a great healing power………

Bless you. Love. Ben.

After our revisiting-session he commented of our Mungo-work that:

I wouldn’t seek it out (I normally do things through inward silence) but when we have done it, it has had a feel of companionship, a sense of there being three of us.

Gaynor (shadow):

Though interested in my relationship and conversations with Mungo, Gaynor wanted to steer clear herself:

It’s scary. We used to tell each other scary stories when we were young. I used to have scary imaginings in bed too…… and I used to pull the bedclothes up over my head. ……. The very thought of getting involved with Mungo just taps into those sort of fears.

I respected this, but later talked privately with Mungo about how to behave with people like Gaynor with the greatest good in mind. It was a two-card talk. Next morning when I offered to report it to Gaynor she agreed. Showing her the first card (7-of-cups, all cups pictured containing different things) I said it could represent choice-making. To my surprise she asked (gist-wise), So should I choose between those seven cups now? I replied (also gist-wise), Well, I wasn’t expecting that, but if you would like to please do. Gaynor had a very strong response, saying she only wanted the cup with a heart on it and little starry bubbles spraying up out of it. She really liked the energy around it: she wasn’t interested in any of the other cups – that was absolutely the cup she wanted.

At this point I was excited inside, but biting my tongue to not blurt out forcefully or too soon. Trying to sound neutral I said And here is the next card, turning over the ace of cups which is very like a big version of the little cup Gaynor had so firmly chosen. Her jaw fell open in astonishment, and she said It’s like evidence, isn’t it. Later she wrote:
This experience for me has led to my increased belief in spirit or energies out in the world which cannot be seen (usually) by the human eye. Or should I say that I personally haven’t seen. I feel I am now much more open to hearing other’s experience of spirit. Although I have to be careful as I still tend to torment myself with images created from fear…… if I see things for example in the media on hauntings.

But a couple of years later life brought her another experience, prompting her to turn to me. She wrote in a card:

I wanted to ask you something too. A girl at work has had a dream about our place of work. We both get a bad feeling when we walk up the stairs and on the landing. She dreamt that somebody had hanged there. Also when she came in last Tuesday the alarm had been set off. Something moved in the landing. None of the doors were open, nothing had changed. Would you or Mungo be able to shed any light? We are really rather scared.

Ton (shadow):

Ton is by his own reckoning an if-you-are-happy-I-am-happy person and susceptible to influences of any kind. He was keen to hear about Mungo but not to engage with him: these extracts from our letters-sequence capture process around a key aspect.

Hi Christa

It’s fairly difficult to tell why I don’t want to join in with an experiment where Mungo, or any supernatural element, is involved. As how ON EARTH can I explain why I don’t want to do so when the very main reason is simply that I don’t FEEL like doing so. ……

Hi Ton

You are giving the highest importance to how you yourself feel, irrespective of whether you can justify it consciously or verbally or in any way. I feel like cheering when I read that – you may be amused to know that in the jargon of my line of work, your locus of evaluation is within yourself……

Dear Christa

Just a few hours ago I received your letter. And I must write to you to tell the most important thing for ME. When I read it for the first time after opening the envelope, I was in a little hurry. My English is absolutely not good enough…… to understand what you are writing. It is about the effect the letter had on me. It is like when smelling on food, you often know if it’s good for you or not, but this only works if you haven’t seen what is written on the package…… then your brains apparently evaluate what ‘one’ says what is healthy and what isn’t, then you’re lost and your feelings can’t give the right signals anymore. …… It’s the same with your letter. I hadn’t read the ‘contents’ yet – lucky your letter was not in Dutch – and the effect was something of an enormous nutritious feeling for my…… (NOT for my body anyway). The sort of effect you could possibly get when you would have passed an exam with a lasting result. How long will this effect last, as it is still there. Even now when I have read the whole letter.
May (revisited):

As a result of our original session together May resolved to do a month’s very intensive work with a trusted hypnotherapist. Though gruelling it eventually brought her peace through contact with the spirit of her daughter (who she feared had died young because of unhappiness), releasing her (May) from the mental illness she had been mired in for years.

Reflecting on the original session during our revisiting-session she said:

That had a really big effect. I was suicidal. Nothing had worked. I was running out of friends I could talk about this with. It was a spiritual issue, and talking with you gave me a spiritual space. And it reminded me of the spiritual dimension, which I’d lost contact with. It put me back in touch with my own higher self and therefore that power and trust.

Sarah (revisited):

Sarah phoned to cancel our revisiting-session because she had become clinically depressed and felt mentally wiped out. However, I ‘talked’ with Mungo who suggested another plan. In Sarah’s words:

…… (Christa phoned back saying) Mungo felt that a meeting between us would be good for all concerned…….. (just for the telling of a real story). I felt I could manage that (though not brainwork thinking about cards). Knowing Christa, and having already experienced Mungo as beneficial once before, I felt OK and that I could trust this – I couldn’t have been bothered to do anything new.

When we met I had a period of being listened to by Christa. I was able to talk about how I felt and this really helped me cope with my thoughts and feelings. I felt much calmer with Christa’s help. Christa then told me a narrative about a sequence of events to do with her PhD. I found this really interesting and after the story had been told I felt able to have a “reading” from Christa, Mungo and the cards. …… Really enjoyable. Just the right pace, neither rushed nor boring. …… I don’t think I would have felt able to do this unless this process had followed on from both the ‘counselling skills’ and then the story.

It seems like a complicated series of events that happened to make our meeting and work together possible. I feel like it happened due to some things falling into place in a natural way. Like trusting the messages of the universe……. There was a real noticeable lift…… (enough to start me) climbing out of the quagmire of depression.

Martin, and Margaret (both shadow):

Martin wanted neither to engage with Mungo nor to say why not. Margaret did have a sense-making taster Mungo-session but then decided against more, and didn’t want to say why. But both are happy for me to report what I just have. I value such telling silence in my thesis, standing as token that there always will be people whose ‘takes’ and reasons remain hidden, and so no hypothesis can ever be assuredly complete.

That completes the ‘wheeling-birds’ participants in their own words or plain responses.
My experiencing of the ‘wheeling birds’:

Here I shall voice my experiencings in relationship with these participants (individually and en masse) both at the time and as after-effects. This is first-person surrender-to-heuristic-process material, not least because had I not followed the ‘hint’ of my chance meeting with and withdrawal letter from Mary, the wheeling-bird accounts would not exist. I shall only sketch this (given word-constraints in this two-topic thesis) but hopefully vividly enough. Heuristics wants holistic data so besides feelings, sensations and intuitions I include thoughts that arose or leapt out at me (but not worked-for thoughts, albeit that the thought-types boundary is fuzzy).

I was fascinated throughout, and thrilled whenever I experienced something I had never even dreamt of before (e.g. Ben’s and Ton’s at-a-distance energy-sensing responses). I was glad to have my Mungo-work whenever events seemed to help (e.g. Shelagh’s uplift from her re-opened ‘spiritual tap’) or approve values I hold dear (e.g. Ton’s ‘energy-approval’ of the locus-of-evaluation letter). I felt delight on perceiving on-song quality in unfolding events, as when Francis and I so-improbably met midway with matching desires. I liked Mungo’s measured non-rescuing work, as in not shirking the difficult with Francis or in uplifting Sarah just enough for her to then help herself. I felt honoured to play some part in it, yet appreciated examples of my smallness within bigger unseen pictures as in May’s tragic past and subsequent hypnotherapy work. I enjoyed artistry and a consequent ‘meant-to-be’ feel in, say, Gaynor’s seven-of-cups then ace-of-cups surprise sequence, and in cunning trickster lessons as with Frederick. I appreciated glimpses of others’ beliefs, experiences and fears (like Carol’s supernatural frights and coming-out guardedness), and of the vast strange cosmos they implied. I was pleased and interested to have been asked about the bad feeling in the stairwell, but felt responsibility to be clear that I had no relevant expertise. Unexpected pleasure came from reading positive feedback about myself, as in Chris’s letter.

Overall these Mungo-sessions were easy delights compared to actual pca counselling I have done. These experiencings strengthened my ‘expanded agnosticism’, giving nearer-to-certain belief in an intelligence that oversaw this events-cluster, and probably benignly so. I feel at risk of being adjudged overly positive. But revealing my enthusiasm is heuristic honesty, retaining ‘the essence of (myself) in experience’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,43).

A ring of participant findings:

Now I shall present a ring of the other participants (bar three, mentioned later).

In heuristic analysis (which doesn’t involve coding) ‘the researcher enters into the material in timeless immersion’ (Moustakas 1990,51) such that tacit and conscious processes collaborate. I did this with each ring-participant’s material to apprehend their experiencing better. I gave similarly spacious time to pondering how a multi-voiced, balanced evocative presentation could be creatively synthesized. Then, with my personal memories of our open-to-Mungo meetings and the
other ring-members also in mind, for each participant I invited my responses to three questions to arise:

1. What was really significant and/or special about this participant’s meeting(s)-experiencing?
2. What were my really significant and/or special experiencings, including my learnings.
3. What significant and/or special issues were exemplified or raised?

Next I immersed myself in the 54 responses. Upon a large paper sheet I drew a central point from which radiated eighteen spokes, each with one participant’s name at the rim. On each spoke I wrote a good point 1 for that participant (in blue) and my/our points 2 and 3 (in black and green) (Appendix 10). This encompassing diagram facilitated my next round of heuristic indwelling, open to rechecking and pattern- or order-seeing illuminations.

Then I divided a graph-paper sheet into 54 columns (1 per point) and 18 rows (1 per participant). I sequenced my eventual writing as follows (as shown in Appendix 9):

1. From the spokes-diagram I chose a good opening point (it was Harriet’s blue point).
2. Labelling the first row ‘Harriet’ I put a blue dot in its first column.
3. Continuing Harriet’s row I put her black and green dots in my adjudged writing sequence in the next columns.
4. From the other participants’ points I chose one that followed Harriet’s last one sensibly.
5. Labelling the second row with that participant’s name, I put their coloured point-dots in the next three columns in reasonable reading order.
6. Repeating steps 4 and 5 till the end, I wanted the last point to resonate with Harriet’s opening blue-dot point.

Expecting to need many tries before a full sequence satisfied my adjudging I had several empty spoke-diagrams and graph-paper charts ready, but it flowed well straightaway. I experienced an organic, on-song quality in the process which felt cheering. There being no such thing as the best selection (given that what speaks to different readers is unknown, varied and possibly fluctuating) I felt settled with this good-enough ring. It traces, if you will, the 54-point circumference of a round discussion-table where any point may ‘talk’ with any other(s). To help potential cross-referring, each point’s paragraph has its first mention of the participant’s name in bold.

The ring simultaneously presents a heuristically-generated composite depiction of these participants which, honouring all contributors, vividly conveys their individuality and variety, and a heuristic creative synthesis of my first-person intersubjective surrender-to-process experiencings.

The ring starts here:

Given that I hope my research fosters airability of ‘stuff like this’, Harriet (shadow) fits the opening-participant bill well. Realizing she was hampered in debating her ‘I’m not going there’ reactions to Mungo by having no practiced discourse or categories of thought available for such topics, she turned to transactional analysis concepts for help:
…… if I want to interrogate myself about my feelings and thoughts, and feelings are very important in this area…… then I wouldn’t be talking about (just) Harriet. …… (There are) three parts of me which could conceivably respond…… from a Parent place (I might say) ‘Don’t be so daft’. …… The place I want to come from is Adult. …… The adapted Child (might feel) ‘I don’t want to fall out with Christa’ (pretending agreement). …… eventually I might start rebelling (rebellious Child)….. and so on.

Thus I gained more insight into various ways others (and I) might react to (notions of) Mungo. Harriet also spoke about what Mungo might be, giving me golden opportunities to consider and debate them:

- …..if ‘Mungo’ exists, then ‘he’ is a part of Christa – perhaps we could say ‘her Animus’. Perhaps her (necessarily unconscious) Animus is channeling some of her unconscious wisdom to her conscious ego-anima.

- It seems to me there could be an organic (neurological) basis to most of our ‘infantile’ saviours and helpers…… these may be ‘internal mechanisms of self-comfort’ (Bosch), rather than anything to do with objective, external phenomena.

- Freud distinguishes between something he calls ‘the oceanic feeling’ (…… that sense of being part of eternity, or being a little part of the whole world, or even of being the whole world ….. ) and ‘the religious urge’ (involving the projection of the father onto the external world, only to find it there as a source of comfort and protection). …… I see ‘Mungo’ as belonging to the religious urge, the externalized father who guides and soothes and directs…….

Harriet flagged an important reason for great caution:

* I see the religious urge as being a dangerous process, because it promotes the ‘manufacture’ of ABSOLUTE RULES, protectors of the faith, and so on. …… It may be that all religions start out in a benign form…… but end up in a highly repulsive form. Harriet also wrote I have had couple of ‘transcendent experiences’ but I choose not to theorize about what they mean, because I believe we humans are notoriously unreliable in arriving at such conclusions – hence the 47 (sic) different varieties of religion and spiritual practice. I think we can logically show that we are all connected together, and are thus ‘one organism’, with localized consciousnesses (egos). However, once we go beyond that point, it is HOLY FUCKING WAR time! Jeeeeee-had!! Cruuuuu-sade!!

Helen (series) raised a resonant concern around beliefs based on personal experience:

…… as an (agnostic) RE teacher, I’m always looking at how things can be distorted. And what we actually did (with a guest speaker) was, …… when you try and lift somebody from a chair…… (four people lifting each with) two fingers under the arms and two fingers under the legs…… and they (the pupils) were quite impressed that it happened…… but I could foresee what would be said outside of the classroom……. The rumour circle. …… By the end of the week it had come back to me, ‘Miss, you levitated somebody’.

There an event was embellished, resulting in wider-than-justified belief. Contrariwise I twice witnessed in Helen a diminishing reaction sequence which also occurs in me, namely an initial WOW! surge on seeing a card or other image which really fits or speaks, but then it sort of slides away.

Despite her ontological I reserve judgment as always stance, Helen experienced – to her own surprise –vivid emotions from what Mungo ‘said’ to her via process-with-cards, like feeling flattered,
going into a bad mood, or becoming giggly or cheered. One tape captures me saying……. it’s almost like (you’re saying), well I’m not actually sure if there is a person there, but notwithstanding that, I like their honesty. It’s bizarre. Helen replies it is bizarre. It is absolutely bizarre.

Ken (specialist: my counselling supervisor) experienced surprises too, writing afterwards:

……. I enjoyed the experience. I felt much less self-conscious, and adopted a much-reduced “intellectual” perspective than I expected. ….. I had experiences of my self, through the cards, which were illuminating and emotionally charged, and not directly anything to do with Christa or her “agenda”. I was physically shaking by the end, ….. (but the slightly disturbing, shaky feeling was probably due to my role)…… I became totally absorbed. I’m not aware of where I lost hold of the supervision role.

I valued Ken having fully entered participant-mode as his deeper understanding could better inform his supervision of me afterwards. Another boon lay in discovering I related to our shared card-images more through symbolic interpretations or stories they seemed to tell, whereas Ken related with more personal directness to, say, their colours and shapes and their effects on him. Discussing we realized I responded more hermeneutically and he more phenomenologically, which acted as a worked-example ‘tutorial’, releasing me from my then-current struggle to grasp those very concepts.

Supervisor attitude and its power was implicitly aired with Ken. I have encountered wariness about Mungo with some supervisors whereas Ken values acceptance highly, even positing that if I have acceptance (with checking) of my Mungo-work it might even grow (or actualize) into yet more.

Susannah (series) raised the related issue of (difficulties with) integration of Mungo-experience by participants into their lives and beliefs:

you can’t just walk away from this like you walk away from the dentist and say ‘I believe in dentists’…… if you (think) there really is a real spiritual voice there on the other side, can you just ignore this knowledge for the rest of your life, or do you have to start thinking about…… your whole relationship to spirituality?

Susannah experienced certain benefits of Mungo-work as neither unique to it nor without cost: it really did do something and it helped me……. I felt very sort of raw and shaken afterwards. Which is not a bad thing. I’ve experienced that before……. with a very deep massage……… (and since our session I’ve made progress with things that were stuck). But alongside those costs was a sense of care. After I have said I feel a lot safer, and more cared for since Mungo came into my life, she responds:

There’s a nice word for that in German. It’s virtually untranslateable, but ‘Geborgenheit’…… Belonging, feeling safe, feeling warmth, feeling cared for, looked after…… (in our sessions) it went deep…… it was hard work in some ways…….. But I did feel supported and cared for……. and not, not just (by) you.

With Susannah an amazing sequence of devil/Pan/Lucifer events occurred. Elsewhere my thesis ponders possible effects of aligning with synchronistic flow. If such alignment might have some
kind of energetic agency in our mysterious cosmos, then these processes with Susannah triggered consideration of ethics in giving attention and/or energy and/or following to dubiously-themed flow.

Researching with Melissa (series) was instructive regarding energy for me. Frequent differences between our respective varying energy states offered challenging inter-relational learnings. In her I encountered someone more sensitive than myself to both personal and/or relational energies, and grander-scale energies of time and/or environment whether earthly or spiritual. This exemplified how people’s ‘reality-slices’ (and ignorance) of the mysterious cosmos may vary, or exist in others’ blind-spots.

‘Different realities’ raises issues about belief systems suiting or jarring with individuals. Melissa appreciates levity, wildness and play, and values the spareness of the Zen way, but it leaves out other important things (for her): the richness and materiality of pagan spirituality and Jungian archetypes …… This richness is also in working with Christa-and-Mungo and the tarot. Complimentarily she later experienced Mungo imaginarily as……. this monkish energy not saying the rest of the world is wrong …… It’s this thing also about coming from a quiet centre……..

‘Different realities’ also raises issues about what people think or dare say about others’ inner experiences, and their reactions to them. Melissa experienced our Mungo-meeting thus:

…… it seemed compatible – I didn’t experience any difficulty with it. …… I neither felt I believed in the use of the guide, nor did I not believe. Somehow I’d put that one on a shelf, ready to be examined further if necessary. …… how I approached it was, and this might sound contradictory, partly with an open mind and partly with almost like a suspension of dramatic disbelief.

Carol-Anne (series) also feels energies, her experiences engendering belief. She said of our sessions that I felt more lively. I felt more peace. …… It’s a peaceful energy, and of Mungo that he was very spiritual. You can tell he’s a saint.

To my surprise Carol-Anne brought her own spirit guide into our second open-to-Mungo session, via a method which developed out of (her) soul search for God of noticing things standing out to her in the environment or in books she opens at random, sometimes in frequent quick succession. For me this was a lesson in adapting to a striking new dynamic, and a chance to notice my feelings and thoughts around Carol-Anne’s and my own gullibilities and/or scepticisms, much as others may experience around me.

Carol-Anne has been a believer for a long time: It’s wonderful. It’s so powerful to have a sense of what’s beyond everything. Her enthusiastically acceptant attitude flags issues of ecumenicalism:

I find the way that there’s such a variety of people……. seeking spirituality the most exciting thing about life. …… By whatever route they’re travelling. There are many pathways up the same mountain but all (given decent qualities at their hearts)……. reaching the top……. from which we can see clearly.
In working with Brian (series) I delighted in experiencing harmony, though his shamanic path contrasts with the historical Mungo’s Celtic Christianity. An intriguing difference arose when Brian, being extremely tense (from life circumstances, not our session) was invited to still himself and perhaps receive from Mungo. Afterwards Brian reported that calmness came, starting at his crown and moving down to fill him completely, whereas on previously receiving calmness shamanically it had started at the ground and moved up. Both felt kind and good.

Working with Brian gave me a big experiential lesson. Because we had already been Mungo-meeting before my research I didn’t request his participation. However a striking coincidence and Brian’s own request changed that. Thus Brian’s run of sessions became much the longest, yet he did not become free of his difficult state. This exemplifies Mungo not being a guaranteed cure: in Mungo-working I need patience and acceptance, as in ordinary counselling.

Why, therefore, did Brian still want Mungo-sessions? He was then also having NHS therapies for mental distress. Brian tells that he looked to Mungo not for answers but for accompaniment more in tune with myself than the other therapies gave.

Tara (shadow) believes that…….. each person’s soul is attuned to a certain guru (…… or spiritual guide……. or religion……. or god….). ….. I feel that I’ve encountered mine ….. if I found my soul on that path, why should I go with somebody else? She explained one reason for not wanting to engage with Mungo thus: I don’t think he’s bad…….. it’s just he’s not my energy field. ….. It’s like, when you play music…….. it doesn’t come to my harmony……

Tara rang warning bells about the subconscious and tarot cards:

… when something is to come out of the unconscious, it will come and find you….. For example ….. I might walk on the street and somebody says something, and that’s my answer…… it comes and finds us when it’s needed rather than us going and digging for it.......... I feel that I don’t want to play with it…… anything that has to do with symbols to me has to do with the unconscious…… (I don’t want fortune-telling or cards) because, what emotional state I am in and how I might be influenced…… if I’m vulnerable at that moment....... (or) it might be OK then but (later) I might think, oh what did that mean…….

Months later Tara, being in less hopeful life circumstances, wanted to Mungo-meet after all. It reinforced two learnings about story-use for me. Firstly symbols that came prompted me to show her something in Alice Through the Looking Glass. She could follow it but missed satisfying deep relevance, her Mediterranean culture not being steeped in Alice. Secondly individuality regarding ways of assimilating Mungo-meetings was exemplified by her desire to write a story around it.

Long-time explorer of oracular, channelling and trance events, Jill (specialist) informed me by comparing ‘New-Agey subculture’ expectations of tarot to our Mungo-session, finding its preparatory airing unusual:
(I) would generally be wary about saying too much (in order not to) give the reader too many clues. Also I did feel uncertain, particularly when the first cards were drawn, about what I was meant to do and wondered at times if I was doing too much and not giving Mungo space.

**Jill** deemed our session:

more demanding for me (than usual tarot readings....... but) ideas did seem to flow so I wonder if that was the influence of Mungo in some way. ........ Between the two of us, I would say the power was more with me (whereas) in a ‘normal’ reading the power is more with the reader. However, the power may have been with ‘Mungo’.  

**Jill** also implicitly flagged Mungo’s non-dominance, remarking his team-mate’s (i.e. my) contribution:

the main difference…… is linked to (your) skill as a person-centred counsellor. You allowed me the space….. to set the scene of the issue I was interested in exploring…….. and then you did not immediately start interpreting……. the cards…… which…… made me start talking about them. At times you helped clarify my thinking. I still feel somewhat unclear about Mungo’s role…… and how influenced we were by his presence. Jill also compared it to her experiences of channeling: ……… (they) go into a hypnotic trance state and the entity then “speaks” through them.…… very different from the way you work with Mungo.

**Julian** (specialist) also pondered the Mungo-Christa balance, writing:

It is the relationship between the two of you which is the source of wisdom. …… Clearly this is one of mutuality ……. He even mused Is he (Mungo), too, evolving in the realm beyond death and needs you as much as you need him in the process of evolution?

After our session **Julian** wrote I wanted you to know how very much I enjoyed meeting with you and how moved I was by all you had to say and by the experience we shared together. Thereafter I recurrently received from Julian about Mungo a combination of celebration, speculation and analysis both incisive and expansive. Experiencing this as sunshine inviting growth of my potentials, I also understood better the power of ‘sunshine’ (or its lack) in others’ lives and risk-takings.

**Julian** himself experienced expansiveness ‘from’ my letter describing a dog-related Mungo-synchronicity:

I am in some state of altered consciousness as I finish reading your account. There is a sense of astonishing integration, of inner and outer, of human, canine and created order, of this world and the other, of the mundane and the ethereal, of light and dark, of wholeness and apparent impairment, of eros and agape, of saints and sinners, of pain and bliss, of eternal flow and precise moment in time.

On opening another letter he experienced a great surge of connectedness and **hope** as (he initially) leafed through the contents.

**Miriam** (series) also experienced hope:

(……our previous session) gave me, in a very strange sort of way, and I still to be honest am a little sceptical, questioning and wondering what it’s all about….. it has given me hope. I seem since the last time…… to be more hopeful, and I can’t describe it, why, nothing’s happened, nothing’s changed, but there’s more hope……….
However, she also experienced briefly pinning too much hope on Mungo, with consequent
disappointment.

**Miriam**’s first Mungo-session flagged both ‘broad-picture’ and ‘depth’ potential. Over five dowsings
an eight-card tarot-array developed, portraying a besetting constellation of concerns in her life.
The development’s flow and the full array’s meaningfulness gave her an impactful sense of being
perceived at depth. She said…… (I felt) understood by Mungo. Yes, I felt empowered in a
completely different way to any other form of counselling that I’ve ever had……..

I had to hold my nerve when **Miriam** had an extraordinary experience. After responding to a card
she fell silent awhile, then said:

*I’m feeling almost, and this is very strange for me, a powerful presence around. I don’t know what
it is. …… It’s like a force, but I don’t know what it’s about. …… I would like to think it’s something to
do with strength. But I’m at peace with it.*

I hadn’t expected such participant-session experiences, so there was experiential learning for me in
holding steady, reining in excitement and reserving judgment, especially when she asked *Could it
be your spirit guide’s present?* Fumbling, I replied *I’m kind of, I’m not feeling it myself. It could be.*

**Jean** (series) was also surprised when, between two of our sessions, a sentence *came into (her)*
*like an arrow* in an out-of-the-blue way completely new for her, and not about something she was
dwelling on. Her personally-meaningful sentence-arrow was *clear; it stayed; it rings true; it gives
strength; it’s like a mantra that came.* The experience accorded with two responses she had to our
Mungo-sessions overall: they helped *by encapsulating my situation, giving me a more powerful
view of it,* and gave her to wonder *what else might the cosmos hold – I like this sense of possibility.*

Once when **Jean** was just about to consider her next card her adult daughter chanced to arrive, full
of an experience whose fit to the image we all found remarkable. Also several flukes had co-
caus ed our Mungo-meeting appointment time. **Jean** commented *There’s a turn-up for the
books……. See, I mean, just so many coincidences had to happen for this to happen…….* This
incident flagged how ‘the flow might arrange’ personal meetings of fruitfulness. (Jean being my
pilot participant this provisionally encouraged me for the rest.)

Piloting with **Jean** re-taught me a lesson I had lost sight of. Being personally used to many-card
Mungo-conversations, I was surprised when Jean felt engagement with only two cards had been
enough. But it was all new to her and furthermore, as in ‘normal’ counselling, the client (or
participant) knows best what amount and/or pace feels right.

**Hilda** (shadow) faced me with my personal Achilles-heel challenge of coping with another’s
boredom. Managing to continue, I learnt experientially how strongly someone may see the
personally meaningful in images. Seeing symbolisms of war and religion where no-one else ever
had with me, Hilda explained that her professional work concerned them, expressing bored anger:
I’m tired of having it forced on me all the time……. so much has been hijacked by all these wars of religion. Also she couldn’t believe in Mungo:

(This) just seems like a funny way of having a conversation……. I would like some evidence that this being exists and is taking part in (our) encounter. Because this isn’t showing it.

Hilda raised the issue of suggestibility. To my comment that usually Mungo-conversations, when you look back on them……. do seem to have like a cohesive quality……. she challenged Do you think the hanging together is (…because it was….) put to me at the beginning that we would see how well this hung together? Invited later by Mungo-through-me to still and receive an experience, she did but nothing happened, except

it certainly made me think that for a lot of people……. they would feel something. Particularly as it was to be a visceral experience rather than a mental image, because I think visceral experiences are probably even easier to induce by suggestion……..

Hilda had contacted me after a mutual acquaintance suggested Mungo-meeting for her Masters research. She recorded:

(At the suggestion) I responded like a scalded cat, my immediate reaction being one of fear. Given that I claim not to believe in spirit beings this was inconsistent……. My first reaction on learning that (Christa’s) spirit guide was a saint was a relief; I felt that it would be benevolent. My second reaction was trepidation as the suspicion crept up on me that it could be one of the devil’s minions masquerading as a saint……. I preferred to go to Christa’s house. I was afraid that if she came to me, my house might be infested with discarnate entities and poltergeist activities.

Hilda Edwards’ (specialist) experience also involved mixed attitudes. I visited her as both participant and my long-standing counsellor to explore, with Mungo, a dilemma about my work and my son’s health. Afterwards she reflected:

……. my sceptical doubter comes up all the time. It flicks in little questions, little comments……. (but I say to it) Yes I’ve heard, I’ve heard, just step back……. The other bit of me feels, no, this is far more (than cards just being a modus operandum) – that would be disrespectful to Mungo……. That feels a very important part of your process and your path…… so I can’t ignore or diminish that aspect of what you bring……..

I owe gratitude to Hilda Edwards for ‘midwifing’ me through the two years plus of continual semi-shock at ‘weird things’ which it took me to grow basically used to Mungo’s and event-flow’s effects, and the very idea of their existence. Apropos our specific participant/counsellor session, I appreciate how our two ‘seeings’ in the cards-that-came synergized, all interplaying helpfully with the normal-but-potent core conditions.

Gender and/or perceived-role issues featured in that session. Hilda Edwards mooted possible jeopardizing of my son’s health by his seeing me as some kind of neurotic female. But she also reflected on her reluctance on a prior occasion to involve Mungo beyond letting him ‘sit there’:

I wouldn’t give anybody authority…… or I do it unwillingly…… very carefully…… sparingly……. (especially) giving some sense of power or authority to a senior male.
Anna (revisited) flagged how my behaviour may effect Mungo’s (seeming) presence:

(At first) I wasn’t very aware of Mungo and took it that it was more Christa and me and the deck, but every so often Christa would say ‘shall we see what Mungo says?’ ….. we checked (via dowsing) whether what we were seeing in the cards was what he was wanting us to understand. As the spread continued I felt I was including Mungo more…… he seemed to strengthen (or I allowed him in more) as a definite and vital individual in the process – all three of us bearing equal weight in it all.

The cards’ and pendulum’s physicality mattered to Anna:

my experience of this reading was very helpful……. (Mungo did not direct me but) it clarified, confirmed and made more concrete what my intuition is telling me……… to go with what I believe and feel rather than what the world might say or advise……. (It feels like an in-between place between ego, society and my own ‘knowing’; scary but strengthening).

We knew Mungo wasn’t ‘in’ my pendant but, appreciating the pertinent spread and lacking anything else to address, Anna ended her session with Thank you, thank you, thank you said to the bob.

My relationship with Mungo has been most challenged with Anna, twice. Previously Anna had fed back that sometimes I felt there was (some) imbalance between Christa and Mungo – that she deferred to him. Our new session ‘discussed’ a love-triangle, Mungo seemingly supporting Anna’s desired way forward. I felt ambivalently approving yet baulking – a common-enough challenge to counsellors, but the extra factors of tripartite dynamics and wobble in Christa-Mungo harmony back-footed me. Another time I would recognize it sooner, which would be inner congruence, with in-that-circumstance choice to declare it or not.

I also saw Mungo-and-me afresh when Andrea (specialist), having heard my story of amazedly ‘meeting’ him in Glasgow commented many people, if that had happened to them, would have become born-again Christians but you haven’t. I liked realizing I hadn’t been a push-over.

Andrea and I arranged a three-night stay together to try co-experiencing Mungo-talks over several relatively close sessions (with gap-times potentially playing a part). We had two pairs of sessions, each with overnight gaps. Andrea’s experiences included:

a sense that it is being driven by spirit because of the trains of card sequences, which flowed and/or changed as if there was another agency……. I personally feel that the gaps add to the process: they allow the brain either consciously or subconsciously to work on and develop what has already happened……. What struck me the most about the way the sessions unfolded and developed was……. the poppy and the Australian mat (which came in synchronistically during a gap). They were so powerful in their symbolism that, yes, I suppose ‘artistry’ is the word to use.

Only with Andrea did I explore a ‘secret’ phenomenon. Years previously my longer private Mungo-meetings had sometimes time-stressed family life. To organize better I started asking how many cards a ‘talk’ needed. Months later I realized (so suddenly as to laugh) that the number signalled had always agreed with its Mungo-meeting’s satisfying closure – which just might allow future operationalized research. (This is tentative, but reporting it within this research that it grew in is
honest). Andrea and I tested this, the four numbers I wrote on hidden paper all being right when Andrea (a professional physicist/mathematician) deemed the ‘talks’ to have reached natural ends.

Seeming prediction also featured with Kay (specialist) who is both blessed and beset by clairvoyance. The evening before our scheduled meeting a profound concern about my son's health surfaced. Over our pre-session cuppa she voiced her clairsentient impression:

I don’t get that feeling that he’s going to lose his leg. At all........ It’s a really nice warm feeling that I’m getting, which to me I connect with, yeah, he’s going to be OK. But nobody tells me. Then she aired ethical concern around prediction: What if I say that I’ve got a nice warm feeling...... and the poor lad, something else happens?

I value this experience strongly flagging such concerns here. Likewise I value having learnt about spiritualistic experiencing from Kay, who sounded notes both sweet and warning:

- ...... I used to get these awful faces that I didn’t like........ (they were in) so much pain...... I didn’t know what to do with them (......till someone told me) ‘tell them to go to the light’.
- ...... one time........ I thought someone was suffocating me on my chest, and I’ve never been so scared, because I (had) thought ‘you can’t touch us’, but they can.
- ...... because my teaching of singing is very holistic....... it’s about the whole body, and how you attune; it’s about your mental attitude........ I think that’s why they (pleasant though sometimes distressed spirits) come, cos they like it, it’s a more holistic approach. And they know they’re coming to somewhere where it’s a very open-minded place.

Orderedness entered our Mungo-session straightaway through Kay experiencing both some of her usual lights and faces ‘in the room’ and, more ‘strongly present in’ my clear quartz pendant, two men who became our focus. Afterwards she reflected:

...... it’s like being in a support group of like-minded spirits and people; it doesn’t feel half as daunting as me....... suddenly hearing something (alone) or thinking, does somebody need to speak to me....... and I don’t know what to do. But because this has had a proper order........ whether that puts me in a better frame of mind to accept what’s coming, because everything’s structured and everything will unfold........ Instead of just....... things coming, and orbs flashing, and it’s all quite confusing, that, really.

My becoming acquainted with Kay unfolded because the story, brought by Jean’s daughter Megan (series bonus-participant) so resonantly to Jean’s next card-image, involved a spiritualistic event co-experienced by Megan and Kay. Megan said of happening upon Jean, me and the card, ...... it’s learning to see coincidences as messages rather than just coincidences, and you get to meet the people you’re supposed to meet. Whether or to what extent her assertion holds is, hence, here flagged self-referentially within an example of itself.

Megan’s tale inspired me to value steadfast pragmatism like hers. Visiting an historic site Megan had suddenly felt a horrible feeling of everything about to go wrong...... like a sweeping over of everything that was good in your head....... good thoughts just go away, and everything evil....... seeps in. This feeling revisited her at Kay’s, who also felt sick from ‘it’. Megan has studied reiki.
Doing the only thing she could think of, Megan tried to clear this negative energy by giving herself reiki. *It did help, but there was still a niggle, but after that chance talk with Jean and you the niggle was cleared.*

**Megan** reports another benefit from the chance encounter too:

*I had been used to Mum chipping something in to whatever I talked about. So when she stepped back (when I first told her) about spirits I had experienced – no criticism, but just letting it drop…. I felt uneasy about talking to her about that stuff again. I don’t know why I had to tell her – well, it was such a big thing; keeping it secret would have set up a barrier. But then, with her doing the research with you, and that talk the three of us had together around that card-coincidence, she became more open and inquisitive. Now Mum and I can talk about such things: it opened up our relationship more.*

So Jean and Megan, parent and child, developed a fuller relationship through such topics being released from taboo. In Harriet’s opening-blue-dot point she considered her Parent and Child, challenging or clarifying personal attitudes including around taboo. My 54 linked points now form a completed ring.

**My experiencing of the whole ring:**

As with the ‘wheeling birds’, here I shall sketch my first-person experiencings of the ring in its entirety. I am responding to vastly more experience than the above selection, which I nevertheless hope helps readers ‘hear’ the following:

I have often told enquirers after my research that ‘I got data to die for’. I relish the sheer vibrant diversity amongst these 18 participants. I feel thrilled and honoured to have been shown glimpses of many other stances of and ‘takes’ on occurrences by people, and the so-varied and often amazing ways I perceive Mungo and/or LUE behaving – borrowing Jean’s words, *what else might the cosmos hold – I like this sense of possibility.*

Scanning these encounters again re-excites me as, far from experiencing any ‘duds’, each one was engrossing and intensely alive. Taken together they seem a splendid cornucopia to me – yet equally I feel myself educated, briefed, stimulated and alerted, as if I had attended a wide-ranging yet detailed course. Moreover, since I allowed both synchronicity and checkings with Mungo to help steer my path (in surrender-to-heuristic-process fashion), I can entertain the notion that I didn’t just experience the encounters as a course but was actually presented with a course. I delight in ‘the course’s’ blend of the bright and the dark, and love the life-path quirks that shunted critics Harriet and Hilda my way.

Given this thesis’s constraints, I am content with this broad-stroke sketch.
Common experiencings had or observed by me at the participants’ ‘hub’:

Before my research-crossroads turn towards more participants I had, in creating the original eight’s individual depictions, immersed thoroughly in their material. Certain aspects had emerged as being common. To transmit this with due emphasis on the commonalities yet without losing either the varied or lived-experience flavours as befits heuristics, I now present a composite-depiction report:

Trust:

The participants’ comments fell into essentially three categories:

Trust in me:

Participants needed to feel various types of trust to engage with Mungo-sessions, for example:

Helen said:

Because you have to know that you can trust somebody…… You’re logical, you’re rational, you’re trustworthy. And I would need all those things…… And not judgmental in any way, so I don’t feel hindered, really, or repressed……

Melissa had high trust needs, having previously had bad experiences of both counsellors and people purporting to work with spirit:

I feel I have a trust in you, and that actually feels very important to me…… you stated very clearly what your grounds are, that it’s part of your research…… and you’ve been very upfront about the whole thing all along……

Miriam with her long career in psychoanalysis voiced other concerns:

(I had considered whether you were schizophrenic)…… and when you have this sort of internal dialogue with Mungo, what’s happening…… how can there be that two-ness? …… but realizing that it’s actually very sane……

Carol-Anne exemplifies several who made similar bottom line decisions:

Carol-Anne: Well I like you, I think you’re very interesting, I feel very compassionate……. because I got to know you during that course (years ago)……

Christa: Right. Em, thank you. And so, I’m assuming there that you wouldn’t have just done this sort of thing with just anybody?

Carol-Anne: No. No, not really.

Trust in themselves:

Whilst Susannah did assess me (…… there’s quite a bit of trust. I…… know you as someone who’s very discrete. You can keep secrets…… that’s probably one aspect of you that sort of swayed me), trust in herself also mattered: I’m just trusting my instinct here too. Just going with the flow. Taking the plunge.
Brian couldn’t put his finger on why he wanted Mungo-engagement, nevertheless answering my question with sureness: That’s interesting, I don’t know. I wouldn’t have said ‘like’— not that I don’t like it…… It’s just the way it is, it just is. I don’t know, it seems right to do it.

Jean commented I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t have a positive approach……… I would say that if I didn’t trust you, or I didn’t feel I could cope with it, then I wouldn’t be here. Still trustful at her ending review she said I’m open to considering using it again in future situations, but also it is so intangible: my trust is in you rather than any direct feeling of it.

Trust in Mungo and/or the process:

This was explicitly voiced only by Sarah (having already experienced Mungo as beneficial once before, I felt OK and that I could trust this) but was implicit in that no participant broke off during a session. Of the 33 who engaged with Mungo only three specifically chose ‘no more’. All eight series participants:

- followed through all sessions
- asserted later that they had no misgivings and were glad that they had done it.

Also all eight pre-PhD sheet-of-responses friends happily became ‘revisited’ participants.

Timings and pertinences:

Participants commented on timings of events both in and around sessions, and dowsed-out cards being pertinent to whatever was being explored. For example:

Miriam said And I couldn’t believe…… the accuracy of the pictures. That was something just totally unbelievable…… that things can be so accurate. Having also experienced timing-flukes in her patients’ lives helping their psychoanalysis she mused: …… why things happen in a certain time and in a certain way. Yes, it never ceases to amaze me.

Jean explored difficulties around her father in our early sessions. I visited her house for our last two sessions, each time arriving during a personally distressing phone-call from her Dad. She said I was the most perfect person to arrive during the phone-call because I was already in the picture at depth and could therefore best help steady her afterwards, and I think it’s very pertinent…… more than coincidental that you turned up…….. (when) I was just having that phone-call again!

Some participants commented on how timelinesses or pertinences interplayed with beliefs. Reflecting on our sessions Helen said:

What seemed to happen was, we would be talking about something each time before we started to do the contact…… and what was quite remarkable was that the cards, especially the first two times, would have a direct bearing on what we’d been talking about.

Later, when at her request I had explained the synchronicity concept, she responded It’s a lot for me to buy into…… and I’d want my synchronicities to be more gut-wrenching – and then maybe.
Brian and I met with mutual jaw-dropping surprise in a town I rarely visit. I was the first acquaintance he met after leaving his doctor who had virtually commanded him to retire, plus we had explored related issues only the day before. My notes record: *I said* (responding to his surprise and shaken state) *I don't think anything I could say could be as powerful as just me being here. You're a pagan – shouldn't you believe in all this?* (meaning synchronistic or fortuitous timings or patternings) *He said something like 'Well yes, but it's easy to say it to other people, but a different matter to trust myself to it.'*

Many more examples occurred but, hoping those four diverse notable-timing experiencings suffice, I move on.

So far in this commonalities section I have drawn on my intensively engaged-with series participants. Now I shall instead benefit from the breadth of the full 35. From my immersion in my unique experiencing of encountering them all, two common qualities arose from my tacit into my conscious knowing. They had been tacit because no participant or I had named them. Realizing these implicit suffusing aspects was fostered by heuristic methodology, where methodologies employing analysis through coding would have missed them. They are pitching and instructiveness.

**Pitching:**

In post-realization retrospect I perceive all sessions’ cards-that-came, time-spans, extra events or EHEs to have been suitably pitched to the participant and their issues or states. Now I notice there having been a lack of symptoms of bad pitching, like restiveness or frustration in either participants or myself, though I didn’t consciously appreciate it then. In those few cases where people declined or pulled out they were still content whilst talking around the phenomenon and/or left at ease and/or friendly with me – I experience these as nicely-pitched ‘negative’ cases, which pitched nicely into my own experiential learning.

Only Susannah underwent brain-racking processes (once saying *god, this is hard work Christa!*) and, together with me, an emotionally-charged time-dilemma involving Mungo and a child’s care – but being herself an academic used to *posing tough questions* she appreciated challenges’ potential value. I also like noticing retrospectively now that *this hard work!* was ‘repaid’ by one session’s spin-off saving her some horrible outer-life work. So I find Susannah’s case tough yet still well-pitched – and, reporting with immediacy from the heuristic re-indwelling of this very writing, I happily experience it as having been fair to her.

**Instructiveness:**

Whilst most participants found the sessions or the chance to decline or discuss them however they wished instructive regarding their issues, themselves or life, I certainly experienced the entire ‘course’ of them as wonderfully instructive to me without exception. I learnt experientially not only alongside them from their issues (just as counsellors often do) but also both how varied the Mungo-
associated processes could be and what they might require of me as team-mate. I learnt also from my participants’ varied stances towards and ‘takes’ about Mungo, and from the many tales of related or contrasting things in their lives which, it seemed, the permission given by my ‘weird’ Mungo-interest released. I experienced the full ‘course’ of 35 as fascinating, instructive, and a good balance of inspiring surprises, challenges and diversity with sufficient steadying overlap.

**Collaborative phenomena:**

Pre-PhD I had already been experiencing an integrational co-working between Mungo-meetings, ASCs and other EHEs (and person-centred relating) so good as to risk coming to seem naturally inevitable – thus perhaps even fading from view. Researching with many participants re-highlighted and strengthened that experiencing, and widened my experiential knowledge of its ‘menu’.

**Interview of Christa-then:**

On first hearing Susannah’s session-tapes I found their richness daunting until I realized that, with her academic curiousity, she had effectively interviewed me through questions melded into our sessions. She was my second participant, so extracting and analyzing her interview of Christa-back-then yielded a benchmark depiction of my early-days thinking and experiencing uninhibitedly expressed. For example, it captured my puzzlement about Mungo encouraging engagement with her, a spiritual believer where Christa-then was expecting to work with agnostics or atheists as research participants. That clearly transformed later, whereas a sustained factor is that this path of (Mungo-research) is……… high-octane personal development, I kid you not!

Christa-then had grasped only application-version and not first-person surrender-version heuristics. Whilst analyzing Susannah’s Christa-then interview, actual in-the-moment events triggered her

logging things that are actually happening during this writing-phase. She worried: I never dreamed ‘it all’ would ask me to be so ‘improper’ and direct in my (writing…….. given that) …… I have been told that I must find and use ‘an academic voice’.

Yet fortuitous events encouraged directness – after her down-to-earth vernacular presentation at an in-house conference:

One chap spoke (saying) he was really grateful I’d……… said those things (about Mungo-work) because he had experienced……… things like that (as a research-hospital hypnotherapist) but didn’t know (enough places) where he could talk about it……… he felt relieved.

After telling Susannah the above Christa adds: And I felt really vindicated, I felt really vindicated!

Susannah felt her Mungo-sessions helped her, but voiced concern about potential harm to others who couldn’t integrate such experience. Christa-then still thought her research concerned spirit guidance only but, noticing two rapidly-following avoid-harm discussions in her life, mused upon beautiful co-flow in LUE. Also, taking a charity-shop find to her classics-scholar friend, she learnt its Greek inscription started not with I but H (shown by an apostrophe), therefore reading:
Hippocrates, so……. First do no harm. She reports herself delighted that the timely decoding……. exemplified (themes in co-flow) ….. and what it………… underlined as a value……. important in this work.

I (Christa-now) experience having that interview as a developmental-marker boon, delightfully portraying her ‘research toddler’ sometimes being ‘handhold-led’ towards better competence, patiently by timeliness itself. The above extracts from it must suffice here.

**Benedict and Scarlett; Cathy (and Jamie):**

These pairs are presented here because especially long and/or strong event-streams developed for me around my Mungo-meetings with them – sagas-as-lived involving grander-scale experiencings. In these cases therefore my experiencing takes centre-stage (key though the participants’ presences were). I shall write them largely in the vernacular, hopefully fostering readers’ more experiential ‘hearing’ of the I-who-feels-and-thinks, as heuristics requires.

**Benedict and Scarlett:**

Benedict (series) explored trials of aging in our open-to-Mungo sessions. As I started analyzing them my father Henry’s health plummeted. His friendless isolation and my only-child status meant all bucks stopped with me - with him in Kent, me a single-parent of health-challenged youngsters in Lancashire, and my own mental-collapse history. Difficult emotions, sudden crises, hair-tearing dealings with health and social services, conflicting demands, gruelling scenes etcetera abounded. Time was ever short – for tasks, assimilation, adequate thinking, and being chronically required in two places at once.

Personal journalling helped, and snatched research-writing times soothed. They started beneficially interplaying. Soon I wrote:

*I’m writing it all in here. There’s too much else to do, to be chopping and changing……. This Benedict document…….. and Henry’s health and care…….. look virtually certain to interweave……. writ(ing) about both in here…….. (opens) a door to helpfulness or synergy between them……..*

A 50,000-word Henry-saga rapidly grew, capturing heartfelt situations, diverse really-human characters and my phenomena’s crucial, touching or opportunity-opening inputs, interleaved with Benedict’s material. His feedback from his checking-read included **compulsive – reads like a novel.**

During that duress-around-Henry time, participant Andrea and her adult daughter Scarlett were to drive up from Surrey for a long-since-arranged three-day stay involving Scarlett’s PhD-participation. A reflective person, engaged herself in academic psychology-research, Scarlett had previously happened to see and enjoy my cards and now deemed herself glad and fit (longstanding mental-health condition notwithstanding) to engage with them. Ours would be plain card-sessions, involving neither pendulum nor mention of Mungo, respecting Scarlett’s condition and her being a hardened atheist and opponent of religion. Intuitively, and Mungo-checking, I didn’t cancel their visit. It too interwove with the Henry/Benedict saga.
Certain of Scarlett’s and Benedict’s aspects were complementary, like Scarlett’s at-ease curiosity about card-use but aversion to religion as against Benedict’s religiosity but wariness towards cards:

……. these things (like water dowsing) do happen……. people do have some abilities, faculties for doing, perceiving things that other people don’t. But a pack of cards – I really can’t do it. At review he reflected: It’s…….. interesting…….. to notice that I have sort of subliminal misgivings about tarot and the occult left over from the way I was brought up (very thoroughly taught (about religion) when I was small……..).

Whilst Benedict related his session’s card-images not to his personal life but, say, to literature, Scarlett was personally frank, as when reporting no misgivings at review:

(our sessions) helped me refine my own opinions……. Like an alcoholic who can’t allow themselves a drop, because I’m (clinically) obsessive I can’t allow myself any magical thinking, and yet with the tarot cards………. I found something satisfying…….. mystical…….. feeds from the same bit of me as magical thinking………. (I’d like to)…….. find a healthful outlet/use for that faculty – whether it’s ‘out there’ or ‘in here’ or what.

Focussing now on my direct experiencing, I extract from my Henry-Benedict saga a self-care outpouring:

Scarlett and I were about to do a session, but I ‘just’ phoned Henry’s neighbour to check if his discharge from hospital ……. and immediate start of carers…….. had gone alright. No, it hadn’t. ………. I was so shocked and distressed and full of must-help-now feelings – and 350 miles away! It was an absolute godsend that Andrea (superbly level-headed, practical and quick-thinking) and Scarlett (who worked recently as a carer and…….. has insider tips) were there to scrape me off the floor. Reflecting later I recognized that if there was just one moment in the whole Henry saga when I ……. (most needed) supportive friends, that was it. And there they were – and the best possible team! Andrea even offered…….. I can drive you down now; we’ll be there in six hours……..

It still makes me weepy, writing it now in this thesis.

The weepiness came from intense tangled feelings – heart-rent urgency and relieved, touched thankfulness such as many people would feel, but also awed gratitude at the dovetailing of crisis with its saviours’ rare presence, itself so dependent on past Mungo-related coincidences. I felt, and still feel, admiration of that flowing-yet-interlocked pattern.

Cathy (and Jamie):

Similarly process with Cathy (shadow) became a many-chaptered story, some chapter-shifts occurring when her seven-year-old’s then-unsettled sleeping blocked evening sessions in their home. The consolation was chatting with philosophical, pedagogically-trained Cathy instead – demoted from PhD-work those conversations were simply us living life, doing what we liked.

Fortunately a session-tape did capture a debate which I treasure, experiencing it as exploring bases-that-matter with Cathy and enjoying ‘disagreeing in tune’:

Cathy: I suppose like you if I was faced with incontrovertible or insurmountable evidence…….. well, I’d have to accept that something was happening……..  

Christa: It would be a shaking of the foundations?
Cathy: Well would it? …… it’s finding out what the foundations are……. I have my concept of what the foundations are, but……. that’s only a concept…….. There might be all sorts of foundations……. that other people are aware of……. that haven’t touched me enough to shape what my idea of the foundations are…….. well they’re very science-based I suppose. Logic and, like you I have a science degree.

Christa: You’re raising really interesting questions in my head……. if there’s a sort of spiritual energy plane or something……. it seems to me like the energy plane……. chooses, well I’m going to work for you via homeopathy, and I’m going to work for you via candle meditation, and for you via what you think when you’re out fishing, you know. Almost like it’s part of our (individual) make-up, what’s going to work.

Cathy: At that point, the logical or scientific or whatever part of my brain comes back with, I think you’re absolutely right. I think it’s a necessity within ourselves……. part of our make-up that……. humans tend to want something to cling on to, something to provide answers, something to use as a way of living their lives (that is) different for every person. And I think it is a very strong instinct, but to me that doesn’t necessarily mean that there is that plane, or that god, or whatever.

Christa: I can see it either way.

Cathy: Yes. I’m aware that I could see it either way as well really. But it’s just that part of me that’s coming through at the moment.

Just as with Benedict and Scarlett though, the greatest boon I experienced because of Cathy’s participant-ship came not in sessions but whilst just living life. One evening (already demoted from PhD-time) Cathy and I were chatting about Mungo/spirit-related stuff when Jamie (sleep-disturbed for a second time) came down for comfort with his mum, lying quietly on her lap. I would have shifted the subject, but to my surprise Cathy continued freely conversing about Mungo-type things in Jamie’s presence. It became a consciousness-raising challenge concerning personal reservations and/or group taboo about ‘just talking normally’ about such things around children (mine included). Later when alone, Cathy and I mused on:

Christa: But the thing is, right, I suppose for a child, they’re experiencing so many new things, that it’s just another new thing.

Cathy: They’re like a sponge.

Christa: Yeah. So whereas for an adult it’s this weird thing – I mean I’m hypothesizing……. maybe to them it’s not a big deal either way because it’s just another new thing.

Cathy: I think you’re exactly right. And I think it would then depend on his future experiences as to whether it became significant for him……. if he had other experiences that all kind of related to that and he connected them all up……. maybe it would become very significant but who knows, only the future’s going to (tell) ……

This issue of openness (or not) around children was for me an undreamt-of eye-opener. I also carry forward subsequently hearing both a claire-sentient PhD colleague’s tale of childhood distress.
at being taboo-blanked by his family, and Cathy's co-parent's view that a child intrigued by
encountering something 'unscientifically' strange should be given alternative explanations. I am
glad to have been enlarged by these hearings.

Originally I intended to winnow from the above pairs’ combined 57,000-words-long material two
tales showing experiencings of both individual occurrences and the lived-tales' unfolding. When
later my heuristically arrived-at judgment was to include synchronicity and its interplay with the
other phenomena, these tales were sacrificed. However, the next chapter depicts great unfolding
instead, and I own myself content with the fierce distillings given above. Together they dot out a
grand canvas – agedness and children; learnings entrenched or free-thinking; long views taken
over time and moments of finesse are indicated, and I have shared first-person experiencing (albeit
curtly) of vital helps and startling twists (exemplified by Andrea and Scarlett's saving-grace helps in
a Henry-crisis) experienced during this research.

Having now presented depictions of participants', my own, and relational experiencings of and
around 'Mungo', arrived at through deeply heuristic processes, and in as real a way as thesis
limitations allow, I move next to synchronicity experiencings.
Experiencing Synchronicity

I now turn from participant-with-researcher dyad-experienчисings of Mungo (albeit interplaying with EHEs and synchronicity) to focus instead on my lone synchronicity experiencings (albeit in that same inextricably interplaying triad).

This chapter’s more lone self-searching character (and the longer storyings it evolved) give it an HSSI slant. Its concern being first-person experiential knowledge it presents synchronicities-as-experienced unlimited by prior theories of synchronicity, except in that Jung’s thinking (Jung 1976/1951) seeded this chapter’s baseline ‘synchronicity’ definition, namely meaningful coincidence (but not necessarily simultaneity) between inner psyche and outer world.

This chapter exemplifies leashless surrender-to-process heuristics, a first-person experiencing akin to Richards’ (2006) ‘wren stories’. Sela-Smith’s PhD-thesis section which simultaneously reveals and demonstrates her leashless HSSI self-searching through 136 pages of first-person narration (Sela-Smith 2001) likewise fulfills heuristics’ goal of ‘lived experience, that is, full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person’ (Moustakas 2001,264).

Sela-Smith’s self-story is, she says, its own explication, her narration retaining the authentic organic enmeshedness of events and her experiencings both initial and developed (i.e. explicated). Similarly my living through this chapter’s synchronicities stimulated me to explicate my experiencing of them. As West reminds us, heuristics’ key stages (engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis) may non-linearly recur as events unfold, with explication occurring whenever we ‘examine what has emerged…… teasing out the new understanding’ of our experiencing through ‘self-searching’ (West 1998,63). Such experiential responses can occur regarding both individual events and their flows and/or patternings apprehended holistically. I experienced the following 31-event sequence as a whole time-flow ‘tapestry’ greater than the sum of its parts. Presenting it entire avoids fracturing the data (Charmaz 2000), shows Nature answering out of her fullness (Jung 1972/1952), and bears comparison with Main’s reflections on a 41-event synchronic sequence (Main 2007b).

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) bid researchers to follow their work’s unfolding by making midstream shifts should they serve fuller discovery. Once I had shifted to recognizing synchronicity as co-equal research-topic I read my PhD journals, noting all synchronicities and developing a typography of them. Immersing in them thus I became stunned and delighted as I grew more aware of their range and diversity, also ‘hearing music’ in their matching of styles to events. I noticed myself increasingly finding it less strain to imagine some caring intelligence behind them than not (especially when they interplayed effectively with Mungo and/or EHEs).
I intended to present and explicate my typography-as-experienced for this chapter, but once I
started its writing it took on a life of its own. New synchronicities and EHEs happened which,
interweaving with Mungo-talks, dialogued with the growing chapter, changing its nature
fundamentally. This shift was from being about past experiences to becoming largely a real-time
evolving act and display of present experiencing plus the personal-experience explications thereby
prompted.

The process grew complex as, for example, I would break off to report a new event and then
capitalize on it to help explicate some prior issue, only to be butted in upon by another pertinent,
attention-clamouring event. It was exciting but unwieldy process. In ‘conversation’ Mungo ‘named’
this situation by a tarot-image melding of bearing-too-many with exhilarating juggling. Receiving
this symbolic empathy helped me: feeling understood and ‘held’ by the image I breathed more
easily, and its agreement with my experiencing gave me to feel ‘things are in tune, it’s OK’.

Figure 10: Empathic Mungo-indicated image-pair

Living the entwining richness thus became comfortable but risked becoming tangled confusion
when constrained into words. I have tried to balance reduction of too-muchness against not losing
the sense of a living, surprising, unfolding engagement with synchronicity (in its triad with Mungo
and EHEs). Readers will be going through it all more quickly than I did, with less time for things
and connections to sink in and be mulled, but my experiencing really did include not just separate
events but also broad and sometimes fast sweeps of their concerted storying. This chapter’s
‘willful’ evolution presents such a sweep which, with spacious ‘listening’, I experienced as a
synchronistic ‘symphony’ which drew to a close at last.

Its overture, though, clarified and underlined for me that my now more-likely-than-not credence in
intelligence behind synchronicities was boosted by my perceiving (and liking) its occasional
addressing of intelligence itself. The overture-event started through conversation with a physicist-
friend who extolled hard-science’s hypothesis-testing method. When alone later I found myself
pondering if I could devise a test of sorts around my experiential sense (and consequently evoked
cognitive hypothesis) of intelligence(s) behind both sum and parts of ‘the triad’. My PhD journal
records my eventual settling upon ‘it should seem as varied, responsive, pertinent and creative as a person’. Then, with superb timing, I stumbled for my first time upon the Turing Test (French 2000) which, roughly speaking, proposes semblance to human conversing as yardstick for a machine’s intelligence. I felt thunderstruck and elated by this ‘answer’ and relished its self-referential wittiness – by ‘sending’ me the Turing Test just then synchronicity answered my Turing-like test!

Here I pertinently reassert that heuristics seeks details of personal experience whilst ‘retain(ing) the essence of the person in experience’ (Douglass and Moustakas 1985,43). Just so the above retains that essence of me – that cast of my mind – which, say, enjoyed BSc physics, and in it I express the Turing-Test synchronicity’s persuasiveness to myself (which is not tantamount to trying to persuade readers).

My essence also plays into my enjoyment and manners of analyzing. I ‘cut the pie’ of all my responses to all my synchronicities in various ways, one pair being:

a) how I experience synchronicities individually and/or directly (even if delayed)

b) how I feel differently (existentially, say) in living a life in which such synchronicities occur.

Apropos b), I symbolize my overall experiencing of this chapter’s evolution as receiving a backbone for it (each synchronicity-that-came being a ‘vertebra’), whilst my consequent responses and explications fleshed it out. My holistic experiencing of the backbone (or symphony) thus coming and co-operating effectively has been of feeling delighted, intrigued, honoured and existentially cheered.

Another cutting-the-pie pair is:

c) ‘heart/body-responses’ like feelings, intuitive meaning-makings and visceral effects

d) ‘head-responses’ like thoughts-arising and (drive towards) cogitated thinking, including about synchronicities’ possible meanings and hypothesizing about what their occurrences indicate.

Heuristic illumination released me from a wariness I had had about disclosing d) – that examiners, say, might deem it too close to hard-science modes for phenomenological comfort. But concealing having unforced and/or enjoyably-reached ‘head-responses’ struck me as making a mockery of heuristic experiential truth-seeking. Dwelling in the conundrum attained a clear ‘ahaa’ moment, a sudden ‘hearing’ in myself of words whose gist was ‘a hypothesis arriving (like Archimedes’ Eureka) is a heuristic illumination!’ My immediate sense of safe relaxation ‘said’ that my tacit self was satisfied, this indeed being an example of Gendlin-style (Gendlin 1981) heuristic focusing in action.

Having concluded this chapter’s overture-section I now proceed to its synchronicity-symphony’s gearing up:
Great Space:

Soon after I started work for this chapter my friend Lucy and I spent a night hostelling in Liverpool. I used my slim Swiss-Army-style knife in cooking which Lucy remarked on, so I told her a quirky story about it. Later we talked about Quaker ministry. I related how my ‘maiden ministry’, prompted by a red-hearts synchronicity in that Meeting, had been about relationship-healing as facilitated by prior blade-pierced red-hearts synchronicities in my life. The next day we visited Liverpool Cathedral (nick-named ‘The Great Space’), encountering therein a modern painting (by Wiszniewski) on the Good Samaritan theme. Within it a slim Swiss-Army-style knife’s blade entered a red heart-shaped pool of blood. Noticing this, Lucy was both visibly and innerly rocked.

Back home again I journalled:

*I was mulling that blade-heart experience when illumination struck – making me grasp for my pen to capture the new apprehension and its process:*

I’ve read many others’ synchronicities and struggled to put over the qualities of mine. It seems almost the more you put synchronicities into words………. the less you get across the sort of nubbing-yet-exploding ‘Bam!’ effect they sometimes have………… Well, do I need a creative synthesis – not verbal but quicker – visual perhaps – for this aspect then? And then came a bam!-quality realization: ‘The actual content of that cathedral synchronicity portrays it!’ That little focal point, that touching, blade-to-heart precision – yet within, and bespeaking, a vast communing Great Space! I love that – that symbolically ‘gets’ the scale-bridging power of certain synchronicity experiences brilliantly! And how self-referential that blade-heart – Great-Space synchronicity is!

Now I shall explicate the above illuminatory experiencing further, depicting first-person thoughts and feelings. For me the event both was a synchronicity and symbolized a frequent result of synchronicity, namely that when one strikes me as good (more later) and finely focussed, then it may simultaneously evoke in me a sense of expansiveness – of ‘tiny’ synchronicity bespeaking a cosmos interconnected, mysterious and stupendous, for which the ‘Great Space’ suits wonderfully as human-scale symbol and name. I have felt admiration of this masterly presentation of precise focus arcing to the tremendous; pleasure almost to laughing at its so-timely meshing into my PhD process; a sense of sweetness in that the vast and tremendous ‘spoke’ to ‘little old me’ and my friend, and since it does to others too, delighted awe at the intricate intermeshing infinitude implied.

This Liverpool case helps me explicate my feeling safe (given my discerning) around synchronicities. Those I have experienced seem to be on the side of moral good, falling into four broad categories:

a) Those which ‘discuss’ moral issues, whether just of themselves or together with other events and/or Mungo-talking.

b) Those which (seem to) bring about good events.

c) Those which initially seem harmful but later enable good development.

d) Those which look superficially like ‘just good fun’ but give me a sense of relaxed, bright accompaniment, cheer, or encouragement on a certain path.
A blade-to-heart image could bespeak bad things like cruelty or threat, say, or good things like indicating the heart of something or judgment in touching-but-not-harming. I experienced this synchronicity as in category a) firstly because its Good-Samaritan content invites pondering on moral qualities or acts. Secondly it depended on and synchronistically recalled a string of prior instances, their overall theme being the transformation possible within relationships when difficulty is bravely ‘pierced’ with good will.

Widening my angle now, I experience this whole blade-heart saga as morally good; as artistically good (being a tale skillfully wrought by LUE); as helpfully good (being a timely boost in my research process); as relationally good (in having given a little to others, judging by feedback), and good simply in that that’s how pondering it makes me feel. I have played devil’s advocate, scanning for bad effects but finding nothing.

The blade-heart/Great-Space synchronicity is a creative synthesis expressing synchronicity’s *Bam!*-engendering, arcing-across-dimensions nature. But its originating idea wasn’t mine – it was gifted by synchronicity in Liverpool cathedral. I pondered and noticed its import, and Lucy drew it. It is, I moot, a ‘synthesis co-created’ by Lucy, me and synchronicity itself.

The rest of this chapter was also co-created. It follows a flow of LUE events-that-came. I have deliberately retained qualities (whimsicality, say) from its earliest draft as they implicitly portray my nearest-to-immediate first-person experiencings. I also explicitly explicate some (subject to space), such implicit/explicit combinations having depicted others’ experiencing fulsomely (Sela-Smith 2001, Meents 2006).
Münsterland:

Now, as I write, I am feeling a gentle Wow! I’ve been debating whether to tell another story-as-lived because it and the blade-heart sequence braided together through time. Just now, needing a stretch I walked about, into another room where a book’s spine (long-forgotten and never yet read) compellingly caught my eye. Taking down *The Art of Fiction* (Lodge 1992) I idly opened it, immediately seeing a previous owner’s highlighting of ‘Intertextuality’. The word was new to me, but Lodge explains about ‘many ways by which one text can refer to another’ and ‘resonance’ (ibid 98). Irrepressibly I thought, but this is fantastic! It’s just what I was contemplating doing myself just now!

Not only that, but directly before the highlighted ‘Intertextuality’ Lodge writes of ‘a reworking of the parable of the Good Samaritan’.

Not only that, but immediately prior to this debate-mull-Lodge sequence I wrote a presentation abstract concerning ‘library angels’, including Rebecca West’s random taking and opening a volume (in a disordered library) only to find she had drawn both the right book and the right page.

Not only that, but Lodge writes:

> another aspect of the art of fiction…….. which often involves intertextuality…….. is the Missed Opportunity. Inevitably………… one sometimes comes across……….. echoes, anticipations and analogues of one’s own work…….. too late to take advantage of the discovery. (Lodge 1992,102)

But Lodge’s words give me no missed but an exquisitely timed opportunity. I shall ‘take advantage of the discovery’, following this Lodge synchronicity-cluster’s ‘advice’ to not merely *report* my heed of synchronicities but actually *do* it here, telling beside ‘blade-heart/Great-Space’ the other story which braided with it concerning my German cousin’s death-time, letting ‘intertextuality’ and ‘resonance’ show. Right now I feel desire to help the second story flow by giving it, too, a name that fits yet honours anonymities. Hitting upon ‘Münsterland’ as the (lovely) area where it happened, I feel a satisfaction – ‘Münster’ literally means ‘Cathedral’, nicely partnering ‘Great Space’.

Explicating through self-searching now, I see the blade-heart saga of good and timely things happening as one example amongst many unfoldings I have experienced. I notice myself resultantly feeling more hope and/or calm around life problems, partly through believing I might be helped, encouraged or taught by such an unfolding (as if it were a current welling up to bear me through tricky straits), and partly through trusting that Mungo-conversations might, in a manner similar to counselling, give spacious but stimulated attention which helps me find better ways.

However, processing complex Mungo-talks and/or synchronistic unfoldings sometimes uses time and/or mental energy which, in pressed situations, I just don’t have. Sometimes then clusterings of simpler Mungo-talks and/or synchronicities have occurred, heartening me. This happened when
urgent Münsterland concerns clashed with responsibilities to my son in England, causing moral dilemmas, stress and rush. I experienced the clustering of simpler Mungo-talks then as having sensitive pertinence, opening me to a more intense level of being somehow: it was a precious time.

Having experienced prior such clusterings as beneficial, nowadays I let decisions even around serious matters like death be affected by both trusting-to-timing and pointers within such (clusterings of) synchronicities and/or Mungo-talks (given discerning no outweighing contraindications). It matters to me that I look critically back at outcomes, as the following long but unbranched story exemplifies:

- I didn’t rush to Germany as my cousin neared death partly because I felt, checked with Mungo, and provisionally trusted that unless some new factor arose, my already-booked flight-time would somehow be for the best.

- Being still in England when he died, I queried but then still went circle dancing as planned the next day, open to it bringing synchronistic help.

- I did experience pertinent synchronicities there, predisposing me to trust that the Celtic blessing we sung, being resonant to much about my cousin, would honour his funeral. It was plain enough to read slowly in English (which he had taught), respecting the German congregation.

- I did so, and afterwards a man who would otherwise not have known me introduced himself as my cousin’s deceased wife’s only brother, and uncle to the little daughter they had lost to death when she was only nine.

- Together he and I found her grave in the cemetery, though other family members had tried and failed.

- After the wake thirteen of us returned to the cemetery for a final farewell,

- where two asked me about the little girl’s grave so we went there,

- and the others noticed and came too,

- and spontaneously we all, young and old, fell into minutes of respectful silence.

- My cousin’s sister had one more branch of the lilac we had laid in his grave beside his wife remaining in her basket.
She laid it caringly on the daughter’s grave,

and several eyes reddened as the little girl was embraced by the family too, with connection made to her parents.

What effect that special moment may have on any of us is unfathomable, but as I feel it, seeds were sown,

and it wouldn’t have happened had I not held to my flight-time, gone hopefully circle dancing, and dared act upon the synchronistic gifts there.

I deem this to have been synchronistically enabled and good (although impossible to compare to what might have happened had I flown earlier instead). However, holding to my English duties and original flight-time got me bawled out as selfish and worse by another cousin. His attitudes mean I couldn’t possibly (yet?) explain to him, say, ‘in my cosmos greater good may come from giving flow some say in decision-making, as a canoeist might benefit from less brute paddling and more being borne’. Living with synchronicity and Mungo means having to accept some discord and being judged bad even by people I want as friends.

But other friendships can be enriched by (talking about) synchronicities. Occasionally I have witnessed an early synchronicity in someone’s life, which I have enjoyed. My hypothesizing self has wondered if ‘it chose’ to do this around me, either for them to have a non-poo-pooing listening ear or catalyst, and/or for my lived learning of reactions’ diversity.

Beginners may not distinguish between mere coincidences (between things of no personal importance) and synchronicities involving meaningful coincidence between outer-world things and inner-life aspects. But the one may shade or convert into the other. For instance, soon after I returned from Münsterland Lucy related how her husband’s hearing of a Grave Tie rose and a Grave Tie pub in quick succession had impressed them both. Their coincidence became my synchronicity, touching my heart’s memory of lilac and graveside silence tying my family – the living and dead, the parents and child – together. By my showing this intertextuality between our lives it might modify further. My experience is that sharing about synchronicity seems sometimes to beget more. Furthermore I notice myself liking that.

On reflection I understand this in myself. Firstly I wonder what might happen next, as if it were a sort of cosmic ‘Soap’ involving flows of artistry and interesting puzzles. Secondly I have often experienced synchronicity fostering interconnection between people, interweaving their paths (loosely enough for comfort) towards less isolated, more easy-breathing living. I feel pleasure in playing some part in augmenting that for others, but am mindful that they might experience it otherwise or like it less. Thirdly I have experienced specific healing to happen only through
synchronicity, as when a participant’s disturbed feeling left by a dream haunted her for days despite her best and varied efforts. It lifted immediately when, having myself followed a seemingly separate (but ultimately intertextual) synchronistically indicated path, I found a salving, dream-resonant object and offered it to her. When that happened I felt surprised, excited and good.

Soon after the Grave-Tie chat I needed a battery-recharging day and prepared for rambling. But a Mungo-talk brought a picture I couldn’t fathom until I noticed its shapes – an area blank but for a tiny mark suddenly recalled Great-Space/blade-heart to me. Yes, Mungo wanted me to visit Liverpool instead, and I happily agreed. Wanting a book to read en route I took one a colleague had just lent me. After the plan-change rush and narrowly catching the train I relaxed initially, but then a feeling familiar from prior Mungo-suggested circumstances arose inside me. Gist-wise it went:

If nothing special happens today, OK, I mustn’t be attached – and something could happen that I don’t notice – but even so my discernment couldn’t gloss over nothing happening. Mungo would seem less reliable. Honestly though, I couldn’t so much respect or credit a guide who didn’t cause these testings. I experience them as mild cliff-hangers.

Still, despite tension I could profitably read en route to this ‘something or nothing’. The book’s very first words read:

Blest be the tie that binds………..

When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

At some point, I came to know that all together my family held the memory of those who had passed on, held them in the circle still………..

(Griffith and Griffith 2002,vii)

I was heart-touched, yet also amused: I hadn’t imagined the ‘something’ happening before Liverpool even. The quote resonated to Münsterland, whilst Mungo’s outing alteration had placed it within (my trip to) Great Space. I liked the neat dovetailing (or intertextuality), so typical of how Mungo-and-it-all works.

That dovetailing came eventually, as did my dream-haunted participant’s salving. Such experiences, giving a sense of something benign in play, have increased my equanimity around problems – something unimagined is likelier eventually to turn up than I thought earlier in my life. Heuristically I notice that I want to think ‘something is likelier’ if I try to meet life problems and personal development with care and bothering. That personal view fits with ‘it all’ having geared up during my counselling diploma (although that’s insufficient for inductive extrapolation).
Darkness:

So far I have shown and explicated bright aspects of living with the synchronicity-Mungo-EHEs triad. Now I shall address some darker aspects.

Something had indeed ‘been likelier to turn up’ during my first decade with the triad. Then storm-clouds gathered, starting with such nerve-racking difficulties around one child that I was soon sleeping only two hours most nights. Then came simultaneously the three counselling clients who most ever scared me, and exceptionally many transitions and losses in my own life. I became clinically depressed, with such cognitive dysfunctionality that I could hardly manage humdrum chores, never mind competent dealing with special concerns around my child. Also profound anxiety rendered me pathetic company just when I could hardly bear being alone. It was an existential crisis writ large. Where previously timings and the triad had been kind and their challenges tractable, now all these dysfunctionalities and problems conspired both in time and in each blocking the others’ solutions – the previously bright had turned so dark. I had no adult helper, and public services failed to help too. Also the triad had gone alternately silent and confusing. It was a terrible time.

After four months’ nightmare, a card for the Christmas I couldn’t possibly ‘do’ arrived from a trusted mentor, reading ‘I do hope the doctorate is still progressing’. Despite misgivings about plaguing him and my near-incapability of writing, I risked a letter to him. He answered thoughtfully, and I replied to him. These letters capture with the power of immediacy and extremis some utterly foundational questioning which, but for this crisis and my mentor’s initial card, might never have been aired. I give extracts here (sometimes expanded or précised) to show transparently the researcher-who-is-me and certain experincings.

From my first letter:

I haunt doctors’ and mental health workers’ offices....... I am now so shaky and slow of speech........ I am in a position and state where I can’t cope, or protect my sons from my non-coping, but there really is no-one who can pick up the pieces........ I’m so concerned about what this downfall will do to my children........ I sit immobile for hours in horror.

Why am I writing this to you? ........ some vestige of my hope is that if I voice these things to enough people somehow some help may come, whereas if I freeze and isolate........

But also I can’t avoid the question, where is Mungo in all this? Why has he now become haphazard and unconvincing, and why have the synchronicities ceased given that they were throwing themselves at me and asking to be studied before? Have I been led up the garden path? Have I got out of a benign current and into a maelstrom? What can I trust? And so on. Why have I been so abandoned given that, mistakes notwithstanding, I was at least aiming for good in my explorations with Mungo and others?

.......... (some)thing that has knocked the stuffing out of me is the ‘going off key’ of my relationship with Mungo. It involves a double loss – of my closest-seeming friend, and of what sort of future work I saw myself as doing. I am shocked to discover just how attached I must have been for a long time to Mungo and his collaboration with synchronicity and his kind pertinence as was. Too
attached for good research? At least it now shows me capable of finding ‘the phenomenon’ unsatisfying, giving more credibility to my finding it satisfying before.

From my second letter:

people have asked about how, given that I was in such a state…… I could so quickly have become essentially OK again. (I describe seeking help everywhere to hugely insufficient avail until reaching the end of the road – nothing left to try, nowhere else to ask. I then persistently see myself overboard ship, hanging onto a rope with one hand which is sliding down, whilst my ‘free’ hand tries to hold up another rope which my child is hanging onto, but carelessly and sliding down. I cannot save my child (or myself). I resolve, however ghastly it is, to hang on because by the time I slide off into the deep my child might have been rescued some other unforeseen way.)

Then two categories of things started happening. One was that after my sons and I spent Christmas with friends (which respite I expected to be followed by another aeon of desperation) a sequence of sweet things started, like the chance of a mind-resting train-trip through soothing snowy landscape to visit kind acquaintances in Tyneside. The other was a gentle restarting of sense-making connection with synchronicity and Mungo. I could not have made these things happen – they could only be received by me if given, from other people or from timelinesses and/or spirit. The horror started ebbing and was gone within several days, which immediately also removed three other problems: with tasks no longer being done despite a state of terror they became much easier again; I could manage relaxed chatting with friends again so the isolation thawed; and I felt again that my relationship and work with Mungo et al could continue. (The confluence of things had re-turned from cruel to benign.) I was, I would say, compositely saved.

I note and wonder about this happening shortly after reaching the end of the road, facing the facts as clearly as I could (in the interests of ‘love and truth’, in fact), and ‘getting’ the sliding-ropes symbol (a heuristic illumination).

I boarded that Tyneside-bound train with the first new book I had felt able to face for months, to read occasional paragraphs as the lulling, snowy countryside slid by. It was Thomas Moore’s ‘Dark Nights of the Soul’ (2004). The first paragraph I read proved the return of the synchronicity whose loss I had so recently looked straight at and accepted. It repeated, albeit differently phrased, the last thing I had read in something else just before leaving home, about things not being as they seem and having deeper layers of meaning.

I was very pleased to read your letter. Partly for its kindness, and partly because I could dialogue with your comments thereby expressing what sits better with me now, especially around what Mungo and ‘God’ are to me. If I want to adhere loyally to anything then it is good values, which I have been happy to symbolize by ‘love and truth’ for several years. That is my ‘God’ in the sense of being my aim, my gold standard, my ‘peak principle’. Maybe this is not ‘God’ in the sense of some all-encompassing being or intelligence. Maybe whatever energy or anything of ‘love and truth’ there may be in the cosmos is puny compared to some actual ‘big God’, but whatever the case, if I have to choose between goodness and power/size, then goodness it is. As best I can manage, of course. So when I communicate with Mungo it is always with conscious evocation of ‘love and truth’, and I have co-operated with him in significant part because he seems to me to actively foster discernment.

Also, though, he has been my best friend – not just interesting, helpful and funny etcetera in ways that suit me, but also a quiet companionship in my home and life which, challenges notwithstanding, gives me more contentment and therefore more chance to work better than I used to have before. So, actually, in many ways Mungo is akin to a life-partner, and I don’t think I was abnormally shocked when I thought myself ‘bereaved’ of him.

You are the only person who suggested that maybe this terrible time had developmental purpose. I really liked that because I never quite gave up on having that as a secret question myself!
I have deliberately kept the above extracts long, hoping that their bulk conveys the episode’s enormity in itself and its vital, truthful import within my heuristic journey.

Lodge returns:

This chapter has just exhibited having a life of its own again. Needing a particular map I visited the public-library map shelves. As my eye ranged along them its peripheral vision glimpsed (to my surprise, the novel-shelves being elsewhere) a David Lodge book ‘next-door’. *The Year of Henry James* (Lodge 2007) had a subtitle inside: *Timing Is All*. Given Lodge’s prior timely entry into this chapter, how neat!

This gives me a Golden (rather than Missed) Opportunity to explicate how EHEs, subtle or otherwise, may process for me. Tracing it backwards in time (rather than forwards as in ‘Münsterland’) shows that:

- I enjoyed the above timing and wordplay,
- but only found it by opening the book, which I did for two reasons.
- Firstly this chanced-upon Lodge book came after recent Lodge coincidences, within this chapter-writing’s time-span.
- Secondly, recent years’ experiences of following through on *intertextuality* and *resonance* (like Lodge again) have often elicited more (like ‘timing’ again).
- Through this very act of explicating I have realized another reason: I like ‘playing this game’ which piques my curiosity, makes me smile, prompts me to cosmic musing, often signposts directions that I fancy, and so on.
- The prior Lodge coincidences happened because I took *The Art of Fiction* from my shelf
- which I did because of recognizing my own ‘over-noticing’ of it,
- so had I not, *Timing Is All* would not have entered this thesis.

‘Over-noticing’ anomalous attention is one subtle but distinct EHE-type which I experience, others being something looking momentarily but significantly different, and my virtually always sensing which card-deck a Mungo-talk needs. These experiences differ from ordinary mis-seeing or thinking of something by coinciding with a sense of near-sureness in my chest. It lasts but a
I know this could all sound flimsy and gullible. Nevertheless I give heed (but not blind obedience), prior experiences having impressed me. For example, once when pausing on a country outing I felt a mysterious sense of meaning about a blossoming elder nearby. Bookshop-browsing the next day I noticed The Girl Green as Elderflower (Stow 1991) and wondered, was I primed to notice that? I bought and read it. Eventually a character said in Latin Mentiris, Marcus haud Latine loqui potest (ibid 48). I phoned ‘my’ Marcus, my Latin-scholar friend, and his deliciously right-yet-wrong translation went ‘Liar, Marcus can’t speak Latin’. I relish the wittiness of that – and yet, so what?

Relating that story has brought a new realization, a further personal-experiencing explication. I bought that book during my early phase of big EHEs like the Glasgow wave-of-love, whose impacts shifted me from only head-thinking about others’ EHE-reports to believing the possibility of them in my guts. The ‘quieter’ elderflower over-noticing brought different benefits. Through buying the resonantly-titled book which was itself later shared as remarkable (the multiple Latin word-play striking Marcus too), I gained enduring witness to the events’ strangeness borne by Marcus and the tangible book. Such witnesses helped me hold the knowledge that such things could be, strengthening the cosmic-view expansion so crucial to my heuristic journey.

I notice myself disliking long gaps between opportunities to show and discuss ‘my strange things’ with others. I feel a lack of mirroring, whether witness-bearing, curious or sceptical. When I can meet others I enjoy, say, their enriching of symbols or stories, or other contributions which perhaps even complement mine, creating a whole greater than the parts or suggesting ways forward.

Soon after finding Lodge’s The Year of Henry James I walked along a beach dotted with stones riddled by long, narrow, twisting holes. Eventually one lay at my feet which, immediately and impactfully, I knew mattered to me. Egg-shaped and egg-sized, its one end had an eggshell-smooth encapsulating surface whilst the other had that tunnelled, complex, open nature. Within seconds I treasured it, a symbol satisfying a previously absent or unrecognized desire. It complemented the blade-heart/Great-Space moment. There the tiny synchronistic touch-point evoked its vast space-time context; here the ‘eggshell’ bespoke cosmic oneness yet the ‘unshelled’ end suggested an infinitude of interconnected intricacy within.

Figure 12: Christa’s cosmic egg-stone
Thought-responses I experienced vis-à-vis this egg-stone included a curious question. Was its initial impact a ‘knowing’ which ‘gave’ me the stone with which I then evolved a symbolic relationship, or had a subconscious concept or symbol-desire already ripened within me which the egg-stone synchronistically fulfilled?

I showed the egg-stone at the next PhD-group meeting. Whilst personal responses were (as ever) diverse, one colleague’s first angle of vision had him seeing a skull with two clear eye-sockets. I had already met an impressive two-eyed symbol that day, and before me on the table lay Therapy Today, its cover a cartoon-face with two big eyes. I experienced this as possibly a multiple-resonance pointer – had I not explored it I would have felt unworthy, having wasted an opportunity for both opening to connection and/or testing it.

I found the cartoon-face article which opened thus: Americans are a ‘positive’ people…… expatriate writers like Henry James…… wrestled with and occasionally reinforced this stereotype……. This affords me opportunity to own an observation and a question. The article’s rapid mention of Henry James whilst my current reading was The Year of Henry James ‘slid’ into my mind so seamlessly that initially I didn’t perceived their twoness, seeing no connection not because there was none but because it was ‘too right’, giving the impression of there being just one thing. On noticing later I thought, given debate about over-reporting of coincidences due to false-positives, let false-negatives also enter the frame.

Vis-à-vis the PhD group, I explained that for me the egg-stone symbolized both interconnected multum in parva, and my daunting thesis – however might I encompass my research’s burgeoned interlacings as the ‘eggshell’ held the tunnel-mazed stone? I ended by raising my hands and eyes heavenwards in (prayerful?) fun: please grant me one or two more synchronicities to round this chapter-in-progress out and off.

After the meeting I went to sink into a campus-bistro sofa with coffee, opening Lodge’s book again. I found him also grappling with book-shaping problems, helped by Henry James quotes like:

Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so.

(James, quoted in Lodge 2007,28)

Lodge himself presently comments:

The human mind demands pattern, order, cohesion and a certain degree of closure in narrative discourse, and can only occasionally be teased into accepting a (departure from this)…… Readers bring such expectations to non-fictional……… narratives (too)………. The historian or biographer describes a circle which contains the facts he considers necessary for a proper understanding of his subject, and excludes an infinity of other connected facts. Skillful writers…….. give their narratives a satisfying form………

(ibid 30)
This thrilled, amused and relaxed me. Here, already, was another synchronicity such as I had just publicly requested, encouraging me with tutoring and companionship (from James, Lodge and ‘it all’) for the thesis-forming problem I had just linked to my ‘geometry of my own’, my egg-stone.

I was glad also to receive a broader companionship-in-writing from my full reading of *The Year of Henry James*, Lodge’s autobiographical account of the genesis, composition and reception of his prior novel, *Author, Author*, concerning certain events in James’s life. He excuses writing about himself in terms I really relate to:

> Such an undertaking obviously risks seeming narcissistic or presumptious……… It seemed to me, however, a story worth telling because it had several curious and unusual features, notably the nearly simultaneous publication of several other novels about or inspired by Henry James, a phenomenon which stirred up considerable interest and speculation………

(ibid xi)

*The Year of Henry James* relates multi-novel coincidences in the publication world, more intimate coincidences in meetings between some of those novels’ authors, and linking moments along Lodge’s own path. For example his first chance meeting with Jamesian author Colm Toibin had occurred years before. Both travelling the Santiago de Compostella pilgrimage route for research purposes, they happened to sit, as strangers, at the same canteen table. Toibin described it thus:

> I looked at one (man) and was sure I knew him from somewhere…… he had glasses and straight hair, he was in his late forties. Suddenly I realized who he was.

> ‘What did Chad’s family make their fortune from in Henry James’s “The Ambassadors”?’ I asked him.

> ‘No one knows,’ he replied. He did not seem surprised by the question.

> ‘But there’s a solution in your first novel’, I said.

> ‘In my second novel’, he corrected me.

> ‘You’re David Lodge,’ I said, and he agreed that he was.

(ibid 41)

Lodge comments on this after years and the flurry of James novels have passed:

> Note that the very first utterance Colm Toibin addressed to me was an abstruse question about Henry James. To use a currently fashionable formula: how weird is that?

(ibid 41)

As to resonances between moments on Lodge’s own path, these two quotes from his *The Year of Henry James* give an example. The first starts as Lodge, having contributed to a literary event in Rye, retires to James’ old house where he has been invited to stay overnight.

> And so to bed – in Henry James’s bedroom! …….. the panelled bedroom…… known as the King’s Room since George I slept there in 1726, having been shipwrecked in a storm on nearby Camber Sands………..

(ibid 27)
Years later, having written *Author, Author*, Lodge returned to the area to give a public reading, he and his wife this time being invited to overnight elsewhere:

*The wind rose in the night, and was still blowing next morning, gusting to gale force. …… I took Mary on a tour……. We headed back to Rye along the coast road that runs below the sea wall at Camber Sands and noticed a crowd of people gathered on the beach above our heads, all gazing at something……. When we……. joined them we saw an astonishing sight: a fair-sized cargo ship was stranded high and dry on the beach……. as if a giant hand had plucked it out of the sea and plonked it down like a child’s toy on the pebbles……. It was on this very beach that George I had been shipwrecked in 1726, and from which he had been brought to Rye to shelter in Lamb House. The connectedness of things I encountered in the course of my Jamesian project was a constant source of wonder.*

(ibid 91-92)

As to my own project, my acceptance of the Lodge book that chance presented (and prior resonances highlighted) beside the library maps flowered into ‘meeting’ an eloquent mind with experiences akin to mine but other ‘takes’ to dialogue with – a surprising, stimulating ‘tutorial’ gift!

One difference between myself and Lodge as encountered in *The Year of Henry James* is that, whereas my mind’s propensity is to think curiously about what such events might signify and to produce hypotheses and illuminations, Lodge seems a purer phenomenologist.

He reports James abhorring the notion of any *postmortem exploiter* of himself and considering *launching, by provision in my will, a curse not less explicit than Shakespeare’s own on any such as try to move my bones* (ibid 39). Thus the modern-day author Heyns, whose Jamesian manuscript came too late in the flurry offered to publishers, was prompted to suspect, as yet another letter of rejection arrives, that James’s curse is taking effect……. Lodge’s own *Author, Author* was an unlucky book, yet he writes:

*No, I do not feel that I have been cursed, but rather that by daring to write imaginatively about Henry James I entered a zone of narrative irony such as he himself loved to create, especially in his wonderful stories……. about writers and the literary profession……. I became – we all became, Colm Toibin, Michiel Heyns and I – characters in a Jamesian plot. Consider, for example, that comical convergence in the sanctum of Lamb House of three writers all secreting works-in-progress about its distinguished former owner. Could anything be more Jamesian? It was, to use a (Jamesian) phrase, ‘as queer as fiction, as farce……’*

(ibid 39)

I liked Lodge’s idea of entering a zone via engagement – of irony in his case, but of what in mine? I pondered several concepts, rejecting each as too narrow. Then I got it – I had known it all along! By engaging with synchronicity *et al* I entered a zone of further synchronicity *et al*. So, then, Lodge’s case and mine both partook of self-referentiality and, as I experience it, intelligent wit. Furthermore Lodge’s book synchronistically suited my research twice over, through its topics and its academic ‘tutoring’ – but I wouldn’t have found it by normal searching as Lodge never mentions ‘synchronicity’ therein.
Nor does he ever directly consider whether more than mere chance is happening. However his words twice hint fleetingly at his stance. Having reported Heyns’s wondering if ‘James’s curse is taking effect’ he writes:

…….. and if I were of a superstitious nature I might experience some uneasiness myself on this score, since I certainly feel that ‘Author, Author’ has been an unlucky book. (ibid 39)

He implies that he is not superstitious. However, elsewhere he relates how, when well into writing Author, Author, he discovered a neighbourhood couple to possess (through their interest in Oscar Wilde) artefacts like old theatre programmes providing elusive Jamesian information he needed. Lodge writes:

It was an extraordinary and (I thought) auspicious coincidence to find this invaluable research resource at the corner of our street. (ibid 63)

Here he seems to admit to some optimistic kind of superstition. I find this a sweet example of human dual-mindedness around Lady Luck (‘what airy-fairy twaddle’ say, but at another time ‘it was meant to be’).

My own cognitive rag-bag became evident when pondering Lodge’s ‘connectedness of things (as a) constant source of wonder’ alongside his never mentioning synchronicity plunged me unexpectedly into a maelstrom of vagaries and discrepancies, stuckness and swirl, floundering and fumble wherein any clearer thought or image arising was so welcome. Recounting it honours the heuristic value of acknowledging the researcher’s essence integrated with their experiencing of the phenomenon, depicting an indwelling-to-illumination process of vividness. Stripped from my flounderings, the main clearer bits, put vernacularly as I thought them, processed like this:

- Why should Lodge mention synchronicity? He describes no ‘bingo!’ moments of strikingly matching things happening together, like Jung’s famous scarab. Nor Jung’s predicitive subcategory either.

- No, Lodge describes something more like what I’ve been calling flow – themes recurring in various guises, a saga of resonances, that sort of thing.

- So I’ve been sloppily saying ‘synchronicity’ – me of all people, when I’ve criticised people like Chopra (2003) and gullible New Agers for over-broadening what they’ll call synchronicity, devaluing the concept.

- I knew I would reach having to say what I mean by flow, dextro tempore, timelinesses and other words I’ve used with un-PhD-like vagueness, having to call things something to even get going.
This is it, dear – and saying what you mean requires knowing what you mean.

Heavens, what do I mean? It’s all too big and complex to get my head around. But wait – that thing I chanced to read in a charity shop...... aah, in a book of Castanada selections...... he said it took him ages to grasp what the Mexican shamen were trying to teach him because he lacked fitting ‘cognitive units’ to think with...... phew, that's at least something I can relate to right now.

But now what? I’m probably lacking loads of cognitive units, given all the varied happenings of my saga – far bigger than Lodge’s which takes his whole book to describe! Help! ........ I need an analogy!

Oh, that’s right! An image that holds it all – what relief that would bring! And if it could help tease things out more, plus communicate with others, those would be great bonuses.

So what should it capture? During my saga ‘bingo’ synchronicities have happened, and so have these ‘flow’ things, and I don’t think they’re totally distinct phenomena but sort of part of one continuum or domain.

Can I justify that? Some participant encounters which neither of us felt to be disjointed did involve both, so for now that’s reasonable.

I keep imagining a sea with cross-currents that slap into each other, humping up the water and spray. Maybe if that’s like a ‘bingo’ synchronicity, then other things the sea can be or do like (pulling you with) undertows or (delighting you with) dancing ripples are maybe like these other flows, timelinesses and whatnot.

Would that speak to others though – or might someone else, hearing it, imagine something better? I phone William. He isn’t in but another friendly academic gives me some time, her quick impression being ‘that’s cool’. Good – but that doesn’t mean it’s right....... except...... I am happy that it gets the sheer magnitude, diversity and fluidity of the thing.

But hang on Christa. Aren’t you wriggling out via an analogy rather hastily? Maybe the cognitive units are there in others’ work – look for them. Yeah......... but......... I’ve read about eighty synchronicity papers and none discussed synchronicity as party to some ‘sea’ or ‘flow’ or anything. So at least at the angle I’m coming from, that linking seems fresh.

But what about other disciplines – theology, say, with its chi and tao etcetera? Fair point, but doesn’t theology speak more of general principles? I’ve lived through human-scale incidents – I’m trying to tease out the devils and delights in the details.
And hey, Lodge is a knowledgeable professor, and his publishers must surely be widely read. They think his tale (so comparable to mine) note-worthily unusual, but drop no cognitive units. Just circumstantial evidence, but even so.

So back to that provisional sea analogy. It lightens my heart – self-empathy around coping with that complex, hidden-depths vastness. But my heart sinks too. Honestly, the tasks of sussing out and expressing what saga-incidents maybe relate to which sea-behaviours!

Perhaps I have read about this sort of thing but forgotten. Try scanning *The Transpersonal* (Rowan 2005) and that William Bloom (2001) compendium for starters. First I’ll just open the Bloom and see what comes – ah, a page I margin-marked ages ago:

\
\[\textit{such a question} (about looking at things not in the old 'lens' way of analyzing content into separate parts, but in a 'hologram' way referring to an order of undivided wholeness)\]

\[\textit{cannot be answered immediately in terms of definite prescriptions}\ldots\textit{ Rather, one has to observe the new situation very broadly and tentatively and to 'feel out' what may be the relevant new features}\ldots\]

(Bohm 2001,11)

Thank you! My lifelong feeling that I should explain fully right now rumbled! Naturally sussing takes time!

Now I’m amused! I imagine myself with a tutor-imp on each shoulder – a PhD one whispering don’t try to prove anything, stay self-searching, no hypotheses, and a personal-predeliction-cum-physics-graduate imp whispering what does the ‘sea’ represent, are there laws, test it. But what do I think?

Well, I’m further amused to find I’ve gone full circle, re-noticing Lodge’s demonstration of a way out. *The Year of Henry James* is candid self-depiction of his experiencings, conceptualizations (like ‘zone of irony’) included – follow that model!

So I acknowledge the imps-that-came but hold my course, neither forcing an analogy to do more than it can (yet?), nor quashing the images, analogies or hypotheses that arise unforced within me.

I reassert my experiencings of ‘bingo’ synchronicities, of a ‘sea’ of flow, resonances, timelinesses and so on, and of sensing them to be parts of one continuum or domain.

Sea experiences:

Surrender-version heuristics’ indwelling often is arduous (Djuraskovic and Arthur 2010). I felt relief from both the releasing act of writing through that Lodge-triggered confusion, and then having its
Those questions travelled with me (though mostly as background) when, the next day, obligations necessitated a bus-ride into Lakeland’s heart and then a long fell-walk. I had just started considering sea-currents again as the bus turned a corner, surprising me with a ship (on a pub-sign) raised on clashing waves – there in the landlocked dale, which made me smile!

Later, breaking my fell-walk for sandwiches, I started the book I had chosen to bring mostly for its smallness and lightness. I discovered Dostoyevsky prefacing The Gentle Spirit (1996) with apology for its confused nature, portraying a character faced with new circumstances who:

\[\text{has not yet managed to collect his thoughts} \ldots \ldots \text{he tries to make some sense of what has happened, to ‘get things into focus’} \ldots \ldots \text{he contradicts himself} \ldots \ldots \text{both in terms of logic and of emotion} \ldots \ldots \text{now (he) talks to himself, now he addresses an invisible listener} \ldots \ldots \text{That is how it always is in reality.}\]

(ibid 1-2)

My smiling again, at its resonance to my indwelling, partook of recognizing a dear friend’s trait – how like synchronistic flow to give timely comments.

This ship and this preface enable exploration of the relative powers I feel in diverse coincidences and/or the power I give them. I enjoyed the up-raised waves being outwardly there in tune with my inner musing, but at a strong-coincidence rather than clinching-synchronicity level. After all, ship pub-signs aren’t rare, the watery upheave was less dramatic than I had been imagining, and so on. Imagining myself-who-experienced-it enthusing to discerning-me or somebody else, as if it had been a bulls-eye backing my synchronicity-sea model, I sense a ‘hmmm’ of devil’s-advocate doubt.

But I experienced the preface as well into the synchronicity class. My felt sense likened having a companion thinker with kindred concerns arrive most timely and fulfillingly. The match extends beyond Dostoyevsky presenting an erratic ‘psychological sequence’ (like my Lodge-responses sequence) to his bolstering the acceptability of depicting mental confusion by mentioning meritorious precedent (\ldots something of the same sort has been permitted in art\ldots before, for example, Victor Hugo\ldots\ldots) – just as I can now mention Dostoyevsky to bolster mine. So this synchronistic ‘meeting’ empowered me to let my naked process-writing show – or did I relinquish power in letting it sway my decision? I feel there is more to explore around synchronicity and power than one PhD journey can cover.

Let one power issue stand as token. Heuristically I notice myself liking that both my Lakeland-travel questions were quickly ‘answered’. I don’t think, in my tentative model’s terms, that the Dostoyevsky-synchronicity ‘upheave’ made me see the pub-sign wave-clash as higher in retrospect. But I recognize from studying lighter-weight New Age writings, say, that some, having
been wowed by a dramatic synchronicity, may then ‘see’ it everywhere (retrospectively included), abdicating power to (mis-)perceived coincidence in their lives. This is an ethical consideration for dissemination of my research.

My ethical conscience was touched by sea-behaviour shortly after the ship-and-Dostoyevsky journey. One exceptionally still day, whilst rambling beside Morecambe Bay, I paused to admire light-play on the sandbanks and unusually waveless waters in the windless hush. Then a roaring surprised and puzzled me. A stretch of sea-channel hundreds of metres offshore was becoming ‘striped’. The ‘stripes’ rapidly grew tall, soon presenting a ‘Loch Ness monster’ row of twenty-odd equally spaced humps which, whilst retaining their positions, nevertheless reared higher yet until breaking into caps of white spume. A minute later they subsided whilst the roaring faded, but soon another roar announced another ‘Nessie’ arising elsewhere.

This uprearing of standing-wave breakers whenever variables like the undertow’s speed and depth combined into a right set of conditions – this display of nature’s awesome, changeful (and horrifying) power excited me in itself. But there was more: that morning a careful Mungo-talk (about a friend needing help) had concluded with two cards usefully marrying concepts of a horse powerful in its stillness and horses powerfully active. Mungo had instigated a later talk too, which in effect said to me, look out for this: symbolically using a nearby extractor fan alongside cards, it had linked notions of extraction noise and of strong outflow beneath producing results above. By the bay I was now witnessing noisy tidal extraction, the ebbing deep displaying its strength in waves rearing above – ‘white horses’ powerful in their simultaneous still-standingness and roaring activity. The double resonance with the day’s prior Mungo-talks thrilled me, and I experienced satisfying artistry in how it had all come together – a heart-deep glow and wonder that just was, independent of later head-questions about whether ‘an artist’ existed or not.

Right now, as I sit writing this chapter, I notice how organically it is evolving. For example, on starting that bay-story I never imagined its finale would touch on what I now perceive could be categorized as Grand Design. This is typical of my research engagement with ‘the triad’ twice over. Firstly it is ‘from the ground up’, my Mungo-talks and other experiences ‘discussing’ mundane details in my life without ‘top-down’ principles or abstractions being flagged first but only (sometimes) emerging later. Secondly that bay-story exemplifies how if I judiciously follow what ‘the triad’ seems to suggest, whether in wider life or as in writing ‘triad-events’ into this chapter, then a story that hangs together ‘gets authored’ – that’s how I experience it. Furthermore I certainly feel myself to be an individual making personal choices yet the ‘getting authored’ happens, producing a ground-upwards saga begging a top-down title of ‘That involved free will and/or determinism – discuss’.

As to ethics, may that ‘roaring Nessie’ (and terrible undertow) which, in years of bayside walking I had never observed before, symbolize how a domain of magnitude, complexity, power, and potential for rare behaviours can never be assumed to hold no more surprises or dangers. I once
met a woman whose pendant resembled a tarot-image I had studied that morning. Chattily I mentioned this: fearfully she pleaded with me never to even have cards in any room I was in. She had been led a promising path by tarot, following it on and shiningly on until disaster struck. She would say no more except to repeat her pleading, so I know not if she ‘played in delightful waters where eventually a rip-tide battered her’, or if she was swept to a place where she might have learned something valuable but didn’t, or what. As a model a synchronicity-sea bespeaks potential danger (and hackneyed use of sea symbolism could be to the good, being more widely graspable) besides diversity, surprise, depth, power, potential usefulness, subtlety, beauty, trickiness and so on – it gets the vastness of the thing.

If danger may lurk then why go there? My personal answer, born of my experiencings, though multifaceted starts passionately with because it's exhilarating too. A sensible common viewpoint is that if our world has domains or powers which maybe bring dangers and/or benefits, then humankind had better study them – such, indeed, is science. Thank goodness, say, for vulcanologists sufficiently thrilled to ‘go there’, developing our understanding to good effect. I feel blessed with fascination akin to theirs, plus a synchronicity-sea that ‘wants to play with me’. I’ve long symbolized myself as captain of my own ship choosing, discerningly, to heed the reliable crows-nest man (Mungo) with his greater view – it’s neat that that now suits a synchronicity-sea too.

Through this self-searching explicatory writing I have realized my exhilaration is twofold. I relish observing the triad’s creative doings and/or how the synchronicity-sea subtly or boldly moves. But also I love ‘dancing’ with them and their currents, for the enlivening ride and, I now realize, my sense of mastery-so-far. I may struggle with PhD knowledge (around references, say) but love developing know-how through mutual responsiveness with ‘my’ phenomena, and (even though it’s sometimes tortuous – that’s how I’m taught more) overall it feels great!

However much I know what I’m talking about, my knowing how to discuss it is infant (but developing). For instance, I previously deemed the timely ship-sign a ‘strong coincidence’, but now reflect that by Jung’s lights it was synchronistic – a meaningful ‘spark’ between inner preoccupation and outer world. Am I then muddling meaningfulness-strength and unlikeliness-strength (and maybe other things I haven’t yet noticed enough for even provisional naming) in this and other aspects of my phenomena. Lack of sewn-up conceptualization is fitting in edgy research: the thing is to proceed via floundering with vigilance.

**Information:**

Indeed, indwelling this chapter’s experiencings awakened a pairing of issues in my mind. Others have often described directly feeling energies around situations, whereas I experience learnings connecting with or challenging prior cognitions energize me secondarily instead. Pondering also that synchronicities feature things material (like pub signs) and energetic (like roaring Nessie), somehow ‘what about information’ occurred to me – is ‘information’ a pertinent lens for considering
this stuff? After all, cosmologists now debate information as a fundamental like or even prior to matter and energy (Bekenstein 2003; Stonier 1996). And ‘library angels’ bring information, don’t they?

Next a ‘TV angel’ entered this fray with a documentary (Austin 2010) showing a new human sense (the researchers’ term) being learned by volunteers wearing ‘feel-space belts’. The belt encircled their waist with mobile-phone vibrators, each either vibrating or still depending on the volunteer’s orientation to the earth’s magnetic field as sensed by another device in the belt. Cycling around town in their belts, volunteers reported their earth-orientation sensing becoming part of their navigating, but they couldn’t verbally explain how.

Watching this I became super-alert. These volunteers moving within the selfsame world as onlookers yet also in a hidden domain of extra information could be a fruitful template, helping me grasp my experiencing better through comparison to theirs. Certainly I reached better-verbalized ideas around types of synchronicity-engagement. Some synchronicities are received passively (albeit actively valued), as against ‘my’ synchronicity-sea ‘asking’ that I more actively navigate it (enmeshed with navigating life’s ordinary information too). Between those extremes are diverse, nuanced others which can, also, veritably transmute over time.

Whilst younger I experienced occasional passive but valued synchronicities. Nowadays my active responding to synchronicities which ‘want’ it involves self-searching and/or action and/or head-stuff. Isn’t that suspect? Wasn’t the scarab synchronicity’s merit, say, that it jolted Jung’s patient out of too much head stuff? Am I working too hard? What of wonder and intuitive trust? Well, heuristics wants my experiencing. Explicating it now, I become aware that my sensings of which events to ‘just’ resound with and which to variously act and/or cogitate upon seems to work, feels satisfying, and leads on.

I also realize that (in synchronicity-sea terms) when smaller ‘ripples’ seem perhaps significant or perhaps not, if life allows I try heeding them, curious to plumb the synchronicity-sea’s characteristics or its very existence. Similarly I follow through when perhaps-synchronicities ‘ask for’ longer thought-train processes (unless life’s press precludes it), and like it when experience-then-cogitation process fans from or dovetails into greater-scale flow.

Loving things:

A dovetailing flow started during my sea-model mulling phase when, my mind having gone blank on a walk, a memory abruptly returned. For years I had carried in my purse a quote which above all others gave me goosebumps. The lines by Isaac Newton run:

I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only as a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself by now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

(Cassirer 1943)
Glad of its return, I wondered if it would feed my heuristic incubation, or if some link might emerge.

My subsequent Mungo-talk sparked thoughts of the satisfaction of relating with another who also bothers, at which my pendulum swung differently, indicating that I should dowsed out words from the deck’s booklet. As I innerly ‘spoke’ the card’s entry, the pendulum swung to ‘yes’ only for ‘leo’ and ‘pet’, instantly recalling the drama-documentary screened the previous evening. H G Wells and his mistress, Rebecca West, pet-named each other ‘Jaguar’ and ‘Panther’. Having both sea-model and Newton quote around for me I asked, ‘the scene of her on the beach?’ getting a ‘yes’. Gist-wise I continued, the pendulum concurring at each step: ‘but unlike Newton in his quote, she threw stones into the sea’ …… ‘she engaged with it’ …… ‘the synchronicity-sea desires my engagement’. This self-referentially dovetailed into my ‘plumb the synchronicity-sea’ and ‘dovetail’ paragraph above.

Here (self-)scepticism could say that process just went where I wanted it to. But heuristically I notice my credence favouring the hypothesis of involvement of things-beyond-me, it seeming consilient with other experiencings. Firstly I (and participants) observe the pendulum responding finely. Secondly my trust grows when dowsed-out words initially bamboozle me but satisfying fit comes after further steps, sometimes pendulum-indicated (like researching words’ roots) and sometimes not (like dowsed-out words being ‘answered’ on the radio). Thirdly the dowsing endpoint, besides making sense itself (‘the synchronicity-sea desires my engagement’) may loop back to amplify, nuance or counterbalance earlier notions in the process (‘the satisfaction of relating with another who also bothers’).

I was taught dowsing-out communication-enrichment and other methods by ‘my’ phenomena. Mungo et al bothering thus with me makes me feel happy, valued and even personally liked. True, deciphering it often involves ‘head-stuff’, but I enjoy that, feeling warmly well-met by another’s spark whether intellectual or artistic, and qualities of expression whether elegant or questing – notwithstanding uncertainty about what Mungo is. Experiencing Mungo-talks as high-quality stimulating and/or caring relating which responds to my innermost thoughts, impulses and feelings, I feel loved for whom I truly fully am, which is profound. ‘Deep but light’ comes to me now.

This warm, sparky, deep-light relationship is one reason I continue my with-the-triad research despite its high costs. Mungo-talks can take significant time and energy, especially those involving perplexing phases. Also the phenomena and their processing-demands turn up erratically, albeit with kind timing or, if I’m under duress, with potential to help rather than pester – unless the pestering teaches. Nevertheless, unpredictably consuming they are, so this research has meant foregoing ‘proper’ work, ‘adequate’ money and ‘decent’ home maintenance, including for my children. I deemed them better off with Mungo et al helping around family problems despite the scruffy home and lifestyle – a powerfully telling experiencing.
Remember, remember:

But what of other motivations? Beyond normal reasons like ethical obligation to participants, a sense of teleology draws me.

As I write the night beyond my skylight is ablaze with fireworks, fortuitously referencing my theme. November the Fifth, and I remember how the gunpowder plotters, finding certain circumstances about Parliament’s cellar ideal for their purpose, interpreted this ‘sign’ as indicating God on their side. So a sense of destiny can be mistaken – yet a future-ward sense does sometimes suffuse me now, and I can entertain the idea of a teleological cosmos more. Having experienced flows of themed synchronicities and confluences of resonant triad experiences, I heuristically notice myself feeling and/or intellectually pondering on directionality or purpose around them – not least because heeding them (though not them alone – like the feel-space cyclists) generally gets me to good places I would otherwise not have reached.

My heuristically developed future-ward sense likens intuitively deducing where a river-borne leaf is likely to go, albeit knowing many factors could change that. Apropos myself being borne on currents of triad experiences (enmeshed with mundane choices) I know teasing out how my liking the seeming goal might affect the currents themselves is beyond me now – but I notice it interesting me. Experientially I know the currents could drop me (whether through something’s intelligent choice or otherwise), but also when it seems I’m being carried a nonsensical way it generally becomes a roundabout route to somewhere good that couldn’t be reached directly.

November the Sixth, and switching on the radio I chance upon a Hindu teacher-theologian saying that this year Bonfire Night coincided with Diwali:

(The light-festival’s fireworks are sent):

*into the sky ........ to inform the heavens about the aspirations and needs of those of earth....... As Hindus we believe expressing good wishes for others does bring subtle and imperceptible beneficial outcome.*

(Akhandadhi Das 2010)

How similar yet different to ‘throwing stones’ into a dialogue-desiring synchronicity-sea. So now prayer joins teleology alongside other notions amidst the not-knowings and cogitations in my researching mind. Am I being borne towards greater mystery? It feels intriguing and good – but I want common-or-garden grounding too.

Counterbalancing its nebulous effects, synchronicity sometimes hands me something pragmatically down-to-earth. For example, a looming difficult situation had me wanting a novel I was sure to like as refuge. Visiting a neighbour, I did a double-take on seeing the perfect answer lying in full view: *Wow, so David Lodge has published another novel; yes please, I’d love to borrow that!* Lodge again! So relaxing....... and then so pertinent in my process. His academic characters sometimes
make learned but reader-friendly points like this comment on prayer which, with some word changes, can challenge triad-heeding too:

*But the biggest problem of all was the idea of a supreme being who intervened....... to reward some petitioners and deny others manifestly no less deserving. What was surprising was that religious people were so resourceful in rationalizing and reconciling themselves to these disappointments and contradictions that they persisted in petitionary prayer.*

(Lodge 2009, 113)

Indeed. For example, ‘Andrew’ was a rare friend I could explore my early, agnostic-shocking synchronicities and Mungo-experiences with. Our mutual friendship deepened further through touching EHEs we shared, but only I became smitten. It’s a long story, but the key thing here is that Mungo – who was demonstrably and reliably helpful regarding everything else – consistently assured me that Andrew would heal from certain damages and fall for me too. For agonizing years I was on a roller-coaster of alternating hope and endurance, staying there partly due to Mungo. Lodge’s character’s observation (tweaked) essentially applies.

But the story reached a remarkable halt. One day Andrew, mishearing something I said, became atypically outraged and quit our friendship. Two synchronicities had directly led to the fateful misapprehension, and my smitten state suddenly simply ended, completely and peacefully. It was phenomenal, with a sense of a trial involving many learnings having run its course. Regarding it all – the initial falling, the enduring, the learnings and the release – my deep self feels (questions about determinism and personal agency notwithstanding) that ‘it was meant to be’.

Thus scales mysteriously merge – were the misapprehension-causing synchronicities just brief events or features of something greater? My lived immersion in my phenomena brings such wondering musings within my heart and mind. The seeming reach of it all! When flows of events encourage wider-angle apprehensions ‘it’ (and my writing) maybe seem more nebulous, but also sometimes tremendous.

Remembering my trials of unrequited love and of depressed cognitive dysfunction, I know journeying with such as ‘my’ triad may cross dreadful terrain. I experience concern: what if one were laid thus low and then, by whatever spirit or mechanism in a cosmos we far from fully understand, abandoned, stuck or locked there? Literature-reading suggests (often by what isn’t said) that people trying good-heartedly to develop themselves don’t get beset by, say, malevolent energies. But there’s no certain total overview – it would feel ethically (and methodologically) wanting to conceal this concern my mind experiences.

**Closings:**

Meanwhile, finding companionship with ‘my’ triad good, I continue in both receptive and active modes. Around the time geared-up synchronicity-experiencing and Mungo entered my life I came to prize symbolic objects – holding one fitting for the moment, say, felt nourishing. I still use them,
in ways superficially resembling others’ prayers, magic or psychosynthesis, but that are my responses or invitations to currents within – or maybe co-creation with – the synchronicity-sea.

For example sometimes I choose to wear a pendant which, to me, symbolizes something desired. Today I felt apropos this chapter ‘it’s time to draw a line around it’. Rummaging amongst my pendants, the pool-blue glass pebble rimmed by plain pewter immediately felt right, expressing to me (and allowing me to express to the cosmos?) my desire for clear closure and open mystery combined.

Later, whilst meditating, I recalled pausing by Potters Tarn yesterday, soothed by rising fish’s ripple-rings and reflected drifting clouds. My intellect’s eye saw it afresh, recognizing its fittingness as symbol for this chapter which cannot include all my synchronistic experiencings as a pool cannot contain a sea. Yet hopefully the chapter suggests ever-changing moreness, as the ripple-rings and reflected clouds bespoke the depth’s life-web and vaster sky. Only later did I notice, and enjoy, its sweet echo in the pool-blue pendant.

So are these pendants prompts to my subconscious, my higher or simply my opportunistic self; or prayers; or stones thrown into or time-swirled by the synchronicity-sea: my questions run ever on. But I did the Potters-Tarn fell-walk despite time-and-work pressure, from prior experience that battling beyond a certain brain-tightness brings diminishing returns whereas soul-space refreshes flowing. So it did, bringing moreover a chanced-upon symbolic moment which, gathering this chapter, reduced my work-pressure. Symbols, I find, are deeply vital to my journey.

Another extraordinary experience has just happened which wants (my anomalous sensing says) to be included. I have described chancing upon a just-right blessing for my cousin’s funeral at a circle-dancing meet. On my next return to that circle-dancing meet, a bad foot was likely to cause my frequent sitting out so taking a short-story book seemed sensible. Rummaging at home I rediscovered The Seeds of Time (Wyndham 1959). The very first dance was to music I loved. This time it had lyrics too, the last lines striking to my core.

*Life is a mystic spiral,
……………………….……………
*So dance the mystic spiral and scatter the seeds of time.*

Journalling those words just now I was touched again, this time to a moment’s weeping so deep and wondrous as to feel sacredly blessed somehow (Anderson 1996), then abruptly it was gone and I was simply myself feeling my just-me level of wondering again.

**Whole-sequence experiencings:**

Having considered my experiencings singly or in small clusters, I now attend to my whole-sequence experiencing. The following is not classic-academic reflection but HSSI-appropriate
wider-angle first-person experiencing, apprehended as flow occurred or through subsequent heuristic processes.

I experienced this chapter’s sequence-as-lived as a co-created, co-operative ‘dance’ between synchronicity, Mungo, EHEs and myself, including early ‘seed-events’ resurfacing later within the chapter. I find myself curious as to whether ‘seeds of time’ have been scattered for beyond this chapter too. I have experienced enjoyable qualities, like nifty plaiting of different theme-threads such that the chapter-cord holds; themes of importance (like death and cosmological speculation), and lyricality. I feel glad and grateful to have experienced such good flow. I appreciate some links having come via other people (e.g. Grave Tie coincidence; two-eyed skull), bolstering my acceptance of the whole.

I feel as if synchronicity tutored me about its own diversity, ‘musicality’ and pitching to circumstances through this sequence. My sense of it revealing or discussing itself was strongest in its bringing me (through Lodge’s return) to my synchronicity-sea creative-synthesis model, followed by the development-catalyzing pub-sign, roaring-Nessies and Leo-Pet resonances.

Reflecting on how different this chapter’s evolution has been from the synchronicity-typology I first envisaged a phrase ‘hits me between the eyes’, and I boggle at not having realized it before. Triad experiences came, making me depict a flow of organically braiding processes that are no longer bolt-on phenomena to my life but, like the pca, a way of being (Rogers 1980). Overarchingly I now experience myself, like the feel-space cyclists, gladly living in an expanded world.
**Immersion in Literature, Texts and Experiences 1: Synchronicity**  
*(with Methodological Interludes)*

Proceeding from ‘experiencing synchronicity’ to engagement with synchronicity literature facilitates sensibly flowing cogitation. This chapter’s positioning here is also methodologically sound albeit unusual vis-à-vis classic research. Customarily a would-be researcher explores literature beforehand, discovering their topic’s overall field and knowledge gaps which they might fruitfully address. However, not knowing until my research-as-planned was largely done that synchronicity would merit co-equal topic-status, my literature search was naturally post-hoc. I could in any case not have commanded which knowledge gaps my synchronicity experiencings would address – I could only follow synchronicity’s ‘blowing where it listed’.

Keeping my literature-engagement’s actually experienced post-hoc position within this thesis too has verisimilitudinous merit, because it matters valuably that during my earliest PhD years (from 2003 on) I was ignorant even of academic synchronicity-literature’s existence. Though hard to imagine from today’s powerful-internet standpoint, it is understandable – I had no humanities background, no computer (or spare cash), scant IT-literacy, and unexpected family-care responsibilities preventing visits to my distant university (monthly PhD-colleague meetings excepted). My study log confirms my early-years ignorance, my first Jungian tastes, say, coming through holiday-reading *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung 1977) in August 2004, and *Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle* (Jung 1972/1952) in November 2007. Thus I experienced many synchronicities and my responses thereto quite innocently, untrammelled by knowledge of synchronicity theories or academic papers and therefore independently thinking new ‘loose’ thoughts (Bateson 2000). Naïve yet concentrated first-person synchronicity-experiencing is a knowledge gap I inhabited – one, moreover, which in these hugely more computer-connected times seems unlikely to recur.

It is also methodologically relevant to consider the roles, types and positionings of literature engagement in HSSI’s leashless processes and theses which, making no claim of contributing to generalized knowledge of their topics, offer in-depth first-person knowledge-discovery instead. For example, Sela-Smith’s research addressing her obesity problems progressed via necessarily individualistic self-search to an individualistic curative root-cause, whereas no public-domain information had ever previously helped her (Sela-Smith 2001). Consequently obesity literature barely impacted her HSSI process so she presents only a brief background whereas, as pioneering critic of Moustakas and HSSI instigator, her literature engagement principally concerns knowledge's types, developments and resistances thereto, demonstrating her competence whilst serving appropriate purpose.

Just as Sela-Smith presents her struggles with Moustakian heuristics’ dichotomy and her subsequent HSSI development, so too does Meents struggle in trying to follow Moustakas and then Sela-Smith, eventually developing her own individualistic methodology-application which ‘seemed
consistent with the intent of HSSI’ whilst in certain necessary respects being ‘not the same as Sela-Smith’s HSSI (application)’ (Meents 2006, 79). Consequently Meents’ literature also voluminously engages methodologically-related issues, whereas apropos her self-search question – How do I experience intuition? (ibid 93) – she simply indicates that her heuristic immersion included reading widely about intuition. Both Sela-Smith and Meents report their topics’ literature only briefly, it being incidental to their inquiries into not the topics per se but their individualistic experiencings thereof, whilst both search and discuss methodologically-related literature widely but not in everything-lumped-together chapters. Instead, asserting that their very dissertations explicate their research-evolution processes by spelling out their entwined methodological-application developments and topic-related learnings, both position literature sections wherever true to those developments-as-lived or appropriate.

Time has moved on, and now (2017) more HSSI’s have both been researched and become accessible to literature-searchers. It is evident that, like myself, some others wrestled significantly with Moustakian discrepancies before finding and considering Sela-Smith (Caro 2007, Barre 2015). Studying Sela-Smith’s thesis (2001) I find four main HSSI-principles distinguishing it from Moustakas’s (1990) application – a determined re-adopting of (1) leashless researching, (2) the I-who-feels, and (3) lone experiencing (no participants) of a story(ies)-that-transforms, plus the addition of (4) resistance to some aspect(s) of self-search being expected. Subsequent researchers have varied in which Sela-Smithian principles they have particularly eschewed or espoused (leashless ‘nose-following’ (Meents 2006) and story(ies)-that-transform in my case), and some have hybridized HSSI with, say, dialogic/dialectic integration (Ozertugrul 2017) and systematic self-observation (White 2008). Nevertheless all have done ‘what it says on the tin’ i.e. self-search and, as Ferendo says, while (we)…… have gone off on various tangents, a careful reading of Moustakas indicates that this is precisely what he would hope for (Ferendo 2004, 312). HSSI’s various tangents include literature being selected and/or positioned not formulaically but in accordance with the overarching principle of doing whatever promises best illumination (Douglass and Moustakas 1985) – not ‘anything goes’ but discerning responsiveness to the evolving individualistic task in hand.

I return now to my synchronicity-literature engagement, which evolved through stages. Firstly, having reached recognizing synchronicity as co-topic and synchronicity-papers’ very existence, I aimed to explore their whole terrain, keen both to learn and to compare my experiencings to others’ yardsticks and ideas. I wanted this academically, methodologically (reading being a heuristic-immersion method (Moustakas 1990)), and personally (to, say, either lose my wow! synchronicity-response through sincerely considering explanations, or still feel it standing honestly firm).

Literature concerning synchronicity-experiencing comes from unusually many fields (ranging widely from, say, physics (Peat 2007) to spirituality (Main 2007b) to management (Jaworski 1996) to bereavement (Hill 2011) so my literature-haul was large. Immersing in ‘conversation’ with authors, my responses – whether resonant, disagreeing, or otherwise sparked – increased my apprehension of my experiencing of synchronicity. In addition, my reading brought not only academic ‘discussants’ and immersion-‘dialogue’ as expected but also surprise continuations of my
previous chapter’s process, namely in-the-moment synchronicities. These ‘butted into’ literature-Christa ‘conversations’ (making them three-cornered), which I experienced as synchronicity enhancing the disclosure and/or discussion of its own aspects.

Capturing so many pertinent fields and my experience-discovering responses thereto generated a 23000-word chapter, clearly too much for this thesis. Obliged to prune, I shall select those literature issues around which I was actually affected by synchronicities arising (in actuality or memory) during the search itself because, besides portraying point-by-point experiencings of mine, they furthermore played into an overarching apprehension which surprised me on reflection at chapter’s end. The lead-up to that apprehension will work better if I arrange this chapter less according to literature’s topic-areas and more according to synchronistic-impact areas as I experienced them.

Sketching certain recurringly pertinent benchmarks beforehand will help.

**Jungian and other benchmarks:**

Carl Jung coined the very term ‘synchronicity’ to cover a variety of meaningful coincidences which had impacted either himself or his patients, thereby enabling presentation and debate about such events. Since his first declaration thereof in 1951 (Jung 1976/1951) literature about synchronicity referencing his ideas about it has ever grown. A basic grasp of his synchronicity-related conceptualizations is therefore seminal background to my literature engagement.

Jung considered synchronicity both psychologically and metaphysically. Apropos the latter, he and Nobel-physicist Pauli together proposed that synchronicities evidenced an ‘acausal connecting principle’ just as fundamental in the universe as causality, space-time and energy (Jung 1972/1952). Furthermore, synchronicity’s ‘bridge’ between inner human psyche and external-world event being meaning suggested that materiality is ‘psychoid’ i.e. possessed at depth of a priori meaning.

Apropos psychology, Jung noted synchronicities’ relationship to change, often involving the experiencer’s affect and/or ‘impossible’ stuck situations (ibid 35) such as might constellate archetypes in a person’s psyche. Archetypes, Jung had postulated in light of both observations and his discovery that myths’ motifs recurred globally, were ‘patterns of behaviour’ (ibid 29) ‘inherited as irrepresentable dispositions in the unconscious, the timeless constants of human nature’ (Jaffé 1975,17), i.e. elements within the collective unconscious. Indeed, symbolism including the mythic enhanced many synchronicities’ meaningfulness (as in the scarab-rebirth symbolism in Jung’s seminal case (Jung 1976/1951,511)).

Besides describing his conceptualizations, Jung’s writings also indicate his experiencing and attitudes regarding synchronicities. He knew them to matter and yet be taboo:

*As a……. psychotherapist I have often come up against the phenomena in question and could convince myself how much these experiences meant to my patients. In most cases they were things which people do not talk about for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule. I was*
amazed to see how many people have had experiences of this kind and how carefully the secret was guarded. So my interest in this problem has a human as well as a scientific foundation. (Jung 1972/1952,6).

Jung himself was reluctant to publish partly because synchronicity jarred with prevailing Western notions of causality and positivistic science (Aziz 1990). But after years of exploration and thought he gathered courage to go public, writing *Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle* (1972/1952) wherein he forewarned readers that he would make ‘uncommon demands on (their) open-mindedness and goodwill’, and that there could be ‘no question of a complete description and explanation of these complicated phenomena, but only an attempt to broach the problem’ (ibid 5-6). He spelt out that ‘synchronicity is not a philosophical view but an empirical concept’ (ibid 133) whose ‘inherent quality of meaning produces a picture of the world so irrepresentable as to be quite baffling’ (ibid 134).

Jung values methods of inquiry which, in contrast to specific-question research in restricting laboratory-like conditions, leave ‘Nature to answer out of her fullness’ (ibid 50). When ‘Nature’s answers’ concerning synchronicity bring baffling unthinkability Jung, whilst holding to the empirical ‘answers’, critiques the idea of thinkability itself. His general patient observation-over-theory stance is voiced thus: ‘First I made the observations, and only then did I hammer out my views’ (Jaffé 1975,26); and (regarding interpretation of dreams, which can be synchronistic) ‘I take good care not to juggle it into line with some preconceived theory’ (Jung 1972/1952,122).

Heuristically I note that discovering Jung’s open-to-full-Nature and observation-over-theory stances encouraged me because my naïve synchronicity-research had *de facto* unfolded thus, and such is also my bent.

I must add that there are many other forms of coincidence explorations besides the Jungian (e.g. by Kammerer (Ritter 2010), Koestler (1974), and Beitman (2009)) in which I also immersed.

**Perceiving synchronicities’ effects:**

When, after many months otherwise occupied, I returned to my first huge synchronicity-literature chapter I could see only at-random ways of pruning it, all its synchronicity topic-areas having ‘dialogued’ with me in roughly equal measure with none more clearly warranting being retained. I entered a phase of dwelling with the above conundrum, abetted by renewed methodology-literature engagement, the totality unexpectedly fostering methodological evolution through conscious/tacit/unconscious interplay within me –*a de facto* reflexive heuristic process concerning my heuristics-use itself (Etherington 2004a). Personal-experience illuminations arose which, respecting space-constraints, I explicate sketchily below.

Put broadly, I now consciously perceive that my PhD-time has straddled both my shift from just-spirit-guide to with-synchronicity-too research and, coincidentally, *heuristics’* shift from Moustakas’s application (using third-person protocols) to Sela-Smith’s HSSI-clarification (re-requiring first-person leashlessness). Synchronicity-research catching its actual experiencing needs the latter
methodology’s receptiveness rather than the former’s control so, one could argue, the coincidence of my and methodology’s shifts is itself synchronistic.

Previously however, whilst consciously moving to HSSI methodology, being human I had still retained semi- or unconscious ‘oughts’ from Moustakian and more classic academe (buttressed by my milieu – my small cohort/subculture’ of fellow pre-Sela-Smith student-researchers and supervision). It held, say, that with ‘wackier’ topics like mine, best keep to established methods like Moustakas’s application-protocols (gathering third-person data) and thesis forms (with standard chapters) to avoid ‘over-frightening the horses’.

In my recent indwelling-phase though, discovering newer HSSIs and Sela-Smith’s professorship strengthened my ‘HSSI-companionship’. Now I consciously dared, for example, to innerly counter prior supervision, allowing myself science-analogy support (as Moustakas had with Archimedes) – sometimes freshly-encountered phenomena require new appropriate practices and ideations – imagine, say, electromagnetism and field-theory pioneer Faraday being obliged to proceed using just Newtonian-mechanics terms! An over-strong analogy, maybe, but it helped me snap some sort of cord that had tensioned between my perceived appropriately leashless mode and unperceived (and hence bedevilling) still-held Moustakian/classic rules.

Other illuminations included solider apprehension of (and worry about) perceived difference between my work and others’ concerning which aspects of selfhood ‘count’ in Heuristic Self-Search Inquiry. Put simplistically Sela-Smith, say, had prioritized her I-who-feels and arduously unearthed a ‘taproot’ (my term) of tacitly-held pain from her deep past, whereas my thoughts-arising-me was discovering a ‘mycelium-net’ of responses, mostly to current experiences of myself-in-the-world.

Though there is much to return to here, I became released enough to proceed through consciously recognizing both as first-person explorations of interiority. The same heuristic-process alchemy also brought my related attitude to a penny-drop shift from I’m bodging it to I’m pioneering certain aspects, with much relief and energy release. Such worry-phases in evolving one’s individually appropriate HSSI-path have been reported by others, notably Meents (2006) – HSSI can be gruelling in many ways.

I experience a certain self-referential irony in early heuristics’ encouragement of midstream method-shifts (Douglass and Moustakas 1985) having been followed by Moustakas’s protocols-application (Moustakas 1990), from which some researchers have through struggle midstream-shifted back to midstream-shift allowability, particularly Sela-Smith (2001), Meents (2006) and myself. Interestingly some newer theses relate kindred struggles (Caro 2007, Barre 2015) whilst others’ researchers found HSSI early enough not to get caught (McAindriu 2010, Tweedie 2015). This mix is understandable during HSSI’s nascency.

For strugglers methodology-shifting has naturally interplayed with method-shifting – sometimes a protracted, multi-phased complex process. However my reworking of this very chapter offers a plain exemplum of methodology/method interplay. (Necessary background is that examiners gave my original thesis a ‘resubmit’ decision, this being my second-version thesis.) Through recent
Underneath I apprehended my original-version chapter's classic-rules structure. Thereupon I could restructure it HSSI-appropriately according to a second-order experiencing that over-viewing so many examples had engendered, namely perceiving various in-effect roles of synchronicity – a different but compatible ‘lens’ to that of meaning. Shifting thus I felt clearer, a grumbling sense of fudging HSSI and ‘safer’ modes together falling away – that sensing, indeed, resulting from and being a focussing such as Gendlin (1981) described and Moustakas (1990) considered a core heuristic process.

I perceived in-effect synchronicity-roles in all three sources: literature, my prior experiencing, and in-the-moment synchronicities which had played into writing my huge original chapter. Reminding readers that this immersion-chapter’s purpose is to present first-person experiencing (thoughts-arising and ideations included) whether in response to individual literature-readings and/or events or their patternings, I shall start with a simple case to show readers what I mean.

**Synchronicity supervises:**

An anonymous therapist (in Mansfield 1995) relates how synchronicity steadfastly ‘supervised’ him (my term), since Jung’s book *Aion* had spontaneously to fly off his bookcase during three separate appointments with the same couple before he ‘complied’, thereby reading therein crucial insights regarding both them and himself.

My PhD-reading was also ‘academically supervised’ by a pair of synchronicities ‘querying’ my early-days understanding of university advice saying ‘ignore grey literature’. Firstly, I once sank into a welcome bath after taxing, unrewarding study of an academic paper, taking simply as light relief a ‘naughty’ grey booklet (North 1994). Yet on reading therein:

> Creative projects – especially those that involve benefit to others – often call up these helpful coincidences, as if the universe itself were responding with nudges of encouragement for our efforts.

( Ibid 6)

I felt immediate great relaxation, telling me that North had exactly voiced an aspect of my heuristic experiencing – one I had not yet properly verbalized, partly I think through suppression (it fitted nothing I had academically encountered), there being a ‘phew, it’s OK to say that!’ flavour to my relief.

Secondly, when the postman delivered comedian and Goon Michael Bentine’s autobiographical *Doors of the Mind* (Bentine 1984) I randomly opened it, my eyes first falling upon the…… table shook with a terrific bang inside the wood….. (then news of a bomb killing Bentine’s friend arrives, then….) the…. table again cracked loudly like a pistol shot (Ibid 43). This struck me instantly as a quasi-amalgam of Jung’s twice-detonating bookcase incident whilst arguing with Freud (Jung 1977) and his paranormal knowing of a gunshot suicide (Aziz 1990). I felt excited that Bentine’s book had opened just there. Also I felt as if Jung’s academic credibility were supporting grey-literature’s relevance to my research, back when I was still flummoxed between classic no-grey-literature advice versus the heuristic-immersion any-literature-that-helps requirement.
Synchronicity ‘supervised’ me again later concerning Freudianism. One of my university research colleagues, ‘Sally Flynn’, held a broadly-speaking Freudian, naturalistic you-create-them-yourself view of synchronicities. She expressed exasperation at my awe and/or delight responses, whilst I disliked my strong feelings being empathically ignored. However, later I experienced a synchronicity not with her but referencing her. Later again, whilst top-deck bus-riding in an unfamiliar town, I had just fallen to considering telling her when the bus stopped, the bus-stop-sign in clear view being labelled as at X Street, and below that at Y Avenue such that read downwards it said ‘X Y’, which was ‘Sally Flynn’. Yet later I told her the two-synchronicities tale: her reaction intrigued me (although I may write no more). Personally, though, I was both experientially – and hence more vividly, nuancedly and lastingly – alerted to Freudian ‘takes’, and stimulated to seek and immerse in them (Mayer 2002, Williams 2010a). However I shall not detail that, the point here being my synchronicity-as-supervision experiencing.

I experienced other supervising synchronicities too but, considering thesis-constraints and digestibility, I shall move on now.

**Synchronicities encourage my researching:**

This has been risky research for me both to do in itself and to include within my wider life so synchronistic encouragement, whether practically helpful and/or like cheering from the side-lines, has mattered greatly. A cheering came when, obeying a sudden strange attraction into a shop, I spotted therein a book-title synchronistic for me then. The book itself opened promptly to my hand:

*To illustrate the remarkable law known to all researchers, but not yet acknowledged by science – that when one is becoming interested in a subject, books formerly unknown and unsuspected fly to your hand from everywhere – while I was speculating about Canopus……… there came my way ‘Astronomical Curiosities’………*  

(Lessing 2005,66)

Both the event’s witty self-referentiality (and literature-search bonus) and its coming ‘from’ Nobel-laureate Doris Lessing whom I respected cheered me all the more – synchronicity ‘really knew how to please me’.

Practical-helpfulness examples often chimed with Hanson and Klimo’s (1998) participant-research into the experience of being carried along by a series or flow of unforeseen circumstances or events culminating in a right and desired outcome. I too experienced stepping-stone events and senses of co-creation (some involving surrender and/or risk) and transcendent intelligence bringing people and events together in nonordinary ways (ibid 302). Two PhD ‘gateway moments’ exemplify this. During my initial interview William stilled at Mungo’s request, thereupon innerly receiving experiences persuading him in my favour plus the biblical verse *Come to me, all ye who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28). On later visiting a Mungo church I found its outdoor preaching-cross plinth to be unusually carved – with the self-same verse. I felt wonder and warm connectedness embracing William’s ASC too, whereas this next example was ‘mere’ synchronicity. Travelling by train to my far-from-assured PhD review panel, I chanced upon ‘Diane’ for the first time in years. She, it transpired, had sat on such panels: I was so helped by
both what she said during our journey and by that we met synchronistically, also experiencing it as like being ‘plugged into’ a sort of relational and informational world-net.

Having generally found synchronicities plain and direct vis-à-vis meaning (witness the above and many with participants) I realized through literature-studying that Jung’s seemed likelier to beg knowledgeable and/or symbolic interpretation than mine (Jung 1972). However, like Jung I found that synchronicities’ bridgings of inner and outer events could relativize time – indeed, I experienced it concerning himself. On gaining a conference place in Switzerland I resolved to visit Jung’s self-built lakeside Tower retreat. Discovering it to be private I made efforts, eventually being invited there by a descendant of Jung’s. Wanting to take a token of thanks, I recalled a particular card-deck with illustrations incorporating its pips (Meeuwissen and Dawe 1992). I managed hurriedly to buy one, not registering until getting it home that its box portrayed a kingfisher and key – and hadn’t I recently glimpsed something about Jung, kingfishers and keys? Hunting unearthed it on the ‘unwanted’ section of a recently photocopied academic-literature page, and it involved Jung’s spirit guide, Philemon. When I eventually gave the deck, Jung’s descendant independently noticed the Philemon resonance. I felt more ‘bridged’ to Jung than I could ever have imagined, ‘across’ decades and, furthermore, with spirit-guide resonance – which delighted and encouraged me onwards, almost as if the event-stream ‘said’ this research wants to happen.

Main also details synchronicity encouraging him to study itself in an unpublished paper (Curtis and Main 1994) that I encountered thus: in a charity bookshop I chanced upon a book ‘with my name on it’ through multiple links to my German mother (Droste-Hülshoff 1916). Published by (German for) ‘Books of the Rose’, it bore their black-rose logo. Then, independently, a friend showed me an acquaintance’s unpublished essay, The Black Rose (Curtis and Main 1994), wherein many coincidences involving the black-rose motif are explored. Next my first literature-search attempt was helped by a librarian whose black-rose pendant I admired: she had made it herself, and had suddenly felt urged to put it on just before leaving home that morning. She guided me to my first-ever print-out, a review I later realized concerned a book by Main – The Black Rose’s author. It was my initiation (and Main links initiation for alchemical and other reasons to black-rose symbolism in The Black Rose) onto my university literature-study path, along which coincidences between my reading Main and encountering black roses became, frankly, a corny but relished joke! In The Black Rose Main describes how his initiatory decision to study synchronicity involved experiencing several fish-coincidences contemporaneously with his first reading of Jung on synchronicity, which itself started with fish coincidences. So my synchronicity-study initiation was synchronistically involved with (and black-rose symbolized by) a writer whose synchronicity-study initiation involved coincidences coincidentally involving Jung’s initial coincidence-writing. I can only concur with Main’s comments that the self-referring nature of…. synchronistic experiences….. reinforce or amplify the significance and status of the phenomenon (Curtis and Main 1994,62) and, experientially, the intricacy of all this is quite bewildering (ibid 66).
I experienced the above as more richly synchronistic than could be explained away by selective attention (as considered by, say, Braud (1983)) or misunderstanding large-number statistics (Diaconis and Mosteller 1989). I could, rather, concur with Tart’s experiencing of multiple coincidences regarding his imminent work as synchronistic confirmation of the usefulness (Tart 1981,37) of that work. Also, just as Main’s study-initiating coincidences enthused him yet more towards studying synchronicity through involving Jung himself, so mine enthused my work more through involving the well-versed (and now authoritative) Main.

Again, I experienced many more encouragement synchronicities during this research but, respecting constraints and reading-flow, I now move on.

**Synchronicity nurturing relationships:**

A feature I enjoy in the interplay between my literature-searches and thereby-sparked (or other) synchronicities is that of experiencing some synchronicities as playing in-effect roles quite different (or even alien) to the literature’s topic. For example, sweet relating flowed from my search for synchronicity-writers with substantial science and/or maths credentials. Discovering physicist F.D. Peat I chose one of his books to buy just before attending an unrelated discussion group. The leader circulated the discussion-article – *Gentle Action* by F.D. Peat! This coincidence prompted me to reassess Peat’s book-titles, switching to *Pathways of Chance* (Peat 2007) which I took on my next visit to Auntie Hilda. An elderly widow, she needed chatty company, but her horizons were now much narrowed so our being together could get stuck. I was in Auntie Hilda’s garden when I reached a photograph in Peat’s book of him with his Auntie Hilda and her garden. I showed Auntie Hilda, who responded *Ooh, I had a uniform like hers when I worked at such-and-such, and this happened and……* In short we had a good laugh and chat, with doors opened for the future – sweet, gentle action!

Yet the Aunties-Hilda example can address Littlewood’s abstract albeit rule-of-thumb statistical ‘Law’ which, assuming ‘miracles’ to be 1-in-a-million events and wakeful life to involve roughly one experience per second, says that experiencing a ‘miracle’ on average every 35 days is normal (Littlewood 2014). Debunkers of unlikely events’ significance often cite Littlewood’s Law. But reaching the above ‘gentle-action effect’ depended on a two-link chain of ‘miracle’ synchronistic events (one-after-another initial Peat-encountering; coincident Aunties Hilda of gardens and uniforms). Rule-of-thumb multiplication of Littlewoodian probabilities makes the above a 1-in-a-billion events-chain – still occasionally likely within a world population of 7 billion. (These statistics could be debated further or linked to others’ writings but I refrain, keeping the experiencing of relationship-fostering as the main point here.)

Adler highlights a kind of doubleness to such 2-event chains entailing synchronistic meeting of two people in which each person is ‘a significant other’ to the other…… (Adler 1997,99). Just so I read en-route to a dear cousin’s funeral a synchronicity book whose cover-art incorporated moon-phase changes leading to some new personal stage, whereas a hospice-nurse had recently described a moon-phase dying-process to his sister which then matched his death. Hearing her tale
complemented my book-art synchronistically and vice versa, which ‘hugged’ both our bereaved hearts and engendered warm connectedness between us, both seemingly particles in the universe’s corpus mysticum (ibid 105).

My engagement with literature exploring possibilities of mystical or spiritual qualities within counselling and/or PCA relationships (Lines 2006) and how that might relate to relational depth (Mearns and Cooper 2005) evoked my memory of a shared synchronistic events-stream. In a PhD-student gathering one colleague steeped in relational-depth research voiced desire for an unusual object to help unblock her research process. I chanced upon one within the hour, bought it for her and tracked her down. Later she emailed: I felt overwhelmed by the synchronicity, and felt a knowingness of something deep between us. Great to be in contact and in touch with something else!

Trusting that I have now illustrated my experiencing of synchronicities as relationship-fostering enough, I move on.

Synchronicities challenging:

That death and bereavement often associate with synchronicities (as with my cousin above) is no surprise to the Jungian worldview as they are strong archetypal situations. In Todaro-Franceschi’s (2006a) research-group of bereaved people, synchronicities experienced personally as comforting became yet more healing through mutual sharing. But death synchronicities can disturb too, witness this challenge. I once borrowed Kübler-Ross’s On death and dying (1973) from a co-student, taking it home keen to start learning about death. First, however, I went to feed my children’s hamsters. One of them – quite young and very fit only hours earlier – lay dead in its cage. And because of my synchronistic death-interest, however irrationally I felt guilty of killing it, which was horrible. I eventually got over that, but can imagine people remaining distressed by such or even weightier magical thinking (which is not uncommon in humans, Subbotsky 2004), which raises therapeutic questions.

Another challenge came on the heels of my literature-engagement with writers considering synchronicity’s nature and functions, like compensation of conscious attitude (Aziz 1990), messages from one’s own subconscious (Williams 2010a), and self-engendered mirroring (Surprise 2012). I noticed the last-mentioned bothering me, reminding me of more simplistic New Agers’ you-make-your-own-reality views sometimes heaping unkindness on, say, people enduring runs of bad luck. I remembered Hastings’ (2002) warning about turning personal experience into a cosmic principle, then heuristically noticed my gut-response: Quite! And besides, synchronicity won’t be pinned down or ‘owned’ – it’s too diverse and intelligent for that! – a flag of my experiencing made overtly conscious.

That evening I watched a TV documentary (which I’ll name later). Next morning I couldn’t sleep beyond 4am. I couldn’t think why – I wasn’t distressed – but gradually came to feel something wanted to emerge. By 8am it was strongly formed, involving a synchronicity which had
thunderstruck me years ago. I had never told anyone – it had seemed too weighty before, but now seemed timely.

Visiting a priory once, I bought a postcard of a tapestry depicting a saint. One day months later I felt an anomalous pressing desire to check the saint’s name: it was Nicholas of Somewhere, but where? Searching high and low I finally found the postcard and missing place-name – Myra. Next day the newspaper front-page bore a huge photo-portrait and one stark word – MYRA. The hated Moors murderer had died the day I sought the name. I felt slammed.

The night-time processes which had gradually brought both memory and my resolve to relate it were doubtless triggered by my watching *Born to Kill? Myra Hindley* (Edwards 2012) screened the evening before. I experienced this as synchronicity reminding me of the prior synchronistic challenge – what (I thought) if someone in a position like mine when the first MYRA synchronicity happened, or their therapist or confidante, believed that synchronicity always mirrors you? The issue could hardly be more vividly symbolized! This could be further discussed, but the point here is my experiencing of synchronicity challenging, so I move on.

The third challenge I shall relate started with a months-long phase of unremitting stress-overload, involving tasks crucial to others’ wellbeing in which I was under-skilled, underequipped and alone. Then many things went wrong at once whilst many deadlines loomed. Having previously enjoyed a sense of compressed and meaning-rich living such as Marshall (2006,339) did during his phase of many synchronicities, now I seemed mired in perverse synchronicity when things interrelate exasperatingly (Combs and Holland 1994,107). My mental state deteriorated, and my shaky hands made my use of spoon or pen visibly sloppy.

Then I happened to hear on the radio ‘work as though everything depended on you; pray as if everything depended on God’ (originally St. Augustine), triggering thoughts about God-believers perhaps weathering storms like mine more confidently, whereas my research experiences had expanded my belief to include beneficial flows and synchronicities, yes, but not certainty of their pertaining ‘everywhere and always’ – so I couldn’t ‘just always trust’, hence my unnervedness. Recognizing this as heuristic process I poured in-the-moment words ‘into’ my computer – which then wouldn’t save my ‘God or Flow?’ document. Yet another stress! I checked and tried many times, but no. Then I paused and a ‘ridiculous’ idea came – does ‘it’ want a different title? I pondered what the issue’s essence really was for me, then tried ‘Extent of Belief?’ It saved immediately. I wept with relief then recovered with a coffee, only then thinking ‘I had to ask the right question’. So, where Combs and Holland (1994) could experience perverse synchronicity as a suggestion to re-centre oneself, my experiencing was of a challenge I had to think my way through, thereby attaining the ‘Extent of Belief’ right-question prize.

Again, I could speak further about what the question opens for me but, with synchronicity’s challenge-as-experienced portrayed, I move on.
Synchronicities seeding, sustaining and growing:

Since Jung ‘seeded’ the synchronicity-idea mid-20th century it has spread and now, Hocoy posits, human existential needs for meaning, connection and agency offer fertile soil in which personal experiences of meaningful coincidences (can)…. ‘seed’…. belief in synchronicity (Hocoy 2012,467). Various writers have indeed described experiences which seeded their interest in synchronicity itself (Hocoy 2012, Curtis and Main 1994, Mansfield 1995), but I have also experienced something further, namely synchronicity seeding varieties of itself into my ken.

My synchronicity-within-counselling seed-experience occurred when, as a pca (and Jung-ignorant) student placed in a GP surgery, I could get neither doctors nor administrators to understand my requesting two reasonably similar chairs (to avoid seeming status disparity) in the counselling room. A client arrived, in whose new job as a community officer involving one-to-one private talks with troubled individuals, exasperatingly the ‘powers’ kept ignoring his requests for two reasonably similar chairs for fostering more mutual conversations. I was too flummoxed to even think of voicing the coincidence but gained personally, the client’s what’s-their-problem attitude abetting my pre-existing explain-it-to-them approach. Now I experience appreciation of that seed’s quality, highlighting as it did not a triviality but the important (in-)equality-signalling issue, which has sensitized me to noticing it more keenly in various circumstances since.

Synchronicity seems to be flourishing (as Hocoy (2012) expected) through not just spread of the idea’s popularity but also seedings of fresh synchronicity-involving ventures in the world and, personally, seedings of fresh experience-types for me by synchronicity. Indeed, one such fresh personal-experience type prepared me for learning about a new venture. My fresh seed-experience involved a significant coming-together of two event-streams. My friend ‘Carol’ dreamed of seeing a naked baby being wheeled in a pram without bedding along a cold station platform. Carol wanted to help but lost ‘cold baby’ in the station mêlée. Her following day was unrelentingly ‘cold’ – ghastly rail-journeys, failing work, café closing in her face etcetera – a sweep of ‘broad’ time-spanning synchronicity rather than ‘pointed event’ synchronicity (Castleman 2004,105). But it was ‘cold baby’ she remained haunted by. Already knowing this tale I felt recognition-shock on suddenly coming upon a discarded naked baby doll (which I wrapped in my beret) during an hour strikingly clustered with real and symbolic cared-for babies, the scene even unfolding beside a Henry Moore mother-and-baby sculpture. For Carol, being offered my ‘beret-warmed baby’ healed her hauntedness as no other efforts had managed to during the days since her dream. My experiencing was of deep pleasure about Carol’s relief (and having been so-to-speak entrusted with the power and wherewithal to effect it) and at experientially discovering people’s synchronistic event-streams could dovetail so connectingly (and feeling honoured to have been shown it, despite not certainly knowing whether synchronicity – or anything – had chosen me).
The above meshing then meshed again, when literature-study revealed that Carol’s and my event-streams and their warm shared finale likened experiences interconnecting and sustaining members of dream-groups (also involving synchronicity- and vision-sharing) instigated by Jungian Castleman (2004). Castleman (who was inspired partially by Lakota tribal-field ways) notes Jung to have explored both personal and collective unconscious extensively, but less so the field of psychic reality .... where relationship (my emphasis) affects the unconscious (ibid xxii). Bidwell resonantly critiques Jung’s autobiography, ‘Memories, Dreams, Reflections’: failing to address his significant adult relationships, Jung suggests that individuation ...... is a solitary experience (Bidwell 2000,18). So, as I delight in perceiving it, here is a post-Jungian, relationship-sustaining, synchronicity-inviting venture which nevertheless, in Lorenz’s words (2006,12):

*take(s) seriously the spirit of Jung’s work on synchronicity and his suggestion to “dream the dream onward” in every era…. open to what is emergent in the world today.*

Hocoy moots that synchronicity-belief is likeliest to be seeded by uncommon ‘profound and numinous’ meaningful coincidences (Hocoy 2012,467) which matches my experience, witness my early-days lucky-penny/Pfennig-book synchronicity (p32). He adds though that ‘common experiences of synchronicity help sustain its currency’ (ibid 470) which also chimes with me, my additional personal experiencing being that, now that I’ve crossed into synchronicity-belief, ‘little’ synchronicities help sustain me. For instance, once I experienced as endearing a sparrow pecking (as never before) at my kitchen window whilst I made tea for a literature-study break, but when on return my first reading discovered Spiegelman’s (2003) case of a bird’s meaningful pecking at a window I laughed. My experiencing was as of fun brightening me on an isolated work-day (which is non-trivial, sustaining my energy for the work) – in short, like a ‘friend’.

**Creative synchronicity:**

Sometimes, in a friend-like manner, synchronicity ‘gives’ something to the recipient’s taste or advantage in response not to a voiced desire but a background yen. Main, for example, ‘was implicitly carrying around with him (one) day’ (Curtis and Main 1994,66) a certain question vis-a-vis which he experienced several improbable ‘answering’ events, considering them synchronistic. Similarly synchronicity manifesting as a long-duration ‘sweeping event’ (Castleman 2004,104) ‘gave’ me numerous books whose reading revealed surprise research-furthering points.

Thus the tiny George Eliot book I chanced upon (bought for lightweight carrying on rambles) included ‘The Lifted Veil’ (Eliot, first published 1859) whose main character perceives synchronicity-like visionary details of distant places and others’ feelings, on the truth or falsehood of which much hangs. A critic’s introduction faults Eliot: ... the (main character’s) mysterious power.... is made to come and go.... for no other reason than that.... the plot demands these vagaries. This is a very serious artistic infirmity. This stimulated me regarding synchronicity-as-‘author’ because of experiencing precisely its intermittency – its ‘choices’ of when and what to highlight – as showing intelligent artistry. Relatedly, whilst interested in authors’ explorations of potential links between synchronicity and cosmological concepts like, say, quantum entanglement (Martin, Carminati and Carminati 2009) and a postulated A-field (Mackey (2007), again I found
myself unable to see such concepts accounting for the intermittency-with-flair so pervasive and
telling in my synchronistic experiencing.

When my literature-study turned specifically to creativity, a run of readings interweaving with events
and impressions occurred which I experienced as showing synchronicity being creative itself, and
fostering creativity. It was so co-involute that I wrote it in clearer-format stanzas. I present some
sections below (again omitting richnesses to favour clarity). The Durant (2002) paper mentionned is *Synchronicity: a post-structuralist guide to creativity and change.*

I take my folder of relevant articles and a pencil on a long bus-ride to Blackpool,
all the better to alternately assimilate, muse, assimilate, muse with landscape slipping by.
Besides, something helpful might cross my path – you never know – travel rolls the dice.

Blackpool’s high-tide waves and curious promenade sculptures ease and amuse me.
Then, flash-trawling the charity shops, I find a tarot-deck –
not one I would have chosen, but bold and different and the money helps sick animals.
In a café I savour its novelty before turning to more articles –
Durant (2002) even advocates encouraging creativity-boosting synchronicity
through public-transport travelling,
which synchronicity with my bus-riding feels hopeful and….. personal (ibid 493).

My mind lightens, glimpsing a tentative, emerging pattern:
several creativity-papers overlap with a model of overlapping in Durant’s (2002),
the mandorla – a traditional spiritual symbol, the ‘almond’ shared by two overlaid circles.
Heaven-with-earth, for example,
whilst in critical theory sometimes two category-circles ‘ought’ to be separate
because their overlap (mixing races or classes say) would be cultural taboo.

*Creativity is paradoxical* (this and that ‘impossibly’ combined), *and therefore often sacred or taboo;*
many aspects of creativity challenge either/or thinking (ibid 494).
Durant also writes….. *(in) a synchronistic event, it is as if the normal categories*
*(the ‘circles’ of inner thoughts and outer world) that make up “reality” are challenged* by being overlapped.

How akin to Williams’ (2010a) *fertile conditions for….. synchronicity* (are the perception of) *gridlock:*
frustrated abilities to resolve a seemingly unsolvable problem (ibid 28). Indeed!
Synchronicity has often baled me out of such ‘impossibly’ overlapped, ‘this but also that’ corners!

Such problem-easing synchronistic combining of ‘impossibles’
resonates with Reiner’s client
whose many synchronicities gave a *strange impression…. (of)…. living inside a poem* (ibid 561),
its symbolisms creatively offering work towards reintegration.

Apropos cards, it often happens that if a deck comes my way
it soon suits a particular Mungo-talk better than any of my other sets could.
When, post-Blackpool, I considered using the overlapping-circles notion for this section
(although it wouldn’t catch everything) Mungo wanted to talk.
He signalled two card-pairs from my chance-found Blackpool tarot (Garizio and d’Agostino 1988).
First came a picture of a framework; I posited a *frame that focusses, but can’t hold it all?*
The reply-card of animals speeding into and out of its picture agreed,
signifying *‘this view…. and more’.*
The second pair came with a created-right-then method — exciting, and potential for the future.
I ‘knew’ (but verified by pendulum) to peruse the next two pictures in my mind’s eye
as if they were fully overlapped transparencies,
noticing what then coincided:
beneath an open umbrella (holding a simple, steady space)
stood, with just-right comfortable headroom, a tree (intricately growing in that space).
Commenting now on the above run, whilst studying creativity and overlapping (circle-symbolized) concepts or situations, I experienced being synchronistically ‘given’ a particular card-deck (and a creative ‘knowing’) whose Mungo-indicated pictures overlapped satisfyingly to symbolize ‘bigger picture-ness’, progression and good growth, which are resonant with creativity.

But amongst writers’ suggestions for encouraging synchronistic creativity, Reiner (2006) includes embracing doubt to allow wholeness of perception. I appreciate this view, chiming as it does with my perennial wondering if (to adapt Jung’s phrase) I am juggling events into line with perceiving synchronicity. But, as he and others also say (Castleman 2004), the more events pile up, the more impressive. The following occurred later on the day I wrote the above stanzas.

I watched the film BBC2 happened to be screening, *Made in Dagenham* (Coles 2010), about the women-machinists’ ground-breaking 1968 strike at Ford. Early on, whilst other male unionists want to prevent women striking, the only one on their side enters the sewing-machinists’ shed calling the hundred-plus women. Together they seek one courageous and clear enough to represent them at a meeting, whilst rain falls into buckets through holes in the dilapidated roof. An open umbrella also ‘levitates’, hung between makeshift ropes. Surrealistlcaly, with comfortable headroom, there stands beneath it (my own attention heights at the resonance to my card-pair) not ‘a tree’ but Rita (phonetic ‘mirror’), a slight woman with lightly folded arms. Soon others see her rightness, calling her to volunteer….. she thinks…. then replies ‘Go on then’. From her seed-moment of acceptance, the real ‘Rita’ led them – learning on the hoof – through conflicts with unions, management and families to Westminster, resulting in the UK Equal Pay Act followed by similar Acts in Europe and elsewhere. Complex branching growth both personal and political, and progression into bigger pictures.

Shortly after watching the film a related Mungo-talk culminated in bringing me the phrase ‘a list’. Trying the ‘assumptive world of synchronicity’ (Main 2011) I googled ‘a list’, immediately getting:

*A-list stars support….. Girl Rising……. highlight(ing)….. that educating young women helps them and their communities flourish and succeed….. (through) stories of nine unknown girls, all of whom struggled to acquire……. education*

(Thorpe 2013).

‘Girl Rising’ was news to me (having only just premiered), but I ‘rang inside’ with its resonances to Rita’s and her mates’ arisings both personal and big-picture feminist. Also, noticing help from the more powerful in both cases (the politics-savvy male unionist helping in the Ford-strike case; A-list stars’ support through voice-performing in *Girl Rising*) moved me greatly.

My experiencing of this run’s totality is of a ‘synchronicity-authored’ tale of just such creativity as I set out to study. Thus I perceive the authoring itself as creative and the tale, being inspirational, as having creativity-fostering potential. Both the card-pairs bespoke and the tale tells of growth and progression.
...... and regarding progression, now at the time of my re-shaping this whole chapter, a curious thing. Wanting to check a Girl-Rising detail I looked on-line, discovering it now as a DVD with this cover-art. It bridges (as may shortly be seen) to the next already-planned section, which bridging I experience as artistry.

Figure 13: Girl Rising

**Synchronicity, cosmology, philosophizing:**

I described earlier how this chapter’s first version grew huge, partly through new relevant synchronicities arising during its writing. From happening more as one-off events early in that process, they tended more towards runs and/or cross-connections later on. That ‘vortex-enlarging’ character was part of my experiencing so I am maintaining it in this chapter-version too, including this section’s interconnections building in their sequence-as-experienced. (I present the old-version parts in blue).

I start where, in engagement with authors discussing concerns about synchronicity within therapy (e.g. Boyd 2008; Keutzer 1984; Nachmann 2009), I reached Stein’s (2011) countering discussion of faith in therapy mentioning Jung’s sense of *a hand far above my reach* (Lammers 2007, 117). Then I wrote *big questions – touching on power, ontology, ethics and other principles – such as I shall discuss here.*

I proceeded by narrating the story of document-saving failures bringing me to my ‘Extent of Belief?’ right question (p138). My writing (albeit now edited down) flowed on thus:

*It is the right question for me – having considered it since I really do value how it can ‘look’ elucidatingly in many directions. For example, having found my child’s dead hamster (p137) I had to accompany their discovery of their pet’s death, without my having experienced close grief before. In that ignorance I could at least hold to pca fundamentals – which thankfully helped. My ‘extent of belief’ was not *I’m sure the pca is always right but its principles seem good enough often enough to better the chances* so try them notwithstanding ontological uncertainty. My then rationale for pca-use likens my rationale for synchronicity-heeding nowadays.*

*Levels of meaning matter here. I heed synchronicity although I have sometimes experienced it ‘bedevilling’ my life and/or my mental state. For example, the Myra (p138) and Kübler-Ross/hamster synchronicities felt horrible (how could I square that with something ontologically trustworthy?) but later seemed good at a deeper level, both educating me and giving me the wherewithal to raise certain issues herein vividly.*
Levels of meaning also arose when, in a sequel to the kingfisher-and-keys synchronicity (p135), another synchronicity (which I needn’t detail) came during this chapter’s (first-version) writing, leading me to the Arthur Kingfisher character in David Lodge’s (1985) *Small World*. Consequently re-reading *Small World* I discovered not only the straightforward story I had enjoyed years previously, but also a witty ‘supertext’ coded by Grail-like situations and names which only the Grail-knowledgeable would see. I saw this as analogous to how a synchronistic view of life’s unfoldings may give them extra, ‘higher’ meaning. Most delicious is a conference (or round-table) scene where the panel chairman, Kingfisher (the wounded Fisher King), is cured of chronic lassitude by, finally, the ‘right question’ (as happens in Grail legend) posed from the floor (a newcomer to the castle) by the innocent Persse McGarrigle (or ‘Percival/Parsifal’). I could not but see resonances with my own saga too – the reasonably-similar-chairs synchronicity (p139) of ‘Round-Table-like’ values; the notable coming of my ‘right question’; my just-pca-naive arrival in the ‘Jungian castle’. I relish all this, but it begs a further question: if a ‘Grail-eye’ on *Small World* likens synchronicity-vision in our world, what (if anything) is synchronicity’s equivalent of Lodge?

The right-question and world-synchronicity-vision ideas made me seek out a supposedly Einstein quote (Olsen 2004): … *the most important question a human being can ask is “Is the universe friendly”*. Experiencing personal responses arising within me I scribbled with immediacy: … *my belief…. include(s) beneficial flows and synchronicities, yes, but not certainty of their pertaining ‘everywhere’….. so I couldn’t ‘just always trust’; hence my unnervedness. My last admission there exemplifies Olsen’s (ibid 1)…. *your state of being could evolve from the answer to that…. question.*

But questioning the quote’s provenance I found that its originator was not Einstein but probably Myers (Wilms 1912), and Myers pre-dated and had significant influence on Jung’s spiritual-scientific thought (Shamdasani 2000). This enables me to indulge in closing this ‘extent-of-belief?’ section now with a certain flourish – since synchronicity steered it several times (especially in bringing Kingfisher), I could say its full-circling came both back to Jung’s *hand-above-my-reach* thought in the opening paragraph and, actually, from a hand (or hands) far above my reach.

Now, during this chapter’s new-version reworking, the synchronistically-arrived art above adds (as I experience it) both to the full-circling and bridging to the previous section.
Indulgence aside, contemplating that full circle I note that my ‘extent of belief’ has increased through my experiencings during its writing to include that synchronicity can engage philosophical debate.

Earlier I mentioned liking that ‘extent of belief?’ can look in many directions, scrutinizing for example not only mysterious/spiritual phenomena but also science’s sway. Thus too the 21-year-old Jung championed two-way criticality between the scornfully sceptical and the eagerly superstitious when exhorting his co-students to join him in the border zones of exact science to study the unfathomable (Haule 2010,65). One such ‘unfathomable’ is, as Haule (2010,66) puts it, the lawful irrationality of synchronicity……. These things happen…. and it is not accurate to say that they violate the laws of physics…… what they violate are our metaphysical assumptions. Indeed – I experience lawful irrationality in synchronicity as not counter but extra to physics – and therefore agree.

Main (2011) also considers perceptions of our universe in exploring how the modern world, seen as having been secularised and rationalised since medieval times by processes of Weberian disenchantment (Jenkins 2000), might be re-enchanted (without loss of science’s benefits) by Jung’s concepts, particularly synchronicity. Main considers Jung vis-à-vis several dis/re-enchantment aspects, against some of which I shall consider my own experiencing:

Apropos ‘location of meaning’, Main posits the synchronicity-concept to be re-enchancing because it reasserts the possibility of meaning in the world beyond the mind (ibid 149). I see the Kübler-Ross/hamster-death sequence as exhibiting meaning that is humanly discernible…. and….. something patterning not just inner, psychic events but outer, physical ones too (ibid 150).

Apropos ‘antistructure’ such as carnivalesque events that shake up the usual order of things, I experienced the computer-‘bedevilled/enchanted’ genesis of Extent of Belief? as energizing the multidirectional subversive potential of the question itself. Apropos ‘higher times’ the Kingfisher/Small World episode sounded more ringing resonances because of my prior Jung-kingfisher synchronicity and other Lodge books having synchronistically ‘spoken’ in this thesis – altogether a pattern gathered in relativized time. Apropos our ‘cosmos’ having hierarchy and human meaningfulness, in overviewing my synchronicity-experiencing I discern a ‘heirarchy’ of good-hearted intents ‘down here’ striking more synchronistic ‘music from the spheres’, as do other authors (e.g. North 1994, Mansfield 1995) – a ‘growth’ as against ‘dominator heirarchy’ (Wilbur 2001). I also discern nested hierarchies (ibidem) of one synchronicity later being embraced by another (as with Girl Rising). So, my recent experiences and Main’s academically expounded points do chime.

Main’s re-enchantment paper (2011) also considers synchronicity-study’s past and future, developing a ‘wish-list’ for future research which includes richer synchronistic case studies…. (ibid 146), and explorations where synchronicity is not just an object of inquiry…… but part of a method of inquiry (ibid 147). I believe this PhD’s research advances towards both those wishes.

A grace-note just now – having written music from the spheres I suddenly doubted the phrase’s existence, so I walked across my room towards a dictionary whereupon a small sweet note rang.
Was it my imagination? I walked again, and it rang again: I experimented to track down the source. Years ago a friend showed me an earthstar, a puffball-type with (as google images show) ‘petals’ whose curling lifts the puffball further up into the spore-spreading air. My next charity-shop browse discovered a ceramic open-topped sphere like an as-yet unraised earthstar. Thenabouts I also found a same-sized, blue-glass open-topped sphere spangled with gold stars. Paired they symbolized for me simultaneously the elements (ceramic earth and air; blue-glass water and (star-)fire), as well as brown terra and starry coeli (as themselves and as symbolizing the profane/physical and sacred/spiritual). Liking their symbolisms, I placed them somewhat apart on a high bookcase. They must have gradually jiggled closer, their spheres first toning enchantingly on time. I enjoyed and admired the event immediately, but note heuristically that it took hours for the symbolic synchronicity’s sheer cosmic magnitude and wholeness-of-complementarities to sink into me.

That tiny-to-cosmic note takes me neatly to my next intended issue, namely synchronicity’s reach. Aziz (1990) discusses Jung’s synchronicity in light of Smart’s (1969) dimensions of religion, and I shall consider two experientially here. Apropos the doctrinal dimension, I find Jung’s belief in the unus mundus (briefly, interpenetration of psyche and matter... coextensive with nature in its entirety (ibid 177)) not merely compatible with but even bespoken by synchronicity in, say, those spheres’ timely sounding. Apropos the ritual dimension, I have often experienced personal ‘ritual’ (such as my mindful positioning of the complementary spheres) to reach across time, becoming ‘Act 1’ of a later synchronicity. Peat (2009) also appreciates synchronicity’s time-spanning reach: even extremely gentle and subtle (moments) can... change a person’s entire life or enable an individual to exercise a transformative..... function upon..... society (ibid 5). An example is the world possessing Jung’s sole book for general readers (Man and His Symbols), produced in his last year only because a dream synchronistically approving a publisher’s request persuaded him to write (Freeman 1978).

Synchronicity counselling:

Throughout this research participants and I often experienced synchronicities which gave us pause or fostered process in a counselling-like way. However, here I shall present the events and HSSI-responses I found in myself of one multi-staged ‘virtuoso synchronicity-counselling performance’.

My original-version chapter’s process ended with a multi-incident ‘sweeping event’ (Castleman 2004,104) that both uplifted me greatly and moved me deeply, like (as I experienced it) a supremely gifted counsellor might have done. It involved four academic papers read in the just-right sequence to address that moment in my life, entwining with a drama watched, a packet delivered, a Mungo-talk and two poignant memory-threads, the crescendo bringing me to ‘a very big place’.

The sweeping-event story will only make sense if I outline two interconnected concerns I had back then. Firstly, my undergraduate child had returned home with their long-standing stoniness towards me. This was grindingly painful, but also engaged me greatly with process around seeding, hopefully, little starter-contacts of some warmth. Relevantly, I had already experienced
years of the Mungo-synchronicity team helping me to gradually untangle 'impossible' lone-parent (and only-child-of-ailing-parent) family knots, leading me to conjecture that their gentle potency as shown in my household would need only to be writ larger to, potentially, assist in larger spheres. But secondly any value-in-the-world of ‘my’ phenomena seemed also a sad-silly dream – I suffered continual semi-slumbering doubts of my research ever really reaching or speaking to anyone.

With these two grumbling backgrounds I read Beitman, Celebi and Coleman’s chapter (2010) which gave serious, extended, broader-than-Jungian consideration to synchronicity. On ‘hearing’ them say synchronicity helps us navigate daily life, I felt ‘met’ – even potentially understood – in my stony-child parenting efforts. Later they discussed synchronicity-research’s trade-off between experimental control and ecological validity (ibid 458), through which I first clearly ‘heard’ appreciation of synchronicity-data from true-to-life situations. Having encountered no other synchronicity research as integrated with real-life directly-personal experiencing as mine, I suddenly felt valued (possible even desirable) and potentially ‘visible’ to them. On both personal counts, their paper had emotionally moved me.

So I was feeling quite tender both because of the above, and because that morning’s Mungo-talk had sweetly concerned small friendlinesses keeping hope of better relating alive. Then I found the Mungo-talk’s terms to be strikingly resonant with my next reading, Whitmont’s (2007) inclusion of I-Thou relationships (Buber 1958/1937) in the Self’s unfolding destiny-synchronicity pattern (ibid 28). Again I felt as if liked for my efforts – a grateful warmth in the stony-atmosphere house. Next I wondered why this destiny-topic article seemed unfamiliar although I had obviously printed it some time ago. I checked its download date – oh, just before this child’s serious accident, it got lost in – oh god, that crisis, that shock, that protracted worrying struggling aftermath. The ‘return’ to its scenes ‘unskinned’ me yet more.

For evening comfort I watched television, a drama (Wainwright 2012) unexpectedly involving salvaging relationship with someone narrowly avoiding death. The double resonance (rocky relationship; death nearly happening) rendered me even more tender. In that state I resumed next day with Peat (1999), his linkage of synchronicity with small acts of connection through respect, love and compassion, which keep people together (ibid 6) nearly creasing me. Valuing renewal alongside change and creativity and (given shadow acknowledgement and work) open responsiveness alongside inner authenticity throughout, he interrelates ‘small love and synchronicity’ (my term) with help in planetary-scale difficulties similarly deriving from our inner connectedness to all things and…… our inherent creativity and humanity (ibid 7). Now (alongside the tenderness) I glowed with ‘seen plausibility’, my dream of Mungo-with-synchronicity’s gentle potency as shown in this household…… writ larger to assist in larger spheres no longer seeming so sad-silly alone.

By now my feelings were very stirred and ‘unskinned’, both ‘up’ into excited validation and hope around my work and/or destiny even; and ‘down’ into tenderness around my child, relationships and mortality. In this state I turned to Colman’s (2010) case-study illustrating living symbolic process, including his poignant coda about choosing as memento on the day his father died the
letter-knife from his desk – though its many deep meanings only emerged later. Colman ends movingly, dedicating his article to my father and to all (parents): a gift from the living to the dead in honour and thankfulness (ibid 294).

In immediate response I scrawled in the margin I hope my thesis to also be a gratitude…… I feel the act of bothering well is party to that. Only once I had expressed that did a memory arise: I just carried on margin-writing (here expanded somewhat for comprehensibility), fully in my stream-of-moments. PS: funny, I studied my letter-knife yesterday…… oh! …… just after using it to open that parcel containing ‘The knife of never letting go’! (Ness 2008)…… Oh! …… and I first met that book just after Dad died…… I had had to rush doing so many things, but after a couple of days I emerged from his bank with time at last to sit in the nearby café, nursing a drink and staring at the fountain outside. The café was promoting a little book-sample – I got given one – oh that title! ‘The knife of never letting go’ – its incredible timely resoundings with Dad’s so-recent death, and our sometimes delightful, sometimes dementingly difficult relationship! As Colman said of his father and their letter-knife, some meanings and links only emerged later, but during my above-described hour of ‘meeting’ Colman and my consequent process, somehow some healing of Dad’s and my problematic relationship happened. I felt as if raised to a higher perspective, yet also moved to full stillness.

As to my overall experiencing of that four-papers day, besides having been so ‘met’, touched and opened both deeply regarding family pains and uplifitingly regarding work hopes, I also couldn’t help admiring the flowing way both had happened together without jarring but rather with what felt like complementarity – like some token of wholeness’s good. I felt enthusiastic too, wanting to blurt out synchronicity can do this – ‘play’ a person like music, or play to their heart’s music – what counselling – look what it has done!

So far this section has been about paper-readings and processes that happened during my work towards this chapter’s first version. Now, to my astonishment, I must add a coda which just happened (in green to emphasize the four-year gap between then and now).

I need to explain that I had always experienced near-impossibility of talking with Dad about practical emotion-involving issues – he would change the subject or walk away – so during his terminal illness I feared discovering nothing about his wishes. But luckily a moment came good, and I discovered his desire for Brahms’ ‘Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras’ at his funeral. Alone later I cried, relieved to at least know one right thing.

Today, on finishing the knife-of-never-letting-go paragraph above, I went to my kitchen for lunch, putting on Radio 4. I caught erstwhile war-correspondent Bowen (2017) describing his time in Baghdad with correspondent-colleagues, including friend Rory. A powerful music-piece interwove with Bowen’s words and war sounds. Eventually he said:

……… (we) played Rory Peck’s collection of three music cassettes on a battery-powered tape-machine. My favourite was Brahms ‘German Requiem’. It became the sound-track to the air-raids’ son-et-lumière of the war. If a bomb landed nearby the whole hotel shook. One of the great
themes of Brahms’ masterpiece comes from a biblical quotation, Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras – ‘All flesh is grass’…… In a war life does get scythed away like grass. The Americans even had a bomb called a daisy-cutter, which mowed flat everything in its vicinity……. Brahms ‘German Requiem’ will always take me back to that war, and the surprising courtesy of Iraqis whose families had been slaughtered in the Amiriyah shelter……. Two years later……. I heard……. that Rory had been killed…… I played the music, and remembered my friend……. (and)….. the long years of near-isolation that Iraq faced until its next nightmare – invasion, occupation, and more war, so far without end. (Bowen ceased speaking, the music swelled forth, and the choir sang as finale:)

| Denn al - les Fleisch es ist wie Gras und |

Standing in my kitchen my feelings felt tremendously heightened and full, wrought by the combination – the Greater Music even – composed of Brahms’ music, war-horror, people-sorrows, Bowen’s humanity, his memories, my memories – and synchronicity of piercing, soul-shining and magnificent precision, effect and quality. Because, leading Dad’s funeral myself, I triggered exactly that music’s playing at his committal – that music is the only thing in all the cosmos that was, and now symbolizes, my ‘knife-moment’ of letting go, and never letting go, of Dad.

An overarching apprehension:

I have now portrayed, in hopefully living-enough detail for readers to really ‘hear’ (as heuristics requires), eight of the roles I experienced synchronicity as playing. I believe the portrayals show how literature was both party to and discussant vis-à-vis this, and exemplify my experiencing of synchronicity as inventively diverse, adapting itself to multitudinous circumstances. Next I move to a related new overarching apprehension – a heuristic illumination which only lately matured into strong verbalization.

The years-long background is of my having perceived my synchronicity-experiences (shared and lone) as more numerous and interconnected than any cases I found in literature, notwithstanding authors discussing, say, synchronicities scroll(ing) themselves into a pattern over years, linking persons and places in a web of significance (McMillan and Rosen 2012,86);), the experience of being carried along by a series or flow of unforeseen circumstances or events……. (Hanson and Klimo 1998,1), and groups sharing co-evolution involving dreams and synchronicities (Castleman 2004).

The writings which came closest concerned Main’s experiencing (Curtis and Main 1994), Plaskett’s experiencing (2000), and Main’s analysis of Plaskett (2007b), but theirs seemed ultimately more focussed as against mine ‘rambling all over the place’.

However, my recent re-engagement with my original 23,000-word synchronicity-literature chapter after a long gap, preparatory to creating this version, involved a surprise key meeting. Having luckily just finished a work-chunk, I was free to re-study my 23,000-word chapter on a four-day stay
in a hostel a friend had booked for a mixed bag of friends and family to enjoy. Beside a mountain-
view window I re-immersed myself in all that synchronistic experiencing. My tacit processes and
conscious thoughts could mull, but alone as ever (I live with no-one (no clued-up sounding-board)
and people I see less frequently couldn’t, even if interested, be clued-up enough in the time). But
then by fluke I fell into conversation with my friend’s son’s friend whose work, it emerged, was
assessing submitted film-scripts: he had expert interest in archetypes, timely strokes of fate,
strange happenings, symbolisms, themes running and/or resurfacing etcetera. In short, it was a
case of ‘when the researcher is ready, the discussant will arrive’.

Eventually in our fascinating conversation I voiced (as never before), gist-wise:

*There’s this chap, Main, who’s analysed this other bloke Plaskett’s synchronicities. And there are
loads of them, like mine. But he’s whittled and narrowed them down to a tight symbolic conclusion –
really skilfully, but the actual events had to be right for it to be possible.*

At this point I gestured with both hands in front of me, shoulder-height and shoulder-width apart,
then both curving simultaneously inwards and downwards, whilst saying:

*They funnel down to a point – whereas mine, they’re the opposite, (reversing my gesture) they
keep widening, suiting themselves to circumstances, burgeoning out* (then I ‘feel/see’ a symbol in
the alchemy of that moment), *oh, like a cornucopia.*

Back home two days later I mused on that conversation and Main’s work (2007b) which, selecting
some ninety from Plaskett’s collection of remarkable symbol- and/or concept-highlighting incidents,
analyses them by such methods as seeking symbols’ deeper and/or alternative meanings, and
relating or grouping them, one such group concerning the Grail’s various symbols like the chalice,
krater and stone-from-the-sky. Main’s meticulous analyses connect and winnow the symbols and
concepts iteratively (and clearly understandably), finally leading to (maybe even) the thought that,
in a sense, synchronicity is a form of the Grail (ibid 140).

I found this convincingly done and the conclusion powerfully succinct but, notwithstanding loving
‘my’ synchronicity’s case-by-case responsiveness (as demonstrated in this chapter), I was
academically semi-envious – what was *I* to do with this all-over-the-place ludicrously abundant
cornucopia? Then I thought *Well, I’ll just look online – see if the Grail has other symbols.* First
stop, Wikipedia (on 16.2.2017). It said:

……. *some scholars think the Grail’s forerunner was Aechelous’s horn.* I didn’t know what that was.
And then: *Aechelous was the River (or Water) God. He was fought by Herakles.......... who
broke off one of (Aechelous’s) horns........ (thus symbolically) confining waters to rivers........
(thereby freeing) land for cultivation...... (thus Aechelous’s horn is) the horn of plenty. (’Aka the
cornucopia!’ I immediately thought.)

I found this so exciting. I couldn’t resist that favourite physics/maths exclamation – Q.E.D!

and von Franz’s Grail work. As with all things Grail variations abound, but there is enough to say,
yes, the Grail can be the cornucopia too. So, as I see it, ‘my’ synchronicity’s manifestations
wouldn’t flow ‘down a funnel’ to a succinct concept by themselves for me by myself. But, through
an appropriately synchronistic meeting with a film-script expert, and conceptually juxtaposing them
to Plaskett’s/Main’s, then it all flowed together ‘into’ the Grail. Besides, in myth the cornucopia feeds all with what they need as (I have lately learned) can also the Grail.

So, my new overarching apprehension is that, where Plaskett’s experiences and Main’s analyses reached the thought that, in a sense, synchronicity is a form of the Grail (Main 2007b, 140), my experiences have complementarily brought me to the thought that, in a sense, synchronicity performs the fulfilling-many-needs function of the Grail.

Conclusion:

In this chapter I have explained my late literature-engagement, my consequent earlier literature-naiveté giving my first-person research a special from-ignorant-ground-up knowledge gap. I discussed HSSI’s need for non-formulaic choices of literature and its positionings within theses, the better to serve exploration of experiencing phenomena. HSSIs often show researchers reflexively returning to wrangling with methodology and methods as (appropriately following their noses) their experiential phenomenon-explorations evolve. My chapter exemplifies such revisiting, HSSI-typical struggles with interim muddles and/or uncertainties included. I noted the fortuitous contemporaneity of my research’s topic-shift with HSSI’s advent.

I emphasized that, whereas phenomenon-litterature does not necessarily feature much in HSSI theses, heuristics involves immersion in literature (grey included, amongst whatever other media and things serve) to stimulate experiencing. I explained and showed how in-the-moment synchronicities ‘butted into’ my immersion, deepening or instigating further experiencing.

Organizing my chapter according to aspects of my experiencing (rather than being literature-topic-led) I portrayed my experiencings at various levels as authentically as possible, noting several roles synchronicity plays with all being finally gathered into synchronicity’s seeming cornucopia or Grail.
Immersion in Literature, Texts and Experiences 2:  
Spiritual Guidance

This chapter, like the previous one, evolved into this version-2 from the version-1 I did prior to the methodology-and-methods developments within both myself and academe that I have already described. In this case version-1 comprised three chapters (Spiritual Guidance; Divination and Dowsing; Science and Spirituality) which I wrote whilst still tensioned between classic-academic and heuristic-immersion literature requirements. Also as with my previous chapter, my dutiful version-1 writing on the basis of others’ literature categories ‘suffered’ actual experiences ‘butting in’ with issues I experienced as pertinent and growthful – indeed, their very beyond-the-literature characteristics bedevilled their integration into classically-based literature-chapter processes.

Now though, with strengthened clarity about immersion-prompted first-person experienccings and illuminations being heuristics’ real goal towards which phenomenon-literature reading serves (rather than vice-versa), I shall refashion this chapter-version accordingly. Version-1 ran to 31,000 words so, given constraints, comprehensiveness regarding both literature and experienccings is impossible. Nevertheless, in version-1’s opening page I posed a question (to be shortly revealed) which I retrospectively perceive the chapter-process’s butting-in events to have richly answered. To do justice to communicating this, significant richness must remain.

Overviewing and reflecting after version-1’s full process also engendered second-order apprehensions (a typical heuristic-explication sequence) which I shall show along the way. Now, though, I shall start presenting this chapter’s developments event-by-event.

On starting version 1:

Henceforward –unless I indicate otherwise – this version-2 draws on version-1 writings, albeit somewhat edited and/or expanded and/or commented upon in this version-2’s now. To begin:

Starting this chapter proved hard for a fundamental reason. Facing the task I realized a basic uncertainty: in light of recent years’ studies and experiences, was Mungo a ‘spirit guide’ as I had originally thought?

My mind concentrated, I tried to represent the shifts in my apprehension during my research’s lifetime to myself, eventually ‘seeing’ a mace. Initially it was as if I had accepted ‘spirit guide’ as handle to an ‘ornament-studded mace-head’, each ‘ornament’ symbolizing an aspect I already knew of Mungo. Now metamorphosed, the mace-head is an ever-expanding experiential domain and I’m inside it, experiencing aspects subtly or vividly but unable to snapshot-view its totality as from without. Meanwhile the name-handle has alternated and mingled with other notions, becoming less sure. In short I now have ballooned experience of but a fuzzier handle on whatever-it-is – though still happily nicknaming it ‘Mungo’ because of its continuing ‘dear-friend’ qualities.

Synopsizing it differently, does Mungo merit a noun when what I (and others) actually experience is ‘him’ doing verbs? Or do we? Yes, because even when synchronicity, divination and dowsing are
subtracted from ‘it all’ there are, for example, nudges to go somewhere, do something or choose particular card-decks; anomalous attentions towards picture-parts or other sensings; the tripartite nature of participant-Mungo-Christa conversations; and in the dowsings-out of words from written sources a wit, whether clever or comedic, beyond mere message-giving.

So verbs happen, with certain sorts of experiencings repeatedly recurring. Meanwhile uncertainty about a best-fit noun chimes with when, having read pertinent literature, I gratefully margin-scrawled, say, thank goodness I didn’t read this earlier — it would have skewed my experiencing…… hi-jacked my own thinking…… . Quirkily my early research years (prequel, and then fast-tracked participants alongside study slow-tracked by family ills) brought me experience largely unframed by erudition or even populist knowledge. Later I found literature offering partial overlaps but no bulls-eyes to my complex of spiritual-guidance-like experiencings.

Like Hastings (1991) exploring channelling I felt that many arenas warranted visiting like, say, spirit guides, channelling, shamanism, mediumship, spiritual emergency, delusions, debunking, cosmology and philosophy. Immersion in such literature might have prompted changes in my ontological understanding of Mungo and/or reflexive change in our collaboration. However, considering this retrospectively, I perceive no essential, study-caused shift in my with-Mungo behaviour.

My readings discovered nothing like our tripartite ‘talks’ involving the physically demonstrable – was I simply missing it? The most compendious, relevant academic tome (Klimo 1998) was old but, thinking Klimo the likeliest academic to hear grapevine-wise of developments, I contacted him describing my experiences. He replied (Apropos do I) run across anyone else with an experience such as yours. No, not exactly; but……. I run across a lot of stories, cases, experiences, equally intriguing, complicated, and challenging (Klimo 2014).

Part One: Engagement with texts and experiences that came

Reading Klimo’s answer I felt freed and energized to start chapter-writing. But forthwith LUE started bringing personally-stirring relevant experiences, diverting me into processing them. Generally they engendered experiential evolution of my guidance-and-me understandings, but the first two suggested — with neatly apposite timing — launching the chapter with my (not literature’s) guidance basics, as follows:

Firstly Mungo signalled two cards for laying side-by-side, the Fool (embarking naively on a journey) and a picture of an announcing trumpeter. The sequence brought to mind my research path from ignoramus to thesis ‘performance’, and Mungo concurred. Beneath that title-pair a six-card circle then developed, symbolizing our oft-repeated cycle of me becoming stuck in troubles (like protracted lone caring duties), with Mungo then offering both step-by-step help in wending a way through and dependable at-my-shoulder presence. I liked this pictorial abstract of the Mungo-Christa journey, and relished how the self-referential Mungo-talk about Mungo-talks had, also self-
referentially, guided me to an HSSI-appropriate *experiential* (not literary) good basis-block to this guidance chapter.

Another Mungo-talk built a second basis-block by developing two side-by-side picture-columns freshly synopsizing sorts of guidance I experience. One column spotlighted that LUE especially brings experiences ranging from humdinger synchronicities down through various ‘wave types’ of my postulated synchronicity-sea, plus occasional event-flows which evolve into stories (co-created with my actions) whose narration sometimes touches hearers. The partnering column highlighted Mungo-talks as more encounter-like, giving me (and sometimes participants) empathic, fertile, accompanied-feeling mulling times, often also contributing a wider perspective either time-wise or vis-à-vis a greater world.

Once thus guided to noticing those spiritual-guidance aspects’ relevance to this chapter it seemed obvious, but I hadn’t thought of making the points before – my then still predominantly classic literature-chaptering mind-set had encountered no ‘hooks’ on others’ writings pulling those aspects in. Instead the phenomena had proclaimed themselves, with such timeliness as to seem ‘living’ responses to my literature-immersion efforts. Furthermore, apropos my recent noun-and/or-verbs nature-of-Mungo-et-al questioning, here were two initial ‘verb-presented’ answers, concerned moreover specifically with what I/we experience Mungo and/or LUE doing.

Next phenomena ‘gate-crashed’ into my not-yet-thoroughly-heuristic work again, no longer just reminding me of aspects but bringing new ones. However for various reasons I ploughed on with principally based-on-others writing within my version-1 thesis (although full-bloodedly journalling the gate-crashings with immediacy). Now, released by both my and academe’s HSSI-consolidating developments, I shall privilege the streams-of-experiencing that ‘answered’ my spiritual-guidance literature-immersion. Others’ writing can also be variously linked to my experiencing, but that coat shall be cut to suit whatever cloth presents itself after my self-search-inquiry narration rather than vice versa.

**An exemplifying pithy vignette:**

The gate-crashing event-streams did not pre-inform me of their ‘title issues’, hurling me rather into fast-flowing processes whose patternings only kaleidoscope-turned into settledness eventually. However a vignette happened afterwards – a mini-exemplar of the bigger gate-crashings – whose depiction will hopefully prepare readers for bigger unfoldings and enfoldings to follow.

One day circumstances sent me to Lytham. Once there I nearly trod on a sword-shaped cocktail-stick on the pavement. It ‘spoke’ (due to that morning’s Mungo-talk) so I picked it up, pondering a little and then just putting it in my pocket – see if anything happens. Further on a scruffy post-it notes-pad lay on the pavement. Having some study-reading with me I thought, oh, they might come in handy, so I pocketed them too. Later I nipped into a charity shop – you never know what might turn up amongst their ‘randomized’ stuff. There was a Shakespeare book by Bill Bryson, whom I enjoy, and after dithering awhile I bought it. Next day I unpacked the Lytham stuff. On seeing the ‘sword’ and pad together their similarities of colour and scale prompted me to lay the
'sword' upon the pad. Then came the book, which I laid beside them. On seeing them together a saying leapt to my mind.

Later my son visited. I showed him the objects, laying them out one after another, saying it reminded me of a well-known saying. He responded immediately: *The pen is mightier than the sword.* (.... tiny pause......) That’s clever!

![Figure 14: Pen mightier than sword](image)

Indeed, being so pleased with the Lytham findings’ clever channelling into one pithy message-symbol, plus the process’s neat exemplification of longer gate-crashings, plus sharing it with my son, I never thought till now (at version-2 writing) to check back on that morning’s Mungo-talk. My journal shows that its two images (both being sword-suit cards) discussed stories’ reader-friendliness/unfriendliness apropos sub-tales all coming to clear points (or not) and being rather numerous (or scant). This is pertinent vis-a-vis the following gate-crash stories (which also involve Mungo and LUE-stuff entwining), but considering other writers – Shakespeare or Bryson, say – precedent for appreciating question-mark ‘endings’ and life’s multitudinous inter-weavings exists.

**Bigger gate-crashes start:**

Crucial background to the opening events is that my early Manchester years’ struggle to ‘get’ methodology included realizing and re-realizing many times in many circumstances that the hard-scientific method – which for me until then had been (besides careful observation) the only methodology I was steeped in (or even knew about) – was philosophically incompatible with phenomenological research, heuristics included. Gradually I became steeped in the no-hard-science-in-heuristics rule instead.

Then came the day when my hour-plus train-ride to a Manchester PhD-group meeting was rendered delightful through sitting by chance beside a chatty elderly man. He had worked, it emerged, in medical laboratories like my father, except that Dad, being some 20 years older, would have started in the era of fewer cruder tests as my co-traveller with his historical knowledge of the field explained. When I related how jointly getting blood from a ram helped bring Dad and my Mum together, he described how that would have involved suspected glandular fever, the particular combination of results from various tests of the patient’s blood revealing which of several diseases it was.

Our conversation involved much logical thinking, scientific endeavour, forefront development of tests etcetera, and I loved it! I was excited then, and in telling my PhD-group, and all that day and beyond – and indeed now. Somehow that encounter’s mix caused my hard-science enthusiasm to flare strongly and, courtesy of its pre-meeting timing, my ardent voicing it to the group – even though it belonged strictly outside my ‘phenomenological-research box’, of course!
A fortnight beforehand my son had moved out. Our agreement to meet each week for meal-sharing and a film, say, felt important beyond the usual reasons, around fostering his life-savvy. Cutting a long story short, it was only caring about my son's development that caused me to watch with him the Human Universe series (Brian Cox 2014a) which the BBC coincidentally started screening thenabouts. Thus I came to see an episode which spoke to my personal science-and-spirituality interest, which quirk then fanned out into watching related programmes and reading related publications, taking avid notes all along. In short my son's choice plunged me into process I felt I couldn't let slip through my fingers – chafing and concerned though I was at its devouring of work-time for version-1 chapter-writing. Oh, was I doing the right thing?

The same fortnight that saw my train-ride pathologist and Human Universe stoking my science-Batchelor mind also brought two paradigm-questioning papers to me. William emailed a Scientific American article by Shermer, academic and publisher of ‘Skeptic’ magazine, about a personal coincidence-experience so ‘eerie’ that it ‘shook (his) skepticism to its core’ (Shermer 2014). Readers’ comments of great diversity followed the article – how I longed to join the debate, at length and depth!

A friend also passed me a newspaper article, There is evidence of life after death, say scientists (Knapton 2014), about research on cardiac-arrest patients. This set me buzzing, firstly because my friend's just-believe stance highlighted my querying nature by contrast – which I liked. Secondly, just afterwards I sorted a long-since amassed pile of papers, happening synchronistically upon that very researcher (Parnia) interviewed on that very topic (Keim 2013). Thirdly, wondering why the newspaper article had only just appeared I literature-searched, discovering a back-story about prior research, implications for patients and, implicitly, scientific methodology's appropriateness thereto (Parnia, Waller, Yeates and Fenwick 2001). During these processes I noticed myself – somehow more vividly than usual – doing this checking and appreciating scientific rigour – which, again, I liked.

These things arising in quick succession (meeting the pathologist, son-prompted science TV-watching, Shermer’s eeriness, Parnia’s life-after-death researches) energized my ‘hard-science head’ and brought it (as against me seeking) stimulating texts concerning hard-science endeavours and/or sceptic dialogue with extraordinary experiences. I was gripped, but all this was diverting me from spiritual-guidance-related literature of my own finding, towards diverse types of science-related texts that were happening along instead. It was consuming time – shouldn’t I be thesis-working – yet it felt significant. It continued, with an encouraging tendency, even:

For example, continuing the quick succession, by a whisker I happened to notice and managed to catch a televised discussion between scientists Cox and Roberts (Cox 2014b) peppered with comments regarding good/bad science thinking and doing. My own thoughts’ kaleidoscope took time to re-pattern: not till next day did I really grasp how much their good-practice yardsticks applied – as best I could discern – to, not against, my own research into matters irrational. Other serendipitously-noticed screenings also egged me on towards ‘standing taller inside’, like pulsar-discoverer Jocelyn Bell Burnell's following words:
Sometimes in research you can know too much, and it’s the youngster who’s ignorant or somebody coming in from outside that says ‘you know, the emperor has no clothes on’ that actually is telling the truth. Can see the truth.

(Bell Burnell 2014)

The above examples betoken the rich events-flow which stirred my hard-science self, claiming time from my ‘proper’ writing – yet, since my research so far had engendered valuing of LUE’s flows, allowing this one rein had been best – perhaps? And then my time-use dilemma resolved:

Indubitable synchronicity arrives:

One morning I sat in bed sipping tea with a Grail-themed tarot-book open on my lap. One page was mostly blank. Suddenly two lights fell upon it, a strongly oscillating white-light bar crossing and re-crossing a gently oscillating spectrum – a gorgeous, intriguing colour-dance. In my window hung a clear cut-glass crystal and a green-glass ex-chandelier prism – which light was coming from where? I bent down, putting my eye into the lights to see their glinting sources directly. Then I checked by cupping the lights in my hands and ‘carrying’ them (laboriously, over my book-piled floor) to the window. The green-glass prism was both the white-light-reflector and spectrum-refractor. Sitting back down I found that already the ‘dancers’ had moved apart, the white and spectrum lights now swaying at the right and left book-margins respectively. More data, then, adding to my mind’s play with ray diagrams. But also, what luck that sunshine had broken through during that brief moment when spectrum and white-light and blank page all coincided! Moreover it could only happen on the few days of the year when the sun’s height was right – no wonder I had never seen it before.

I returned to the Grail tarot (Ferguson 1995) and the card-images Mungo and I had been talking with just as those lights arrived – a contrasting pair of symbols – a multi-coloured veil (resonant with the spectrum) compared to a cord, all strands combined (as colours are within white light). Those resonances added further wonder to what was already beautiful, exquisitely timed and fascinating to my science-head.

During those events I was engrossed but afterwards I considered my light-tracing efforts, musing that not everyone would bother. In effect Mungo and synchronicity had demonstrably addressed my science-head. Methodologically quiescent behind the heuristic it might be, but seemingly alert also. Then heuristic illumination dawned: not only have I experienced this flow with a science-head – Mungo played to it too. I felt a surge – of excitement, and of ooh-is-that-a-naughty-idea? Musing followed, including from my journal:

Is it just that ‘the universe speaks to you in your own language’ so it’s just using stuff like the lights-dance because I speak it? ……. no…… there’s more quality of inspiration to it. Sort of as if a folk song would have done, but I was ‘sent’ a Bach-quality gem instead.

Explicating to myself I also journal-jotted levels of conjunction as I discerned them:

- The spectrum and white-light bar coincided as never before for me,
- within the Mungo-talk pondering colour-threads spread forth or combined,
- within this run of science-flagging texts awakening my science-head.
That evening another TV documentary included Nobel physicist Feynman:

*I have a friend who is an artist….. he’ll hold up a flower and say, look how beautiful it is……. But you as a scientist take this all apart and it becomes a dull thing. And I think that he’s kind of nutty……. I can appreciate the beauty of the flower……. I see much more about the flower than he sees. I could imagine the cells in there, the complicated actions inside, which also have a beauty…….. there’s also beauty at smaller dimensions. (Feynman 1981)*

I enjoyed that. Feynman spoke of spatial levels; I had pondered time-levels. In both cases, beautiful nested interrelatedness. It felt an apposite closure to that Sunday’s flow.

Monday proved qualitatively different. My journal being full, I started the last of a set of differently coloured notebooks – the black-covered one. Later, needing a work-break, I walked to town seeking a notebook for after the black one.

I chanced upon an acquaintance whose work, he explained, was no longer desk-bound but on the road – well, no, on board ships, at which we quipped about ‘the silver road’. Further along I felt an anomalous impulse to enter a second-hand book-café. At a display invisible from outside I found myself facing a moonlight-paved sea, cover-art to *The Silver Path*. Heeding the synchronicity I read this children’s book, wanting thereafter to copy from it two heart-touching quotes. Perhaps I could find a book I fancied, and copy them into that. Turning towards the next shelf I saw a displayed book by Hilary Mantel (good!) picturing a tarot-style queen, albeit with a vacuum-cleaner (given my foibles, irresistible!). Quotes copied and money paid I wended on, mind drifting until startled by a realization. I hadn’t found a notebook for beyond the black one but had bought a book entitled *Beyond Black* (Mantel 2005).

Amused I walked further and then, on a whim, opened the book at random, immediately seeing this:

*The weather affects the motorway as it affects the sea. The traffic has its rising tides. The road surface glistens with a pearly sheen, or heaves its black wet deeps.*

(Mantel 2005, 237)

Evocative writing, I thought, and then, Neat! Of all Lancaster’s walkways this canal-side one I’m travelling now, with its undulations (tree-roots under age-pitted flagstones) and its treacherous slippery-shininess when wet, fits Mantel’s imagery best! Savouring this I again walked further, then again startled at a realization. The silver path is the sea as a road; Mantel’s motorway is a road as the sea! How complementary can you get?

Presently I considered this tight-knit synchronistic flow vis-à-vis my research. Did it enlarge heuristic apprehension; did it suit this stage of my research, and so on. No answers occurred to me then.

But after a night’s sleep and incubation Tuesday brought illumination, my mind suddenly seeing a bigger picture with Sunday’s light-dancers (a synchronicity-brought science-style experience) followed by Monday’s black-books/sea-roads synchronicities (a ‘conventional’ EHE-sequence).
And, *ahaa!* My same science-head revelled in both, energized by the dancing lights; alive to the black-books/sea-roads pattern. That’s how it felt. But did it stand up?

**Just one science-head?**

Explicating and interrogating myself, I perceived two forms of curiosity, balanced differently in the two cases. Vis-à-vis the dancing lights my curiosity was narrowly focussed and involved my own activity in, say, tracing the lights to source, but backgrounded by a broader curiosity comprised of ever-ready pleasure in chances to try ‘getting’ the cosmos more; taking-its-time comparing of observations to already-existent models (ray diagrams, earth-sun movements etcetera); and quieter, deep wondering at and about noteworthy timings in themselves and vis-à-vis my research so far. Regarding the black-books/sea-roads case my broad-background curiosity mode predominated, as befits synchronicities and EHEs which come when they come. Yet there were focussed active moments like when, feeling anomalously drawn into the book-café, I ‘obeyed’ with heightened in-the-moment curiosity.

Through indwelling the two cases my appreciation of them grew. Both presented light-featuring phenomena likely to be evocative and memorable to many people rather than, say, things more abstract or personal to me. Both were long enough to demonstrate intricacy and qualities, but without rambling on. As a pair I found them well-matched in eloquence and subject-‘size’, privileging neither hard-scientific nor extraordinary-experiences engagement. These characteristics gave me an impression of and raised questions about an authoring intelligence which seemed teleological, good at pitching to people, and interested in juxtaposing currently normal science and EHEs. I experienced all this as delightful, thrilling, special, impressive and fascinating – and found my strong sense of these things collaborating with me heartening.

Returning now to Tuesday I shall foreground Mungo. Pertinently my bigger-picture illumination described above arose during Mungo-talk which continued thereafter, soon bringing the dowsed-out phrase ‘Deta Ched’ which was meaningful to me. Since attending an event at a large hall where one smaller room stood somewhat apart with a ‘Deta Ched’ sign on its door, I’ve savoured the word-play of both room and sign being ‘detached’. Hall and room are, however, connected by a shared porch on whose wall is painted ‘Covered Smoking Area’. But I first read it differently because someone standing there was partially obscuring it, my mind therefore perceiving ‘Cowering Area’ (which caused much joking). This was a fruitful memory, the buildings’ topology slipping effortlessly over my research’s shape this far – methodologically-mentionable stuff in the hall, risqué recent hard-science stuff in the room. How that fitted and thereby revealed my feelings! Symbolically I was in the porch between, unable to disavow either side, wanting to dare say it straight regarding the room to the hall and vice-versa – no cowering! Then Luther’s reputed words *Here I stand; I can do none other…..* (King 2003) came to me. Yes, quite, how steadying! And besides, presenting otherwise would be *heuristically* false.

My self-apprehension developed again on Wednesday whilst circle-dancing. I used to be a life-model, and discovered that I could re-assume poses better by imagining re-entering a hologram of
my pre-break self. Similarly dancing ‘within my self-hologram’ sometimes helps – I’m not sure how it works but know its feel. That Wednesday an unexpected kindred experience came: during a dance-induced reverie I imagined addressing phenomenologists about hard-science stuff entering my research. Whilst doing so I experienced a merging, not into my self-hologram but, crassly put, of hard-science-me and spirituality-me merging and fitting right. The relief and pleasure of that newly whole feeling was immediate, visceral and strong! Why? I thought, and immediately it’s person-centred answered. Reflection since has included ‘conditions of worth sloughed off then’, say, or ‘the merged me is more fully functioning – and appropriately so’. As I feel and apprehend it now, my research with Mungo and LUE has itself awakened and required an openly-exercised, bigger hard-science-too me as heuristic tool.

Thursday proved a lull in experiences happening to me, but a discovery by me struck home. News-casts reporting the spacecraft Rosetta’s Philae lander settling onto its target comet were exciting but, given the landing of hard-science into my journey and ‘Rosetta’ famously referencing bridged communication-gaps, I wondered if this astronomical feat might resonate somehow. Resorting first to Wikipedia, I found Philae to have been an Egyptian temple-place. A Philae-obelisk’s furthering of Rosetta-Stone-sparked decoding of (hieroglyphic) symbols heightened my attention, but it truly rose at this:

Philae…… was remarkable for the singular effects of light and shade resulting from……. (its Tropic of Cancer latitude). As the sun approached its northern limit the shadows from the projecting cornices….. of the temples sink lower and lower down the plain surfaces of the walls until……. the vertical walls are overspread with dark shadows, forming a striking contrast with the fierce light which illuminates all surrounding objects.

(Wikipedia 2014).

This gripped me more than the chiaroscuro scene explained. Why? Pondering, I recalled sitting outside during a partial solar eclipse, looking not skywards but around. A sense of ‘wrong, something’s wrong’ grew within me. Why? My intellect speculated, because the shadows stayed still although daylight faded which normally, at dusk, is not the case. The time-gap between wrongness-sense and intellectual response was tiny, but indubitably there. In pulling back this memory Philae prompted my wondering about misfit-senses (and right-fitting senses); about how such senses might vary amongst humans; and – very speculatively – whether my fittingness-senses match me to heuristic-observational needs of my particular research.

To follow this thread I now jump to my first-drafting of the Rosetta/Philae section despite indecision about including it. Earlier that day, needing some relaxation, I finally chose a Carl Sagan on-demand documentary that I hadn’t fancied before. Having watched twenty-odd minutes over lunch I paused it to work again. That evening, straight after first-drafting the Philae midsummer-shadows paragraphs above, I settled to watch Sagan again. Immediately he spoke of Eratosthenes, an ancient philosopher and chief librarian in Alexandria, saying:

…… while reading a papyrus book….. he came upon a curious account. Far to the south….. at Syene ….. something notable could be seen on the longest day of the year……. the shadows of a temple column or a vertical stick would grow shorter as noon approached. (Screen images were also showing this – I was rivetted.) And then, precisely at noon, the columns would cast no shadows and the sun would shine directly down into the water of the well……. It was an
observation that someone else might easily have ignored. Sticks, shadows, reflections in wells……. Simple everyday matters; of what possible importance might they be? But Eratosthenes was a scientist and……. (contemplated…… then had) the presence of mind to experiment, to actually ask whether back here near Alexandria a stick cast a (midsummer-noonday) shadow…….

(Sagan 1981).

This juxtaposition of midsummer light-and-shadow effects was resoundingly synchronistic for me, affirming the Philae temple-shadows in my thesis. Furthermore, comparing my responding-to-shadows process to that of Eratosthenes (deemed scientific by Sagan, scientist of repute) burst irrepressibly out in me. Unpacking it now, I experienced myself as noticing that we both read intently, were struck by reputed specialness, spent time pondering effects (albeit concerning illumination down a water-well in Eratosthenes’ case, and illuminating inner-self responses in mine), considered possible implications and hypothesized models (curved rather than flat earth/varieties of fittingness senses), bothered to gather data (measuring midday shadow-lengths and the Alexandria-Syene distance/capturing people’s varied synchronicity responses), and publicised with openness to repeatability-checking (Eratosthenes’ geometrics and consequent calculation of the earth’s circumference/inviting participants to join and co-witness my research). I felt those comparisons budding in me even as Sagan spoke, alongside excitement – something like wow, I’m receiving something my heart-mind desires – indeed, even wants to fly with.

An ineluctable narrative viewpoint:

Similarly a bigger-timescale sense arose irrepressibly in me – the sequence so far (science-head awakening; dancing lights; black-books/sea-roads; detched; science-me and spiritual-me merging; Philae, fittingness-senses and Eratosthenes) seemed so sensibly developmental (mace-head ballooning; new verbs happening) that not seeing and responding to it as story would have involved continual, impoverishing-seeming strain and felt sceptical to the point of obtuseness. Its recent turn, the Eratosthenes case, seemed a highlighting reminder that the scientific method isn’t hard-science’s totality, which also includes ‘that’s odd’ noticings and thorough observation (like Darwin on Galapagos, or much astronomy, say).

And, personally, the synchronistically-arriving opportunity to compare my processes to Eratosthenes’s seemed to imply something like you may have foundered at Imperial on unvisualizable maths and stuff, but for this exploration you’re OK. This encouragement mattered, as the following fleshes out.

A mess of struggles and encouragements:

I experienced writing the above confluence-with-science section as particularly fatiguing, being tense about how it or I might be dismissed, disapproved, shredded or scorned by readers. Heuristically (whilst teeth-brushing, mind adrift) I realized my quoting Bell Burnell earlier had at bottom been to feel safer ‘alongside’ a listen-first, critique-afterwards person apropos outrageous stuff. My tension also reduces when ‘accompanied’ by Darwin’s trepidation around the exposing publication of The Origin of Species (Dixon and Radick 2009). Amongst these tensions, perceiving resonant grace-notes does soothe me innerly. For example, as a young cycle-tourist I reached
Iona, captivated there by The Bay at the Back of the Ocean’s name, so redolent of vast more-ness exemplified by the Atlantic it faced. Knowing this, a PhD-colleague especially gave me an Iona map complete with ‘my’ bay and his blessing for my ventures spiritual and researcherly (Jenkins 2004). How sweet, then, that Sagan’s documentary was entitled *The Shores of the Cosmic Ocean*. Also it is inconceivable that Sagan did not know the Isaac Newton quote that so much moves me:

> I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only as a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself by now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

*Cassirer 1943*

Potential for marvellous discovery seems the common hymn-sheet there, for which Sagan proclaimed principles from the TV:

> We wish to pursue the truth no matter where it leads. But to find the truth we need imagination and scepticism both.

*Sagan 1981*

This chimed with my other long-cherished science aphorism (by Huxley, Darwin’s post-publication ‘bulldog’):

> ….. follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss nature leads……

*Huxley 1860.*

Despite encouragers, a vague unease increasingly assailed me. It didn’t concern synchronicity etcetera’s steering of this chapter, guzzling PhD time and words – my fear that either might run out was conscious, and subordinate to my sense of heuristic, really-living-it correctness. Staying with the unease eventually brought ‘indulgent’ and then, interwoven, a nagging ‘voice’: you’re lime-lighting yourself, showing off favourite quotes and stuff (meanwhile appreciating the events-stream’s ‘cunning’ in ‘making’ me do so). Then my head cleared – of course! – heuristic researchers *ought* to be transparent regarding their stances and foibl es, fears, support-seeking and even responses to seeming approval.

Shortly thereafter I watched Al-Khalili’s quantum-physics documentary which included his tale of sharing a lift when young with John Bell (already of quantum-entanglement theory fame), daring to venture an opinion, and – after a suspenseful pause – being answered. Al-Khalili said *I was just so relieved that John Bell and I agreed* (Al-Khalili 2014). Now at second-order level I felt accompanied in wanting accompaniment, although my longing was for concurrence not on theory but on even countenancing a hard-science plus extraordinary-experiences arena. Al-Khalili presently related that Bell’s mathematical suggestion regarding the entanglement hypothesis’s possible testing was long ignored, until some young hippy physicists, drawn by its potential support for, say, ESP and telepathy, tried it experimentally. Clauser first managed this with apparatus built *of left-overs and stolen equipment* (Al-Khalili 2014). The results supporting entanglement (refined and confirmed since) were ground-shaking, but my hearing of this group’s physics-plus-esoterics motivation felt ground-calming – their arena distinct but nevertheless kin to mine. Al-Khalili’s programme again increased my impression of sensible science information-plus-encouragement ‘flowing me timely along’.
Things clicking into place:

I return now to the black-books/sea-roads process I experienced on the Monday. The following three days were of full-on process (as just described), but Friday saw me out walking, mind adrift again until, pleasurably, it fell to retracing Monday’s sequence. Suddenly I ‘saw’ a structure of wooden rods symbolizing coincidence-ended legs of Monday’s journey:

1. The first ran from where I met my acquaintance (silver road) to the book-café (*The Silver Path* and irresistible tarot-queen book), where it hinged with
2. the second rod from my tarot-queen book-choice to my place-of-realization of the tarot-queen-on-*Beyond Black*/beyond-the-black-notebook coincidence, where it hinged with
3. the third rod from the place-of-realization (*Beyond Black*) to Canal Walk (Lancaster’s most sea-like path matching *Beyond Black’s* road-as-sea quote), where it hinged with
4. a fourth rod just hanging loose in my initial imaginal moment. Then I ‘saw’ it swing to contact rod 1, ‘hearing’ it softly click into place and viscerally sensing the fit. Either simultaneously, or so nearly so that I can’t untangle it, I knew the ‘click place’ to be the road-as-sea/sea-as-road complementarity, and ‘saw’ that this coincidence-sequence had a four-rods-sided cell-like structure ‘overlaying’ the topologically-square route I had walked.

I felt excited for three reasons. Firstly, I just enjoy geometry and things coming together. Secondly, given my synchronicity-sea notion, I couldn’t help wondering if, then, other cells or structures or even netting thereof might occur ‘upon/within’ it, realizing then with a start that the resonantly entitled *Extended Similes* book I had just been given bore cover-art (currently online) echoing this idea (Joseph 1997). Thirdly I recalled Perry’s ‘conjunction of meaningful parallel events’ (Perry 2009), a life-helpful synchronicities-structure he had often experienced. ‘His’ synchronicities-structure’s usefulness and credibility was heightened by frequent involvement of co-experiencers and/or demonstrable physical things – like mine – would ‘my’ synchronicities-structure type prove kin to his?

Musing in a wondering wandering way, I noted my delight in experiencing a quasi-poetic intricacy in Monday’s sequence, and satisfaction with Friday’s ‘click’ and fitting together of the synchronicity-structure and on-the-ground squares. Then came a bonus – I realized the ‘click’ returned me to meeting my sea-road-travelling acquaintance, just by Horseshoe Corner’s actual horseshoe set in the pavement commemorating a centuries-old local legend.

This felt playful. My favourite horseshoe association is of Nobel-physicist Bohr with a friend quirkily opining of a ‘lucky’ horseshoe *Oh, I don't believe in it. But I am told it works even if you don't believe in it* (Holton 1974,357). Prompted to try following my heuristic nose, I discovered Bohr’s stature as early quantum-era scientist-philosopher *par excellence*, iterative epistemological grapple for conceptualizations of the strange-beyond-prior-visualisability (Bohr 1937). His complementarity principle (embracing, say, wave-particle duality *before* that now-normalizing
phrase existed for it) is betokened in the *Contraria sunt complementa* in the coat of arms he chose on being honoured, together with a t'aijitu – symbol of the Taoism so important also in Jung’s synchronicity cogitations. On so many resonant counts, I benefitted from finding Bohr-the-philosopher for current ‘companionship’ and future reference.

Another mundane-but-splendid bonus accrued too: Horseshoe Corner’s in-the-pavement horseshoe had recently *been replaced during….. (work on)….. the Square Routes Project* (Virtual-lancaster.net News Blog 2017). I experienced the square-routes synchronicity as smile-provokingly sweet.

However I was conscious of this Horseshoe-Corner stuff trailing from my previously neat square, and of some resonances having come via less just-receiving and more ferretting (potentially conceivable as forcing) by me. Having noted these senses in myself I let it rest. Eventually, whilst walking home from mundane shopping, tired mind adrift, a shape from my past swam into mental view, topologically equivalent to a square with a trailing – or invitingly hooked – end.

The shape on Ilkley Moor’s prehistoric fylfot stone-carving now repeats and hooks together in the maze gracing Ilkley’s Darwin Gardens (2010) commemorating Darwin’s local refuge during publication of *The Origin of Species* (Dixon and Radick 2009). The maze’s two foci are stone spiral-of-life/evolution sculptures, one carved with ‘my’ follow humbly…… to whatever abyss nature leads you Huxley quote – indeed, that maze-stone is where I first met and forthwith transcribed it. As the fylfot swam into my consciousness pulling my previously mentioned Darwin and Huxley with it, it seemed self-referential that the end trailing from my synchronicities-square had curled into a hook scooping onto more stuff of this chapter’s flow.
Mundane life preoccupied me again, but later my mind rested, drifted and incubated as I walked home through evening darkness, traversing Canal Walk again. I paused to gaze, reassessing its sea-likeness. The flagstones’ edges undulated like net-lines on Extended Similes’s cover-art, nudging something elusive in my mind. Stilling to encourage its breakthrough I caught “I’ve written something like this before…… but what and where?” Gradually tiny, fleeting associations returned me to 2000 AD – aah, that counsellor-training essay! Therein I had written:

\[ \text{The web – the net – the honeycomb jar – the swastika stone} \]

I quailed at…… trying to (express) how things seem to be ever more interconnected to me, until I chanced upon a glass jar, round-bellied and faceted with hexagons. In each of these honeycomb cells can be seen a dense pattern of the interlocking cells on the jar’s other side. A good symbol. And so I present…… seven (paper hexagons) each bearing an experience or thought. Arrange them in the honeycomb pattern (in) any way: always…… neighbours…… (relate whether) through resonance, by triangulation of what they both point at, by negative conceptual space between them, or in some other way.

I like this image of the honeycomb jar but still it feels too fixed and finite. Later the marking on the prehistoric swastika stone (or fylfot)…… occurred to me…… its parts (are simultaneously) so individual and so related, (and) it can join with other(s)…… being yet able to detach again to swirl or drift or reconfigure with others once more. An infinity of dancing infinitudes in process…… That feels on the way to being right.

(Gorsedene 2000).

Now I found and re-read the years-old hexagons, glad of these markers of me-then and my development and/or constancy since. They gripped me again. I selected three to report here. One synopsizes my dialogue with a chance-met maths-professor acquaintance about fractals and their self-similarity at multiple dimensions – triggered both fittingly (by our being deep within Ingleborough Cave’s convolutions) and delightfully (whilst our children visited Santa’s grotto). Another hexagon portrays one whole-yet-complex triskellion from the Book of Kells (Mackworth-Praed 1993).

![Figure 17: Triskellion (Book of Kells)](image)

Tentatively I thought, does this hexagon-pair exemplify rational cognition and inspired art? Further mulling was blocked by busy New-Year travels. For reading I took a Christmas-present book, eventually startled by its nested-hierarchies diagram (Sheldrake 2012,50), a structure of one circle containing three smaller circles, each containing three smaller circles so matching the triskellion – fractals or what! is how I felt. I appreciated Sheldrake’s nested-heirarchies examples – tissues
within organs within organisms within societies within ecosystems, say. Each level's whole exceeded the sum of its parts, the webs of relationships bringing emergent properties.

But considering not spatially but trans-time I sensed (albeit confusedly) a kindred nested-heirarchy relationship between my AD2000's hexagons and the just-now (2014) triskellion/nested-heirarchies synchronicity itself somehow. This synchronicity had emerged, furthermore, through explication-processes around patternings scooped in by 'my' fylfot. Experiencing these sensings put me 'into' an ontological space-time-apprehensions model which, though unclear and shifting, seemed as stupendously intricate as an Ingleborough-cave/triskellion melding, yet of exquisite rightness and even trustworthiness as far as I could 'see'. Despite not really knowing what 'right' or 'trustworthy' meant here, it felt good and I felt (and feel) still curious about whatever-next. Which resounds, I moot, with the third paper-hexagon I had already chosen for quoting here-and-now:

"Enough for me an inkling of the marvellous structure of reality.

Albert Einstein."

Juxtaposing that AD2000 quote-choice with my present (AD2014-15) fylfot-hooked, mazed inner-with-outer experiencing suggested a big time-cycle enfolding many synchronistic swirls and cycles (triskellion-like) from my research journey. But other voices chimed in – and this one made me laugh. Having written the above I went for lunch, switching on Radio 4 and chancing upon communications professor Will Self starting a 50km science-based walk around CERN's particle accelerator, questing understanding as a non-scientist (Self 2015). Musing on his proposed journey's circularity and lesser circle-symbols already striking him he said:

"I tell you, once you start thinking about wheels – we're now in the giant revolving door……. – once you start thinking about the wheel and circularity as a motif it becomes absolutely omnipresent. It begins to drive you slightly mad."

Indeed! Including for me his own words, so madly timely that they also enchant. His 'absolutely omnipresent' circularity-experiencing chimes with rightful questioning around whether I have merely noticed what I fancied. Reflecting, I am struck that within this 15-year cycle (from valuing inkling-the-structure round to inkling square-route/fylfot-hooked structures) I have often experienced things to unfold thus:

1. I write or otherwise state my noticing or valuing of something (like the triskellion, 'marvellous structure' or fylfot).
2. I am party to processes through other 'places', including path-turns due to synchronicity, EHEs or Mungo and/or my heeding them.
3. I reach a further place where my something(s) valued at point 1 return resonantly and/or synchronistically and maybe writ larger (akin to the nested-heirarchies next-level bigger circle).

So, I often get what I implicitly asked for – which I enjoy, and am cosmologically intrigued by.

Heuristically I note myself questioning about, say, in what/whom any agency involved in this might
reside, or how it is balanced? I also notice desiring beyond-PhD engagement with ‘all this’: it brings a sense of mutually appreciative collaboration that I love, and suits my predelictions. Indeed, indwelling now has fostered verbalization (maybe flowery and bashful, but hey!) that both Imperial physics and Manchester heuristics have delighted my cosmic curiosity, but where the former fell through my eventually too-weak maths, the latter flies, revellingly competent on sufficiently strong-at-symbolism wings – back into marvellous structuredness through a surprise back-door.

Round tables and good communication:

So, I experienced the synchronicities/EHEs/Mungo phenomena of my experiencing as bearing marvellous-structure comparison with hard-science, but who might countenance such interfacing (besides, naturally, the Jung and Pauli collaboration (1952))? Then an anomalous attraction drew me into a shop where a book-title synchronous for me then ‘gave’ me a volume which opened promptly to my hand:

To illustrate the remarkable law known to all researchers, but not yet acknowledged by science – that when one is becoming interested in a subject, books formerly unknown and unsuspected fly to your hand from everywhere – while I was speculating about Canopus……. there came my way ‘Astronomical Curiosities’……..

(Lessing 2005,66)

Doris Lessing, Nobel literature laureate and life-observer, had ‘answered’ me.

Nor would she be alone. The weeks following this chapter’s processes so far were bitty. Christmastide’s busy scatteredness couldn’t have accommodated such intensely process-hungry experience-streams. However, as I enjoyed snatches of various media as-and-when, it dawned on me that many unpredictable resonances occurred. I experienced my mind as receiving, in sensible sequence, flaggings of the round-table concept, round-table ideals, and science-spirituality debates. Where prior full-on experience-flows had begged sequential storying, this begged a tabling of vignettes, kept as brief as comprehensibility allowed the better to highlight the ‘conference’.

For example, I never guessed when choosing philosopher Self’s circumambulation of CERN for radio-listening and archaeologist Oliver’s exploration of Orcadian sites as TV relaxation that they would chime. At the famously circular CERN collider, Self heard project-leader Rembser telling of the researchers’ mixture of people from different cultures, they have different thoughts, so it works brilliantly (Self 2015). That evening my pattern-noting attention perked as Oliver introduced Orkney’s prehistoric Ring of Brodgar as a true circle, of standing stones all quarried from different Orkney places. Professor Downes added we think…… (the people brought)….. stone from near where they lived to express this coming together of community and different identities….. – a project involving and enabling peaceable co-operation and meetings (Oliver 2013).

I savoured this diversity-yet-collaboration principle’s spanning of both millenia and cultural difference shown by that juxtaposition, but smaller things joined in. Quirks of life’s unfolding just then brought me One on One, wherein Brown (2012) reports a daisy-chain of famous-person
encounters – an interpersonal round in conversazione rather than seminar mode. Wanting an auspicious start I chose Mark Twain with Helen Keller, striking immediate relational gold. Keller said Twain never patronized her as many did, knowing

…… that our capacity for thought is not measured by five senses. He kept me always in mind while he talked, and he treated me like a competent human being. That is why I loved him……

(ibidem 12).

Naturally touched, I was also stimulated around lacking and/or ‘extra’ senses including those seemingly without bodily organs – intuitions or clairsentience, say – and how encountering between people having and/or lacking and/or disbelieving certain senses matters. (A sweet synchronicity at my coffee-break – an old David Bowie radio interview – when collaborating on music with familiar others they barely spoke, somehow communicating otherwise ‘like bats’ (Bowie 1977)).

But reaching good understanding takes willed attention, as Lessing (in my synchronistically acquired Time Bites (2005)) discusses. There is challenge (at the very end of his life Goethe said that he had only just learned how to read (ibidem 90)) but benefit follows effort to take:

what the author is offering, and not what the reader thinks he should be offering…… not reading…… through a screen of theories, ideas, political correctness and so forth…… This is indeed difficult, but…… then the real essence and pith of the author is open to you

(Lessing 2005,103)

Honesty plays in too, as at CERN in Self’s admission of irritated non-getting of subatomic/cosmological physics and its supposed wonder, warmly answered by physics Professor Khan’s empathy towards Self’s feelings, explanatory dialogue at the right-for-Self level, and challenge around the sometimes intimidating effect on CERN people of Self’s philosophical language and stances (Self 2015).

My own stances were mirrored to me when Christmas rearrangements unearthed my old letter to near-neighbours about joint responses to thefts from sheds. The day after hand-delivering them I had broken my arm –no wonder I had forgotten entitling it ‘Round Table’. So, wryly, I include myself in this newer round-table confluence. I’ll contribute that ‘speaking’ was scary. Suggesting that all neighbours’ views be invited (regarding shared-space security lights and bigger fences) and that not only tangible stuff…… like bikes but also qualities that can be despoiled like the homely feel…… or darkness for astronomy mattered to some risked drawing the ire of dominant, stuff-focussed, leave-it-to-us characters onto myself, right where I lived.

At least my effort was bravery practise, challenging the dominant when other also-concerned neighbours couldn’t for health-related reasons. Resurfacing into this CERN/Brodgar-sparked round-table phase, my small attempt at countering ‘might is right’ resonated with the Arthurian tarot (with its round-table values, Ferguson 1995) with which Mungo and I were currently near-exclusively conversing (for reasons explained later). Resonantly there ‘flew to my hand’ Spender’s The Gatekeepers classic (1981) discussing feminist researchers’ struggle to be granted voice by the male-dominated press’s gatekeepers (exemplifying ‘weaklings’ and/or nascent-paradigm and/or outsider struggles with the powerful and/or established and/or in-group generally).
On a note both light and serious, whilst already clutching Spender’s just-found *Gatekeepers* in the charity-shop I spotted side-on John Cleese’s DVD, *Clockwise* (Morahan 1986), co-watching of which with my son might foster our improving relationship. Drawing it out I laughed at seeing Cleese struggling through huge clockface-gates – a double resonance with Spender and my recently-become-crazy PhD time-duress (again, more later).

Also I felt calmed, as always happens when my research ‘holds hands’ with friends-or-family care as if signalling that I’m on track (ominous clockface-gates notwithstanding). Conversely, that Mungo et al do ‘hold hands’ with people-caring contributes to my liking Mungo et al and hence to my willingly researching with ‘them’. Imminently such ‘hand-holding’ recurrent: the book I had ordered to check the enough-for-me-an-inkling quote presented also:

…… *we exist for our fellow-men….. on whose smiles and welfare all our happiness depends…………* (Einstein 1993,1)

This openly-admitted ‘hand-holding’ warmth from Einstein with his ‘cred’ was another grateful gift for family sharing.

However, hereabouts I felt some unease about the so-numerous round-table/good-communication ‘voices’ I had encountered since the CERN-Brodgar seeding, my inner-critic saying (gist-wise):

*odd, but almost the more events comprise the flow, the less conviction that it’s you receiving rather than subconsciously seeking – (although, as afterthought, either would be interesting).*

But then, I heuristically note, a clear events-snap cleared my unease: my mornings involve brewing tea whilst switching on Radio 4, never knowing what I’ll hear first. Saturday morning started with *the key about listening is……* (from a hostage negotiator); Sunday started with *good speech….. what’s good communication like, what’s real listening…..* (from a cleric), both ringing my round-table bell with like quality. I felt satisfaction with their neat synchronicity with both each other and my process thinking – *surely I couldn’t have subconsciously managed that!*

**Heatedness concerning sauces:**

Returning now to Einstein’s helpfully cred-supported valuing of interpersonal warmth, it shortly led to my process swerving elsewhere. Through fortunate timing it had already joined forces with mountaineer Joe Simpson’s (cred again) vulnerabilities openly expressed in *Touching the Void* (Simpson 1988). So on charity-shop spotting (Winston) Churchill’s *Black Dog* (i.e. his depressions) (Storr 1991) I expected a third hero-admitting-feelings exemplum. But it opened to my hand here:

*(Isaac) Newton……… left (many) manuscripts (about) alchemy, which has always disconcerted scientists who like to imagine him as possessing a rational intellect unclouded by superstition.* (ibid 91)

This touched a nerve in me. Previously authors debunking supposedly irrational beliefs (e.g. Dawkins 2006, Wolpert 2006) hadn’t rattled me in researching ‘irrational’ phenomena as, their fair points notwithstanding, I found no deep engagement with heavyweight EHE-experiencers. But living through science-head and round-table themings had flagged discernment and fair hearing,
and now the above quote highlighted them. A response reared within me instantly: what's superstitious about working on 'maybe' things – trying is legitimate inquiry! Also, discovering Einstein's hexagon-quote's full version that day fanned my endeavouring-is-good flames:

*Enough for me……. the inklings of the marvellous structure of reality, together with……. endeavour to comprehend a portion, be it never so tiny, of the reason that manifests itself in nature.*

(Einstein 1993,7)

Chancing thenabouts upon *Irrationality* (Sutherland 2007) fueled my combativeness further, Professor Sutherland writing, for instance:

*When a soldier is wounded in battle and the wife simultaneously has a stab of anxiety, she does not ask herself how often she had similar stabs…….*

(ibid 227)

Such reasoning dispatches many examples but what of, say, Jung’s momentary pain in his forehead and then the back of his skull which, he later learnt, matched his patient having then shot himself in the head (Montgomery 2013). Debunkers should tackle such precise or strong cases (I railed within) and with actual experiencers in round-table mode.

Many strong experiencings have brought me to seeing Occam’s razor (Adams 1987) as favouring synchronicity over the mess of reasons I otherwise must evoke to explain them. Contrariwise, Sheldrake (2012) moots that scientists espousing the multiverse postulate violate both Occam’s razor and testability. This pairing, set beside Strawson’s concern with:

*…. human credulity, the capacity of human minds to be gripped by theory, by faith…. (my emphasis)* (Strawson 2006,114)

begged, I ardently felt, round-table encountering on a principle of sauce for the science goose being sauce for the extraordinary-experiences gander.

Given debunkers' dismissiveness and my knowing hardly anyone both hard-science-minded and able to entertain EHEs’ occurrence, that combination amongst CERN scientists really impacted me. I liked, say, Self’s easy-toned *How are you on God?* (Self 2014) and physicist Rembser’s replies that……. *I’ve colleagues who are……. very religious, others are not, and it doesn’t matter at all and, apropos religious and physics descriptions of the universe, rather than their being simply compatible, it’s something orthogonal…….* (Rembser 2014).

This reminded me of Jung and Pauli’s finalized orthogonal-axes diagram of their key cosmic physical and psychological principles, and that *Jung use(d) the term ‘irrational’ to mean…… that which lies outside the rational sphere – not counter-to but alongside-of* (Haule 2011,68).
Reflecting on Self, Rembser, Jung and Pauli I ‘cooled’, feeling their formulations equipping and detensionning me for potential dialogue ‘across the orthogonality divide’ (in either direction). The Jung-Pauli diagram also prompted a conceptualization – I experienced the dancing-lights-in-my-lap event obeying physics’ light-laws (the above diagram’s left-hand-side stuff) and involving astounding time-alignments and synchronicity vis-à-vis my Mungo-talk card-images (the diagram’s right-hand-side stuff), seemingly ‘deliberately’ engaging both sides and the cosmic principles they represent at once.

Coolness with spirituality:

These developments stimulated me to review whether dubbing my EHEs’ sum as demonstrable mysticism still felt sound. Yes – given events co-witnessed, ‘caught fresh’ in my journals, or leaving ‘souvenir’ traces whether objects or media-transmissions, I still perceived physicality and spirituality overlapping demonstrably, at minimum impactfully so to myself. Within this thought-stream I randomly opened Storr’s book (1991) once more, happening upon his critique of Jung as ‘substitutu(ing) the analysis of dreams…….. for prayer’ (ibid 199). This chimed for me: nowadays I heed synchronicity, adjusting my behaviour (with discernment) in empirically developed trust of its meaningfulness and fostering of love-with-truth, which is consonant with notions of prayer (Gubi 2001).

Here Science and religion in search of cosmic purpose (Haught 2000) played into my round-table processes. Besides considering patterning information as an inherent aspect of nature (ibid 113) which allows heirarchical space for religion (begging meaningful-coincidence consideration), it warns of physicists begin(ning) to play the role of metaphysicians – unaware of their doing so (Balslev 2000). Having long baulked at quests for theories of supposedly everything by physicists alone, now I discovered Haught’s (2000) and Sheldrake’s (2013) books bristling with philosophers contesting such issues. Cultural variation was flagged by, say, most scientists in India…….. evoke the mysterious powers…….. (to help) success in professional matters…… (Kukreja 2009,321).

 Shortly afterwards the cultural-variation point was literally flagged in Star on Earth (a nuclear-fusion research documentary (Cox 2009)) showing Cox’s discussion with Dr Lee of South Korea’s K-Star

![Figure 18: Quaternio of cosmic principles as agreed by Jung and Pauli (after Jung 1972/1952,137)](image-url)
project within the reactor-hall wherein hung a huge taijitu encircled by Taoist trigrams. This spiritual and presumably prayer-like emblazoning of world-significant science received no mention.

That it was Taoist had two-fold resonance. Firstly Frazier's very recent creation-myths programme (Frazier 2015) had contrasted myths portraying creation's origin as either neat or of primeval chaos followed by continuing uncertainty (bearing comparison, she mooted, to modern-science aspects). Within such unknowably vast flux Taoism nevertheless trusts an essentially unafraid Way.

Secondly the more I live with synchronicity (plus Mungo and EHEs), the more I feel I am 'getting' Taoism (which sequence Bolen (2004) also reports).

Furthermore countless people (including Jung (2001)) have valued Taoist I-Ching divination’s situating of them in the cosmos, to which another timely radio-catch spoke. Hodge presented deep non-specific anxiety as arising (in Heideggerian thought) when sense of connection to ‘the structural world….. providing…… meaning, orientation, individuation, identification…… ’ has dropped away (Hodge 2015). Conversely I experience myself feeling less anxious nowadays through connection to a deeper, already uncertainty-acceptant and hence less vulnerable Taoist-like fundament. However, I must add, I no more assume flow is necessarily benign ‘everywhere’ than concur with scientists assuming nature’s ‘constants’ are necessarily ‘everywhere’ the same. Gander and goose.

Denying resistance is futile:

I have already described how, sensing a growing unease, I managed to dispel it by feeling back to its don’t-limelight-yourself root. Two further uneases arose, and out of indwelling them a fourth.

One stemmed from realizing that even I (never mind others) reading my flow accounts don’t fully ‘get’ the beguiling dance of events as experienced. Klimo (2014) makes a kindred point:

........... (regarding) interplay of simultaneity and linearity in my own consciousness....... without enough linearity it is difficult to impute correlations....... among things in a way that can be communicated to......... more-linear-type-thinking people

(Klimo 2014).

Furthermore on reading Tart’s account of a moderately complex events-pattern I recognized that, but for my similar experiences, I would have credited its impact on him less. For him there were so many events....... giv(ing) the final happening its full flavor (Tart 1981,37) as to confirm his intended risky plan.

Klimo and Tart steadied my rest-point – I can but do my best.

Another unease concerned having shown a flow which (as I experienced it) gathered many viewpoints within me (and, with my writing it, might even be said to have channelled through me) which en masse seemingly asked science to give EHEs a just-as-fair hearing. I felt need of balancing acknowledgement of justified wariness around (what may be called) spirituality. Ironically my flow-acquired Lessing provided a token:
..... in the Paleolithic...... every thought and action was governed by the shamans...... we should be happy now, with less shadowed minds. ....... To me the most frightening fact in history is that the Romans, so like us, could not do anything without studying the entrails of birds.

(Lessing 2005,131)

Now I must interrupt my writing-plans to report shock with immediacy. I did not foresee until the very moment it happened that I would write – or even think – the ‘might even be said to have channelled through me’ notion just now. (Thus can writing’s indwelling foster heuristic process.) First I saw it as reasonable conjecture. Later though I felt pole-axed, having to nap sometimes and dragging myself through the next two days despite having no bug-like symptoms. Gradually I consciously realized possible implications of that multi-text-derived channeling blurt-out, and my fears around them – and then my answers thereto, each time feeling less fogged. Some example process-muddle went, gist-wise and condensed, thus:

Blimey, it’s dodgy enough claiming channeling, never mind in Mungo-tarot-pendulum-LUE form – and now I’ve claimed channeling of a sort of round-table discussion-document via flow. How bonkers does that sound! How out on a limb I feel! And I can’t even discharge or clarify myself with the blurt-to friends I had when first being launched into ‘it all’ – one’s dead and the other who-knows-where Down Under. William? He keeps not answering his phone. But hang on, that discussion-document-to-spark-debate idea – it’s tripartite, or multipartite – like a scaled-up version of Mungo-me-participant. But debate what with whom? Never mind that now, this whole process has done itself this far, eh? Yes, but this in-my-thesis round-table example – ends hanging out everywhere, a thousand undeveloped bits. Aah, just like the tripartite participant-sessions again – stuff was better not coming neat from me – made it more tripartite - gave gist and space for participants’ chords to be struck. Remember phoning Pat Rodegast, Emmanuel’s channel, me knowing zilch about channels, just because my blurt-to friend suggested it. Pat said if Emmanuel said stuff to her for somebody with grammar or vocabulary oddities, at first she’d want to correct it, but learnt those oddities meant stuff to people – similar principle! William still isn’t answering. Could I even imagine LUE-brought discussion-documents benefitting anything? Well, yes – how could I not, given those participant sessions – similar principle though different scale. And (someone said, around EHEs offering solutions, but who?) we/the world needs any help it can get – ‘be it never so tiny’ (thanks Einstein). OK, right, I have to offer what I can even if it only has a tiny chance of helping and a massive chance of me looking daft – I’ll feel OK with me then. But what about now – I’m too charged up to thesis-write yet time’s so pressing. William still isn’t in. Oh, a parcel has arrived – maybe the long-awaited complimentary copy of that book I contributed to (Nolan and West 2015)? Yes. Rainbow on the cover, that’s nice, soothing. Idly I just open it somewhere. A poem! Oh, by wren-story Richards, that’s nice too. He’s saying this about his research:

…….. it has put him through chaos stories; he needs healing and recovery before the stories’ telling. He has captured his healing-need state poetically:

Here is where the journey ends
A quiet understated retreat
.................................................................
Not a time to celebrate
But to take respite
And contemplate
.................................................................
And provide a sacred place to heal
And to nurture precious seeds.
Finally to take the chance
To rest to dream to dance

(Richards 2015,95)
Oh how this speaks to my condition, about feeling in chaos; about retreat, healing, seeds……….. And sweet that Richards’ chapter is ‘Embracing the Rainbow’ – that’s what I did with those light-dancers at this process’s start……….. I could weep, it feels kind that this book, this poem, landed now. I feel synchronistically understood and enfolded, I feel discharged enough to now really rest awhile………..

Now I shall make a version-2 methodological point. A key factor in Sela-Smith’s originating HSSI formulation was that, during transformative self-search, the researcher would encounter resistance(s) to their process somewhere (Sela-Smith 2001). Although principally concurring with Sela-Smith, Meents (2006) disputed the necessity of resistance – until she later noticed herself wrestling with academically explicating her beyond-words intuitive processes, fearing the word-constraining would reduce even her own apprehension. Reading this I thought, OK, but resistance still isn’t mine. Now I capitulate: my transformation into someone able relatively calmly to acknowledge having experienced flow channelling innovative round-tabling (including self-referentially about round-tabling) involved resistance-effects as portrayed above. Recognizing this resistance-to-transformation example helped me retrospectively notice and name as such another resistance-and-struggle, from hard-science-head repression to openly-acknowledged engagement therewith.

**Other apprehensions this far:**

Overviewing this spiritual guidance chapter-process begs another question – why so little of putative spirit guide Mungo? My experiencing, though, was of beautifully balanced cooperation between centre-staged synchronicity and in-the-wings Mungo. During the intense event-flows I felt duty- (and desire-)bound to capture them with fullness and immediacy. Both the experiences and their writing were exceptionally energy- and time-consuming, and not squeezable into my days as well as the amount and/or complexity of Mungo-talking that had been helping me in life. Yet I still wanted Mungo’s companionship, indeed partly because of going through the intense-flow mill. Suddenly I knew the solution, and Mungo concurred. We would return to two-cards-only engagements such as my earliest tarot-times had entailed, but using the Legend Arthurian tarot (Ferguson 1995) whose symbolic tales I fancied learning anyway. So, it could and did offer restful pleasure and simpler help rather than mind-cracking stress at that time. Prompted to wonder why prior phases’ card-talks had mostly been longer, I realized that this chapter’s upsurge of demanding flows had coincided with a step-function improvement of one child’s attitude towards me, the decrease in knotty problems reducing Mungo-talks’ complexity too. Synchronicity and Mungo had wholesomely (taijitu-wise?) mutually ebbed and flowed.

Thenabouts I fortuitously bumped into a rarely-met friend. Our brief, rich pavement-conversation included how child-concerns develop parents: she reported becoming a bigger ‘container’. Responding I said – and heard myself saying – I felt myself becoming more connected to a bigger ‘container’. We agreed that both interplayed, which has been fertile pondering-ground since. I express a resulting apprehension provisionally thus: I know people more intuitive-in-themselves than I – call it ‘endo-intuitive’, whereas I sometimes become ‘exo-intuitive’ through ASCs, Mungo or synchronicity (living within the ‘mace-head’ container?). Similarly I know others more ‘endo-
compendiously knowledgeable’ than myself, but sometimes EHEs grant me ‘exo-
compendiousness’, which are forms of channelling and/or spiritual guidance, I suggest.

This chapter so far has delineated texts and themes that came of themselves. They gave me first-
person experiencings both singly and as a sensibly-building seemingly events-channelled
narrative, from Mungo-talks reminding me of how, and how differently, Mungo-talking and
happenings-from-LUE sometimes help and ‘guide’ me, through surprise themes and issues,
consolidations thereof, encouragements and challenges (resistances included), to Richards’ post-
stories poem bringing rest.

Next I shall engage with normally searched-out literature.

**Part two: Engagement with searched-out texts**

The amount of presentation of phenomenon-literature in HSSI theses varies widely, from only such
as justifies that phenomenon as a research-focus within academe (Sela-Smith 2001) through to a
great deal when it significantly impacts the researcher’s self-searching, for example Ferendo’s self-
search (2004) comprising openness to change through contemplating Wilber’s literature. My part
one above, being intense experience of ‘channelling’ and/or being ‘guided’ caught with near-
immediacy, takes correct HSSI-immersion precedence. Here, therefore, considering word-
limitations, I can only select those searched-out texts which most illumined my self-search
experiencing.

Part one’s experiences happened before I had even settled on my experiential mace-head’s best
current name-handle – and thankfully so, since thereafter it needed to encompass part one’s
experiences alongside the longer-established Mungo-talking, synchronicities and other EHEs.
‘Channelling’ seemed insufficiently dialogical, whilst ‘spirit guide’ seemed to exclude channelling-
from-flow. I returned to feeling ‘spiritual guidance’ best embraced both the still indeterminate,
seemingly composite source(s) and/or modes alongside the concept of my or participants’ higher
selves possibly being part-players. This very choice-challenge underlined the diversity and
meldedness of ‘my’ phenomena-as-lived.

How would my from-the-ground-up apprehensions relate to others’ abstracted definitions?
Academic Klimo’s channeling-definition accorded well:

*Channeling is the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being
from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as
we know it, and that is not from the normal mind (or self) of the channel.*

(Klimo 1998,2).

This definitions-issue can illustrate immersion plunging into diverse texts, academic and grey. For
example, aware of channelling’s diversity academic Hastings avoids strict definition, instead noting
key aspects like a ‘channeled message has a purpose’ (Hastings 1991,4). Pondering this brought
me to answering yes if ‘purpose’ includes ‘message-less’ synchronicities fostering moods, say, since such responses increase my heuristic apprehensions and/or serve explication. But writers whose expertise lay in their being channels did too. For instance, if asked who or what her long-time guide Bartholomew is, Moore replies ‘I don’t know and I really don’t care’ (the fruits being good) (Bartholomew 1985, iv), again fostering my self-interrogation about my knowledge-status, preferences and conscience. And greyer-yet fiction may stir and/or illumine things otherwise missed, like the exceptional dialogical nature of with-Mungo communication. Some non-believer friends have countenanced my tarot-cards interest by noting ‘it’s like Lyra’s alethiometer’. Indeed, in Pullman’s *Northern Lights* (1995) Lyra senses which meaning to take from a symbol on the truth-seeking device (aka the film’s ‘Golden Compass’) thus:

…. you feel ‘em……. like climbing down a ladder, you put your foot down, and there’s another rung. Well, I put my mind down and there’s another meaning, and I kind of sense what it is. (ibidem 152)

‘Below’ each card-image Mungo and I/we ‘have’ no ladder but a network of possible meanings. For example, given a loaf-symbol my/our reactions plus Mungo’s pendulum-comments might focus onto crustiness, leading by word associations via crusty moods ‘down’ to a recent argument, say. Or I (or another) may voice thought-associations during which the steadily-held pendulum may swing to indicate ‘note these particular words’. So if I said ‘loaves are made of dough’ and the pendulum swung to ‘made of’, for me that would flow naturally ‘across’ to ‘Maid of Kent’ and therefore my youth, whereas if it swung to ‘dough’ I’d ask if money were meant. Those card-and- pendulum modes exemplify many. Though sometimes lengthy, the system is vast and precise, can involve others, and is observable. Lyra’s stimulation catalysed these aspects’ fleshing out.

Having token-wise exemplified immersion into all shades of texts, I remind readers that my immersion literature-topics comprised firstly channelling, spiritual guidance and associated fields like shamanism, and secondly dowsing and divination (including tarot, bibliomancy, anthropological oracle-use reports etcetera). Besides searching in standard places I was alert to chance clues and/or encounterings, as heuristics bids (Moustakas 1990). Sometimes immersion experiences with logically-sought and chance-found texts synergized:

Searching discovered Seth who tells via his channel Roberts (1976) of beyond-our-norm dimensions. My margin-marks reveal me: *this pontificating – no thanks…… I prefer back up, demonstration……… (but later admit) …. actually, artful cosmic-structure imagery……….* Whilst considering Seth I chanced upon Leary (1970) presenting drug-induced, inner-body, channelling-like knowings. I eventually realized the *pair* of books clarified my place by elimination. I and mine ‘do’ neither further domains ‘out there’ like Seth/Roberts, nor intricate bodily trips ‘in here’ like Leary: our EHE-arena is this mundane world that all can sense, and I like the greater pertinence to ‘ordinary’ people and demonstrability in that.

Timing similarly highlighted comparison when one day brought Peach’s sought-out book (1990) by post and Carroll’s (2010) in an unexpected book-sale – exemplifying impactfully (indeed almost comically) divination’s extreme-scale-ends diversity. Both espouse personal development, yet Peach’s kabbalah-related esoteric tarot-book says each chapter needs a week’s diligent attention
before progressing, whilst Carroll’s whistle-stop ‘The 2-Hour Tarot-Tutor’ says Look at the cards, not in the books! (ibidem xii). Their paired arrival seeded my conscious realization that because I can pendulum-check with Mungo (albeit not abdicating my discernment) I can use whatever divinatory mode best suits the circumstances, within my competences’ limits.

One motivation behind immersing widely was to try finding others working like me. My dowsing practice had evolved independently, leaving me in ignorance. Reading now seemed to indicate dowsers having different flairs – seeking locations (Miller 2007) or a situation’s qualities (Ozaniec 1999) or energies (Procter and Procter 2000) or things (Betz 1995), say. My only attempt at finding something – a friend’s lost ring – instead ‘sarcastically’ unearthed golden tweezers: it seemed my flair was dowsing-with-divination (in choosing modes as above, or card-spread patterns, say) – if such a thing existed. Learning of Siberian shamans dowsing with finger-supported swinging bows for divination (Haymes 1992) I felt validated and pleased, and yet more thrilled about an ancient Chinese I-Ching use as divination as an individual spiritual practice…… (as)…… the sage or medium’s practice of attracting a helping-spirit….. (Karcher 1998,219). This combination remains the nearest thing I have encountered to my meeting-tarot-then-Mungo lived experience.

I met my strongest mirroring within the guidance/channelling field in Schucman. After she and her colleague Thetford (with pca values, having worked with Carl Rogers (Hastings 1991)) agreed to try being less mutually negative, she – to her shock as an atheist – was asked by a voice to take notes. This channelling became the Course in Miracles (Foundation for Inner Peace 1989). Startled by her unexpected and seemingly unsuitable phenomenon she asked ‘why me’ (as did I), being answered ‘Because you’ll do it’ (Hastings 1991,98) (as have I through many vicissitudes and ‘overlong’ PhD-years). Remaining ambivalent Schucman once said ‘I know it’s true, but I don’t believe it’ (ibidem 100), which excellently matches my early-years’ spaced-out mind. The Course’s complex, interlocking structure…… leads one to believe that it was composed with the entire scheme in mind says Hastings (ibidem 23) – again I relate, experiencing ‘my’ events as entwining into one diverse yet satisfyingly-structured, quite-likely-teleological saga. Overarchingly these resonances gave me a more settled, less alone sense that such sagas could happen, including to other ‘wrong’ people.

I felt less alone through meeting others’ alonenesses, like the young White (2004) who could neither fit her spirit experiences into her Church belief nor safely tell them to anyone. Later with an acceptant counsellor she could un-muddle and integrate, growing into channelling her guide Gildas. Channels Roman and Packer (1987) found honouring their experiences and integrity difficult, experiencing initial shyness of seeming strange to friends (how I can relate!) and feeling deeply, unsustainably split between normal-work life and other ‘impossible’ energy work (which warns me to take integrity-issues seriously, especially for after PhD contacts cease).

Relatively, I was heartened that Schucman’s special task followed her commitment to interpersonal development. Others similarly link the beyond with ethicality, like the entity Silver Birch emphasizing service to others (Barbanell 1949), and Tubby’s ‘hygiene’ of asking to contact only ‘that which will be beneficial and wholesome, constructive and illuminating’ (Tubby 1935). My
version, invented alone but still feeling right, is clear voicing of ‘Love and Truth’ before all Mungo-talk.

For me the integrities in work and in being-with-others interlink. For example, psychotherapist and shamanic-practitioner Dolphin’s PhD (2013) involved journeying in clients’ presence into altered-states – narrating what she saw unfolding there seemed trustworthy because clients did see sense in it. Excited by this ‘triangular’ participant-researcher-spirit situation like mine with, possibly, related challenges, I contacted Dolphin. I could be simply but deeply open with and mutually understood by her about beyond-this-plane phenomena and work. When we discussed ethical power dynamics, Dolphin suggested my airing power with Mungo, which brought a 3-card ‘values policy-statement’.

First came the two-of-cups, speaking to me of mutual, power-balanced relating accompanied by and/or creating good energy, as was my ideal between participants and myself. Via the pendulum Mungo agreed. Regarding Mungo’s part in triad-talks I received not another level-powers image (as my initial startle at what came showed I had been semi-ideologically hoping for) but the magician, with all-round expertise as indicated by all the suits’ symbols on the table (cups for emotion, swords for thought, wands for spirit and creativity, and pentacles for embodiedness and physicality). A willing, friendly wielder of power for good – that was Mungo’s indication.

Did that imply a disempowered participant? The eight-of-swords is triply hindered. On reflection this fitted – Mungo-sessions often address problem and/or stuck situations. Yet by dowsing-out words Mungo stated the bound person’s power to ‘pose (questions, objections, responses.....) at any time’ in Mungo-talks. I liked this expression of respect for autonomy, and experienced the 3-card portrayal as fitting my past experience, affirming my intentions, and being a form of channelled explication.

![Figure 19: Mungo-talk power relations](image)

Relatedly, anthropologist Brown’s research discovered historical drift from trance towards conscious channelling which, he mooted, was ‘more compatible with the starts and stops of…….
counselling’ (Brown 1997,37), whereas trance-channelling’s supposed authoritative master-plan source could conflict with fostering of an inquirer’s personal autonomy. For me, trance-to-conscious evolution begged the question, whither evolution now? I noticed myself valuing tripartite Mungo-meetings (and flow-channelled texts) as being amongst possible evolutionary trajectories away from power-mostly-‘up’-there more towards collaborative-power-‘down’-here.

I also wonder about evolution in academic writing, and its relationship to trust. Literature-searching both divination and dowsing found almost nothing experiential within academe (which itself piques curiosity), but for two shining-light authors both of whom wrote after circumstances ‘forced’ upon them experience-choices whose results boosted trust. Schröter, faced with unexpectedly intransigent geological difficulties in surveying for water-well sites to answer humanitarian need in Sri Lanka, shifted to dowsing followed by conventional checking. His results achieved academic publication (Betz 1995) through having occurred within a German Government-linked project. And Semetsky’s life-problems tangle yielded not to counselling but, finally, to progress-initiating release with a good tarot-reader. Later she researched introducing tarot through readings with mental health professionals (Semetsky 2005) despite meeting academic resistances to her ‘transgressing the borders between popular and academic cultures’ (Semetsky 2011,7). I notice my own trusts entwining – having experienced demonstrable sense-making results from Mungo-talks using dowsing, Mungo passes my acid tests that (other things being equal) I would heed him in a tight dangerous corner, and I now trust my dowsing’s benign innocence unless it degenerates even for checking old food for my children (alongside normal sensing) which assists our greener living. These trusts encourage my ‘stupid’ perseverance with my multi-transgressive research, boosted also by the timely emergence and academic rank-rising of both Sela-Smith and Semetsky after my research started.


However, some grey-literature dowsers report encountering uncertain, quixotic phenomena-readings (which honesty I appreciate), with Lonegren (in Michell 1991,14) conjecturing that different dowsing results (by people at one site, say, become understandable by analogy with) the blind men and the elephant. Michell suggests that dowsers should devise tests for themselves so that everyone would know the extent (of their reliability) (ibidem 48), which idea I like. I test myself as best I can, physically (by dowsing whenever possible with my forearm braced against a wall (reducing likelihood of inadvertent self-engendered pendulum movements)) and cognitively (observing big-picture correspondences). For example, some dowsers hold a ‘witness’ (i.e. sample) of whatever their dowsing is seeking (Graves 1989), my nearest ‘equivalent’ being choosing charity-shop pendants (i.e. potential pendulums) which related events sometimes follow.
Once I sat in a park with a newly-bought jade wondering what jade signified in China. A woman sat down beside me and chatted. Her name (it transpired) was Jade and, as a Chinese scholar, she expounded on jade’s traditional symbolic qualities (which shortly mattered in my life), writing notes in my leisure-reading book – fittingly Maugham’s On a Chinese Screen. When things come together thus, it increases my credence in the parts.

I love experiencing co-existence in ‘all this’ of logicality (as in, say, Mungo’s and dowsing’s step-by-step experiential training of my know-how with them) and lyricality (in ‘Jade’ above and, say, the unexpected seamless incorporation during a Mungo-talk in a friend’s house of a tile on her table depicting a then so-pertinently symbolic blackbird).

As I studied sought-for texts a pattern built – oftentimes involving logicality and/or lyricality and/or wry comicality – of synchronicities following studyings. Thus shaman Shutt’s (2003) words on disturbed houses sometimes experiencing bizarre household-energy events were echoed by my order-of-magnitude ludicrous next electricity metering; my reading about bibliomancy (Karcher 1997) was echoed when, blindly opening a bible, I landed on condemnation of astrologers’ but valuing of God’s predictions (Isaiah 47-48) – pertinence and challenge both; and scrutinizing an unusual Sun tarot-card designed for ‘entering’ imaginally (Ashcroft-Nowicki 1989) was echoed when rambling confronted me with a topiary-bush whose shapes exquisitely matched that Sun-card. Besides their initial ‘wows’, overall such echoes strengthen my gut-level ability to ‘get’ others’ possible guidance-modes.

Many tarot-methods exist. I appreciate Greer’s RITE (Reading that is Interactive, Transformational, and Empowering) alongside her experience-informed view that clients’ key benefit from good consultations is acceptance (in Wanless 2006,3). Wanless agrees, his rationale of acceptance-facilitated better self-understanding chiming with the pca. Greer and Wanless have raised my conscious sense of Mungo’s person-centred-compatible acceptance (no-one ever having become abashed, reluctant or jumpy), his responses to our voicings (inner or outer) addressing things pertinently without ‘wagging a finger’ or ‘batting an eyelid’.

Whilst Semestsky (2011) has firmly planted experiential tarot into academe (and I concur with her observations, like tarot-engagement potentially restructuring our inner world, or enabling conscious self-integration from a higher view), ‘grey’ tarot-experts present its evolutions. Gettings (1973) discusses interpretation of two adjacent cards seen as one composite image. I have not found his idea taken up elsewhere, but Mungo independently taught me richer, nuanced composite ways. Given, say, a hatted person juggling two things (a common two-of-pentacles image) Mungo might ‘send’ two more cards to amplify either the juggled activities, or the juggling job-in-hand and a ‘hat’ suggestion for that job, the pendulum indicating meanings precisely. Such composite pictures kept in mind may help in remembering techniques, aims or stances to adopt when later facing the job (or situation) in reality.

More recently Katz and Goodwin (2012a, 2012b) have innovated several tarot-modes, particularly ‘gated spreads’ where the querent, desiring personal development, undertakes some real-life challenge suggested by the first spread before progressing to the second and its suggested
challenge, and so on. The sustained developmental process thus offered likens mine with Mungo, except that in theirs tarot-spreads suggest challenges, whereas Mungo uses one’s natural flow of life-network-embedded concerns. Vis-à-vis Katz and Goodwin’s studies finding tarot-readers’ styles to be either ecstatic (towards trance-like declamation) or inductive (entailing thought about the cards), I find Mungo-sessions significantly different with their multi-person collaborative potentials.

The above two paragraphs betoken my wide comparative searching and its resultant near-certainty that no-one (at least amongst people declaring themselves) is working anything like Mungo-and-me. This combined with participant experiencings having been favourable gives me senses of stewarding something valuable, of responsibility about ‘getting it out there’, and of pleasurable honoured-ness – alongside adequacy doubts.

Indeed, I suffered a hiatus in which personal sense of destiny, recognizing I had muzzled it and why, and humility/pride worries were tangled together. I was released when a single day brought four answering synchronicities. As token thereof, one was fortuitously catching non-violent activist Popovic (2015) on Radio 4, encouraging any ‘hobbit’:

…. who takes the destiny in the hand (sic) even if you’re not the best design……. you’re not in shining armour. But it has to be you to take the ring to the Mordor (sic)……. once you understand this you’re at the……. start (of) changing the world.

On hearing this I ‘expanded’ with tearful relief.

Conclusions:

This chapter has been an exploration not of literature per se but of spiritual guidance as experienced and/or raised to fuller apprehension through heuristic immersion, indwelling, incubation, illuminations-that-came and explication. Although the immersion was planned to be mostly through literature (spiritual-guidance stuff being relatively scant in other media), sweetly other things – chance-met people, pavement-found objects, television-mediated science encounters etcetera – joined and guided Part One’s process.

My overall experiencing was of events-that-came ushering me through a sensible sequence of spotlightings. Being drawn into admitting my hard-science-head into this research engendered a more fully-functioning me-as-researcher, whilst following events presenting twinned hard-science and synchronistic-flow scenarios made the research’s ‘out-there’ material also more holistic. Next events expounded round-table versions and values followed by events prompting conceptualization of flow-channelled texts (within me), the combination perhaps suggesting may (certain special) meetings be convened and discussion-texts provided thus. That such scenarios could constitute a form of spiritual guidance cannot but seem reasonable to me, since Mungo-meetings have just that convene-then-consider-and-commune structure in miniature.

Part Two explored a necessarily pruned selection of sought-for literature-immersions and consequent apprehensions – more a smorgasbord than Part One’s story. The net result of the
whole, far from being a tighter noun-like grasp of spiritual guidance, is a pageant of ‘my’ growthful
spiritual guidance doing more verbs (and eliciting my responses and self-awareness development).

I now move to my creative syntheses, the third-order first-person culminating apprehensions arising
from pondering all four ‘experiencings’ and ‘immersions’ chapters as a whole.
Creative Syntheses

Fashioning a creative synthesis to give readers an essential vivid grasp of the project’s discoveries is Moustakas’s last heuristic-research stage. Steeped by then in their material, the researcher may be inspired to express their learnings in, say, artistic or diagrammatic forms, or a ‘narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples’ (Moustakas 1990,32) may serve better. HSSI researchers whose reports are such narratives may consequently present no further creative synthesis (Sela-Smith 2001). My experiencing and immersion chapters are their own creative syntheses. However, I present two higher-order creative syntheses here:

The Pyramid:

I asked myself, does anything arise if I consider my apprehensions from the Experiencings and Immersions chapters together. I imagined myself laying them at a pyramid-base’s four corners:

- **Participant Experiencings:**
  - Tripartite Mungo-participant-Christa sessions come to involve synchronicities too.
  - Synchronicities & EHEs also interconnect sessions with outside life.
  - Mungo, synchronicities & EHEs generally synergize helpfully.

- **Experiencing Synchronicity:**
  - Synchronicity expresses its bridging of precision and vastness through blade-heart/Great-Space.
  - Synchronicity-sea model evolves.
  - Mungo’s and synchronicity’s dark sides.
  - Living with synchronicity, Mungo and EHEs interpenetrating mundane life becomes ‘a way of being’.

- **Spiritual Guidance Immersion:**
  - Spiritual-guidance ‘mace-head’ now experienced from within.
  - Hard-science head drawn in by events.
  - Hard-science & synchronistic-flow event-runs twinned.
  - Synchronistic flow gathers round-table ideas.
  - Flow-channelled texts may be a form of spiritual guidance.

- **Synchronicity Immersion:**
  - Synchronicity being experienced as serving various helpful roles.
  - Synchronicity’s meeting-of-many-needs serves a cornucopia (or Grail) function.

**Figure 20: Experiencings and Immersion chapters’ results laid around a pyramid’s base**

On imagining a pyramid-apex view of all base-corners at once initially I was flummoxed – each corner-cluster itself seemed so encompassing and all four already so inter-melding – how could a ‘higher’ view be more embracing still? Then I experienced a double illumination. First, by the minutest moment, came Beauty! And right on its heels, ‘seeing’ a greater Kells-triskellian-like flowing-of-artistry of all those things together, containing rich colours but also darkness. That captures something further, true to my widest-angle experiencing:
The Poem:

There is precedent within heuristics of creative syntheses not of the researcher’s own making being presented. Wardle (2008) studied psychic energy with participants, one of whom channelled the poem which became her creative synthesis. My collaboration ran otherwise: I told its tale at the Come-All-Ye gathering and celebration of my poet-friend’s work after her death, thus:

I relish the small story that nests around Elizabeth’s writing of a poem for me. It's an illustration of the lyricality I experienced not just in her poetry, but also in how life sometimes patterned and flowed around our friendship.

The small story depends on my holding dear the concept and experiences of the Tao. One day I learnt from Elizabeth about her project of writing poetry to do with pottery. Later on I wondered if she knew the Tao Te Ching verse concerning pots. Just in case she didn’t I nipped over to her house to mention it.

Months passed, until one day I came upon a street bookstall, where I fancied ‘The Tao of Leadership’ even though I’m no leader. I bought it anyway, half-idly wondering if, being no leader, I might have some other role instead. Within hours I met with Elizabeth who, all unexpectedly, gave me a poem she had written all those months ago, but not got round to showing me before. She had dubbed me ‘The Messenger’, and this is the poem:

Beauty
The Messenger

You appear at my door in the snow
and say you’ve come to ask me
if I know that verse in the Tao Te Ching
that says, We shape clay into a pot
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes it useful. Then you’re gone,
leaving footprints in the snow.

Elizabeth Burns (2015)

Importantly, I witnessed Elizabeth’s last refining of the poem. Its earlier version closed with leaving only footprints in the snow (drawing my mental eye to the footprints). But the final leaving footprints in the snow equally shows my mental eye the snow’s expanse, and its invitation to others also to journey their way leaving their footprints that others might appreciate too. In that spirit I offer my ‘messenger-ship’ and Elizabeth’s poem as a co-creative synthesis not only of this thesis’s journey, but of the creation and sharing of heuristic and HSSI theses overall.
Ethics

This chapter exists because, due to the family-care-lengthened time-span of my PhD (14 years), the University ethical review processes and guidance-steps I followed and satisfied throughout my PhD-journey no longer fulfil current ethics governance (it having seen significant change during my time). This was rightly pointed out at my first viva, and this chapter addresses that shortfall. I remind readers that earlier chapters describe ethical decisions I made based on my ordinary-life and pce-professional ethics concerning my fieldwork (which was University-approved by both supervision and Panel, the then-current research-proposal-checking system). This chapter does not repeat those points, but shows my post-viva work discussing research-ethics retrospectively.

The rest of this chapter comprises two parts, the post-viva work outlined above and, beforehand, the many-factored story detailing my delayed research-ethics engagement. My reasons for telling it are threefold. Firstly it describes my having acted in good faith throughout. Secondly, although I have elsewhere described a dark depression and its relationship with ‘my’ phenomena (from page 109), by itself I adjudge it to present the dark/light balance I have experienced around timings etcetera on my phenomena-accompanied journey insufficiently. The many-factored story addresses that, simultaneously (and thirdly) satisfying the ethical need I feel for this thesis overall to show adequate amount and variation of darkness (conceptualizable as shadow aspects of ‘my’ phenomena’) to avoid an unethically ‘starry-eyed’ portrayal.

The many-factored story

Firstly I am disclosing this story rather than secretly adjusting ethics around my process’s research-choices post-hoc to be both ethically truthful and heuristically authentic, my awareness levels during various research activities being party to the full picture-as-lived.

Secondly that so many factors contributed to my long-enduring unversedness – even until my first viva – has me entertaining the possibility that it wasn’t just a ‘heap’ of happenstances but a trickster-like flow. I adjudge detailing my experiencing of it methodologically sound both in itself and because it and my depression-tale together lend my thesis a representatively fair mix of seemingly ‘good’ and ‘bad’ quirks/timings-related stuff throughout my PhD’s lifetime (although ultimate results of either or the totality naturally remain unknown). In honesty, whilst the following factors bedevilled me along the way (even, or especially, when I didn’t initially notice them), they now gift an ethical way of exemplifying the several other bedevilling event-groupings (whether in ludicrously sustained sequences and/or everything-going-wrong-at-once clusters) I experienced, the telling of which would infringe others’ privacies. The sequence ran thus:

Firstly, at my PhD-place-gaining interview an unperceived misunderstanding occurred regarding my MSc status. Its upshot was that, whereas my Masters was in Environmental Resources, William thought it was in humanities (which would have developed me about methodology and research ethics). Consequently I was ignorant about and even of them, without my tutor realizing.
Secondly various postgraduate classes were available. I attended my first, the distance to Manchester entailing five hours away from home. Mere days later my intended continuing was thwarted by suddenly-arising serious illness of my child whom, as single parent, I could not leave unattended so long for many months. Friend-offered help sufficed to enable just my attending monthly gatherings of William and his tutees, keeping my sense of colleague-companionship and spirits up. But, with golden-opportunity local participants also surprisingly arising, I developed my protocols in ignorance of my methodological and research-ethics ignorance.

Thirdly after a couple of years, on realizing our Masters-muddle I asked William how my work had not alerted him to my background-knowledge shortfall. He said he had found my protocol choices sensible and consistent with my having background knowledge – my work had been insufficiently bad to flag its flimsy background.

Fourthly, although my methodological awareness had grown through study and hearing my postgraduate colleagues’ methodological wrestlings in our gatherings, my research-ethics awareness remained low. The close-in context was the PhD-group meetings’ (mostly of counselling-practitioner researchers) confidence that counselling skills and ethics basically fitted us for qualitative research. My further-out context was of studying renowned researcher-authors with procedures seemingly akin to mine whose ethical ease implied ‘it’s OK’, for example Maslow’s early interviews around self-actualization with personal acquaintances (Maslow 1956).

Fifthly, after some two years of PhD-time my research plan was passed in 2005 by Panel (the University checking-system which preceded Governance) including approving my ethics. ‘You’re missing stuff’ was not flagged.

Sixthly after one valuable second-supervisor session early on, that supervisor retired, and thereafter – through from 2005 to my first-thesis viva in 2015 – my second-supervision was jinxed. Every opportunity evaporated before it started (through, say, their abrupt departure for work elsewhere), the possibility of their remarking my research-ethics shortfall thereby evaporating too.

Seventh, whilst ‘Panelled’ colleagues completed in time for Governance-overlap problems not to arise, my PhD-time extended into the Governance era. The twofold reasons were lengthy intercalations (necessitated practically and indeed ethically by multiple lone-carer responsibilities), and my research’s expansion by unexpected time-devouring synchronistic flows like those my Immersion chapters depict. Though I received round-robin notification of Governance, since it came some three years after my last primary-data-collecting participant-sessions as Panel-approved it seemed inapplicable to me. Furthermore, reading theses of ‘Panelled’ colleagues who had completed signalled ‘it’s OK’, their levels of ethics discussions approximating mine.

Eighth, health considerations eventually rendered it wise for me to enter (with University advice) into a beyond-write-up-year status, billed as open-ended. That open-endedness then crucially allowed me time to flow fulsomely with, say, Immersion 2’s unexpected events-stream. Returning thereafter to an estimated year’s still-remaining work, I was shocked when the university re-decided such status might now last only one year in total, abruptly reducing my intended year to five
months. Simultaneously my recently-damaged dominant arm failed to clear with physiotherapy, my writing remaining painful and hampered. Doubly disadvantaged now, I couldn’t hope to bring my ‘thesis-ship to port’ despite all-stops-pulled-out exhausting work-hours. Too fugged and pressed to properly assess pruning much-too-long chapter-drafts my hope reduced to ‘getting through the clashing rocks’ (fortunately a personal key myth (from Jason’s Argonaut voyage)).

Ninthly, time saw Manchester University’s counselling section thinning, leaving no counselling and/or heuristically-steeped academic to be my internal examiner. Both viva examiners’ academic ‘places’ were quite distant from mine (synchronicity-expertise excepted). However they gave good attention (with research ethics at last being named as a major shortfall) and, with a ‘re-submit’ decision, I survived the ‘clashing rocks’ to sail/study onwards.

Tenthly, William now retired. Anxious efforts, consuming precious time, finally secured Pauline as replacement. I appreciated how, being in Education, she still accepted me. Nevertheless now neither my supervisor nor probable repeat examiners were in my counselling-studies ‘place’.

Eleventh, I have already described discovering HSSI’s consolidating growth and its now-clearer best-fittingness to my synchronicity experiencings. However, having found no other HSSI researchers in Europe (most being in the Americas) my standing-alone feeling is (however irrationally) amplified.

Overviewing the above in this twelfth place, I see circumstances’ ‘pincer-movements’ first keeping my research-ethics awareness low, and later ‘conspiring’ to bring urgent need to learn and address them in a somewhat standing-alone ‘place’. Conceivably this was ‘tricksterish’ flow – heuristically I own the thought and curiosity as to whether some discernible result (or seeming purpose, even) will emerge either directly (besides my change of supervisor from (as I experienced it) excellent project-opener, the more ‘Dionysian’ William, to excellent project-closer, the more ‘Apollonian’ Pauline), or indirectly through my presenting the above slow-time flow.

**Working on ethics post-viva**

I found myself post-viva in this unclear pass, not knowing how much I didn’t know. Moreover, with William retiring and virtually all William’s tutees having completed, I had no colleague-group anymore. I needed a strategy for groping my way out of this lonely fog.

Naturally I heeded my academic advisors’ comments, but within that steadying an unease droned. Gradually heuristic processes of focussing and indwelling abetted by blurting stuff to a friend raised my semi-tacit fear to clearer consciousness – advisors’ comments had seemed to include that participant-research running risks of changing people or lives even slightly was anathema – mine obviously had and now I consciously knew I felt frightened and flummoxed, trapped in a double-bind between truth and regulations. Again gradually, that consciousness incubated little challenge-illuminations – what about Semetsky’s life-impact ing tarot-sessions research; what about ethnography’s politicizations; indeed, what about counselling-section assumptions that serious-topic research-interviews often wrought counselling-like changes? And then a bigger challenge-
illumination – *maybe* I’m partly getting ‘Education-flavoured’ advice *different to* ‘Counselling/pca-flavoured’ stances. My crucial key idea followed – *ask* a slightly-acquainted counselling academic. They confirmed that their non-counselling colleagues ‘shudder’ at counselling-researches’ inherent ethics-risks (plus, from ‘too many’ ethics books ‘out there’, recommended an excellently suitable one). I felt freed and oriented.

Indeed the book (Danchev and Ross 2014) confirmed that codes vary, and later study warned against ‘evaluating one tradition by the standards of another’ (Hoeyer et al 2005,1742). I declined adopting BERA’s educational research guidelines, holding instead to The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) guidelines for counselling professions (BACP 2016) and researching counselling and psychotherapy (BACP 2004) and The British Psychological Society’s (BPS) *Code of Human Research Ethics* (2014). I also studied Manchester University’s governance documents at various times online, unfortunately not realizing till later that as updating occurred earlier versions vanished. Consequently I have scarcely referenced their points – perhaps even beneficially so since which would be the relevant year’s version is unclear and, as Kipnis (2001) suggests, focus on satisfying regulations can detract from more whole thought within a broader literature-scape.

Danchev and Ross’s (2014) empathy towards novice fears was calming, enabling me to better explore their and others’ writings, getting a sense of the research-ethics field. Byrne (2008) had by then clarified to me the triad of ordinary-life ethics, professional ethics and research’s extra ethics, furthermore considering their overlapping collaboration whilst Soltis (1989) asks whether our various ethics square (which I address later).

I had previously conducted my participant sessions and considered my methodology and methods informed mostly just by ordinary-life and pca-professional ethics, but now I wanted as integrated an ethics field-sense as possible within time-constraints, incorporating broad frameworks and finely fleshed-out points and challenges the better to address issues organically and perhaps notice further ethical holes in my work. I found that study-learning and reflection on my own doings each helped the other improve to a striking degree.

As an aside, within that wide-angle indwelling-space an illumination regarding pairing of phase-change coincidences around my research came:

Fortuitously my participants’ higher-risk involvements stopped before Governance; fortuitously HSSI grew in time for my lone synchronicity-experiencing work. My work has probably occurred in the optimum time-window for managing this double-headed research. I experience this both as intriguing timing adding to my journey’s maybe-synchronicities, and as increasing my ethical responsibility to publish.
Table 3. My data-gathering and university-ethics phases juxtaposed

In now retrospectively considering my ethics I shall address issues that were insufficiently explored during my thesis time but not repeat issues that were, like gently-approaching and consent-checking. I shall work basically through the research- phases’ sequence (though its unfolding was sometimes non-linear and the phase-chunks not discrete), interweaving literature-stimulated points and my reflections.

First though, given my earlier ethics mistakes-of-omission I start with honesty, including avoiding misrepresentation (which mistake-concealment would be) within research reporting (Connolly 2003). Unethical behaviour most commonly stems from errors say Danchev and Ross (2014), referencing Popper’s assertion that human mistakes are unavoidable and hiding them is the ‘greatest intellectual sin’. Reflecting I notice second-nature habits’ role: pca-counselling’s inherent involvement of risks played into my research-risk under-wariness, yet counselling’s valuing of candour in admitting when things have gone wrong to clients and quickly attempting repair (BACP 2016) resonates with my shortfall-addressing here.

Researchers fitness:

Other counselling/research resonances include the need for personal fitness to be self-as-instrument by, say, having a reflexive relationship with oneself before entering another’s lifeworld (Buckle et al 2010). Ethically intense moments can occur there: interestingly, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) posit that reflexivity assists both such on-the-ground, specific ethics-in-practice situations (procedural ethics’ codes being then too general) and epistemological soundness. Personally speaking, developmental activities like long-standing membership of a pca encounter group (which, being open, doesn’t get too ‘cosy’) hone my fitness, congruence and reflexivity.

Counselling and research also both involve living, changing circumstances full of uncertainty where judgements have to be made (BACP 2016) and ‘thinking is not optional’ (BPS 2014,4) though we can’t ruminate but ‘have to act’ (Brinkmann 2007,131). However, making out-of-sessions time to learn to articulate dilemmas improves on-the-spot decision-making (Brinkmann 2007), according with Bond’s an ethical framework creates a basic conceptual structure within which we can all feel safe and supported to move around freely and make choices……… (with) space….. for legitimate differences of opinion (Bond 2015,57). So, time spent pondering codes, frameworks and suchlike.
is crucial but, warn Thompson and Chambers (2012), codes are dangerous if reliance on them switches off the researcher’s reflexivity.

**Approaching potential participants:**

I find research-ethics points in the literature mostly square with pca-ethics and my common sense. Indeed, that the latter two sometimes suffice is exemplified by, say, Connolly’s (2003) warning against approaching potential participants too abruptly and Kipnis’s (2001) concern vis-à-vis participants having enough time to process new information having been addressed by my naively-devised gently-approaching method. Also BACP’s (2004) warning against ‘deductive disclosure’ of a participant by a net of facts around them was, say, naively met by my asking a parent-daughter participant duo not to both use their real names in this thesis after all.

However, the worst specific mistake I’m aware of having made involved muddying of research by professional ethics. The story of Mary’s post-Mungo-taster letter is on page 74. Years later my new tutor Pauline asked if I had offered provision of support to the disturbed Mary. No, I hadn’t. In retrospect I saw probable contributory factors, like the human experience of theoretically knowing something (like my protocols including support-provision for participants upset by our sessions) but not realizing it in the event. But the Mungo-event had been not official but impromptu – had that difference left my consciousness outside ‘sessions-protocol space’? I notice also that it took non-counsellor (educationalist) Pauline to query this whilst counsellor-critiquers perhaps (like myself) subconsciously applied counselling’s thrashed-out common wisdom to respectfully let clients depart if they choose without ‘chase’. Meanwhile, weighing risk of re-opening issues against offering belated repair to Mary, I decided on the latter. She reported having preferred dealing with it alone and, via a difficult patch, having actually reached a better ‘place’ than before. She was also delighted to discover her letter had triggered my research’s growth. It ended happily, by luck rather than judgment, but pondering the incident promotes judgment’s growth.

Complimentarily my most pre-considered, pre-arranged approach was to Scarlett. Her participation is described from page 96, but here I am expanding ethical consideration. I have recently encountered authors’ points resonant to my then untutored thinking. I knew of her mental diagnosis but also of her employment as a carer which indicated strength, a logic similar to Buckle et al’s (2010) in positing that the bereaved aren’t always as vulnerable as governance deems, given what society expects of them and many manage after their loss. Scarlett’s caring-employment competence partially addressed Kipnis’s concern regarding precariousness in the research subject’s condition (Kipnis 2001), whereas Loue and Loff’s (2013) locating of vulnerability in people’s situations was partially addressed by our unanimous arrangement of Scarlett’s mother (intimately au fait with both Scarlett’s symptomatology and Mungo-encountering) being nearby throughout. Harborne (2008) voices the undesirability of muddling the mystical and delusional whereas, contrariwise, communication with Scarlett had shown her intelligently aware of her magical-thinking tendency alongside her autonomous senses of timeliness within her life and curiosity about exploring card-use. Thompson and Chambers (2012) argue for enabling equal access in research (a justice issue) perhaps through adaptations which, indeed, card-use only was
for Scarlett, a special-opportunity step towards including hard-to-reach populations, as Liamputtong (2007) advocates.

The ethical question now arising is, how might Scarlett experience the above were she to read this thesis, realizing her exclusion from Mungo-meeting and pendulum-use experience and her having contributed to research involving both. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) say reflection time is necessary to explore ethical situations which this Scarlett-question exemplified. Only through time-generous indwelling did I perceive relevant matters – not further concerns in this case, but resurfacing memories of earlier book-swap conversations, the memories’ veracity being supported by re-finding my annotated Krishna-dialogue book from her. Scarlett’s robust response to my giving The Wheel of Life, Kübler-Ross’s (1998) autobiography containing spiritual EHEs, indicated self-aware bemusement without feeling pressured to make anything of it. This and other associatively evoked memories (Eagleman 2016) reaffirmed my sense of her intelligent-overviewing and self-respecting strengths, in light of which I deem her discovering the above less likely to upset than discovering her contribution dropped from this thesis.

Sensitive research:

Ruminating further on the above I realized more consciously, including through verbalization, that I had semi-consciously put Scarlett’s declared atheism and demonstrable albeit slight interest in spiritual literature together, intuiting that card-use alone lay in her ‘interesting-yet-safe zone’ (which Mungo agreed with). Abrahams says sensitive-subject research involving emotions (as Scarlett’s did) needs ‘continual….. rebalancing, reassessment and reflection’ (Abrahams 2007,240). I had intuitively ‘pre-balanced’ it, whilst her own assessment comments throughout (‘bringing clarity and hope’, and ‘restful and stimulating’, say) indicated maintaining the current balance.

Authors consider sensitive research to include, say, the threatening, involvement of deviance or the personally sacred (Kavanaugh et al 2006) or taboo (Liamputtong 2007) or the painful (Buckle et al 2010). Again, pondering this time-generously has raised to structured verbalization my consciousness that no participants either seemed to experience or expressed sensitivity (of the vulnerable kind) about our Mungo-meeting topics. Provisionally this is understandable in that topics were either initially chosen by them or emerged from the card-conversations as the participants saw and willingly voiced them. Rather, the modus operandum could have involved sensitivity (through perceived deviance, taboo or sacredness, say). However, my gently-approaching potential participants regarding the mode and then their witnessing and/or experiencing of taster-sessions enabled participants themselves to discern any sensitivity to the mode before full engagement (as Mary’s case shows). Further, although this research perhaps sounds sensitive to the uninitiated its participants did not signal experiencing it thus, instead voicing appreciations too spontaneous, individualistic and/or detailed to just be politeness. Similarly spontaneous individualistic appreciations assured Buckle et al (2010) that their potentially sensitive bereavement research was instead positively experienced by participants.

These literature-informed post-first-viva reflections have also raised to my verbalized consciousness features of this research regarding painful topics. Literature’s advice to
appropriately accompany distress arising (Kavanaugh et al. 2006, Buckle et al. 2010) and give supportive space assisting participants decide whether to end research talks (Danchev and Ross 2014, Thompson and Chambers 2012)) resonates with pca practice (certain differences notwithstanding) so I was prepared. Yet whilst pain-issues featured and were explored with participants (Shelagh, page 76-77, say), distress did not burgeon whereas calmly centring exploration did. Pondering why and/or how is interesting. Beside participants’ comments (about better clarity and/or overview and – possibly therefore – hope, say) and markings of spiritual presence (like Susannah (p83-84) and Miriam (p86-87)), I wonder if card-considering may promote (in transactional-analysis terms) Adult-with-Adult constructiveness even whilst pain is visited. For no participant did pain-exploration prove too sensitive (whereas, contrastingly, I have experienced phases of distress-aggravating card-talks alone – a different ethical scenario discussed later).

**Vulnerable participants:**

Literature presents various notions of what constitutes vulnerability, where it resides, when it occurs and who can judge it. For example, a vulnerable person may be one incapable of considering informed consent (Danchev and Ross 2014) and/or one put at greater risk of harm by research participation than that of normal life (BPS 2014), with even full-functioners perhaps becoming vulnerable in sensitive circumstances (BACP 2004).

Two trends over time have been, firstly, moves away from relatively simple seeing of certain groups as vulnerable towards considering more discrete characteristics and circumstances (Kipnis 2001, 2003) and seeing participants first as nuanced individual people rather than through specific vulnerability-lenses (Danchev and Ross 2014), furthermore recognizing people’s vulnerability’s changeability over time (Kavanaugh et al. 2006, Sieber and Tolich 2013). Secondly, introduction of governance systems over different disciplines at different rates, essentially during post-WWII 20th-century decades, has been followed by critiques of their sometime shortcomings like overestimating risks (Buckle et al. 2010), blocking previously tenable beneficial research areas (van den Hoonoord 2002, 2006), insufficient expertise in some governance-board members and defensive formulaicism (Danchev and Ross 2014). Nevertheless governances’ and codes’ safeguarding of all parties is vital (Bond 2015) and they are evolving.

Apropos my research, Scarlett and Brian both self-declared as mental-health-service users, flagging especial vulnerability-consideration need. Having considered Scarlett above, I shall now consider Brian. Three aspects stand out – individual personhood, autonomy and trust. Apropos personhood, through prior acquaintanceship I knew his vulnerability was ameliorated by family-and-friends connectedness, and that although his affliction involved distress and reduced agency nevertheless when roused his mind thought well (a state I understood well from him, having suffered it myself). Also, as Buckle et al (2010) explore, it can be that participant meetings don’t cause pain (exacerbating vulnerability) but release it (ameliorating vulnerability), akin to Brian experiencing them as spaces of relative stillness and serenity when really needed. Thus concerns about vulnerability, about participants experiencing fair benefits for their participation-burdens
(Karnieli-Miller et al 2009) and about beneficence, non-maleficence and their weighing-together being favourable (BACP 2016) were, I believe, respected.

Brian valued his autonomy within our sessions (in, say, dwelling with card-images his way as against experiencing psychotherapists’ control in deciding the questions), and exercised autonomy about wanting to participate. As Danchev and Ross (2014) suggest, disallowing him through unnuanced, blanket vulnerability-concerns would have been paternalistic, disrespecting his autonomy and knowledge-contribution potential (BPS 2014), thus unvoicing research in a hard-to-reach quarter (Liamputtong (2007)).

Trust is ‘required to face the uncertainties and sense of personal vulnerability’ that counselling-process (and, I posit, research-encountering) may involve (Bond 2004,10), whilst Soltis (1989) says ethics permeates our lives, our values (like honesty and fairness) imbuing both our everyday dealings and research. Brian’s prior knowledge of ‘everyday me’ and consequent trust moderated his vulnerability on entering research’s uncertainties (as also for Scarlett and others who stated trust’s importance, like Jean and Helen).

‘We are all soft tissued organisms with emotions…… vulnerable in certain situations……’ say Thompson and Chambers (2012,27). Indeed, more participants could be considered regarding vulnerabilities and/or sensitivities but, given thesis constraints, Scarlett and Brian must betoken the many. Next I shall focus on dual relationships.

**Dual relationships:**

I experience myself as having gone full circle with this. My pre-first-viva dual-relationship cogitations, thought within a PhD-colleague milieu where others had acquaintance-participants too, are on pages 51-52. Then, post-viva, I felt scarcely ignorant of my ignorance’s extent. But immersing in ethics literature fostered a surprise break-through illumination, basically forth from can-I-make-good fearfulness into clarity that this dual-relationship-involving project is my right research (not some ‘proper project’ skewed with ‘wrong’ participants). Now, appreciating anew my fortunately-arising wealth of acquainted and hence already trusting, openly-engaging participants, I can’t imagine researching Mungo-meetings otherwise (although others may, researching something similar less ‘messily’). Now I relinquish excusing, straightforwardly enlarging my dual-relationship considerations instead.

My participant sessions were counselling-skills/pca-spirited so literature concerning both person-to-person encountering (e.g. therapy) and research widened my conceptual store. Pitfalls and potential benefits were recognized: Syme (2006) argues that although dual relationships might impair objectivity they can foster creative and/or fuller potential, which Danchev and Ross (2014) exemplify with a concrete case of research flourishing due to pre-existing positively-ethical researcher-participant relationships. They advocate judging dual-relationship researches case-by-case; ameliorating pitfalls through high interpersonal transparency; and researchers using the check of asking themselves ‘What does it feel like being in this space with my (participant)?’ (ibid 54). Reflecting now (admittedly years later) I find these verbalized awarenesses upwelling –
‘normal’-but-‘bigger’ conversing; unstilted companionability; face-to-face rapport alternating with side-by-side interestedness; flowing talk alternating with pensive and/or conjecturing slowness; forthrightness and, indeed, transparency; no-one dominating; occasional levity but, intriguingly, never tears – in short, it didn’t feel to me like counselling, teaching or directing – just ‘normal’ but especially alive.

Through my memory therefore, and as sessions’ recordings, transcripts, notes and feedbacks suggest (to the best of my discernment, and that of my highly-reputed mentor, Brian Thorne, who listened to eight tapes), Thompson and Chambers’ (2012) concerns regarding power balance, reciprocity, or researchers grinding axes are principally allayed. And through retrospect spanning the pre-, during- and post-research phases of our relationships I discern no more relationship-shifts than life generally brings, principally allaying their over-involvement concerns. Regarding their conflict-of-interest point, our being both friends/acquaintances (or occasionally personal contacts thereof) and participant or researcher felt ‘clean’ of ‘I’d better say/not say this – it could impact our relationship’ sensings, against the backdrop of my life-experience’s many such situations.

Similarly, apropos Danchev and Ross’s (2014) concern about acquaintances finding refusal to participate hard, my five/six-decades’ life-experience-developed contrasting senses of reluctance and interest ‘passed’ their recruitment as near-certainly sound (alongside supervised contracting as already described).

A special-case concern is that ‘a pre-existing hierarchical, professional….. relationship…… may impinge’ on engagement quality (ibid 75), resonating with Gabriel’s (2005) alteration of relative statuses concern. Did these issues impact the participation of my counselling supervisor and my counsellor? This is rather an interweaving-with-itself celtic-knot-like issue since, whilst responsibility for alertness to consequent distortion of our relating lay with me (I noted none), their professions’ very way of authentic self-aware being would have wrung misgivings (relationship or otherwise) from them, whether in session or feedback-questionning. Their voicing none quasi-supervised my research from within (complementing active academic supervision and mentoring from without), abetted by like silence from six participants who were themselves researchers in humanities, and those counselling-like professionals as already tabulated (p64).

Thompson and Russo (2012) warn that researcher role-switching (between clinician and researcher, say) risks confusing participants, compromising participant wellbeing and research integrity, whilst Karmeli-Miller et al (2009) discuss sometimes-conflicting roles, like the researcher as interviewer, analyser, philosopher and publisher and participant as data-giver and storyteller. Pondering these matters afresh now has awakened realizations that, firstly, my research-encounters involved many and beneficial switchings (Susannah becoming interviewer and philosopher to my storytelling, say); secondly that such switchings within and between participants and myself flowed so naturally ( likening normal-life conversation writ large) as to remain unremarked then; and thirdly, how blessed with a fulsome, self-aware authentic participant-set I was (contrasting with awkward mundane-life relationships). Indeed, now I feel the participants’ calibre both enabled the research’s quality and (given my attentiveness also) held it safe.
Later I shall consider ethics around Mungo’s involvement with participants. Suffice for now to say, I now verbally recognize my sense that these participants’ calibres fitted them thereto.

BACP raises dual-relationship issues which, although addressing counsellor-client or therapist-as-researcher situations, speak also to my researcher-friend/acquaintance situation. Apropos avoiding dual relationships ‘where the risks of harm to the (participant) outweigh any benefits to (them)’ (BACP 2016,33b), my eight pre-PhD sheet-of-feedback Mungo-meetings with friends (and with prospective supervisor William at interview) having all brought benefits, it seemed not imprudent to proceed. Had PhD-sessions showed dubious impact I would have stopped, and addressed the matter herein (as with Mary, p191) (BACP 2004), but participant avowals of benefit were consistently believably fleshed-out.

**Relating with participants:**

Literature warns that therapists may, when research-interviewing, slip from facilitative counselling-skills use into ‘counsellor mode’ (Abrahams 2007,242; Thompson and Russo 2012), becoming intrusive and/or ‘bouncing’ participants into revealing too much for comfort (Danchev and Ross 2014,88; West and Byrne 2009). Further research-encounter pitfalls, potentialities and factors centre on power and trust. Power-dynamics issues include the participant’s and researcher’s perceptions of each other (Britten (1995) (possibly involving subconscious distortions (Danchev and Ross 2014) or deference from whatever cause (Rennie 1994)), and fostering ‘power with’ others whilst avoiding ‘power over’ (Etherington 2007). Transparency and congruence (Kavanaugh et al 2006), esteem for people’s understanding of themselves (BACP 2016) and self-disclosure are considered regarding power and trust-building – trust not being an ethic itself but arising from ethical behaviour (Danchev and Ross 2014) and being particularly vital when research-challenges are high (BACP 2004). Listening both at depth and openly, allowing the participant to flow, expanding their realizations, combines ethical and epistemic good practice (Danchev and Ross 2014).

My research-sessions’ structure turned out not to be principally Mungo-meetings followed by interviews but Mungo-conversations irrepressibly permeated with organically-arising in-the-moment responses (voiced or enacted). My literature-searching discovered nothing likening this tripartite and new-activity-introducing situation – I was, as Wardle (2008) says, ethically in a big place because no-one had by way of code or guidelines decided on this, so I winged it on common-sense and pca-values wings. Now, though, I can bring research-ethics points to bear.

Most of my participants had higher professional status than I whilst I ‘had’ Mungo-connection and expertise yet I neither felt nor sensed consequent power-balance or deference problems, instead sensing mutual-trust bases whereupon competencies were pooled. Furthermore Mungo’s card-image or other contributions gave participants the interpretational (or silence-keeping) driving-seat, and our shared power-with phases of puzzling and/or philosophizing both levelled us side-by-side, and broke any potential slide towards power-over ‘counselling mode’. Every Mungo-session experiencer exhibited enthusiasm or interest (including, in critical vein, those who called a halt), our shared engrossed energy (set within trust) prompting transparency, self-disclosures and
congruence (including from me) in participatory unfolding. Apropos relating with Mungo ‘himself’ I discerned good pitching from ‘him’ and no participant obsequiousness or over-argumentativeness. However the unease I now find within myself having explicated the above is that overall it sounds suspiciously good – yet I did experience it thus (which is a heuristic reflection). BACP emphasizes how crucial supervision is throughout a research’s duration (BACP 2004): had I realized this ‘too-good?’ wondering I would have raised it (and am doubly glad of having abetted academic supervisory discussion with more experiential checking through my mentor’s tape-listening and my counselling supervisor’s participation).

**Researcher wellbeing:**

With others’ wellbeing at stake, participant-research ethics rightly claim multi-lensed consideration. But this research has also encompassed my humanly-lone living with Mungo-et-al, requiring other lenses. Where my participant-research proved essentially blessed apropos participants and session-dynamics, my lone research-as-lived has been tougher. Indeed, being used to its grist’s inclusion of ‘impossible’ situations and dreadful sloughs, rediscovering guidelines to take ‘account of (one’s) own needs as researcher(s) for personal safety and being treated ethically’ (BACP 2004,4.6) and care for one’s physical and psychological health (BACP 2016) experientially touched me, as if receiving kindness.

Relational caring and wellbeing are ethically enmeshed. A researcher’s (lack of) fitness may impact participants and, complementarily, Danchev and Ross (2014) advocate researchers having someone to express unformed thoughts to (aiding apprehension and conceptualization) and someone to debrief to (discharging upset etcetera). I managed to develop a patchwork of helpers, partially through my efforts and partially through ‘saviours’ emerging at key challenges, like she who by maintaining near-daily contact kept me afloat during an isolating clinical depression.

Here a thesis-structure comment is necessary. This particular section being about ethics concerning myself, to make sense at appropriate depth it inevitably requires description of my pertinent vulnerabilities. This section therefore cannot but be HSSI explication interweaving with ethics discussion. Consonant with heuristics’ holistic nature, it asks readers to receive both its aspects.

Dark times and bedevilling flows are exemplified herein respectively from pages 109 (clinical depression) and (regarding my ‘ethics-under-addressed-because….’ narrative), page 186. After emerging from a subsequent depression I sensed a difference vis-à-vis Mungo between the two. Indwelling fostered realization: whilst the page-109 life-engendered depression was exacerbated by Mungo-et-al going silent the next was, I could not evade perceiving, occasioned by Mungo-et-al’s flow taking me to a ‘place’ where ‘everything’ went wrong plus they then fell silent. This led me profoundly to consider both ending my openness to Mungo and/or responsiveness to synchronicities, and how friendly or cruel, ethical or devious, guiding or cat-and-mousing and much else Mungo-et-al were. ‘Whatever next?’ and ‘whither now?’ were ethical concerns.
Yet never could I deny having already experienced patternings, intelligence, feelings, and cooperation with ‘it all’ – and personal development therefrom – perceived broad-canvas-wise as if from a ‘higher place’. Did its seeming grantedness relate to concepts of higher-calling and/or vocation which Danchev and Ross (2014) relate to virtue ethics, positing also that through deciding and undergoing training for care professions, counsellors (and others) ‘already possess the virtues…… necessary for (sustained) ethical research practice (ibid 13)’? They include individual integrity which for me encompasses honouring personal experiencing, including of Mungo-et al’s presence or absence, denial of which (an internal schism) would be counter to self-caring.

During dark times I kept faith, not in Mungo-et-al’s (and/or some cosmic factor’s) sway-holding goodness or certain return – indeed, ‘re-assurers’ thereof only aggravated my state – but with staying open, in accord with my hard-science bent and pca experience, to further process and awareness. ‘Stamina to persist’ and ‘deal(ing) with setbacks constructively’ are ethically valued by Danchev and Ross (2014,128) – I claim not-so-grand doggedness in, with help, struggling out to ponder the lessons and further this truth-as-lived task. Furthermore, Kavanaugh et al’s (2006) vulnerable-participant research-strategy includes, under the maintaining-belief aspect of their ethical caring, ‘going the distance’ (ibid 3) with participants. My going of distances within this unfolding saga including life-difficulties and Mungo-challenges entwined has been, I feel, a form of truth-to-self-experiencing self-care. I posit also that these holdings-to, whether dogged and/or akin to vocational integrity, resonate with Guillemin and Gillam’s (2004) understanding that reflexive self-awareness serves both ethical and epistemological good.

Whilst codes often consider ethical dilemmas (like, say, BACP’s 2016 framework), Guillemin and Gillam (2004) highlight non-dilemma ethically-important moments and their in-the-moment handling. Prompted thereby I pondered my research saga-as-experienced, eventually naming its distinctive, very-oft-recurring severe challenge ‘sheer ethical juggling’. To give a clearly understandable example, there need have been no inherent dilemma between my home-making and support for my two children during their joint public-exam weeks and my attending to my father’s post-death needs, affairs and funeral. But both tasks were my sole responsibility and landed simultaneously some 350 miles apart (and I had no car, scant money, and London lay between). Yet, with just one day proving feasible for my children’s assisting at their grandfather’s funeral without direct exam-clashing, instead of a ‘simple’ dilemma there were weeks of nightmarish tight-timing, money-monitoring long-distance logistics, personal-energy dearths and tricky psychologies around. Exam-times (and death-times) are difficult for many parents (and next-of-kin), but in their coinciding and my lone-coping situation I faced (I have since conceptualized) almost a caricature of many people’s isolated, beleaguered lot in this age – like Guillemin and Gillam’s (2004) understanding that reflexive self-awareness serves both ethical and epistemological good.

Guillemin and Gillam advocate reflexive self-awareness in ethically-important straits and I agree regarding ethical juggling, however sheer and/or protracted. Additionally though, I could not ethically chose otherwise than to heed Mungo (given his track-records of solacing and fostering tight-corner-releasing ideas) and, likewise, any synchronicities arising (which had already on Dad’s death-day ‘presented’ very rare blooms of great family meaning, sounding a peace-giving note
which sustained beneath the following jangles). Heeding Mungo-et-al was ethically sound, and it is epistemologically sound within HSSI to describe my experiencing it so, betokening the myriad sheer ethical juggling on my research-journey (whether relatively-quick clearly-defined ‘mountains’ as above or confusing ‘endless marshes’). Indeed, omitting ethical juggling and my responses thereto from this thesis would be inauthentic, a selective (non-)reporting (Connolly 2003) skewing the would-be holistic picture. As to whether Mungo-et-al are ethical towards me, by the benefits-to-burdens criterion (Karnieli-Miller et al 2009) I experience both as writ enormously large, the ratio as better-than-fair, and the combination as still desirable.

Retrospective overview:

Having indwelt all the above ethical issues, my personal conclusion regarding my research’s overall ethicality is curiously twofold. Had it been presented as a prospective project to Governance as evolved post-Panel it might well have been unallowable for multiple reasons, including its out-on-a-limb unfamiliarity (both substantive and methodological) and consequent risk-assessment difficulties. However, now it is done, it has (I believe) demonstrated low risk, having brought many attested benefits whilst burdens and/or harms have been few and reparable (any unnoticed consequences excepted), and the phenomena and methodology interplayed well. So, even were I deemed unethical, the research – for its qualities during its unfolding and its knowledge’s potentials – ethically merits publication. Withholding it would (as I adjudge it) be unethical towards participants and the wider world, all the more so because a future near-repeat within academe is rendered unlikely by several factors – shorter allowable research time-spans (yet the crucial-ness of my experiencing’s intercalation-bedevilled sweep); the time-span’s straddling of key, enabling changes in methodology; and my family’s getting through just in time (apropos squaring this necessarily self-funded research cost-wise with ethical single-parenthood of accident-disabled children) before certain State-support system-changes.

Nevertheless, I recognize that without good fortune this research might well have caused unethical consequences. I have learnt the experiential vivid way that, were I to pursue future research, preparatory informing of myself about both organizational governance and wider current ethical thinking would be essential.

Continuing now with addressing my ethics shortfall I turn to the final research phase.

Publication:

Brinkmann and Kvale promote consideration of research macroethics – how might publicized new knowledge ‘circulate in the wider culture and affect humans and society’? (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005,167), whilst Connolly specifically advocates researchers ‘guard(ing) against the misuse or misrepresentation of their findings’ (Connolly 2003,27). Apropos my research, putting the idea of unintended consequences (exemplified, say, by Facebook-founder Zuckerberg’s vision of beneficial interpersonal interconnectivity also resulting in large-scale voting-pattern manipulation (Bartlett 2017)) together with knowledge of now-increased popularity of things paranormal (Hill
2011) and broadly New-Age techniques (Heelas and Woodhead 2005) brought concern about publicizing the tarot-with-pendulum method I have described. However, both I alone and several participants (like Francis, p74) experienced it as coming in a package-deal with personal-development and responsibility. Nor have I ever personally experienced or witnessed in another the method assisting maleficence. So, although my research is not generalizable and perhaps the method’s beneficence-as-experienced depends on Mungo ‘who’ might not liken the energy involved in another’s hands, I adjudge the risk of potential benefit-loss through withholding probably greater than the risk of maleficence-fostering through publicizing. Besides, the idea is already ‘out there’, if not through having arisen in other people I haven’t heard of, at least through my participants, so I adjudged my contextualized, values-heeding account to be a better-than-neutral contribution to any future ‘discussion table’.

The above publicize-or-not issue exemplifies non-standard situations wherein different people might decide differently yet still ethically (BACP 2016), given their ethical mindfulness and research-integrity including transparency about challenges or tricky situations (BACP 2004). Ellis enacts this through discussing personal research-mistakes which she recognized in hindsight adding that, given ‘no definitive rules..... (stating) precisely what to do in every situation’, our ‘accumulating more….. stories of research experiences that can help us think through our options' is ‘good news’ (Ellis 2007,5). I believe my thesis with, say, its belated-ethics and Mary’s-letter mistakes and unstraightforward decision-making as above does contribute.

Further, Wardle (who risked mediumship-in-therapy research) wrote ‘Research cannot move forward unless people come forward. People will not come forward unless they feel safe to do so’ (Wardle 2011,183). Just as she helped me feel safer in researching spiritual guidance, so Plaskett (2000) and Main (1994, 2007b) helped me feel safer in presenting extensive synchronistic patternings. Were my writing (being more exploratory ‘searchlight’ than detailing-the-already-framed ‘spotlight’) similarly to offer safer door-opening to innovative others’ researches I would consider that an ethical good in academe’s quest.

**Ethics concerning Mungo:**

Unsurprisingly I encountered no ethics literature concerning divination closely resembling that with Mungo. I thought to air the issue with Mungo who did want to engage (echoing Jung asking the I Ching about its own publicizing in the West when writing an introduction promoting it (Jung 2001)). Mungo ‘sent’ a three-card pertinent, salutary array:

a. First came the King-of-pentacles which, ever since a participant saw it as a friendly ‘professor’ smilingly encouraging her scholarly efforts and/or communication, I often see as such too. But this time, contrariwise, it warned (as pendulum-checked) of *pretence* of friendly encouragement cloaking untrustworthy grooming – in Mungo-talking might Mungo (or similar) perhaps really be thus?
b. Continuing, a standard three-of-wands meaning concerns a merchant watching his ships set out, hoping for safe profitable return. For me then it flagged concerns around a person’s motivations in Mungo-talking (or other divining) – were they after greedy gain, say, or prone to banking on a cards-promised future? Innerly I pondered, what does/should Mungo-talking/other divination serve, and then, by their fruits shall you know them. At that the pendulum indicated, now turn the answering card.

c. The image answered eloquently (as pendulum-checked): discern if Mungo-talking (or similar) is hooking you to (or unhooking you from) deleterious addiction, and/or hindering (or helping) you move towards the light.

Heuristically I notice myself appreciatively experiencing the spread as pertinent and, particularly through its first and last images, a succinct memorable warning against grooming entities/energies and advocating of sustained discernment and light-above-trappings values.

In summary I have now outlined why, although during my participant encountering I applied ordinary-life and pca-professional ethics, my awakening to research-ethics’ increased stringency
occurred so late. Engaging with BACP and BPS codes and a wider ethics-papers landscape I have considered various ethics issues including mistakes and their attempted repair (especially around my Mary’s-letter shortfall), and my ‘sheer ethical juggling’ points. I also sought Muno’s view apropos ethics of Mungo-talking (or similar) which presented (I believe) important ethical points whilst demonstrating ethically straightforward user-friendliness in ‘his’ manner of doing so.

I now proceed to my discussion chapter, which includes my conclusion.
Discussion (with Preliminary Interlude)

Preliminary interlude:

Soon after I started writing my discussion surprise events arose which ‘danced with’ my writing, the holistic process-as-lived creating an earlier chapter-version than this. The synchronistic flow of thirty-odd events interwove academic developments with significant self-search developments. The latter mattered. Sela-Smith (2001) similarly experienced a crucial occurrence after thinking her journey complete to which, true to heuristics, she surrendered, thereby reaching a fuller self-search closure.

I have jettisoned that chapter-version now except that, some of its discoveries being big and/or bringing my thesis to a more rounded ending, I have winnowed those out for presentation. I present some en bloc next and some larded into my following discussion proper.

One of them brought both self-search discovery and post-thesis development potential. Several synchronistic ‘meetings’ with and resonances to paintings by Romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich led firstly to realization of a significant Romantic streak in myself – one of my most ‘monolithic’ self-search outcomes. It also surprised me since, being previously vague about Romanticism, I had imagined it to conflict with scientific outlooks, whereas now I realize its links with holistic science (Bowie 2010; Wellmon 2010).

Secondly the Friedrich-instigated flow ushered me into studying literature connecting Romanticism and synchronicity (Bowie 2010; Bishop 2008; Atmanspacher and Fuchs 2014; Cambray 2014). These studies ‘swirled’ together with a fast-and-fortuitous flow of other incidents and texts which fell synchronistically into my lap, co-creating a ‘philosophy-space I could breathe in’ and a symbolic-plus-visceral sense that whilst my previous philosophical engagements had been in ‘lucky rockpools’ (in, say, ‘getting’ Wittgenstein better with a friend with a Wittgenstein PhD) Romanticism (with its contemporaries) feels like my ‘just-right cove’ for wading into philosophy’s ‘ocean’.

Another opening to future potential involved my encountering not merely a peer experiencer of synchronicity patternings (after years of dirth) but even one who, flow-prompted, had short-story written The Spirit of the Sea whereas a flow of mine had culminated with a ship’s name, The Spirit of the Sea (all wittily apt given my synchronicity-sea model). So our first meeting comprised our two synchronicity-scrolls scrolling synchronistically together (also synchronistically joining my then-current debate with Williams’ (2010a) postulate that synchronicities are exclusively self-engendered – to which co-scrolling presents an explanatory challenge). Literature-coincidence has re-occurred between my peer and myself. Indeed, such peerhood (of a quality I never met before) holds rich potentials: given timing’s import on my journey I wonder ‘why now’ – or perhaps ‘why not before’, which time may answer (or not).

Besides those Romantic and peerhood developments, my preliminary-interlude’s processes included experiencing other synchronistic interweavings offering further benefits for later. This recalled my pole-vault analogy (p26 et seq) in whose terms my run-up towards entry into official
research-time involved phenomena already being increasingly experienced. Now the above futureward potentials liken the pole-vault’s post-thesis-bar ‘fly-away’ possibly into further phenomenal experiencing, exemplifying this thesis-process’s flaggings of its partaking in vaster wholes.  

It may seem that my experincings of both futureward potentials and rounder thesis closure are contradictory. However the preliminary-interlude’s ‘swirl of events’ included fully three symbolic loopings-back to my research’s and/or thesis’s commencements, the symbols expressing both ‘gathering in’ and ‘going and/or growing on’. Mungo-talks played in too but (omitting their subtleties) I can synopsize their gist with just ‘The World’ tarot-image, one of whose classic meanings is of leaping forth from one round of integrational learning into whatever-comes-next.

The preliminary interlude also gave a salutory lesson. Its holistic unfolding was winsome and I, perceiving good reasons, remained caught in living and writing it for some three weeks. Then I suddenly and horribly awakened to both the writing’s discussion-chapter unsuitability – and my ‘bewitchment’ – my close-running of being a sucker. This echoed Ferendo’s self-realization around ‘the heuristic process (being) more powerful than (he) realized’ as through fulsome immersion he ‘imperceptively began to think (unobjectively) like Wilbur (his heuristic-engagement topic-author)’ (Ferendo 2004, 298). Realizing this he was ‘shocked and appalled’ but later considered it showed he ‘actually followed (the) methodology’ into experiencing his topic as intended ‘from the inside’ (ibidem). In my case, since I experience ‘my’ phenomena as agentic, I also considered the winsome unfolding ‘done by’ Mungo and synchronistic flow as trickster-like.

However I had escaped and, reviewing and indwelling the jettisoned-chapter’s full process afterwards, I perceived its synchronistic flow as a faster-paced ‘swirl’ than usual in which
**alternation** of experience types – from, say, literature-sections to conversation-comments to Mungo-talk meanings to café-wall art – stood out (as in a flicker-book jig). Rediscovering thereafter my creative synthesis’s Kells-triskellian (p184) and unwittingly incubating the frequent-changes swirl and triskellian combination, I eventually experienced these illuminations: travelling the preliminary interlude’s experiences had both bemused as if I were an ant threading a Kells-pattern-like path and felt held by trust of some greater sense.

Also the ‘ant-trail’ comprised experiencings of academic and non-academic things. Were the latter cut out then the trail would be cut up, and the ‘ant’ (myself, or readers) denied the holism – which principle applied to my whole thesis. This methodological rationale for depicting full trails (non-academic sections included) for their potential emergent greater-sense experiencing had never before shone so clear for me.

So, like Sela-Smith I gained significant new apprehensions through surrender to late experiences-that-came. Some will play into my discussion proper, to which I now proceed.

**The discussion proper starts**

In this discussion I shall firstly outline how HSSI’s unusual methodological nature may lend its theses’ discussions certain non-standard characteristics. Secondly I shall outline my own thesis’s non-standard characteristics and related contributions to methodological knowledge. Thirdly I shall present my HSSI-experiencing’s substantive outcomes at the meta-experience level. Fourthly, against those backgrounds I shall consider my work vis-à-vis standard discussion issues, situated against literature wherever appropriate. Some interleaving of the sections is inevitable.

**Unusual characteristics of HSSI theses:**

**The question:** Projects usually soon focus onto a clear research-initiating question that fits sensibly beside existent literature. HSSIs are different as, arising most deeply from a first-person passion-to-know, they embark on inquiry ‘on the cutting edge of new territory…… (with) no idea of where the researcher or the territory is going’ (Sela-Smith 2002,58). She and others (notably Meents (2006)) describe their research-journeys starting in originating arenas-of-interest (rather than decided questions), the research-journey’s very processes feeling out, puzzling through and honing their fundamental questions which only finalized late on. I also reached my settled question only after much methodological discussion with others entwined with HSSI-true freefall exploration ‘involving a “dance” between method and research focus’ (Sela-Smith 2001,3). It is:

**What is my experiencing of interplay between spiritual guidance and synchronicity within person-centred encounters?**

**Knowledge status:** HSSIs seek first-person experiential knowledge answering the researcher’s heuristically-vital passion-to-know and academe’s need for such subjective knowledge’s contribution to its overall quest for an encompassing knowledge pool (Wilbur 2001). In HSSI only the researcher crawls inside their unique self (Douglass and Moustakas 1985) so judgment
regarding their experiencings’ meanings and essences is theirs alone (Moustakas 1990) – the knowledge garnered is subjective, and makes no generalizable claim. That said, such knowledge may touch and/or raise self-knowledge in others, as the many response-letters elicited by Moustakas’s self-search into his loneliness exemplifies (ibidem). Nevertheless HSSIs’ lack of generalizable-knowledge claim slants their discussions, particularly in situating their outcomes only against whatever texts (if any) enhance, illuminate or could co-develop with those outcomes’ apprehension.

How the knowledge is shown: HSSIs involve self-search and self-transformations that build bit-by-bit as ‘the ant threads its experiential Kells-like path’, even if some ‘ahaa-moments’ can be pinpointed. Shifts subtle or stark, abrupt or gradual etcetera are integral to the livingly-gathered knowledge and its adequate transmission, hence HSSI’s narratives-as-lived being both knowledge-depictions and explications (Sela-Smith 2001, Meents 2006). Also, since HSSI self-searches and the self can be experienced as identity or process or their interweaving (Rogers 1951), so knowledge-developments could include ‘monolithic’ outcomes (like Sela-Smith’s deepest obesity source) and/or mosaic-like arrays (akin to Ferendo’s ‘numerous….. messy, mysterious, and multi-dimensional’ experiential results (Ferendo 2004,3)). Complementarily, at the encompassing scale, creative syntheses present essential, holistic apprehensional knowledge. These knowledge-sharing modes are very different to objective research-knowledge transmission, again effecting discussions’ forms.

A still-young methodology: Whilst first-person leashless heuristic research is long-established, its early delineating paper having been published in 1985 (Douglass and Moustakas), many researches instead followed Moustakas’s later third-person application-version (Moustakas 1990). Thereafter Sela-Smith simultaneously reasserted the original surrender-version and developed from it her HSSI with key special aspects (Sela-Smith 2001). Since then HSSI’s power has proved itself, but (literature searches suggest) users of the demanding methodology have been more trickle than flood – its world is yet small. Therefore readers, discussants, and indeed tutors and examiners, are rarely steeped in its ways (Sela-Smith’s excellent introductory paper (2002) notwithstanding). If I have laboured the points above overmuch for some, this is the reason. I myself feel need of steeped-expert stimulation and critique (sterling but non-HSSI tutors notwithstanding), and shall if possible procure Sela-Smith’s reading of this thesis, it being a service she offers. This is part of my method, which may yet adjust my understandings and presentation.

My research’s methodological special characteristics and contributions:

Following the above with methodological discussion of my research is sensible. (Substantive discussion follows later.) The issues I shall raise interweave considerably (which I mention here instead of throughout to present issues with more succinct clarity).

The I-who-thinks: Sela-Smith (2001) demonstrated crucial following of the I-who-feels in her innovative HSSI, whilst in Meents’ research (2006) the emphasis swung, in effect, towards her ‘I-who-intuits’. However, mine also tracked my ‘I-who-thinks’ (also a form of inner experiencing) as it responded more to events ‘out there’ than did Sela-Smith or Meents. Ferendo’s thinking featured
largely too, but principally through deliberate hermeneutic immersion in his chosen-author topic, whereas my thought-trail went ‘wherever’. (A preliminary-interlude bonus: my ‘maiden’ Romantic-era studying discovered that ‘for Goethe, a true-to-nature method would require that the observer’s concepts (and perceptions) become as dynamic (and flexible) as nature itself’ (Wellmon 2010,162), which seemed resonant to ‘wherever’ responsiveness including my adhering to flows whilst noting my cogitations – Goethe’s ‘companionship’ encouraged me.)

Phenomena with agency. Topic and methodology show each other well: Goethe’s synchronistically-caused bolstering ‘arrival’ there exemplifies my research’s unique (to the best of my knowledge) HSSI engagement with such agency-having phenomena (Mungo, EHEs and synchronicity). I know no other methodology that could have tracked the phenomena so assiduously, albeit through my responses which (besides disclosing my nature’s aspects) acted somewhat like bubbles tracking ‘particles’ (i.e. events) in a bubble-chamber. Also I am indebted to Pauline who, conversely, remarked how well those agency-having phenomena enabled HSSI’s following-always-and-wherever method to be demonstrated.

Risks (and benefits) around phenomena with agency: My account would be incomplete without saying that, whilst any HSSI risks unforeseen close encounters with personal difficulties, HSSI-engagement with agency-having phenomena risks inordinate levels of unpredictability, surrender and duration (but may bring blue-sky benefits too, as I experienced). Regarding this I have contributed to academe’s knowledge-quest prosaically in that unusual life-circumstances have enabled me to track through with those risks (for 14 years since PhD registration), but also knowledge-wise through experientially demonstrating that HSSIs engaging agency-having phenomena may be possible yet demanding. It would be less-than-truthful and unethical for me not to say so.

Too much information, or emergency? I have mentionned Ferendo’s (2004) numerous, messy, mysterious and multi-dimensional outcomes. Mine have been massively so on all counts, and perhaps my so-many inner-experiencing reports sometimes seem trivial, disjointed or pointless. My rejoinder is two-fold: prosaically I could foresee neither how long or many-turned my ‘ant’s Kells-like trail’ would be nor how its ‘out-there’ and internally-experienced qualities might relate. Also knowledge-wise I could foresee neither whether any composite and/or emergent experiencings would eventually emerge, nor which ‘micro-experiencings’ might later play into others. So, like an archaeologist, I ‘kept all the bits’ I could. Even had the sequence-of-bits not worked synergistically with itself it would have been a valid HSSI set-of-bits and, I moot, a valid methodological trial. Actually I believe it did work as emergent experiencings arose from the minutiae.

Interiority/exteriority balance: Sela-Smith’s methodologically-innovatory HSSI (2001) emphasized interiority, reclaiming as its basis Douglass and Moustakas’s (1985) also interiority-emphasizing ‘gaze’. Ferendo (2004) exemplified significant outward ‘gaze’ at Wilbur’s writings but in order to innerly ponder, relate therewith and be transformed. My research could seem comparatively outward-gazing, which merits two points. Firstly the initial disjointedness (before ‘joining the dots’)
of my inner-self notings, responding to probably more distracting from-any-which-where outer events could render the latter more vivid and seemingly important than the former. Secondly, like a splendid swan seen above the water powered by hardworking unseen feet, my incident-ornamented thesis-as-seen has partnered massive but private difficult family-care work with ‘my’ phenomena’s frequent crucial help which has hugely involved my interiority, its tacit workings and transformations included. I ask readers to trust that ‘my whole swan’ has interior-work gravitas organically supporting the thesis-as-seen.

Having described HSSI’s and my research’s unusual aspects which bear upon outcome types, I now proceed to my own meta-level outcomes.

**Meta-level experiential outcomes of my research:**

In this thesis I have already presented many event- and flow-experiencings at the detailed-depiction level, whilst my creative syntheses expressed essences of the research as holistically apprehended. Now, between the detailed-depiction and holistic-synthesis levels, I shall pull together my meta-level outcomes, namely major ‘mosaic-picture’ things experienced or ‘mycelium-net’ responses thereto seen in reviewing the full research-journey. I re-emphasize that, in line with first-person experiential methodology, I am not asserting objective existence of things experienced but my own meta-level experiencings (conceptualizations included) of them.

I shall put what I experienced happening in upright script and my own contributing endeavours in italics. Their intermeshing is indicative of the great importance of inter-relationality between them. I experienced the following:

1. The coming into my agnostic spiritually-ignorant life, during and supported by my person-centred training and practising of its self-developmental techniques towards ethical counsellor-hood, a gathering stream of surprising ‘impossible’ events – synchronicities, EHEs, and then personal declaration to me of a spiritual guide, ‘Mungo’. These phenomena increasingly benefitted my life and relationships, either separately or synergizing with each other. I did not deny these things, shocking though they were, but tentatively observed and collaborated with them.

2. Being taught step-by-step by Mungo a novel way of ‘talking’ together, his comments being pendulum-indicated bespoke arrays of tarot-images (and/or other things) and mine being my (perhaps silent) voicings, sometimes as brief as an expletive and sometimes long exploratory ramblings. Holding the pendulum throughout, I would know when Mungo wanted to come in again by a swing-change (sometimes unexpectedly to, say, a mid-sentence word). Such ‘tarot-conversations’ which, it later transpired, could involve other people too, were ‘good’ – I experienced them fostering people’s own awareness and/or ideas and/or ways forward. Crucially the conversations were interrelational and robustly mutual, in that I/we could disagree or be angry, say, with Mungo: authenticity was key to the process. Over time I have deduced and checked what was going on whenever Mungo
introduced a new technique, and through practice I have become skilled at (sharing with others in) multi-technique Mungo-talking.

3. The above ‘Mungo-conversations’, whether lone or shared, often interweaving with EHEs and/or synchronistically both with life events and between us (if I was not humanly alone). Such participant-research events drew me away from just-application-heuristics towards nose-following leashless heuristics – I had to wrangle innerly, decide and adapt. (The tripartite participant-sessions, bridging this shift, were both events to be researched within the application-heuristics framework as intended, and my personal experiencings within the leashless-heuristics framework.)

4. In lone research, occurrence of multi-synchronicity flows and patternings eliciting whole-pattern meanings, like the blade-heart/Great-Space pattern’s expression of synchronicities’ oftentimes precision-to-vastness connection, and the flow which engendered my synchronicity-sea impression and model. When such events ‘hijacked’ planned orderly work reporting past experiences, I had to choose between the ordered past and surrender to living-in-the-moment experiencing. Provisionally trusting ‘my’ phenomena I forewent quicker ‘normal’ work, instead daring freefall in an unwitting move towards HSSI.

5. In lone research, synchronistic patternings (akin to the above) furthermore interweaving with Mungo-conversations and EHEs, their synergizings doing things (like pedagogically sensible development of my skills with them) in a well-pitched, well-integrated manner suggesting intelligence. To appreciate and/or receive their doings I had to, say, note resonances, look some things up, and indwell my experiencings. Some event-trains needed my ‘aligning’ with what Mungo et al had ‘said’ in order to reach fruition (as in ‘obeying’ the outing-change to Liverpool (p108)).

6. Perceiving that synchronicity etcetera wrought different effects and/or fostered different themes within each experiential or immersion chapter (as already presented on p183) and in two others with experiential sections. Below I present the latter two chapters (the reduced experiential-chapters diagram being inserted to indicate overall sequencing):

- **Introduction and prequel:** being ushered into the journey’s possibility, initially by synchronicity alone, with EHEs and Mungo ‘arriving’ sensibly paced later. Unable either to deny my experiencing or fit it into my pre-existing physical-plane-only worldview, I passed through shock, long-term feeling spaced-out, gripped thinking, trying tests, and discerning.
• Preliminary-interlude (to this chapter): events both opening doors to post-PhD-attempt potential and giving gathering-towards-closure senses. This chapter involved risky exciting but nerve-racking time-use judgments near deadlines, trying to balance trusting-the-process and discernment.

7. The thesis-scale chapter-sequence above and other shorter-span unfoldings seeming to progress sensibly, suggesting teleology.

8. Perceiving ‘actions’ by Mungo, synchronicities and EHEs as good in various ways (kind, say, or fostering creativity or beneficial step-by-step (re-)integration, especially around person-to-person relationships) except for (1) trickster-like events (which, since if I allowed my awareness of and challenges to them they sweetened again, were ‘anti-infantilizing’), and (2) horrible phases (painful, difficult, aggravating, depressive or seeming-desertion, say) which, given attempted honesty, living-through and challenging-the-phenomena, have so far turned good again after lessons learned). (1) and (2) could be gruelling bewildering roller-coasters, my survival and/or escape from them calling deep pca-use from me.

9. Perceiving the phenomena as signalling their ‘desire’ to be discerningly considered in say, scientific, round-table scrutiny and philosophical manners, through the very issues they flagged and chapters they ‘co-scripted’ with me. This required no efforts extra to the already mentioned from me, but I report liking the desires-as-discerned very much.

10. Perceiving ‘my’ phenomena’s relating with ‘my whole swan’ (p208) in both PhD-research and family-care difficulties as respectfully, mutually and appropriately challengingly pca-valued. Having gradually learnt of and about some spiritual practices during this research’s lifetime, I see spiritual-practice qualities in relating with ‘my’ phenomena.

11. Myself as transformed by my holistic research-journey, from a hard-scientifically and psychologically curious person both agnostic and unengaged about spirituality, to someone in whom those curiosities have been not quelled but enlarged to encompass an experientially discovered (and hence believed in) cosmos of tremendous (though not necessarily ubiquitous) interconnectedness, intelligence, skillfulness and heart, including a spiritual domain which (at least partially) can and likes to help judiciously. These major shifts (and minor shifts along the way) have transformed me into an existentially much happier person.

Discussions concerning synchronicity:

First though, a methodological dilemma raises issues: Now I shall address a dilemma I faced post-first-viva, my resolution thereof and associated points. I have on balance decided to describe the dilemma (rather than simply execute my resolution) firstly because its addressing brought
literature relevant to my research-experiences’ structure into the frame, and secondly because in HSSI’s youth others may encounter resonant methodological issues.

In this thesis I have outlined both how heuristically-expert tutors/examiners had become unavailable at Manchester and how small the HSSI world yet is (more so in ‘my’ Europe than America), and how my pre-first-viva year was bedevilled by sudden administrative loss of seven academic months and damage to my dominant arm. These and other factors meant I was unable either to edit my synchronistic experiencings well or explain methodology sufficiently in thesis-1, or to have examiners familiar with heuristics and especially HSSI (though their other strengths were sterling). One’s report therefore understandably faulted my synchronistic raw-data quantities, requiring my thesis-2 to include more classic-texts presentation, yet they also wrote that not being a heuristic specialist they were ‘open to being persuaded that the (work) is a satisfactory example of such research and that its yield of knowledge and understanding are greater and more significant than I have discerned’, which fair-mindedness I appreciated.

In this new thesis I have explained heuristics and HSSI at length, not only as required academically and by the examiner, but also because I know from experience how long and through how many revisitings of aspects a shift from one methodological world (the scientific method in my case) to a both significantly and subtly different ‘world’ can take. I also signposted readers to Sela-Smith’s (2002) HSSI-introducing paper.

I shall describe my dilemma caricature-wise, omitting subtleties for starker clarity. A resubmitted thesis should address all examiners’ written criticisms of the original thesis. However, obeying my examiner’s requirements for less raw data and more classic-text presentation to-the-letter would conflict with thesis-2 being ‘a satisfactory example’ because the obeying would take my thesis away from HSSI’s focus on leashless explicatory depiction, vitally centred in and tracking the researcher’s experiencing – experiencing which, developed though it might be through text-immersions, shouldn’t be ‘pulled out of true’ by other-texts overemphasis in either its living-through or its thesis-presentation. For example, having been drawn into synchronicity-research as a non-Jungian my special contribution could precisely be that of a naïve synchronicity-experiencing journey involving Jungianism only if and when it naturally arose. Thus I felt HSSI-correctness in, say, mentioning Jung adequately and respectfully but not with journey- or presentation-skewingly heavy academicism – but would that pass examination muster? I experienced this dilemma as fearful with much at stake but, as first line of self-settling, resolved to prioritize holding (as best I could) to my methodology’s spirit.

This basic resolve ‘unfurled’ into threefold ideation. The first ‘arrived’ through the pca- and heuristically-valued process that is deliberate facing and indwelling of a difficulty (like this fearful dilemma), inviting edge-of-awareness realizations and/or illumination. Mentally weary therefrom, whilst walking I drifted into near-blankness (i.e. non-deliberate incubation) when the term ‘heapism’ leapt centre-stage to mind. To explain:

The transpersonal philosopher Wilber uses the concept of the holon which ‘is a whole that is a part of other wholes. A whole atom is part of a whole molecule’ (Wilber 2001,52) and so on from
molecule to cell to organism etcetera. Discussing growth hierarchies or ‘holarchies’ (of nested holons) he continues: ‘the only way you get a holism is via a holarchy, and...... those who deny all hierarchies have only a heapism, not a wholism’ (ibid 52-53). The moment ‘heapism’ occurred to me it ‘clicked with’ my knowing I had edited thesis-2 still with quantities of (raw-data) synchronicities-plus-my-responses depiction, but with more qualities not of heaps but of sequencing and nesting – indeed, principally by means of prioritizing flows-as-experienced over batches of synchronicities grouped vis-à-vis classic-text categories. My chapters’ flow-following depictions surely exhibit holon-nests of synchronicities within themes within chapters’ resonance-clusters within the thesis’s progression, and all ‘my’ phenomena nesting with each other in various greater-whole patterns too.

Wilber speaks further of the holonic model of reality (referencing Beck and Cowan 1996) as involving, say, everything flowing with everything else; stitching together of things into networks and levels; and flow throughout a cosmic-order big picture (Wilber 2001). Again, I cannot but perceive my research experiencings, experienced ‘from the ground up’ with no integrating model in mind, as having great resonance with holonic ideas. It is exciting to find my experiential truths ‘meeting’ this reality-model and to sense potential for future engagement therewith.

The second ideation which ‘unfurled’ from my basic resolve to hold to HSSI’s spirit involved me pondering the following: HSSI opens new ground through researchers’ first-person rigorous and demanding explorations from where they really are. Had they instead to (wholly or partially) inauthentically ‘place themselves’ in others’ already-established territory through over-adherence to prior texts, cutting-edge benefits would (I conjectured) be lost to a sort of ‘academic-place hegemony’.

My third ideation that unfurled was moral. I ran a thought-experiment about ‘what if I obeyed the examiner’s less-data and more-texts requirements to-the-letter instead of their ‘persuade-about-heuristics’ spirit for the sake of likelier PhD success’, finding that I couldn’t feel good or right in publishing such an (in my estimation) warped thesis – and indeed such a warping one. HSSI has demonstrably been valuable, but it is youthful, so any example of it in the academic domain might well affect how future researchers grasp, balance and employ it. I desire not to publish what I would consider an impoverishing conflicted example, but to do un-warped justice to my participants, my phenomena-as-experienced, my efforts and HSSI.

I now see the dilemma as having rendered literature link-making and methodological-cogitation favours. I have also argued for literature-engagement to focus on texts that particularly foster and/or illuminate the research. Accordingly I shall now move into dialogue between my research and its nearest-neighbour literature.

My synchronicity-experiencing dialoguing with literature:

Two books stand out as most nearly neighbouring my research. Main’s (2007) Revelations of chance: synchronicity as spiritual experience relates a 41-incident interconnected grouping of synchronistic events experienced by chess grandmaster Plaskett, Main then rearranging the

Main’s work has several aspects placing it quite near mine from the start. He initially sets aside ‘the problem of situating (his) study within this or that particular discipline…… focusing instead simply on the phenomenon of synchronicity itself, in whatever variety of forms it has seemed most accessible to further scrutiny’ (Main 2007,2-3), and accepts as valid synchronicity-cases that would generally be thought such despite falling outside Jung’s tighter criteria. In these regards Main neighbours my from-the-ground-up, theory-naïve experiencing. Also like me, he considers the rarely studied area of synchronicity-spirituality connections, attempting it partly by ‘attending to experiencers’ responses’ (ibid 9) (as do I). Acknowledging that mysterious spirituality often clothes itself in symbols he finds that Plaskett’s collection supports the postulate that symbolically-rich synchronicities are a form of self-revelation of spirit (akin to my experiencing especially in chapter 7.)

Furthermore many of Plaskett’s and my experiencings and stances liken each other. For example, he and I both have scientific-scrutiny leanings, wonder about meaning and purpose, and notice that our active interest may ‘trigger’ (Plaskett’s term) more incidents. As to the incidents themselves Plaskett and I share, say, grasping coincidences involving punning or symbols’ multiple meanings, and being particularly struck by coincidences shared with another who also experiences related coincidence(s) (like my Spirit-of-the-Sea peer synchronicity-scroll experiencer).

That suffices to indicate my experiencing significant resonances with Plaskett’s experiencing and Main’s study. But can this take anything forward? Whilst recently re-reading non-Plaskett sections of Main’s book I encountered enough instances of his ‘high-academic’ thought approaching my ‘low-from-naïve-experience’ thought as suddenly to ‘see’ a stalactite-stalagmite pair perhaps developing slender connection-strands. Interestingly some of my ‘stalactite-upgrowths’ arose for/from me due to stimulations of the preliminary-interlude jettisoned-chapter’s flow – thus the sequence and time-proximity of living that chapter-version and reading Main was ideal. So, quoting from that chapter-version and earlier writings, I shall give some stalactite-stalagmite examples:

I lead in simply with Main’s point that spirit can ‘operate on (psyche and matter) as if from a superior vantage point’ (Main 2007,30) to my elsewhere likening Mungo (who addresses my psyche through material pendulum and cards) to a good man in the crow’s nest (p121). Main also characterizes spirit as both seemingly intelligent and probably autonomous as it cannot generally ‘be called on at will’ (ibidem) whilst my preliminary-interlude response to an author’s assertion (Williams 2010a) runs thus:

(If) all his synchronicities fitted his rising(-exclusively)-from-troubled-life-crux theory then his synchronicity-type increases synchronicities’ reported variety……. boosting my thoughts like, it so smacks of some overviewing intelligence ‘sending’ certain types to certain people and/or circumstances. But also, only sometimes – if there were no intelligence, how could that choosy on-off-ness happen?

However Main and I sometimes view the same topic but from different angles. I acknowledge that Main’s are versed and matured whilst mine may be as unripe as novice brainstorming – yet such
Juxtapositions can stimulate. For example, Main includes amongst direct experiences of spirit ‘the perception of beauty’ (ibid 31). My preliminary-interlude process, meanwhile, having lead me into Romanticism in art and thought, had through ‘literature-luck’ brought me to writing the following:

……learning that aesthetic discourse shifted through Vischer’s thinking from focus on art-works’ aesthetic “being” to an emphasis of the role of the spectator’ (Nowak 2011,304)……(impacted me) because it overlapped with a years-long postulate of mine. Amongst friends considering art-as-such ‘out there’, knowing how in time-pressured troubled times absorbing tiny lovely moments en passant in nature or art could be ‘stepping-stones of rest-sense’ to me, I had wondered if evolution had developed a survival-assisting sense of beauty (though my naïve idea seems untestable)……..

I appreciate the spiritual and evolutionary angles’ juxtaposition here, considering them not necessarily mutually exclusive but a thought-provoking pairing. Recalling certain exquisitely-timed personal stepping-stones-of-rest-sense moments (like a beautiful peony-pair ‘arriving’ on my parents’ joint death-date) I speculate whether, through synchronicity (and/or symbolism), my conjectural evolved faculty and spiritual gift might collaborate.

The peonies reoriented my being that day and, at a greater scale, Main analyses how synchronicities may reorient someone’s personality and/or attitudes by ‘repeatedly directing one’s attention to (an) area of experience’ (Main 2007,48) such as spirituality. This certainly occurred for me, with much of this thesis being both tantamount to a Dullesian transformative ‘revelation history’ (ibidem) and, with its length and detail, potentially a revealing example.

My various chapters also delineate my synchronistic reorientations towards, say, considering synchronistic-flow study alongside harder-science (p159) – yet embraced within my thesis-wide reorientation towards spirituality. In itself that composite reorientation towards, unusually, considering physically-experienced ‘worked examples’ about harder-science, synchronistic-flow and spirituality together could, viewed through another lens, exemplify ‘seemingly intelligent, informative, meaningful….. creative and insightful (psychic) restructuring implying) that the workings of spirit are, or at least can be, highly purposive’ (Main 2007,30). Heuristically I admit to wondering if purpose ‘chose’ to ‘send’ that reorienting events-stream to myself – someone gripped enough to follow its turns and intrigued rather than unnerved by its mystery?

Main’s ‘highly purposive’ meets my preliminary-interlude writing in response to Williams’ idea that (contrary to Jungian theories situating synchronicity partly in the collective unconscious and/or cosmic principle) self-unfolding can involve ‘self-generated (synchronistic) messages (from only (my emphasis)) a person’s idiosyncratic creative process’ (Williams 2010a,xiv-xv). My written blurtlings-out revealed me HSSI-wise – to Williams, maybe, but propose a mechanism (or admit a mechanism-shaped hole) – dreams sort of within the same body as the personal unconscious, maybe, but the external part of synchronicities….. how? And to both Williams and Jung, hmmm, my synchronicities seem more connected with my path’s unfolding (though path- and self-development admittedly entwine). And to myself, and the path unfolds sensibly – including inter-relationally – so, yes, I incline towards teleology.

In the reorientation, revelation-history and purposive/teleological points above I note Mains’ observations and my experiencings (thought-responses included) approaching stalactite-
stalagmite-wise, and speculate that my thesis’s experiencing-depiction might assist eventual closer cogitations by anyone. Regarding the following I make a brainstorming physical-level suggestion. Main writes:

……. it is often very difficult in practice to differentiate between the contributions made to the solution of a critical problem……. by the normal psychic processes of deduction and inference and by the (as I understand it) spiritual process of insight. (He postulates………) a kind of spectrum: from physical to psychic to spiritual…… characterized by increasing subtlety of ‘substance’ and operation and consequently also by increasing difficulty of observation and quantification. (Main 2007,28)

Reading this after my preliminary-interlude process emboldened me to juxtapose a wild potentially-observable research-idea that had ‘come’. Whilst recognizing that Main’s understanding of ‘the spiritual process of insight’ only partially overlays my physically-demonstrable pendulum-and-cards inspiration-fostering process, nevertheless they might perhaps dialogue. One of my preliminary-interlude writings (resonating with Main’s difficult-to-differentiate point) ran thus:

German Idealism wrestles with thought’s…… receptive and spontaneous aspects, with Haman thinking them not entirely separate. The synopsizing words ‘if….. passive receptivity and active spontaneity are…… different degrees of the same “activity”, the gap between subject and world can be closed’ (Bowie 2010,38) resonated with my long-standing cogitations about Mungo-talks. During them ‘knowings’ and my own thoughts could come so similarly (regarding context-type and sensations, say) for their difference to be near-indiscernible, yet consequent events with pendulum-directed cards might point towards ‘that was a knowing’ (or not). Now…… my self-searching notices my irrepressible questioning-that-comes (rather than answers)….. including this further imagining – given that tarot-talks include directions-from-Mungo via both physical pendulum and my ‘knowings’ (receptive) and my own thoughts (spontaneous), and I could voice their ‘arrival-qualities’, how interesting brain-scanning them could be!

Preliminary-interlude process also captured my response to reading that ‘empirical sciences of today refer either to physical or to mental structures and processes’ such that for Jung’s and Pauli’s proposed psychophysically neutral reality (underlying synchronicity) we ‘hardly have an idea about which scientific methodology could be used for addressing it’ (Atmanspacher and Fuchs 2014,3). I wrote:

In response I locate a ‘place to look’ (by whatever means) as being where observably-voiced thought prompts pendulum movement (linking mental and physical processes), particularly scrutinizing instances when pendulum-directed actions then flow into sense. (This would need an ethical person with whom LUE is currently overtly relating, preferably with wide-ranging and nuanced Mungo-communication-like expertise such as I have now developed.) Compared to unpredictable synchronicities, looking there would be arrangeable although results might not always occur – frequency being part of the observations. (I reassert that these ideas are HSSI material which leapt strongly at/from me.) Also, on reading it is ‘inconceivable how efficient causation could operate between such categorically distinct entities as mind and matter’ (ibid 5), my leaping-out response was (I note heuristically) ‘try brain-scanning pendulum-directed tarot-use for starters’.

Feeling stupid; pondering roles:

I have described how my preliminary-interlude process led from synchronicities around Romantic artist Friedrich to literature connecting Romanticism and synchronicity. Cambray’s (2014) The influence of German Romantic science on Jung and Pauli prompted an unexpected HSSI-train in me. Its section discussing Jung and Pauli’s conjecture linking synchronicity with the psychoid
(caricature-wise, a conjectured unconscious basis-depth where psyche and matter are one) was for me (probably through my theoretical shortfalls) both baffling and distancing. Heuristically I noticed that during its reading there built within me desire to exclaim how does this connect to experience – why no worked example or analogy however partial or tentative – please!

My bafflement and feeling rather stupid vis-a-vis Cambray’s theoretical writings was very fresh when I deliberately went bus-riding, inviting the enhanced heuristic processes it often brings. My intention was to thus study another’s paper, but the bus traversed the university with its departments, and my process jinked. Out-of-the-blue I ‘saw again’ the complementarity between experimental and theoretical physicists – might my role be synchronicity-studies experimentalist then? HSSI-wise I felt myself hoping so.

Postscript-wise I now notice this thought: sometimes theoretical dimness benefits freer experimental work.

**Proceeding from Plaskett:**

Another way my work so far could contribute honours and extends Plaskett’s (2000) contribution. I am grateful that he bothered doggedly to pursue both his synchronistic connections and getting his account of experiencing them heard. He knew neither that his efforts would come to Main’s academic hearing, nor that Main’s analyses would add such higher holistic meanings. And nor would I have found his valuable ‘accompaniment’ and experiential ‘launchpad’ for my saga in its turn.

Maybe something unforeseen will similarly take my account further and/or I might continue, but either way noting how my work is ‘bigger’ than Plaskett’s – perhaps, coming after his, purposively so – is informative. Compared to Plaskett I discern that:

a. My synchronicity-rich saga has many more incidents and is more complex
b. It includes more clearly sequential and/or interweaving sections
c. Themes that develop seem also to pattern sensibly with each other
d. It includes many incidents shared and co-witnessed with others
e. It includes not only spontaneous but also many invited (tarot-talk) synchronicities
f. Incidents need less classic/Jungian decoding and more personal symbolic understanding
g. Many incidents foster relationship developments both intra- and interpersonally, in harmony with pca values and ways
h. Some synchronicity-streams helped the researcher through hard times (especially around difficult caring) whilst others led her into dark times sometimes lasting for months
i. It included very frequent coping with and/or help in time-duress
j. Direction-suggesting synchronicities could be experimentally ‘aligned with’ into further process
k. Spontaneous and invited synchronicities, EHEs, ‘knowings’ and other ASCs synergized, whilst also interweaving with life’s concerns and joys, personal development and relationships

l. Synchronistic flows themselves opened new arenas of potential cooperation and/or study

One aspect of this thesis’s knowledge contribution is that synchronicities and patterns thereof can be experienced by a person at various levels as presented in my long-story depiction, meta-analyses, creative syntheses, and by comparison to another synchronicity-experiencer as above.

I proceed now to literature-discussion concerning other aspects of my research.

My experiencing in dialogue with spiritual-guidance and pca literature:

My original spiritual-guidance literature search, done during my earlier PhD years, used ‘channelling’, ‘spirit guide’ and closely-related terms, seeking what I then thought ‘the traditions of the source of the….. experience’ (Ferendo 2004,315) to be. But those texts dialogued only obliquely with my research-as-lived, especially after living through my immersion-in-spiritual-guidance chapter (re-visioning the ‘mace’) evolved my experience-source ideas.

I must side-step now to explain two recent developments and a choice. When starting work on this discussion-chapter I expected to be in control of it (and had ample time- and word-allocation for it). Then the preliminary-interlude’s developments butted in to many good advantages – but reducing my time- and word-stores. Now, even more recently, a synchronicity re-alerted me to a paper I read long ago which, now ‘clicking’ with my later PhD years’ spirituality-experiencings and two key pca texts, begged inclusion herein. Also, though, having written the above Main/Plaskett section, as a curiosity-motivated relaxation-treat I read Main’s next chapter (Main 2007b) concerning the I Ching (an ancient, much-revered Chinese divination system). It too ‘clicked’ into comparison with my tarot-experiencing. A synchronistic flow then fostered my feelings’ and cogitations’ developments, including about suitabilities of the I Ching and tarot to Jungianism and the pca respectively. This spirituality-related development also begged inclusion herein.

However, these two late developments had consumed time, and presenting both would require too many words from my already preliminary-interlude-reduced store. I have solved the matter by putting the I Ching/tarot development into Appendix 1. Here I shall present the spirituality- and pca-related development which I certainly experience as developing my HSSI apprehensions next.

Surprise late illumination concerning the person-centred approach:

Synchronicity-prompted, I re-read Frick’s paper (Frick 1990) concerning his realization and development of symbolic-growth-experience ideas (SGE). My aim here is not to present SGE fulsomely in itself, but Frick’s process-story enough to situate what then occurred to me. Having conceptualized SGE, Frick gathered examples of such short-moment, mind-and/or-heart-changing experiences (like a father-to-be’s resentment of the fetus about-turning when he first felt it move
into ‘exultation for life….., sense of kinship with….. (his) long lineage…… and harmony and oneness with the cosmos’) (ibid 74).

Frick further reports suddenly realizing after much cogitation about SGEs’ propitiously converging factors that ‘the phenomenon might be a special example of synchronicity’ (ibid 69). Also despite rewarding analysis about SGEs Frick (adherent of both the pca and heuristic research) ‘developed a nagging sense of incompletion about the work…… at the very center of it……. What was the meaning behind the meaning…… of the SGE?’ (ibid 77). His answer came (relaxing with coffee in a restaurant) ‘suddenly, boldly, and with great clarity, like a revelation from some higher source. The SGE is a natural healing and growth-enhancing agency within the personality system’ (ibidem).

This provided (early empirical) ‘strong support for the existence of a self-actualizing force in human personality’ (ibid 78), a central concept in pca thought and action but disputed by various others. Frick further wondered why, if SGE-agency is natural, it is not more commonplace, postulating that in modern technological life ‘the metaphoric-symbolic mode is not respected, nurtured and developed’, thus needing re-encouragement (ibidem).

I savoured Frick’s points immediately, but later I too suspected more – an idea which ‘came suddenly, boldly’ but, it seeming presumptuous, I backed from then re-approached on-and-off. Considering it now requires background knowledge about pca-founder, Rogers.

Many thinkers have considered the actualizing tendency (eg Maslow 1968) but still, already in boyhood Rogers noticed potatoes striving to grow even from their cellar storage-bin’s life-adverse conditions (Rogers 1980). Later, pca-foundations included fostering people’s own actualizing-tendency wisdom by offering beneficial conditions (empathy, congruence and acceptance being prime), and ground-breaking scientific scrutiny of therapy using then-new recording technology (Rogers 1951). After decades of steadfastly scientific and material-world-only research and work, Rogers ‘came out’ as follows:

….. as a group facilitator or….. therapist…… I find that when I am closest to my inner, intuitive self….. somehow in touch with the unknown in me….. (perhaps) in a slightly altered state of consciousness, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. ….. There is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me, then I may behave in strange and impulsive ways in the relationship…… which I cannot justify rationally, which have nothing to do with my thought processes. But these strange behaviours turn out to be right, in some odd way: it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger…… I am compelled to believe that I, like many others, have underestimated the importance of this mystical, spiritual dimension.

(Rogers 1980,129-130)

Alongside this Rogers, having recapped the actualizing tendency, traces other thinkers’ then-new ideas concerning a putative formative tendency ‘which can be equally well observed at every level of the universe…… (being) at least as significant as entropy’ (ibid 125). He then considers awareness’s role therein, finding it small but important, and further that as (through therapy or otherwise) a person’s self-awareness improves they become more interconnected, more fully functioning with fewer barriers and inhibitions to ‘prevent the full experiencing of whatever is organismically present. This person is moving in the direction of wholeness, integration, a unified
life. Consciousness is participating in this larger, creative, formative tendency’ (ibid 128).

Proceeding yet further he acknowledges research into beyond-normal consciousness in which people may, say, experience ‘being dissolved in a whole area of higher values….. beauty, harmony, and love. The person feels at one with the cosmos’ (ibidem). Rogers himself sometimes experienced in pca-groups ‘extraordinary sense of oneness, (yet) the separateness of each person present has never been more clearly preserved’ (ibid 130).

Apocryphally many pca-adherents thought (and think) Rogers had ‘lost it’ with these never-before-expressed mystical views, but other ‘colleagues have observed and felt (such transcendent, indescribable….. transformational experiences) as concomitants of the person-centred approach’ (ibid 132). Rogers again links the pca and the actualizing and formative tendencies:

….. when we provide a psychological climate that permits persons to be…… we are tapping into (the actualizing tendency). And on an even larger scale, I believe we are tuning in to a potent creative tendency which has formed our universe (the formative tendency)……. (perhaps) touching the cutting edge of our ability to transcend ourselves, to create new and more spiritual directions in human evolution……. This….. is, for me, a philosophical base for a person-centered approach…… (justifying)….. engaging in a life-affirming way of being.

(Rogers 1980,134)

I return now to my own presumptuous idea that ‘came’ through mulling and incubating Frick’s account of suddenly connecting his SGE-conceptualization to the actualizing tendency in pca (and the metaphorical-symbolic mode). I suddenly wondered if my research-journey had been a worked example (including many co-witnessed events) of shift from ‘just’ the pca and actualizing tendency, via multitudinous passings-through of heuristics’ stages, experincings and incubations plus, say, metaphorical-symbolic mode-enhancing tarot, to being ‘plugged into’ the formative tendency in pca. It seemed (to the best of my knowledge) the nearest thing extant to a ‘time-lapse film’ of one person’s development from the one tendency more firmly into the other, and as such perhaps offering some validation and/or interest to others. Such were (and are) my heuristically self-searched inner thought-responses – alongside feelings like intriguedness, hope, sheepishness and, now, relief to have ‘handed it over’.

That said, I shall add four commentaries:

Firstly I note how Rogers’ exceptional experiences inclining him towards credence in a cosmic formative tendency (and its unforceable gifting of help within pca-activities) are of intuitive, interrelational and group-sense kinds, suiting his vocation. Mine, meanwhile, major on interweaving phenomena, and sometimes demonstrable synchronicities, gifting me the wherewithal to research interconnectedness and now-and-then serendipitously introduce how-about-this things to the oblivious or doubtful – and I like these activities in principle and practice, which feels vocational (an HSSI realization). Further, Rogers’ and my gifts’ differences seem (echoing myself from p213) to ‘smack of some overviewing intelligence ‘sending’ certain types (of special experiences) to certain people and/or circumstances’.

Secondly, the formative-tendency conceptualization is consilient with other concepts of cosmic and/or holistic reach. Particularly pertinent here are (as already presented on p211-212) the
holonic model of reality involving, say, everything flowing with everything else, and Jung’s Unus Mundus, a complex originally-alchemical idea literally meaning ‘One World’. Hyde and McGuinness (2004) explain it succinctly:

‘Unus Mundus’……. suggests the interpenetration of spirit, soul and matter (or in Jungian psychology) the inter-relation of psyche and body. With the development of synchronicity, and the positing of a ‘psychoid substrate’ of reality, this metaphor is carried into the inter-relation of psyche and matter (with hope of finding) common ground for psychotherapy and physics.

(Hyde and McGuinness 2004,174)

Thus my research’s particular offering lies not in experiencing some such domain, but in developing into such experiencing from an agnostic and pca-basis ground up, holding to pca-values throughout.

Thirdly, between its start and surprise end in the pca my journey traversed Jungian-like terrains without me feeling schism. Thorne’s (2012) The two Carls – reflections on Jung and Rogers is illuminating. Feeling indebted to both their subjective-objective-commingling ideas’ help in his personal life, Thorne finds the same complementarity there as in academic study of them, dubbing Jung and Rogers heroes (because of their empirical-experiential committed work including development through descent into sanity-threatening depths) of the unconscious (journeying spiritually to encounter the Self) and the intimate relationship (journeying spiritually to encounter the Other) respectively (ibid 100, 106).

Personally I note firstly that Rogers’ pca-slant being more towards inter-relationality chimes with easily-graspable tarot’s pca-compatibility. Secondly I resonate with Thorne when, having noted both men’s developments towards love of humanity and concern for the world, he finds them ‘prophet(s) for (these times)’, mitigating against us finding we ‘have no earth left on which to dwell’ (ibid 108).

Fourthly, having written my presumptuous ‘actualizing tendency plus ‘plugging into’ formative tendency’ section above I opened to Mungo’s commenting, who signalled for two cards to be revealed simultaneously side-by-side. Their double sense of right-directionality really struck me. The ace-of-swords has long had a fall-back meaning for me – notice and sense whatever you can of enfwreathing circumstances and then, allowing ‘the force to be with you’ if it wishes, try. So, a fair formative-tendency symbol. And the phoenix-like, good-feeling uprising of Judgement after ‘fires of experiential learning and/or personal development’ was (for me) a similarly fair actualizing-tendency symbol. Thereafter I asked, and if they so act in concert, then? receiving an answer-card to serve also as finale to and exit from the entirety of this thesis’s livingly creative bulk:
Figure 24: So, again, leaping forth from one round of integrational learning into whatever-comes-next

I shall now consider standard discussion issues.

**Suitability of the methodology:**

Congruence of methodology, phenomena and researcher is beneficial. I have felt such congruence throughout this research: I have as required really let it live, and conversely the phenomena have ‘wanted to live themselves’ through me. Also the autonomous phenomena have allowed heuristics and HSSI to vividly demonstrate their nose-following leashless nature, whilst complementarily I echo Frick’s assessment that ‘no other investigative procedure could have yielded the insights and discoveries that emerged during this (holistic synthesizing) study’ (Frick 1990,79). Heuristics’ freedom of first-person exploration grants an assumption of integrity to the researcher (ibidem), which I believe I have acquitted through appropriate time-allowing, fulsomely-living, depth-seeking, nose-following, authentically self-searching methodological steadfastness.

Heuristics’ leashlessness allowed me to jink into following two phenomena entwined which enabled many integrational experiencings. Also, by allowing me to follow where I was experiencing events
to be leading, it kept me aligned with my interest’s passion which, as West (1998) emphasizes, is vital for full-blooded completion of personally-demanding heuristic research.

Frick (1990) and Meents (2006) mention do-your-own-thing and self-centredness dangers in heuristics and HSSI but, resolving to avoid them through self-observational honesty and rigour, turn the potential weakness to first-person-discovery strength, which I have essayed too.

**Uniqueness of this research; contributions to knowledge:**

**Apropos methodology** I have (I believe) done the first HSSI that:

a) significantly tracks the I-who-thinks  
b) deliberately engages phenomena having and being allowed their autonomous agency

Also (I believe) this research is unique (or rare) in making synchronicity a significant part of its choice-making methodology.

Apropos its heuristic-application stage, this was (I believe) the first to include introducing a new activity into participant sessions.

**Substantively** this research, involving first-person engagement throughout (including in participant sessions), claims no generalizable knowledge.

It is (I believe) the most sustained, complex account of someone’s experiencing of synchronicity, furthermore partly logged during synchronistic unfoldings themselves.

It is (I believe) a unique sustained depiction of synchronicity and spiritual guidance collaborating with each other and other EHEs and life-aspects.

Uniquely (I believe) it captures someone’s experiencing of synchronicity (with other phenomena) fostering the development of a ‘field model’ (the ‘synchronicity-sea’) of itself.

Uniquely (I believe) it captures the combined phenomena being experienced as teaching the researcher unusual diverse nuanced communication-skills with tarot and pendulum together, and the researcher’s learning and use thereof (as depicted herein) particularly in life’s tight corners.

The research captures a unique (or rare) step-by-step depiction of someone experiencing development from agnosticism to credence in a further spiritual domain, with existential effect, and a vocational sense (around, say, bridging hard-scientific and spiritual-EHE experiences as flagged).

It is unique (or rare) in many time-respects, including its spanning of academical-world shifts vis-à-vis both heuristic methodology and governance; and of exceptional protracted lone-borne straits in my personal life which were both the trust-engendering- and training-ground for learning co-operation with ‘my’ phenomena, and the reason for my registration-to-submission 14 years which allowed the project its essential maturation time. This confluence of key circumstances is unlikely to recur.
Strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths and weaknesses can be two sides of one coin. This applies in my participant research, wherein the fact of participants coming from my acquaintance circle, bearing the weakness of not being socially representative (though that invalidates no experiencings), brings the more-than-counterbalancing strength that, already trusting me, participants engaged at all and in depth.

Similarly the weakness that the methodological inquiry/exploration mode tends not to bring a succinct research-conclusion is counterbalanced by its strength in encouraging expression of much personal experiencing, potentially rendering it rich, thick and vivid, close to ‘as-lived’, very deep, able to address cutting-edge experiencing, and demonstrate process over time.

I am grateful to Pauline for pointing out that heuristics therefore requires an articulate (or otherwise eloquent in some form of expression) researcher, adding that she found sufficiently articulate authentic (and hence trustworthy) presentation a strength of mine.

Future implications and/or directions:

This research shows that a person may have, or believe they are having, such sustained, complex synchronistic sequences (perhaps also entwined with other phenomena) and, since such persons might have therapy, knowledge of such experiences would equip therapists for understanding, and improved discerning between healthy and problematic experiencers (Nachman 2009).

To such ends, I could offer workshops about my research and/or synchronicity and/or introducing tarot. I shall explore possibilities in parallel with doing the dissertation-project needed to complete the person-centred spiritual-accompaniment course I started two years ago to fit myself more both knowledge-wise and ethically for offering such events.

I shall seek publication possibilities. Finding placement may well be difficult for this out-on-a-limb research: I shall persevere, asking what knowledgeable people I can.

Throughout I must take account of my age (currently 67 years), honouring its limitations (not spreading myself too thin for my stamina, say) and its opportunities (for example, on the one hand freedom from livelihood-earning restrictions, but on the other certain pressing complex moral time-of-life obligations which threaten (and promise) many inter-relational difficulties (and spiritual-development potential).

This research has, in the manner of PhDs, been an imperfect prentice-piece. I know my personal processing and development therefrom continues. A recent symbolic-encapsulation illumination-that-came is that in retrospect the research has a Catherine-wheel-like quality for me, spraying so many sparks of exciting and/or valuable lines to follow (certain philosophies, say) that, again, I could fizzle out by over-spreading myself.
So I shall have judgements to make, including taking time to sense what my actualizing tendency and the formative tendency suggest. Furthermore, in congruence with the research itself, I shall be open to Mungo, synchronicity and/or other phenomena themselves presenting unforeseen opportunities for my research’s dissemination or teaching.

Conclusion – the heart of the matter:

An acquaintance asked for my succinct verbal answer to my research question, what is my experiencing of interplay between spiritual guidance and synchronicity within person-centred encounters? My response thereto evolved.

Heuristics and HSSI not only may but should ‘answer’ in the manner that best communicates the research apprehensions which, especially if diverse and/or holistic, may be through sizeable depictions and/or listings and/or creative-synthesis diagrams, say – as have I. Brief-paragraph answers are rare. Moreover, the research-question may function more as guide (Sela-Smith 2001) or ‘lantern’ or ‘nose’ – alerting one’s sensing as one quarters life- and/or research-terrain, rather than unearthing the discrete answer.

Nevertheless I pondered, finally stripping it back to the ‘Love and Truth’ with which I have demonstrably opened every Mungo-talk. My heart-of-the-matter answer became:

When, with Love-and-Truth intentions towards and between all domains, I opened to co-evolutionary exploration with spiritual guidance and synchronicity that had spontaneously come to me, it worked.

............... STOP PRESS

The above, written three days ago, was meant to be thesis’s end. But heuristics involves illumination(s) which simply come when they do. I am putting today’s one truthfully here, rather than obscure the ‘un-switch-off-ability’ of heuristic re-apprehensions by slotting it ‘logically’ beside related observations. Today two activities alchemized. During café-time with a non-academic friend I heard myself answering her interest thus:

My research wasn’t into a pre-focussed question but....... well imagine being suddenly dumped by aliens into another world, you’d be like ‘what the ****!*?, and to manage you’d have to not just find things out, but (methodologically speaking) find out how to find things out, sussing the two things together, yeah?

This slanted my later re-reading of Sela-Smith’s (2002) HSSI-introducing paper, enlarging an apprehensions-cluster. I have already mentioned that whereas Sela-Smith’s HSSI unearthed a painful ‘tap-root’, mine gradually discovered an intriguing ‘mycelium-net’ (responding to ‘out-there mosaic-tiles’ as experienced). Now, post-café-chat, I thought I’ve been groping – like in an alien world – oh, or like a toddler learning this life.
Sela-Smith says deeply contacting painful old tacit structures is essential, hence her emphasis on resistance. My situation, though, also involves building the tacit through new-world experiencing – which is personally transformative too.

How well-suited I was to exemplify building the tacit in new-world experiencing – spiritually-oblivious agnostic, methodological ignoramus, non-discussing family-of-origin and always-behind-thereafter consequences, knowing only of (not about) tarot etcetera……… If spirit chose, then good choice.

Rather than Sela-Smithian resistance to pain I have principally felt myself standing my ground vis-à-vis ‘out-there’ voices both old (Christa, you think too much – but my thoughts-arising are unstoppable – you may as well tell my lungs not breathe) and new – exemplified, curiously, by (my understanding of) Sela-Smith herself (2002,71-72) distancing thought from internal self-search experiencing (verb), dubbing it instead experience as noun with Archimedes as example. This makes it doubly curious because ‘my’ Manchester University honours Archimedes’ Eureka-moment with a sculpture (by Thompson Dagnall 1990). I assert thoughts-that-arise to be both illuminations (of whatever magnitude) and internal experiencing (often co-arising with feelings and/or bodily change and/or scientific spirit).

So, today’s apprehension-expansion goes:

*My experiencing has involved building of tacit structures within me through new-world encountering (with Mungo and ‘it all’) and standing-of-ground concerning thoughts-arising being inner-self experiencing, which complements Sela-Smith’s work. This methodological answer to my research question complements the substantive Love-and-Truth answer above.*
Appendices
Appendix 1: I Ching and tarot: comparison and confluence

An unfolding-as-lived:

After re-reading certain book-chapters by Main (2007) during my discussion-chapter work his next chapter, *Synchronicity and Spirit in the I Ching*, appealed as a relaxation-treat read. Margin-marks showed that I had leisure-read it a couple of years previously, and that this time I was absorbing it a little more comprehendingly. It told of Jung and an anonymous other having each asked the I Ching about its own functioning prior to significant work with it, receiving the same wonderfully-appropriate oracle-answer (Ting, The Vessel). My mulling mood suggested ‘you doing that, but with tarot about future tarot-use, would be intriguing and timely’. Mungo agreed: ‘yes, now’.

My question evolved through reflection from just ‘how should I use you’ to ‘how should I use you bearing in mind that it may be with other humanly-diverse people’. Next ‘you’ changed from meaning tarot alone to the ‘it all’ I have experienced collaborating with tarot – ‘Mungo, synchronicity(-sea), tarot itself, pendulum, ‘knowings’, other EHEs, world-things-impinging, others’ deliberate or chance-heard comments etcetera’ – in short, Life, the Universe and Everything (LUE). I could happily put my holistic others-considering question to that ‘it-all you’ centred on the tarot.

My just-finished leisure-reading came to be relevant. Recently Philip Pullman described on radio how he developed his fairy-tale, *The firework-maker’s daughter* telling how, to become a firework-maker, Lila had to travel perilously to the fire-god in his flaming Mount Merapi, bringing three particular gifts and receiving ‘Royal Sulphur’ from him. I wanted to know (as book-lover and, perhaps, for timeliness and/or spiritual reasons) what the gifts and Sulphur were, bought the book, and discovered the Three Gifts to be:

> all equally important, and two of them are no good without the third. The first one is talent. The second has many names: courage, determination, will-power. It’s what made you carry on climbing the mountain when everything seemed hopeless. (and the third is) simply luck. (that) gave you good friends, and brought them to you in time. (and the Royal Sulphur –) human beings call it wisdom, (only gained) by suffering and risk – by taking the journey to Mount Merapi.

Pullman (1996:100-101)

One other thing preceded the tarot-talk. Sometimes when my thoughts drift off-topic whilst holding the pendulum, it reacts indicating ‘actually, that is relevant’. This time it concerned fancying wine that evening – Mungo-and-pendulum kept saying, buy wine now. So I shopped, chose, bought and returned, settling thereafter with my Robin Wood cards and my question.

First came the Tower which I couldn’t ‘get’ regarding my question to the ‘it-all you’ until I ‘mis-saw’ (as never before) a little ‘flame-person’ nearing the tower’s summit. Then I surmized that a Mount-Merapi-like venture and/or Lila-like qualities were meant (and Mungo agreed).
Main, following Needham, says of Chinese science conceptualization that things, rather than mechanistically or linearly affecting each other, influence each other in side-by-side or patterning ways, through mysterious resonance or ‘inductance’ (Main 2007,170). Such conceptualizations make reasonable the suiting of oracular I-Ching answers to questionners’ circumstances and, I find, tarot-with-everything’s oftentimes eloquence – like ‘inductance’ between the ‘flame-person’ and Lila’s Mount-Merapi quest.

My Mungo-talk continued, ‘inductance’ resonating between the building pattern of parts. As I pondered the climb’s qualities, my pendulum responded to my thought of ‘attaining’ which, through pendulum-directed dictionary-search brought ‘touching’ too.

Meanwhile I left my curtains open despite nightfall and switching my light on. Now, from just where I sat, the bloomed-glass pyramid on my window-sill (for once curtainlessly lit and visible against darkness) surprised me, ‘wearing’ two ‘edge-blades’ of bright-orange ‘fire’ converging towards its apex – a synchronicity (or inductance) that would influence my next interpretation:

Another card was signalled, to stand level partner to the Tower, with space between. It was Justice.

Pondering her whilst the preceding symbols ‘rang’ inside me, I noticed her gaze – its fire-blade-like penetration into one’s depths (by means, say, of spot-on tarot-cards revealed in a Mungo-talk) as one faces her, converging to touch some inner personal aspect – just-so but fairly, to help. I had experienced such finely-judged empathy (in myself or accompanied others) in tarot-talks, thereby gaining brightened congruence.

Next a dowsing-out process I need not detail brought the word ‘lean’. I ‘knew’ (and pendulum-checked) that this suggested converging the two cards somewhat, towards an ‘and-these-processes-conduct-towards’ final card (the processes being Justice’s fair, deep, not-too-much-at-once perception offering – as from a good pca counsellor – empathy and congruence, and the Tower’s long climb (or process-journey) involving Lila’s Three Gifts and Sulphur – talent, determination, luck, and receiving wisdom). I felt hope and anxiety – would the new card-image be nonsensical or ‘shine’ there? It was the Star:
I felt relieved and delighted, finding her spirit-lifting but naturally, unforced, without pomp. A pendulum-indicated dowsing-out from the deck’s booklet’s Star-commentary brought Hope and faith. Bright prospects. An awareness of two worlds. Also I knew it is sometimes said of her that, having taken good ‘water’ into her vessels, she pours some on needful ground and returns some honouringly to source. All this ‘rang sweet’ within me as befitting someone who, having attained some Star-hood, might now-and-then collaborate with tarot to help themselves, or others, or both relationally together as in some of my research’s participant sessions, along their Tower and/or Justice way.

I also experienced resonance between the two-fold good-water-pourings and that wine I was ‘sent’ to choose. My chosen wine’s company pours some profits into environmental projects. I liked its logo too, conceptually (as I experienced it) a ‘knotwork’ of ‘vine into wine into bottle’ and ‘bottle of vine sending fruits forth’ (wine bottle; bottle vine). Verbally I can’t explain it better, so just state that the visual-symbolic vine/wine-bottle and Star (and Ting) alchemize for me, the trio gifting a visually-memorable motto.

(Not until pasting the logo here did I also think, have I ever needed bottle (from self and help) to follow this research! (For non-English-speaking readers ‘bottle’ here comes from (London) cockney rhyming slang for ‘bottle and glass’ (thus ‘arse’), the internet giving various meanings and derivations – the one I mean here is the having of nerve to see something through.))
So in review, this unfolding has portrayed principles of process through Lila-like personal-development and life challenges and/or choices towards more aware spirituality, by methods demonstrating how those processes can work through on-song symbols and words (in the tarot and whatever else plays in), apprehensions and timings, whilst representing the 'it-all-ness' of it by braiding fairy-tale with wine-choice, card-images, 'mis-seeing', dowsed-out words, light-play on a pyramid, 'knowing' and pendulum movements with (as I experience it) artistry and humour.

The above enables me to compare such unfoldings (and simpler tarot-use) with Main’s writing about divination with the I Ching which, addressing the interweaving of spirituality with synchronicity, enhances my spiritual-guidance apprehensions more than my deliberately literature-searched texts mostly did.

**My tarot-unfolding(s) and the I Ching compared:**

Whilst any of tarot’s 78 image-cards could be displayed simultaneously the millenia-older I Ching, comprising 64 hexagrams (each associated with various long-established commentaries) presents only one hexagram at a time through a randomizing choice-process. Also choice-process and hexagram-interpretation are lengthy and/or erudite compared to tarot’s card-showing speed and potentially quick and/or direct impacts (although long complex mulling may also occur).

These differences, I posit, suit I-Ching divination to persons with expertise or accompanied by experts (as practised in Jungianism), whilst tarot is relatively democratized (certain readers with especial flair(s) notwithstanding) and open to quick and/or multi-image encountering (suiting pca-values accompaniment from oneself or another(s)). Tarot’s relative speed and directness mattered on my journey. Main (2007) recounts Adler’s first I-Ching consultation which, being astoundingly pertinent, hit him like a hammer breaking his rational scepticism. One divinatory astonishment would not have swayed me – it took nightly quick-fire (and hence do-able within life’s press) tarot-card-pairs prefiguring my next day’s experiences time-after-time to ‘convert’ me.

That said, fundamental commonalities between the two oracles emerge. Main (2007) quotes Ritsema and Karcher (2002,11) saying ‘(divination)..... provides a gap through which..... spirit expresses itself’ by choosing from available symbols – as demonstrated in my unfolding above. They further say the I Ching enables spirit to address ‘how we can best live as individuals in contact with both inner and outer worlds’ (ibid 8), resonating respectively with Justice’s (inner touching and self-awareness) and the Tower’s (Lila-like quest and qualities) meanings above. And again, that I-Ching use ‘connects you to spirit...... (experiencing your) spirit as a point of connection with the forces that govern the world’ (ibid 14) likens tarot-within-LUE’s effects in, say, developing within myself the very apprehension of itself and its use-potential and collaboratve use-desire that it ‘sent’ through this chapter’s processes described above.

Another commonality concerns the question Main raises (after Peterson) as to whether the I Ching is spiritual by virtue of synchronicity, or synchronistic by virtue of spirit, or if ‘both factors...... together contribute, in equally unfathomable ways, toward its efficacy’ (Main 2007,185). All my
experiencing of tarot-with-everything chimes with the last postulate. Main further presents Smith’s observation that I-Ching language, symbology and concepts foster correlative and associational thought which, besides fitting my experiencing of just-tarot and tarot-with-everything, is sympathetic to heuristics’ holistic synthesizing methodology.

Now I shall consider differences between I-Ching consultation and just-tarot and/or tarot-with-everything unfoldings, as spotlighted through reading Main. Typically, he says, one consults when ‘faced with a problem that cannot be resolved adequately by other means’ (Main 2007,147) which need many of my tarot-talks have answered too, but others have involved Mungo raising issues to my inviting mind or, say, exploring ‘trivialities’ which later become important, or shifting moods such that I and/or another(s) can cope better. Tarot-as-I-know-it ranges thus widely. I concurr with Main that ‘respect for the oracle and integrity within oneself’ (ibid 148) matter: With the one-hexagram-only more esoteric I Ching respect partially translates to ‘ask infrequently’, whereas with potentially multi-image quick-response-striking tarot, back-and-forth and/or occasionally frequent asking can be as respectful as mutually-attentive multi-exchange therapeutic conversation.

Also whereas the I Ching ‘enhances one’s appreciation of one’s present situation and its inherent potentialities’ (ibid 179), tarot-images’ greater graspability by many people and the variety of what they grasp means that in company (as a friend expressed) ‘it gets you talking’, tarot’s relational capabilities perhaps sparking heads-put-together ideas or hearts-in-communion understandings.

Furthermore Main characterizes I-Ching inquiry as addressing ‘how things are and are likely to become’ (ibid 174), whereas when tarot-images touch very personal thoughts and/or feelings, rhizomatic wandering within one’s (or a group’s) interiority(ies) may result in self-apprehensions growing or triggering change perhaps more organically than from reflection on commentaries.

The I Ching is explicitly also called ‘The Book of Changes’, and a questioner’s hexagram may incorporate indication of a shifted version commenting on time’s likely drift. Some tarot-readers claim prediction, but I don’t. Instead I experience tarot’s potential to evoke, say, a (possibly-conflicted) single time-slice’s mosaic of aspects through side-by-side images, or time-flows (historical and/or potential) with one-following-another images. These can help my (and/or another’s) actualizing tendency’s apprehensions such that it leads futurewards itself.

**Signalling ‘friendliness’ between divination systems:**

I recognize that, being very familiar with the tarot and unfamiliar with the I Ching, I have given a good ‘fat’ press to the former but a ‘thin’ press to the latter above, but I mean disrespect to potential benefits of neither the I Ching nor the many other divination systems of times past and present (Tedlock 2001).

Soon after the tarot-and-LUE flow described above I ‘talked’ with Mungo again, on the companion issue of attitudes in myself (or others) in either divining or presenting divining. The Mungo-talk made a surprising other-divination link which, though tentative, I found intriguing and potentially door-opening. I need detail only its final tarot images as basis to what happened next.
Initially I disliked the magician-image vis-à-vis my attitudes-query, it seeming boastful, but then (remembering Justice) I liked the non-dithering directness of his eyes. Now I saw just confident straightforward this-is-me showing of what he can do, and Mungo said pendulum-wise, yes, hold that meaning. The seven-of-pentacles reminded me of participant Benedict’s past reaction: *what a fraud, wants to look like a farmer (or other expert), but see the clean gloves, the high-quality smock — he’s faking.* So together these images set me pondering, including (gist-wise) *it’s hard work (and unhelpful) pretending to be what you aren’t, whether finer or dumbed-down — just speak as you are and/or say (but owning it) what you do and/or perceive.*

At that the pendulum indicated dowsing out of words from the seven-of-pentacles entry in the deck’s booklet. As usual (to avoid wasting time) I first dowsed out which word-lines would be needed. It was only three of the total six. I suddenly ‘knew’ not to proceed with word-selection, but to use the needed and un-needed lines as full and broken lines respectively of a hexagram for looking up in my Ritsema and Karcher I-Ching book (1994), newly delivered by post. It was this:

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\[\text{\begin{tabular}{ll}
\text{\textbf{Chieh}} & \text{\textbf{Articulating}} \\
\end{tabular}}\]
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Being so inexpert and the I Ching so complex, I just read the first page for impressions. Two headline aspects ‘scored’. Called *Chieh*, the hexagram’s key word is *Articulating* (ibid 633), which to my novice eye did fairly match what the tarot had just ‘made’ me say. It’s also what I’m attempting by reporting all this.

Also the ideogram means *pearl and divination*. The previous evening I had resolved to climb the hill I live on whenever work-fatigue said ‘break now’ around dusk, hoping to see 2017’s only supermoon. I struck very lucky, with it just rising from silhouette trees in an atmosphere which obscured its features but spread its glow, such that I breathed *Oh you pearl!* – given which I experienced the ideogram’s pearl-meaning ‘inductance’ the next day with resounding delight.

My experiencing of this whole I Ching/tarot unfolding is of it being “musical” enough to intrigue and invite. I don’t want overstate the case — it is just one attempt — but equally I don’t want to hide but to share it, opening it to possibility of further development and/or usefulness in whatever good way.
Appendix 2: Glossary

Two types of terms:

This PhD has explored its naïve researcher’s experiencings of phenomena which were not only new to her but also either fairly vague or contested in academe or, in some cases (especially concerning more phenomena than one entwining), seemingly new to academe. She had to coin provisional names for things she was experiencing in order to enable even preliminary thinking, talking and writing about them. As the research progressed the researcher’s senses of the phenomena she had provisionally named shifted (as sometimes also did her grasp of or debate with others’ more established terms). This glossary therefore contains two types of terms:

- Pre-existent terms coined by others and of standing in academe (which also therefore held relatively steady during the research's time)
- Terms coined by herself (or unwittingly likening or deliberately adapting others’ terms) as ‘fuzzy handles’ for the far from fully understood and/or inchoate which worked for the time being (and which also therefore evolved over time)

I shall change verb-voice now to own and explain two glossary-choices I have made:

- Firstly, rather than making the glossary ‘look good’ with numerous pre-existent terms (by, say, padding out the pca or synchronicity with many of their aspects) I am deliberately giving just the functional minimum (in my assessment) of pre-existent terms, so that they don’t swamp or draw focus from or imply they have more importance than the few coined, uncertain and shifting terms for phenomena which are the research’s prime concern.
- Secondly I am sometimes giving the coined quasi-inchoate terms in phrasing echoing that in the thesis itself in hopes of thus giving more ‘feel’ and memorability.

Pre-existent / academically known terms:

Actualizing tendency: Within the pca, the tendency for any organism (humans included) to protect, maintain and develop itself into the most fulfilled version of its true self that is possible under the prevailing circumstances. Many thinkers have considered the actualizing tendency (e.g. Maslow), and already in boyhood pca-founder Rogers noticed potatoes striving to grow even from their cellar storage-bin’s life-adverse conditions.

ASC (altered state of consciousness): Any state of consciousness that is different to the normal awake state, whether that difference be induced (through drugs, say) or spontaneous (as in some mental illnesses) or ‘received’ (from, say, spiritual influence).

Channelling: Here I shall use Klimo’s (1998,2) definition, as it accords well with my meaning.

Channeling is the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as we know it, and that is not from the normal mind (or self) of the channel.

Congruence: Within the pca congruence has two aspects. Firstly, and fundamentally, it is the state of being (able to be) consciously aware of one’s inner experiencing without distortion by, say, defences or introjected values. It is not a blanket state, but fluctuates with circumstances both
outer and inner. Secondly it is the ability and/or act of expressing one’s congruently known inner state undistortedly to another(s).

**EHE (extraordinary human experience):** EHEs are experiences that do not fit with a person’s prevailing consensus reality, whether they be experienced in a sensory or feelings or any other manner. They include, say, ASCs, visionary experiences, clairsentience and synchronicities.

**Pca (person-centred approach):** The pca trusts that each person is known and sensed best not by others or a therapist expert but by themselves at the centre of their own full, complex dynamic reality as perceived. Pca-founder Rogers posited that personal development could best be fostered not by steering but by combined provision of the core conditions (empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard) to someone from either another and/or themselves.

**Spiritual / spirituality:** There are many definitions and/or attributions of aspects to spirituality. Authors generally include connection to both a beyond and a person’s deeper self. The ‘beyond’ and ‘deeper’ connectednesses may be said to involve respectively the Divine and inner life, the transpersonal and the real self, the transcendental and values, and so on. Meaningfully connected relationships are also mentioned, with Swinton succinctly naming the three areas of spirituality as the interpersonal, the intrapersonal and the transpersonal.

**Synchronicity:** The coining of this term arose because Jung and/or numbers of his patients experienced meaningful coincidences in which, strangely and impactfully, the person’s inner psychic state was matched by a corresponding outer event with no discernible causal connection between the two. Synchronicities’ inner psychic states may be corresponded to by outer events with straightforward simultaneity or by events either at a distance or in the past or future. Jung and many subsequent others have considered ‘synchronicity’ both as mind-world-bridging personal experience (as above), and cosmologically as an acausal connecting principle just as fundamental in the universe as causality (and space-time and energy). In this PhD’s research I have considered any meaningful coincidences to be synchronicities in order not to possibly blinker myself with others’ theoretical stipulations.

**Researcher-coined terms / uncertain and evolving:**

**Flow: scrolling:** Synchronicities or resonant inner and/or outer events building patterns or themes over time, either quite continuously or intermittently but with gaps that made circumstantial sense.

**Impelling:** Experiencing my body to be doing or wanting to do something which my thinking mind was bemused and uncomprehending about.

**It-all, all-that, whatever-it-is:** The totality of all the EHEs I (or anyone) have experienced or potentially could be given to experience, and/or the totality of whatever agencies are behind it.

**Knowing:** Experiencing a sense of knowing something that I couldn’t know by normal means together with the sense that it is something I need to know and/or act on now. It is sometimes accompanied by a fleeting, distinctive sense of correctness and/or ‘note-this-now’ in my chest.
LUE: I borrowed Douglas Adams’ book-title, *Life, the Universe and Everything* (abbreviating it to ‘LUE’) signifying that I could not assume any part or aspect of the cosmos to *not* ever be involved in the ‘all that’ or ‘it all’ or ‘whatever-it-is’ strange things I was experiencing.

Mungo: Initially I just assumed that the source of my personally-amazing experiences in Glasgow Cathedral’s crypt was the spirit of its patron-saint, Mungo. Later I relinquished certainty of ‘him’, instead noticing what verbs happened in connection with ‘him’ and deciding that, whether they were due to one energy or entity or whatever or several, it or they needed a working name in my research which I was still content to call ‘Mungo’ because of its continuing ‘dear-friend’ qualities.

Mungo-talking, Mungo-converse, Mungo-session etcetera: Various ways I rang the changes (as in normal writing) to refer to communication-sessions between myself (perhaps with another(s)) and Mungo by means of, at the very least, a pendulum, and usually also involving physical objects like image-cards, symbol-bearing stones or bottle-caps, a book in which to open and point, and so on.

Tarot-talking, tarot-session etcetera: The same as the above, but definitely using tarot cards.

The triad: Mungo and synchronicity and LUE/it-all being experienced as acting in three-party concert, whether near-simultaneously or in a time-pattern seemingly towards one end.

Synchronicity-sea: The tentative field-like model engendered in me by a chapter of experiences of synchronicity being not just one-off discrete occurrences but a pervasive domain (interpenetrating our world as normally perceived) with ‘dynamics’ as, say, subtle, sweeping, stupendous, unfathomed, ever-surprising and so on as waves and currents etcetera in earth’s natural waters.
Appendix 3:

Information for prospective participants in my Ph.D

This will flow in a more easily understood way, I think, if I first briefly sketch out my own development over the last few years.

I studied for my Advanced Diploma in Counselling during 1998-2000, and chose to explore ‘Counselling and Spirituality’ for my final extended essay. Whilst living and learning a person-centred life as best I could, it came about that spiritual events and abilities were, bit by increasing bit, graced to me. Although these abilities were kept safely out of my official counselling work, whenever they were (most judiciously) offered to friends and acquaintances, unfailingly they were pertinent and benign. Furthermore there was resonance between some of their forms of operation and those described in certain writings of Brian Thorne and Maria Bowen. There is a personality behind these energies, with a working name of Mungo.

It would be a gross short-changing of the truth to say merely that Mungo sends messages, presenting the recipient with information or ideas on a plate. His heart is in relationship and dialogue, and in fostering the release of the person’s own answers and/or growth. How this works is something like this:-

(i) The participant voices their area of concern, either out loud with me or silently within themselves, or they choose simply to open out to whatever Mungo may wish to flag.
(ii) Mungo responds to this with some sort of image or idea. This may be in the form of an inner seeing or other sensation experienced by me or the participant, or a directing of us to an external clue like a passage in a book or a sequence of tarot cards. Being directed by pendulum dowsing, this process is virtually always at least partially visible. Also our questions and comments, to which the pendulum responds, are audible and able to be taped.
(iii) The participant responds to Mungo’s input in any of the myriad ways that a person might respond to any such telling or showing from another. That this particular other is spirit may colour the participant’s response to a greater or lesser degree.
(iv) The participant may want to mull this over, perhaps talking with me.
(v) Any of us may want to re-open the possibility for Mungo to chip into the converse again.
(vi) ...........and so on........until........

(n) A natural end comes: perhaps the topic has reached a good pause point, or the participant has had enough for now, or whatever. Before closing a session, I like to check whether Mungo is OK with that too, just as one courteously would in any tripartite conversation. If it turns out that Mungo does indeed want to signal anything more, that does not commit the participant to engaging with it - their choice in the matter is respected.

This, then, is the phenomenon that my Ph.D is studying. I engage in, and sometimes audiotape, encounters guided by person-centred principles (see below) with volunteer participants, with Mungo as a potential ‘third voice’ in the room. It seems sensible to conduct a questionnaire with each participant before their Christa-Mungo sessions to ascertain their individual baseline around overt spiritual experience and/or attitude etc. There are 3 main sessions at sensible time intervals with each participant and Mungo, and then a 4th session just for review and to address anything arising for the participant. Normally Mungo would not be in on the 4th session, but he is open to the participant requesting that if they wish.
Appendix 3 continued:

I shall invite the participant’s feedback at appropriate stages, and they are welcome to raise any concerns or questions themselves at any time. I may also invite participants to meet as a group after they have all taken part, and would be most interested in any feedback the group might wish to give me.

The spirit of my research is to bring the discerning eye of the intellect to bear on converse rich in intuitive, caring wisdom from the eye of the heart. The encounters will be open to riding two horses: space for converse sometimes shading into counselling around issue(s) brought by the participant; and co-inquiry between the participant and myself about ‘what’s going on here?’.

The basic principles of the person-centred approach cluster around the observation that every living thing strives to become the best version or fullest expression of itself that it can under its current circumstances, as for example a potato kept in a cellar will in springtime send forth straggling shoots in hopeful efforts to find good earth, water and light, where it might become a handsome plant. Dubbed the actualizing tendency this desire in all living things to fulfil themselves provokes distortion or protection under difficult or harmful circumstances, as in the ‘imperfection’ of a callus on a human foot being an as-near-to-perfect-as-possible response to a chafing shoe.

Calluses, stuntings and distortions happen to humans’ hearts and minds too. Research and experience show that there are 3 ‘core conditions’ which, if offered all together to a willing person, are like a good soil in which that person’s actualizing tendency can bring about personal growth or self-healing. The 3 core conditions are:-

(i) **empathy**, or the effort by the counsellor or friend to understand whatever the person brings to or expresses in the encounter, as if they were fully in that person’s shoes

(ii) **unconditional positive regard**, or a basic respect from the counsellor or friend for both the other person and themselves, notwithstanding whatever blemishes either might have or whatever mistakes they might make or have made

(iii) **congruence**, or the effort by the counsellor or friend to be as aware as possible of what they are themselves feeling and thinking in the encounter, sometimes also choosing to disclose this honestly to the other person.

All Mungo’s work with me to date has been person-centred in spirit (although drawing, also, on wisdoms and techniques from many other spiritual and psychotherapeutic systems), and done with marvellous skill, ‘pitching it right’, and care.

Christa Maria Gorsesdene
Appendix 4:

**Consent Form:** Research project into encounters between a participant, and the researcher who tries to abide by person-centred principles, with the potential of a spiritual ‘third voice’ in the room.

(3rd draft, January 2005)

I consent to participate in the above research project, conducted by Christa Gorsedene of The Department of Educational Support and Inclusion in the University of Manchester. I have read and had opportunity to discuss Christa’s Ph.D proposal, and understand the nature and purpose of this study. I agree to take part in sessions as part of this research. I am participating as a volunteer.

I give permission for the data from the sessions, and any discussions or writings submitted by me about them, to be used in producing the research report and any further publication. I give permission for the sessions to be audiotaped and subsequently transcribed. I am aware that I can ask for the tape machine to be switched off at any time during the sessions, and for any part of the sessions to be deleted from the transcript. I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any point and have any tapes and transcripts destroyed. I understand that the tapes may be listened to, in strictest confidence, by Christa’s supervisor(s).

I understand that, in case of any problems that remain for me after trying to iron them out with Christa, I can complain in the first instance to her Ph.D supervisor, William West.

I give permission for this information to be published.

(Research participant. Date.) (Researcher. Date.)
Appendix 5:

Pre-Sessions Questions for Participants in Christa Gorsedene’s Ph.D Research

1. **Autobiographical.** Age. Sex. Work (whether paid or not). Race. Country. Any other details or life circumstances you feel to be important to your sense of who you are now?

2. **How you are now.** Eg problems &/or changes &/or moods and their swings &/or ‘place’ around for you now? Essential underlying mood &/or ‘what really matters’ at this time?

3. Do you have a take on what ‘wisdom’ &/or ‘finding wisdom’ is for you?

**Your spirituality now:-**

4. Guiding notions &/or attitudes to life?

5. What gives you any sense, within Life, the Universe and Everything, of belonging or comfort or ‘home base’?

6. Is there anything you do to recharge your batteries / give yourself recuperation or uplift / keep yourself sane / take stock or gather your wits? How often, and does it seem to be enough? Do you do anything you would call ‘spiritual practice’?

7. Any official &/or nameable religion or belief system of importance to you (including avowed disbelief)?

8. Previous ‘other dimensions’ experience &/or attitude to the idea of it?

9. Your current knowledge of &/or attitude to Christa? Any effect of this on your participation?

10. Thoughts and feelings as you approach this experience?

**Mulling Request to the Participant:-**

I invite and request (but do not demand) of the participant that between each session with Christa-and-Mungo and the next they take at least half-an-hour (whether split up or in one go) to ‘be with’ the issues &/or events of the previous session. It is up to them whether they choose to do this sitting in silence, out walking, at a concert, in the bath or whatever; and also whether they choose to think, or to fantasize, or to draw or paint or whatever. Any reporting on any of this to Christa at the next session, in whatever mode, would be most welcome.

(3rd draft, January 2005)
Appendix 6:

Semi-structured interview sheet for review at participant session 4.

Christa Goresdene, Ph. D Participant Session 4 11.4.2005.

Participant Responses to Taped Sessions 1, 2 & 3

The three ‘million dollar questions’ are:

a. How was it for you?

b. What do you feel/think was going on in the sessions? (Please comment on any aspect, e.g. the relationship between you and I, how you saw the relationship between me and 'Mungo', or anything else you could share. In particular you may not agree that the beyond-the-usual happenings were to do with ‘Mungo’, but have your own take, which I would value hearing.)

c. Have you any misgivings about anything?

You may wish to use the reverse of this sheet, or extra sheets, to answer questions at greater length. If you have any thoughts, impressions, feelings, comments or responses of any kind that are incomplete, please be assured that I would value hearing anything, however sketchy or tentative.

Any answers to or comments prompted by the following questions would also be welcome:

d. Any effect of the sessions in your life, good, bad or whatever?

e. Any effect on your view of Life, the Universe and Everything, or your beliefs?

f. Any effect on how you basically feel in yourself?

g. Any comment on how Christa conducted herself?

h. Any comment on how ‘Mungo’ (or whatever it was) conducted himself?

i. Are you glad you did it?

j. Might you consider recourse to ‘Mungo’ again, in future situations?

k. For you were our sessions partly counselling, mutual conversation, co-inquiry, or what?

l. Any other comments of any kind?

The following questions and points are also important with respect to your rights and care:

m. Would you like copies of the tapes for yourself and/or for the tapes held by Christa to be wiped?

n. Do you still give, or rescind, permission for your sessions to be included in my written Ph.D? Do you want to name any restrictions on that? (I would show you any references to yourself or your transcripts in the thesis before its finalization, and you could still veto them at that point.)

o. Please know that if any further aftermath occurs for you, I am open to meeting, phoning or writing to discuss or address that as best I can.
Appendix 7:


**Participant Permission and Biographical Information**

I, the undersigned, have agreed to take part in Christa’s Ph.D research under the following conditions:

A  I can withdraw my permission at any time before the Ph.D is printed in its final version.

B  Pages with me mentioned or quoted will be shown to me prior to final printing.

C  In the event of any problem occurring that I find I cannot sort out directly with Christa, I can complain in the first instance to her academic supervisor, Dr William West, at Manchester University.

D  I give permission for my feedback after our tripartite (or multimember) Mungo-session of _______________ to be used or quoted.

E  I give permission for my feedback after our tripartite (or multimember) Mungo-session of _______________ to be used or quoted.

F  In the Ph.D I wish to be called __________________________.

G  In Christa’s depiction of me, she may write that I am:

H  Participant signature __________________________ Date __________

Christa’s signature __________________________ Date __________
Appendix 8:

Example of working log during listening to sessions’ audiotapes.

Q5 507. Ties in to, physical sense of being somewhere, spiritual sense. Ancient sacred landscapes. Strong pull. Those landscapes of old time.

538. Do people matter in homeless too? Yeah. Leave it at that.

Q6 542. Stuff now absolutely in turmoil. Own work, calming, acknowledging the spiritual. [S p. is his mode of living.]

560. Manifestation? Yeah / Visiting ancient sites.

566. Whereas I now, sit in bedroom, watch TV. Don’t know what lure is of telly now. [Fallow but not dead.]

576. ... denial... spiralling down... went further down quicker. Wouldn’t move out of my room. Determined for it not to happen: friend - maybe you need that.

586. ... like a womb. (Room) ... So opposite to normal like...

595. ... to me ... at the time ... it felt OK.
Appendix 9:

Example of work in progress towards participant analyses.
Appendix 10:

Working diagram for ordering points for ring of participants' findings.
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