

Participation: The "New" Science - Lecture Paper by Dr. Emma Therese Lewis
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February, 2012

Participation: The "New" Science

The Dream has been pressing that I should get on with this. It presses the agenda, the structure, the timing. "Time is getting on" it says. Last night my body, charged with the energy of an expeditionary force, woke every hour. "This is not the time for sleeping" it says. And still I sleep on - attached to my contemporary conventional distinctions; night and day, rest and work, dreaming and waking, past and present.
ETL Dream book - 19/11/11

Context: Where are we?

This paper has been prepared as the last in a series of lectures on transpersonal theory and as a foundation to a weekend on Research Methods.

By now on the diploma course you will have reviewed influential thinkers who have mapped the terrain of "the transpersonal" as they see it, and a series of psychological theorists in other "modalities" focused on other domains of experience e.g., early life. Whether feeling intrigued by Wilber's "integral" quadrants or Washburn's "spiral" dynamics or left cold, one is ultimately responding to the models of other men's minds and characters. Theorists often (though not always) are keen to tell us how they organize experience such that we (in fact, they) might understand it better. In some cases this goes as far as categorizing oneself into a type of the hysterical/obsessive/depressive/schizoid variety for example, or the feeling/thinking/sensing/intuiting variety of human and so on. Such trainings (and the categorizations they provide) can bring a short-lived relief since they provide a sense of belonging and understanding to those who may be feeling isolated and alienated in their life. Ultimately though, an individual needs to be alone with his/her own experience. The reality is that *no-one else can tell you exactly who you are* or how you are. Indeed attempts to do so in early life (and perhaps later in therapy) ultimately result in neuroses and pathologies of varying degrees - even in schizophrenia (Laing, 1967b).

Somewhat paradoxically, a look through the last century or so of psychology (study of the psyche) tells us that the most enduring (perhaps useful?) theory has been developed by those who considered themselves practitioners first and foremost, and whose "theory" arose out of a need to find answers to their own questions regarding healing people (Assagioli, 2000; Bowlby, 1988; Freud, 1955; Jung, 1989b; Mitchell, 1986; Piaget, 1950; Winnicott, 1986, 2005). As a side note, the best of practitioners' findings seem often to be their earliest and, once they begin to consider themselves experts and become identified with their theory, their ability to hit upon long-lasting, resonating truths seems to wane.

Some practitioners' insights eventually become fixed into doctrine (often associated with the practitioner's name) and, if the doctrine catches on with other practitioners, then full-blown movements or modalities result e.g., psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, Gestalt, positive psychology, Psychosynthesis, person-centred psychotherapy, AQAL, spiral dynamics and so on. All approaches are valuable in expanding and developing the field of psychotherapy yet none explain or address the entire human experience. No-one is more aware of the limitations of someone else's theory than practitioners themselves - Carl Jung is famously (although unattributably) quoted as saying that he was *“relieved to be Jung and not a Jungian.”*

Carl Rogers echoed the dangers theory poses when he wrote: *“When I try to teach, as I do sometimes, I am appalled by the results, which seem a little more than inconsequential, because sometimes the teaching appears to succeed. It seems to cause the individual to distrust his own experience, and to stifle significant learning. Hence I have come to feel that the outcomes of teaching are either unimportant or hurtful [emphasis his].”* (1967, p. 276). For reasons we shall explore, it is vitally important that one keeps one's own experience at the centre of one's learning.

Theory itself has, since the 18th century, become increasingly removed from the direct experience derived from immersion in the phenomenon. It has become acceptable to theorise on things that are not within one's own experience. In the epilogue to his study on Jung, Laurens van der Post summarises the fatal issue with modern theory and points the way forward:

“...the time has come when men can only communicate with one another out of what they themselves have experienced and suffered. For they can no longer speak to one another out of pure knowledge alone [my emphasis]. The knowledge which is peddled in so great an abundance in so ready a market today, seeing that it is bartered without human commitment, historical evaluation or moral obligation, is no longer a vehicle of legitimate exchange because it only communicates the facts and statistics of itself and nothing of the person who passes it on, nor anything of the one who receives it, let alone trails along with it a curl of the cloud of aboriginal meaning which somewhere below the horizon of our time once inspired it and which alone can feed the great hunger we feel.” (1978, p. 273).

Like other modalities, transpersonal theory has its share of theoretical puzzles; the "integration" of spiritual and "everyday" life, the debate on spiritual reality as absolute or subjective experience, the splitting of the ego from the spiritual self, even "spiritual narcissism...and integrative arrestment..." (Ferrer, 2002, p. 39). In response to such puzzles, among others, several theorists and practitioners have begun to explore the potential of the philosophy of *participation* and what it offers the field (Ferrer, 2000, 2002; Ferrer & Sherman, 2008; Heron, 2003; Heron & Reason, 1997; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). *Participation* places *experience* at the centre of human understanding – rather than mental knowledge.

My own contribution to this discussion about *participation* flows from on-going researches into the nature of being, how we come to be or not, the meaning of time and the role of external forces in our unfolding. This paper sets out some findings and

contemplations associated with *participation* only to serve as a spur for your own reflections.

How to use this paper - We begin with some background and context on the politics and history of experience and its loss of meaning. The paper explores *participation* as having a role in addressing these issues and discusses some of the ramifications of these losses to the life and practice of a psychotherapist. The paper pursues a set of questions. These can be prompts for your own reflection and our later discussion. In order to offer a detailed example I have included an appendix that is, like everything else, optional reading. Overall, I recommend that you reflect and note down *your own* impressions (feelings, thoughts, sensations, intuitions) that arise from the questions in the paper. This might yield some reflections and questions you could bring to our discussion at the lecture.

Background

Definitions - *Participation* is a word that reflects human experience as the interaction of inner *and* outer, or subjective *and* objective worlds. In characterizing experiences, a modern person has become used to splitting subject/object, inner/outer, higher/lower, rational/non-rational, occult/analytic, healthy/pathological, spiritual/material and so on. And yet we are not divided naturally – we experience *as* wholes. To participate is to acknowledge, as fully as possible, what arises throughout one's being and to make sense of that experience in the light of previous experiences and knowledge. This is done individually, within relationship to others, and in connection to the world at large. This natural attitude that enables a person to experience whatever arises as interconnected and meaningful, has been, sadly, largely eroded from modern life.

“...Participation is the “inherent truth or order in the conjunction between man and nature” and thus the denial of participation must go hand in hand with convoluted thought patterns... The attempt to equate conscious, empirical reality with the whole of reality is a futile task, for the unconscious will not be kept down.” (Berman, 1984, p. 145)

To participate is to accept the unconscious, to live fully, to be present to the nature and experience of living, dying and rebirth as the gamut of human experience. The nature of our consciousness is to want to understand and to be understood, to know and to be known, but little of our energy is currently channelled to this end.

What experiences in life have you found meaningful and how did you know they were meaningful? What is meaningful in your life currently?

Being - *Participation* is therefore a word for what weaves us into the fabric of existence. In previous incarnations we knew well the issues of importance in life. The creation texts of the ancient worlds (e.g., Budge, 2010; Faulkner, 1994; Tedlock, 1996) are the narratives through which we understood our selves and the context (or cosmos) in which we lived. Today the truth of the myths has been reduced to allegory, fable or historical rubric, mirroring our disconnection to the matter and meaning of our own lives. The common themes of the myths express the eternal concerns of humankind: the relationship between life, death and rebirth; chaos and

order; immersion and containment; the power and irrepressibility of natural forces; human frailty, potential and limitation, the ubiquitous journey and so on.

These themes of the creation myths are the real stuff of life - the business of incarnation, survival and creativity. They reflect the intense feeling of living fully; the bliss of love, the fear of darkness and loss, the excitement and terror of the unknown, the battling of opposing forces (inner and outer), the nature of sacrifice, the satisfaction of victory, the confusion of chaos and so on. At first glance, how distant these intensities seem from the issues brought to the modern therapy room (and to supervision) today; lack of material success, loneliness, lack of intimacy and belonging, neurotic anxiety, depression, obsession, addiction, self harm, sexual dysfunction, domestic violence, recurring dreams etc. These difficulties of the modern life are expressions of a deeper malaise. They are symptoms of the underlying disorder of civilisation – man’s loss of myth and thus, meaning. The symptoms are here to help us with the diagnosis of the problem – we should not wish them away prematurely. If we merely alleviate symptoms we never really reveal the heart of the matter. If we do not participate in the deeper meanings of presenting issues and behaviours, we are condemned, therapist and patient alike, to wander in the ever-decreasing circle of despair to which meaninglessness gives rise.

“In the light of the myth every major event of man’s life evokes his descent from his ancestral cosmic origin, and his every major enterprise is undertaken as a rehearsal of the mythical act which first performed such an enterprise. The myth of creation teaches knowledge of perfection, of perfection in nature and of virtue in action. Its immemorial knowledge links those who possess this knowledge to an endless company of fathers.” (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, p. 147)

Relationship - When a therapist can feel the challenges of being faced with the speed and technological/mechanical thrust of modern civilisation and the isolating and alienating family systems to which it gives rise, (s)he can then readily and easily feel the distress of patients. We can easily recognise, understand, and have patience with the behaviours we all employ to cope with overwhelming experience and our bids made to escape it. At this most basic level exists the bond between the therapist and patient. It is therefore the therapist's inquiry into their *own* experience, their understanding of what they find there, and a willingness to sit with others facing the same challenge that provides the therapeutic setting. *“It is only by providing the genuine reality which is in me, that the other person can successfully seek for the reality in him...It seems extremely important to be real.”* (Rogers, 1967, p. 33).

This lecture offers an introduction into *participation* as a basis for inquiry into your experience. *Participation* is the art of reflecting the connection between inner and outer world. It offers inspiration to those deterred by the modern, scientifically reductive, and mechanistic approaches to self, and relief to the reflective scientist looking for a way explore meaningfully. *Participation* has little to do with IQ – everyone experiences life. Academic achievements or knowledge as taught in schools actually limit a person’s ability to participate since they break life up into discrete subjects and focus principally on one reductive way of knowing. *“We are taught at a tender age that the way to define something is by what it supposedly is in itself, not by its relationship to other things.”* (Bateson, 2002, p. 15).

Meaning - Over the last century, it has been widely discussed (e.g., Nietzsche, 1932; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975; Sartre, 1957; Tillich, 1952) that our civilisation, in its current incarnation, faces a pandemic loss of meaning and connectedness. Understanding meaning is not equivalent to sympathising, condoning or condemning (although those judgments may occur) because reality is not sentimental, not emotional – it just is. Conscious participation in reality is as old as humanity but millennia ago we had no need to talk about it, to give it a name - it was just being human.

“Most of us have lost that sense of unity of biosphere and humanity which would bind and reassure us all with an affirmation of beauty. Most of us do not today believe that whatever the ups and downs of detail within our limited experience, the larger whole is primarily beautiful. We have lost the core of Christianity. We have lost Shiva, the dancer of Hinduism whose dance at the trivial level is both creation and destruction but in whole is beauty. We have lost Abraxas, the terrible and beautiful god of both day and night in Gnosticism. We have lost totemism, the sense of parallelism between man’s organisation and that of the plants and animals. We have even lost the Dying God...Observe, however, that there have been, and still are, in the world many different and even contrasting epistemologies which have been alike in stressing an ultimate unity...” (Bateson, 2002, p. 16)

In recent centuries, thanks mostly to the mechanistic approaches of science and religion, we have pulled up the roots of our own direct perception of truth in pursuit of technical, technological and material knowledge and power. As a result, existential crises are on the increase; alienation, isolation, fear of death, fear of life etc. and psychological attempts to mitigate their effects, have been pathologised (see Bateson's work on schizophrenia and the double bind for example). Souls, understandably struggle to fully incarnate in such conditions. Any healer wanting to practice and be well in his/her work must be aware of this basic and universal condition of modern humanity.

The key to *participation* is the *valuing* of experience. Laing pointed out that human experience is neglected in favour of aggregation of material knowledge and power, and supported by the cry for scientific, objective "truth". *True* knowledge however, is not served by the splitting of inner experience from outer reality. As a result, over recent decades, the limitations to the scientific knowledge springing from 18th century foundations have been revealed in many major areas. In recent centuries, religion has worked hard to offset the mechanical scientific perspective through attesting meaning via faith. Science asked “how” and religion addressed the “why” of life. The Church at first had hoped to control the explosion of scientific power and, failing there, satisfied itself in maintaining its power through providing dogma that dealt with meaninglessness through requiring people to believe – without the support of (or even in spite of) their own direct experience of life. Peoples who continued to profess their direct experience of the hidden aspects of life (many of them healers) have been constantly, universally, brutalized (and even murdered) as heretics (Behringer, 2004). Witchhunts in Africa are still occurring today; *“...persecutions organized by the*

populace are tolerated by a number of regimes, and some leaders even make clear their sympathies with witch-hunters...” (2004, p. 228)

In their different ways, religion and science ultimately leave the individual with the same basic questions: What's the point of being? Who am I becoming? Even contemplating these questions raises anxiety levels - hence the developed world's constant demand and supply of entertainment and distraction. Religion now comforts or soothes in the way familiarity and ritual can, while deadening the impulses to inquire, to experience, to find God in one's experience rather than in someone else's rendering. Therefore religion has swollen its ranks with fundamentalists and fantasists but has long lost the heart and mind of the person in the street (I first wrote "stream"). Science and materialism are now showing their limitations across fields of scientific endeavour but those bold enough to speak out still risk exile from their professional communities and shadows cast on the professionalism of their work sometimes for decades (e.g. James Lovelock, Rupert Sheldrake, David Bohm, Lyn Margulis, Bruce Lipton etc.) They have all illustrated - scientifically - that mainstream science inadequately mirrors the reality of life as observed, intuited and experienced.

Many significant scientific breakthroughs actually begin life as insight or intuition (e.g. Einstein on relativity, Lipton on membrane as cellular control centre, Lovelock on Earth as organism) and *then* are subsequently developed or understood using the more scientifically identifiable tools such as reasoning, logic, deduction, analysis and equation. Even the original "inventor" of logic in Ancient Greece was Parmenides - a man who developed his abilities through meditation (incubation) practices (Kingsley, 1999). Intuition or the "hunch" at that time was understood to be inspiration, guidance or message from the God(dess). Guidance came via the Dream and meditation. Restoring this committed focus is possible through modern inquiry also. If we restore the place of the non-rational, we must *combine* it with the importance of practice, rigor, reasoning, triangulation and testing that one finds in a scientific discipline.

In order to tackle anomalies arising from observable limitations in scientific perception, and for which science cannot account, "post-positivist" paradigms (ways of viewing the world) have emerged; e.g. *constructivism, relativism* etc. These promise the "(co-)construction" of reality - as if we can all contribute to reality (i.e. make it up) with our point of view and are not at all bound by the universal laws or nature of consciousness as they actually are. In layman terms, these approaches try to say that if we all agree something is true then it must be true - as if consensus has ever (im)proved anything. Arendt's (1962) deep and sustained inquiry into the most difficult of human realities is a breath of air and light that reminds us that the truth is often not easy or popular and can be far from the consensus view. Often we have to persevere through a good deal of tension to feel the truth that exists. Often the consensus view leads to corruption and brutality among one group of people and toward another.

Conscious participation in (or inquiry into) life, i.e., what is my experience now? - can provide a route to encounter with one's self and spaciousness in dealings with others. It is possible to reconnect to a lost art through looking into the value placed

on the Dream, life conditions and nature beyond. A return to *participation* means a connection to life and its meaning.

“Early man did not observe nature in our detached way. He participated mentally and physically in her inner and outer process. The evolution of man has signified not alone the steady expansion of consciousness (man getting to know more and more about more and more); there has been a parallel process of contraction-which was also a process of awakening-a gradual focusing or pinpointing down from an earlier kind of knowledge, which could be called participation. It was at once more universal and less clear. We still have something of this older relation to nature when we are asleep...” (Barfield, 1977, p. 17).

To further our endeavour in understanding ourselves, each other and our cosmos we can re-member how to participate. Let’s start by looking at the effect of theory in life.

What role does theory play in life/practice?

To take a practical example; when faced with a particular dish I want to cook for the first time, if I proceed without any guidelines I’m likely to make a lot of messes and it may take me a long time to produce the desired result. A recipe (someone else’s formula for the dish) can help me produce the dish at the first attempt. If I am aware of my own experience of the process while preparing the recipe, I will gradually learn my own approach to preparing the dish. If I always use the recipe on “auto-pilot” without much attention towards how I experience it then I will stay dependent on having the recipe/instruction given to me each time I want that dish. I am not really *experiencing* the alchemy of the dish directly until I can employ tools and ingredients spontaneously as a reflection of my own experience, creativity and intuition.

Many practitioners talk or write about how reality appears to them using models, ideas and concepts to explain what they have found. Over his/her lifetime a practitioner’s understanding can evolve into a whole theory (e.g., in psychotherapy; Bowlby, 1988; Freud, 1955; Mitchell, 1986; Piaget, 1950). Students who are learning about the practice may adopt or adapt these explanations and theories to help them explain their own experience. If, as practitioners however, we *always* use the “recipe” and never spend an equivalent amount of time understanding our own direct experience, then one remains a mouthpiece for someone else’s viewpoint. Your existence is currently being “filtered” through the lenses of your upbringing, education, work-places and social groups. Over a lifetime, practice (even life) can start to feel dull and lifeless if one’s world remains dominated by the Other’s model and disconnected from one’s own inner sense.

An example of the various different lenses applied to theories can be seen in looking at the meaning of *ego*. Famously, Freud has been said to have “invented” the *ego* as part of his tri-partite concept of the psyche; *id*, *ego* and *superego*. He then illustrated this concept through psychoanalysis. Today the *ego* has perhaps become mainstream vocabulary but has become a whole lot less precise in its meaning. It is used in various ways and to mean different things depending on the person employing it. Sometimes it encompasses all parts of the individual psyche, sometimes just that aspect that Freud denoted. Edinger reports the *ego* as the seat of the subjective

identity (1992), Washburn has it as the “*center of consciousness and the agency responsible for reality testing*” (1995, p. 13), Rogers and Piaget see the ego as the meaning-maker (Kegan, 1982) and so on. What do you mean by *ego* when you use it? What other examples can you find where concepts we use have been “invented” by someone and then used differently by others?

There is also a category of theorists who write theory about parts of life they have not experienced. This has become more popular in recent decades as people have attempted to “chart” the waters of transpersonal reality “scientifically.” Ken Wilber’s initial taxonomy of transpersonal development that underpins his developmental model, was constructed when he was relatively young and does not reference a practice or live instances (experience). Thanks largely to Descartes, modern science allows for the development of a “hypothesis” or belief without the benefit of direct experimentation (experience) to back it up. The hypothesis might be tested to establish (or not) its validity. This idea gives rise to theory that is not grounded in personal experience and we end up with clinical models that pathologise ways of being without directly understanding them (e.g. aided by tools such as the DSM system). The system of public mental healthcare today is made up of a category of people who have decided they are healthy and in a position to define and describe the experience of those they have determined are not. Psychotherapists are often wary of sacrificing their own direct perception, and the experience of a patient, to the weight of social and medical labelling. A good scientist, of the inner or outer world, does not accept a hypothesis without direct experimentation (experience) as evidence.

What is the role of experience?

Understanding - where our experience is directly related to what we know, to our inner world structures - is a most unique and personal activity. Understanding, in the context of *participation*, is not purely a mental grasp of an idea - it is critically a felt sense. It originally comes from the Middle German “*understan*” meaning “to step under” and the High German “*unterstehen*” meaning to take upon oneself, to venture, presume.” (“understand, v.,” 2012). We understand with all human faculties and senses. It could be said to be our most fundamentally creative act. It takes time and space to develop. Our understanding is absorption of overall impressions and information across all our senses and faculties. When doing the gardening for example, I am not discretely thinking about it, feeling it, sensing it etc. I experience it as one activity with all my senses and perception - unless I deliberately focus my awareness into one particular faculty i.e., I follow a thought about it, or a particular feeling. Naturally we experience life as one being - not as the series or collection of parts into which we may later segment it.

Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, I am using all aspects of my being (to varying degrees) in the process of cooking my dish; imagining, thinking and planning the concoction, feeling my hopes and fears relating to various outcomes, sensing the ingredients and parts of the cooking process etc. I might intuit additional ingredients required or anticipate how the dish should be presented and so on. My nature and my character is influencing the outcome of the experience, in spite of the recipe, at every turn. I might show more or less spontaneity depending on my degree of confidence in following the recipe. To begin with, when following a recipe, we are not very aware of how our being affects what we are doing and experiencing. Only after doing it many

times and seeing the tweaks and variations that emerge each time, might we become aware of the unconscious forces at work. Thankfully, the unconscious is irrepressible and persists with its expression whether we consciously attend to it or not. We are so much more than following a recipe even when we “think” we are following a recipe!

In adhering to any doctrine or teaching, we learn by repetition, by absorption, by osmosis and, in the best of situations, by comparison with our own experience. Only some organisations, whether laboratories, religions, schools or institutes, foster the use of one's own experience and data. Yet real *understanding* is only begun when one's own inquiry and experience is engaged in learning. “...*man has gradually developed the exact quantitative approach which has given him, over such a wide area, his marvelous powers of manipulative control. But in doing so he has necessarily lost for the time being that felt union with the inner origin of outward forms which constitutes perception of their meaning.*” (Barfield, 1977, p. 21)

Philosophers and practitioners who have emphasised *participation* as understanding life, point out that direct involvement in, and use of, our own experience is critical to our empowerment as human beings. Tillich describes the courage needed to participate in being; “*In situations of cynicism and indifference [man] is not aware of [the source of the power to participate]. But it works in him as long as he maintains the courage to take his anxiety upon himself. In the act of courage to be the power of being is effective in us, whether we recognize it or not.*” (1952, p. 181). Tillich's comment emphasizes the transpersonal or unconscious power at work. When we begin to inquire into experience, the forces at work (beyond our own will) quickly become apparent.

We can see the transpersonal power arising from *participation* in every psychotherapy session. Our *participation* (or lack of it) conveys to more about who we are to each patient in the therapy room than any amount of received knowledge. The shamans and medicine men of old understood, thanks to guidance and inspiration from powerful allies, that healing is achieved by the taking on oneself of the situation not by having an idea or a theory about it (Jung, 1989a). Our healing strength comes through our psychic, psychological and physiological structures. This strength is fundamental to being not only an authentic and effective therapist, but an authentic and full human being.

What happens to experience during development? How does “socialization” affect it?

The obstacles toward being (with our own experience) are rooted in our early (and past) life difficulties. Socialization in the West these days is usually a brutal process of manipulation and control which leaves a human being unsure of who they are and unwilling to participate at best, or identified with, and endorsing, the brutalizing machine at worst. (Gerhardt, 2004; Lewis, 2011b).

In most societies, children reflect the viewpoints in their environment in order to belong, to be loved, in order to survive. This doesn't necessarily mean they let those viewpoints define them completely but they largely take them on. Later, as adolescents or young adults, they may define themselves as fiercely against the viewpoints but, whether for or against, they are nonetheless defined by the set of

values initially presented in their environment. In the West ideological perspectives are then handed to us forcefully, from the environments into which we are born and develop; families, schools, churches, countries, governments, colleges etc. A child is repeatedly "taught" the primacy of other people's experiences over his/her own and eventually ceases to be interested in, let alone excited by, making sense of his/her own experiences and inner world (LeClaire, 1998).

Laing wrote extensively about the double binds and knots that modern Western children face (Laing, 1969, 1972). There are still a few rapidly disappearing but contrasting approaches to development that can be observed in indigenous communities. For example, in traditional Inuit communities moral development is a process of constantly stimulating, and being interested in, the inner world experiences of children from as young as 3 into and through adulthood (Lewis, Martins, & Packard-Mossman, 2010). Inuit adults pose or even pretend difficult scenarios that might arise in life - such as a parent dying - playing them out as games to encourage the child to creatively respond. It is also sadly possible to see this natural ability of children (and adults) erode when the Inuit move their families to Western diets, cultures and societal values.

Many different psychological theories have emerged regarding the development of Western children into adults. Perhaps the most widespread and influential has been the *behavioural* approach. In the West *behaviour* has become the standard of evaluation of the individual (rather than their being). Preferred (by the test-setter) behaviours and reduction of symptoms become the measures of success for "normal" children and "efficacious" therapy alike. Too often children and patients are loved only on condition that they conform and behave to someone's standards. In neither case could the individual be said to be well since their inner experiences are, at best neglected, and at worst alienated or isolated. The separation from self causes the difficulty that LeClaire 1998) writes about as primary narcissism or the child "being killed." Freud explains the everyday conditions that give rise to such difficulty; *"The child shall fulfill those wishful dreams of the parents which they never carried out...At the most touchy point in the narcissistic system, the immortality of the ego, which is so hard-pressed by reality, security is achieved by taking refuge in the child. Parental love, which is so moving and at bottom so childish, is nothing but the parents' narcissism born again."* (Freud, 1914, p. 48).

Given it is the norm that viewpoints are handed down by caretakers and educators, chances are good that our own understanding has been substantially under-developed. In our culture, our perception continues to be directly and overtly manipulated every day while opportunities or efforts to connect with our direct experience are devalued on personal, interpersonal and cultural levels. For those who do pursue truth (scientists, philosophers, healers, etc.), when "anomalies" arise between their direct experience and the given/received viewpoint, then *participation* offers the opportunity to develop understanding and meaning in place of continued isolation.

How can we research our own experience?

Thanks to limitations and anomalies arising in the current viewpoints of science and philosophy over the last 50 years or so, this perspective called *participation* is being increasingly recognized (Abram, 1997; Ferrer, 2011; Gebser, 1984; Heron, 2003;

Lewis, 2011b; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975; Puhakka, 2008; Skolimowski, 1994). While it strikes many as new, it actually echoes understanding that humans have expressed in other civilisations and eras - that all phenomena have seen and unseen aspects that are constantly unfolding and enfolding. *Participation* involves the conscious, dynamic participation of the human being with his/her inner and outer worlds – all understood as parts of a whole. Experientially, poetically perhaps, *participation* is simply intimacy with Life - by contrast to the distant and aloof "objectivity" that is the hallmark of the positivist/materialist scientist. *Participation* is not sentimental about life and its nature however. It is open, empathic, rigorous and reasoned in its approach.

As science inevitably comes up against its own knowledge limitations (macro)cosmologically (in terms of the workings of the cosmos), and microcosmologically in terms of the working of the brain, nervous system and psyche, the human being is constantly presented with the fact that we do not really understand either our own make-up, origins, and thus destiny. This raises existential and spiritual shadows of anxiety, doubt and isolation. The knowledge an individual *can* really rely upon is his/her own experience and (changing) perception of life. A research inquiry focuses consciousness to this end and brings to the practitioner a sense of his/her own solidity and security and, possibly for the first time, a sense of being-in-the-world.

Some researchers have developed techniques and methods specifically to reflect the principles of *participation* (e.g., Anderson & Braud, 2011; Heron, 2003; Heron & Reason, 1997; Moustakas, 1990; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). One would need to read the author's own work for his/her specific method and approach to participating. Just like in the therapeutic setting, a research setting contains an inquiry and provides the tools and conditions necessary for the transformative potential within an experience to unfold into meaning (Lewis, 2011a).

How is *Participation* relevant to psychotherapy?

The importance of personal inquiry and research in the psychotherapy practice has never been more pressing. While so many "givens" about the human being's perspective and experience are being revealed as limited or even wrong, we owe it to our selves and our patients to keep inquiring, keep opening our selves to fresh experience through being aware, and reasoning out what we find to reach new understandings.

Psychotherapy might come to reflect the decades of findings in on-going consciousness research if it is to enable the human being to understand him/herself. These researches include experiences of reincarnation, psychic faculties, out-of-body travel, time travel, interactions with other beings not physically present, alignment to the Dream etc. These types of experiences are part and parcel of an individual's psychic experience and development and yet the therapeutic field struggles as much as the individual in integrating them into life. The modern, material world rarely acknowledges, let alone understands these experiential phenomena so the skills and insights of our ancestors are a good reference point.

Ancient Science of Healing

The ancient tools of *participation*; dreaming, incubation, meditation, contemplation, practice etc. can be found today in the literature of qualitative researchers (Anderson, 2011; Heron, 2003; Moustakas, 1990). These tools are central to re-establishing a meaning to life. Through them, *participation* in the deeper structures of life is intrinsic and accessible to every human being. These realms are no longer the monopoly of theorists, therapists, priests, and pundits but the source of knowledge for every man and woman choosing to participate.

Researches into historical and indigenous consciousness “practices” show us that they are just as applicable to today's developmental challenges (Feuerstein, 2001; Florescano, 1999; Jung, 1989b; Schwaller de Lubicz, 1978; West, 1993). Ancient understandings of consciousness, energy and matter (and therefore healing) include yoga, tai chi, qi gong, taoist meditations, and shamanic ritual. The longevity of these participatory practices, despite periods of aggressive persecution (Behringer, 2004), tells us they have a use to humanity that modern living has failed to match.

It is also the case however, that these tools and practices have become severed from the philosophical and epistemological (ways of knowing) understanding on which they were based. For example, “yoga” in the West has been mostly reduced to a fixation on physical postures and breath work – a tiny fraction of the participatory techniques encoded in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. For full participation in the current era it serves us to recapture all aspects of inquiry that the ancients endorsed; dream interpretation, bodywork, self-study, breath awareness, concentration, contemplation, meditation etc. To these we can join our reasoning and rational capabilities resulting in insightful experience that is related to a modern world.

Modern Examples

An example of the power of *participation* in research can be found in Serge Leclaire's (1998) writings on narcissism (revealing the ubiquity of what he calls parental narcissism and its contribution to the “death drive” of the child). His finding is that “*in order to achieve full selfhood we must all repeatedly and endlessly kill the phantasmic image of ourselves instilled in us by our parents. We must all combat what the author calls 'primary narcissism,' a projection of the child our parents wanted.*” (1998, p. back cover). He arrives at his insights through the detailed contemplation and creative expression of 5 case studies.

Another example of participatory psychoanalytic research is Donald Winnicott's *Holding and Interpretation: A Fragment of an Analysis*. (1986). This work is a verbatim transcript of the partial analysis of one of Winnicott's patients. It reveals more about the dynamics of holding, insight, timing, withdrawal, regression and patient-therapist relationship (among other themes) than many theoretical books that *talk about* what “works” in therapy.

Anthony Lunt (2010) has written a masterful and inspiring account of his experience in the Way of the Dream that he refers to as *A Vision*. Again, no book or thesis *about* working with the dream comes close to the wisdom that is conveyed through this direct and truthful work. It is a feature of the best participatory writings that they affect the reader's consciousness directly, and few more so than this work.

Possible Future Directions

What areas of experience do you feel need a researcher’s time and attention? What would you like to understand more thoroughly?

My own example concerns the exploration of time. The impact and meaning of time in psychic terms is only just beginning. We are at a similar juncture to our friends from the Middle Ages who, thanks to geographic and cosmological discovery in their era, became conscious of the spatial dimension in a new way that led to the Renaissance. This meant that perspective and relative perception became conscious realities and this development had a profound impact on human creativity and productivity (Gebser, 1984). We are approaching a similar shift in our awareness of time and how it works (Musès, 1985). This shift has the potential to transform our linear, historical perspective on human existence into something richer and more meaningful. These developments will raise all sorts of questions for psychotherapy as people grapple to understand their experiences. Moving away from the definition of time as linear and progressive will allow the “past” to be seen as it presents now and as it determines the future.

With an increasing awareness of the inter-relation and *participation* of all phenomena and experiences, the existing dualisms troubling psychotherapy will be revisited e.g. subject/object splits, projection/projective identification, connections between inner and outer worlds realities etc.

The "theory" that you learn today cannot be solely relied upon to form the basis of your practice when so much about "knowledge" and experience is changing in the world so fast. While the practitioners we study have made brilliant contributions to the field, it was never their intention that our inquiring and researching should stop with them.

Thanks to developments in quantum theory, consciousness studies etc., we are at a point where *everything* about being human needs looking at again with fresh eyes to see what emerges. All your inquiries, whatever your questions, are therefore valid, crucial even, to your own practice and to the field of psychotherapy beyond.

Conclusion

In modern Western society, thanks to an over-dependence on scientific and mental models of understanding, disconnection from life and reality, and thus loss of meaning, is pandemic. It is the inquiry into and participation in the nature of life that connects one to it. It is connection to life and one’s place within it that brings meaning and fulfillment to the human being.

In the modern setting, as in the ancient tradition, psychotherapists are here to heal themselves and others as a result - not to reduce existence to a list of troubling symptoms and people to reductive, arbitrary pathologies. As Jung implored in interview with psychologist, Dr. Richard Evans:

“Man is not complete when he lives in the world of statistical truth. He must live in the world of his biological truth. Man has always lived in the Myth. And we think we are able to be born today and to live in no myth – without history. That’s a disease! That’s absolutely abnormal! Because man is not born every day – he is once born in a specific historical setting with specific historical qualities and therefore he is only complete when he has a relation to these things. It’s just as if we were born without eyes and ears when you are growing up with no connection to the past. From the...From the standpoint of natural science you need no connection with the past – you can wipe it out. And that is a mutilation of the human being.”

(Evans, 1957, <http://documentaries-plus.blogspot.com/2011/11/jung-on-film.html>)

In adapting to our modern environment, we have taken on others' (parents', teachers' etc.) ideas, even though they themselves were lost, and we later defend these ideas and statistical truths as our own. Our own, natural perception of what is real, through relationship to our own experience has become dimmed as a result. Participation through focused inquiry – be it psychotherapy or qualitative research - promotes fresh exploration and supports the re-emergence into life of one's own self and context in life

During our upcoming weekend we explore some of the nuts and bolts of participation as we look at some of its tools - the methods of research. As the ancients tell us, as one begins to ask one's own questions about life and to listen deeply, Life begins to answer. Pay attention to your dreams before the next man's theory.

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Appendix 1: The Power of Inquiry – Hannah Arendt

In one of the most challenging pieces of inquiry undertaken in recent decades - *The Origins of Totalitarianism* - Hannah Arendt (1962) inquired into the roots of the totalitarianism that coloured the face of Europe giving rise to the brutal persecution of sections of the human race including, of course, the holocaust. She examined the centuries leading up to the 20th and contemplated deeply, and without romanticism, the conditions, experiences and forces that gave rise to the greatest inhumanity in our recent history. She did this in its aftermath and having suffered personally under its aegis.

She shows how the evil of fascism and Hitlerism were, in fact, extensions of centuries of colonization, imperialist rule, nation states, the doctrines of "survival of the fittest" and natural selection, and the Jewish lack of "fit" with those prevailing and popular trends. These phenomena existed across the Western nation states including the UK, France, Austria and Germany.

The brilliance of Arendt's (densely detailed) inquiry comes in its ability to see understand how the atrocities of the holocaust were extensions of an attitude to life that the peoples of Europe had long endorsed in the industrial bid for power, wealth and status over other races and peoples. She also details how the lack of belonging that arose as part of the post-industrial age contributed to the inhuman acts of human against human. Through the detail of the book, one is gradually and subtly connected to these drives in one's own self. One sees the impact of those drives on other people(s) and understands more thoroughly the complacency (endorsement even) that surrounds genocide and displacement even in the world today and despite the horrors and gasps proclaimed over the nature of the holocaust but 60 years ago.

For all our sophistication, civilisation and technology, we regularly claim bafflement and shock that the evil of the holocaust was "allowed" to happen let alone endorsed. The film *Eichmann*, based on the true story of the interrogation of the man widely-attributed as the "Father" of the concept and execution of death camps. It underplays Eichmann's own position, better understood by Arendt, that he was just "following orders" and the will of the people in serving the Fatherland. It is this loyalty and patriotism he claims as defence for his personal, frequently evil, actions that the film fails to capture. In Arendt's deep and wide-reaching inquiry, she explores and explains how the roots of alienation, devastation and manipulation had long existed in Western European hearts and minds. This malaise was "tended to" by

the totalitarian regimes who promised a brighter future in exchange for one’s loyalty and individual human rights. By the time she is done, the Second World War, its holocaust, and those who perpetrated it no longer seem like such alien, isolated phenomena. In introducing her findings she says:

"That this [rise of totalitarianism] called not only for lamentation and denunciation but for comprehension, seemed to me obvious. This book is an attempt at understanding what at first, and even second glance, appeared simply outrageous. Comprehension however does not mean denying the outrageous, deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by.... generalities such that the impact of reality and the shock of experiences are no longer felt. It means rather examining and bearing consciously the burden that events have placed on us - neither denying their existence nor submitting meekly to their weight as though everything that in fact happened could not have happened otherwise. Comprehension, in short, means the unpremeditated, attentive, facing up to and resisting of reality, whatever it may be [my emphasis]..." Preface.

What relevance has all this to the psychotherapist? It demonstrates the necessity of inquiry in determining reality. The ability to acknowledge the gamut of human experience (since, if we look long enough, we find it all within us) from all its angles must be central to the art of the practitioner. We begin to expand this ability to understand through inquiring into our own capacities, prejudices, blind spots, limitations, hopes, fears and functions. In his introduction to his treatise on experience, Laing (1967a) writes *"We are all murderers and prostitutes - no matter to what culture, society, class, nation one takes oneself to be...Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life"* (pp 11-12). Later he restores the importance of experience to humanity; *"Experience used to be called The Soul. Experience as invisibility of man to man is at the same time more evident than anything. Only experience is evident. Experience is the only evidence. Psychology is the logos of experience. Psychology is the structure of the evidence and hence psychology is the science of sciences."* (p.16, Politics of Experience).