

ENERGY THERAPY FOR PEOPLE WITH ADDICTIONS

By

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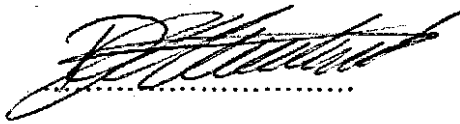
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ABSTRACT

This study documents the journey of five addicted individuals who practice energy-based healing interventions over a period of four months, and provides an in-depth understanding of the embodied meaning of addictive and non-addictive being-in-the-world.

The design of the study is qualitative and proceeds from an existential-phenomenological perspective whereby the data is collected through unstructured pre and post intervention interviews.

Addiction is reformulated in terms of the flow of energy within and without the subtle energy system of the human body, and viewed largely from the *chakra* system of traditional Indian healing. The addicted person is thus perceived as a resonating node of the universe through which energy exchanges freely and fluidly or constrictedly and addictively.

Key words: existential-phenomenology; addiction; energy therapy; qualitative research; spirituality; holistic healing

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"We search our planetary gardens for mind-altering delights with a passion so blinding that the garden becomes a labyrinth, the search becomes the goal, and our passion becomes addiction."

(Siegel, 2005)

1.1. Brief overview of literature

There is a silent spring of intoxicants flowing persistently through our lives and in our bodies. Whether we wake up with a sip of coffee or a sniff of cocaine, take a break with a cigarette or a beer, soothe our pain with chocolate or Valium, unwind with a cocktail or marijuana, ease our depression with ice-cream or prescription medication, we all use substances to *change the way we feel*.

Ever repeated attempts to alter our consciousness, fill the deficits within, and meet the demands of our lives constitute the addictions with which our culture is rife. Although what we choose to ingest and the compulsiveness with which we do so, is shaped by the meaning the substance and the experience it elicits (or is hoped to elicit) holds in the inner life of the person (Judith 2004; Khantzian, 1989; Wurmser, 1974), this meaning is in turn created through our involvement in relation to the wider world in which we live (Stolaroff, 1993; Tart, 2000; Watts, 1962).

As envisaged by Van den berg (1953), man is dialogue: an encountering and encountered being in an ever-changing world. All experience, meaning, consciousness and being, according to Edwards (2002, p. 3) is thus in "a constant state of change or becoming, which we realise only through our action and non-action in relation to a wider world". The fact that so many of us use substances habitually and often unconsciously is suggestive of a fundamental problem in being, and necessitates a cosmological exploration of the phenomenon.

“Being” as understood by Ngcobo and Edwards (1998) implies creation and destruction - the inextricably interlinked natural cosmic forces that have been experienced, observed and widely interpreted by human beings since earliest times. These forces include the polarity of earth and sky, day and night, man and woman; the constancy of the seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, as well as the ceaseless creative and destructive cycles in the relationships between the fundamental elements of nature, such as air, earth, water, and fire, culminating in an endless natural cycle of birth, growth, death, decay, and rebirth (Edwards & Sherwood, 2007; Reid, 1998; Trieschmann, 1995).

Throughout the formation of human life, our ancestors survived only by fitting into the self-regenerating whole of nature in which these perennial rhythms and flow of forces, or energies unfolded (McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999; Trieschmann, 1995). For many centuries these ancestors experienced and observed such forces in the human microcosm as in masculine and feminine dimensions, the fiery emotions of the psyche, rivers of blood in the body and seasons of life from birth to death (Edwards & Sherwood, 2007). Human rhythms – so-called biological clocks – have evolved as cultures wove the rhythms of humankind and all of nature together in myth and ritual, harmonizing the human individual, interpersonal and environmental rhythms and flow of energy with those of the universe (Edwards, 2006; McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999).

Our bodies still cycle in the ancient regenerative rhythms of the demanding and supporting nature that formed us and our prehuman ancestors over untold millennia ago (McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999). For instance getting a good night sleep after the exertions of the day is replenishing and we feel re-energized. However, when a day’s cycle cannot complete itself because of time changes in a long plane flight for instance, we experience jet lag, as the cycles of the body are “dislocated from the cycles of the regenerative earth that formed us, run through us, and continue to sustain us through a perpetual energetic exchange.

As the heavens repeat the same perpetual cycle of waxing, waning, dying, and reawakening of celestial bodies, humans enjoy exciting consummations, dying away of

excitement, and typically its rebirth in the fullness of time (Wilshire, 1999). Many of us nevertheless, seem to lack assurance that the unavoidable demise of excitement will be followed by its rebirth. Without the awareness of and access to our inherent energy source in nature and confidence that our organisms will regenerate themselves and ourselves cyclically in time, these essential and natural periods of dormancy and recuperation, often associated with emptiness and inertness, make the temptation of immediate gratifications overwhelming.

Although we become conscious of our energetic capacities and limitations early on in life by noting the energy demands of physical, mental, and emotional activity, and learn to pace ourselves in conserving energy (Edwards, 2006), the temptation to short-circuit our natural rhythms with substances, repeating “highs” out of sync with ever-cycling regenerative nature always exists. These substances however do not bestow miraculous free gifts of cosmic energy but simply force the body to release more of its stored up energy, thereby draining the body of its regenerative powers (Weil, 2004), resulting in what is experienced as a “down” or “low” state.

It has been established that all “high” states of consciousness are mediated by the body’s own energy in the form of neurochemicals, which may be stimulated equally by many different influences, including ones own thoughts (Pert 1997; Weil, 2004). The experience, for example of being rocketed out of a gloomy state by a word of praise, a demonstration of affection, or the arrival of a cheering letter in the mail bears testimony to the underlying energy activity responsible for internal “highs”. The rush of excitement for instance might be experienced as exactly the same as the rapid euphoria that follows a snort of cocaine.

As humans, we naturally seek to avoid pain and to experience pleasure. If we have lost touch with our internal sources of pleasure and our natural capacity to stimulate “high” states of consciousness, and if the pleasure that originates outside ourselves is the only pleasure we know, then that is the experience we will seek for ourselves (Chopra, 1997; Judith, 2004; Myss & Shealy, 1999). Although all substances may elicit various

experiences depending on the intention and expectation of the individual (“set”), and context in which it is taken (“setting”) (Goode, 1970; Stolaroff, 1993; Tart, 2000; Watts, 1962; Weil, 2004), each substance carries a particular energetic rhythm that when ingested, alters the natural energetic vibration of the body and hence the consciousness of the recipient, in relatively consistent ways (Judith, 2004).

Judith (2004) has explored the vibrational or energetic rhythms and states of consciousness associated with, and facilitated by various substances, and has related the repetitive use of each substance to imbalances in one of seven energetic portals or “chakras,” positioned from the base of the spine to the top of the head, each corresponding to a distinct aspect of the personality, and resonating with one of seven universal principles having to do with survival, creativity, identity, love, expression, comprehension, and transcendence. In so doing Judith (2004) situates specific addictions within the person’s wider human existence, and emphasizes the meaning the particular substance serves in relation to the various archetypal elements, functions, developmental tasks, challenges, and states of consciousness associated with their corresponding chakras.

The personal meaning or value that one attaches to a particular substance (and the experiences it elicits) is thus crucial in understanding what the person is seeking and is instrumental in identifying what some thinkers have referred to as the “essence” of the addiction (Mindell, 2004; Sherwood, 2007). These “essences” are often understood as originating in the macrocosm of the universe, in ideal energetic forms, transpersonal templates, or archetypal patterns emerging from the collective unconscious, which are shared with all humanity (present and past), and are reflected and experienced within the microcosm of the individual’s life (Judith, 2004; Mindell, 2004; Myss & Shealy, 1999; Sherwood, 2007).

The guiding function of intuition has been venerated by wise men throughout history as a means to access this dimension, and has steered, empowered and provided intrinsically meaningful experiences to our ancestors for untold millennia (A’Llerio, 1999; Levin,

1988; Weil, 2004; Wilshire, 1999). Lacking faith in and respect for our intuitive sources of knowledge, we are cut off from this transpersonal realm, and are consequently unable to bring the essences of our cravings into conscious awareness where we may embrace their energy in a creative and constructive manner. We ultimately become unconsciously ruled by them as they seize and possess us and drag us like Persephone into the underworld (Feinstein, Eden, & Craig, 2005; Judith, 2004; Miller & Swinney, 2000).

Our ancestors by contrast, experienced this collective unconscious as an immediate reality, not just as an intellectual construct. Such an experience of shared consciousness forms the basis of tribal unity, as it proves and confirms the supposition that every person in the tribe is the same as every other person in the most fundamental way (Weil, 2004). They were aware of their source and place in nature, recognized the subtle energy systems within the universe and their reflection within their human bodies, and lived in ecstatic kinship with all things around them (A'Llerio, 1999; Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2005; Graham, 1990). They lived in a world in which they were intensely and habitually involved, a world that was exciting and dangerous, one of close escapes or disasters, of rapt and astonished gratitude or despair, in which life was vivid and incredibly valuable, lived side by side with death (McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999).

One could imagine our ancestors experienced themselves belonging in what caught them up energetically and “ecstatically” in a vast interconnected chorus of living beings that together formed a whole, of which they felt themselves to be a small but vital part. In Greek, the term ecstasy (*ek-stasis*) means *a standing out* from the points in space one’s body occupies, indicating an experience or state of mind that is cosmic in scale (McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999; Zervogiannis, 2003). In such moments we are “out of ourselves”, caught up ecstatically, spontaneously in the surrounding world and full of the swelling presence of things.

A residual memory of such a world, according to Wilshire (1999), seems to best account for the boredom, emptiness, meaninglessness, disconnection, and loneliness so often described in current society by those who finally achieve the ease and security they think

they want. Having little sense of meaning and value of the “whole” of which we are parts, we have little sense of our own meaning and value. In Wilshire’s (1999, p. 14) words, “addictions are acts of violence directed at our own insignificance”.

Deep within each one of us is an indescribable desire to make sense and meaning out of life, to discover ones ultimate true nature and relationship to the universe (Judith, 2004; O’Murchu, 1994). This need has been described by Clinebell (1963, p. 473) as “mans religious-philosophical-existential need” – the need to experience the numinous and transcendent, the sacred and ecstatic, the need to feel that there is something wonder-full, transcending the mundaneness of life, as well as the need for a sense of meaning and an experience of being a part of the whole universe. Without understanding, acknowledging and embracing this need, we shoot wildly and erratically in repetitive attempts to satisfy the pervasive and elusive restlessness that bubbles up into consciousness from deep within.

The inability to realize our deepest needs and capacities for ecstatic wholeness and being, which unites us and affirms our place in the regenerative energy matrix of mother earth, leads to fragmentation, a frantic misdirection of energy, and the pursuit of the substitute gratifications that we hope will make us whole. Referring to one of his former clients in a letter to Bill Wilson, cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Jung (O’Murchu, 1994, p. 176) wrote:

“His craving for alcohol was the equivalent on a low level of the spiritual search of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language: the union with God.”

The aim of this study is to facilitate the reawakening of the “memory of inner perfection” (Chopra, 1997, p. 20) that resides within five participants, who experience themselves as being powerfully drawn to substitute gratifications, and explore what happens as the experienced world opens up to them. This is facilitated by directing participants to “return to the body” whereby through their felt-sense, or preconceptual experience, they become aware of and learn to access, cultivate, and direct their innate healing energies on

various dimensions of their existence, including the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual realms, while returning them to their linkage with nature. In this way, they reclaim the essential unity and oneness of their self, and their interconnectedness to the sacred at every level of their being (Chopra, 1997; Judith, 2004; Miller & Swinney, 2000; O'Murchu, 1994).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Traditionally, research in the area of substance dependence has relied heavily on objective methodologies, which contribute to an epistemological understanding of the problem from the researcher's perspective (Smith, 2003). Such studies typically focus on precisely correlating processes and trying to establish causal linkages.

In order to accomplish this they must objectify the body and quantify it, and in so doing, they mask out crucial features, experiences, and qualities of the body as self, (the body as the cornerstone to understanding and revealing the self; that is the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of being human). As the body is divided, so are the resulting theories that are produced from it. The various discipline specific perspectives neither disprove nor invalidate one another, but simply co-exist, resulting in intense polarization of views and considerable confusion (Shaffer, 1986; Szasz, 2003).

In hope of overcoming this fragmentation, this dissertation views the addicted person from what Trieschmann (1995) terms the "energy model", which has been born out of the union of ancient mysticism and modern physics. In this model, man *is* his body. In other words, the primal body we live in and are is not a self-sealing object, but a resonating node of the world through which energy exchanges freely and fluidly or constrictedly and addictively.

In this model, energy is the foundation of functioning in the world, and all physical material, including human beings, are a product of that energy (Edwards, 2005; Chopra & Simon, 2004; Graham, 1990). The great value of the energy model lies in its unifying

essence, which provides a conceptual framework within which to unite all current theories of addiction into a holistic and collaborative understanding. For instance, while addiction involves cognitive, hormonal, neurologic, genetic, neurochemical, environmental, and spiritual factors, at a fundamental level bioenergy is involved (Gallo, 2002). Energy is therefore the glue that bonds all fragmented theories together into a holistic understanding, while providing a more expansive, imaginative, and organic vision of how these pieces might fall together into a whole.

This dissertation thus focuses more on the ontological aspect of the problem, that is, the lived experience of the individual who is central to the area of concern - the substance dependent person. From this perspective, the body-self's immediate experiencing and minding of the world cannot be objectified or quantified, and it is only in this experiencing that the addictive condition really shows itself. Likewise, it is only in this immediate experiencing that non-addictive, integrated and ecstatic involvement of the body-self in the world, as experienced through energy based healing, is revealed.

In order to illuminate such experiences, the present study is conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, using an existential-phenomenological approach to access the rich, emotional worlds of the co-researchers, and gain a deep, novel understanding of the embodied meaning of addictive and non-addictive being. Consistent with the philosophy that informed this research, this method preserves the uniqueness of the experience from the sufferer's point of view by allowing the participants to speak for themselves, relying on the knowledge and first-hand experience of the five research participants (Von Eckartsberg, 1998).

Such an orientation transcends dualistic separatism and determinism, thereby allowing addiction to be revealed and explored holistically by encompassing insights from all disciplines that touch on the experience of the addicted individual (Edwards, 2006). Finally, it permits us to explore the experience of addiction on all four dimensions of human existence, including the physical, the social, the psychological, and the spiritual realms.

For instance, issues relating to the experience of addiction on the physical dimension might include the somatic experiences of physical cravings and unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. On the social dimension, the experience of addiction may include issues of social rejection relating to the pejorative attitudes of others towards the person as an “addict”. The psychological dimension illuminates issues relating to the addicted person’s search for a sense of identity, a feeling of being substantial and having a self, and the ways in which intoxication has illuminated as well as concealed such a self. On the spiritual dimension we explore the way in which the addicted person relates to the unknown, and how this unknown is both uncovered and obscured through the use of certain substances.

The following section outlines the aims of the study while illustrating the suitability of the selected framework in achieving such aims.

1.3. Research aims

The aims of this study are multiple, and include theoretical, descriptive and exploratory, as well as interventionist components. These three aims are broken down in the following:

- The theoretical intent of this research is to reformulate addiction in terms of stagnate, fixated, unbalanced, and blocked energy. It is hoped that through the combination and integration of existential-phenomenology and the energy worldview, both being holistic by nature and advocating a transcendental approach, we will be able to rise above the dichotomizing constraints of natural science understandings of addiction and permit the current theories to be integrated into a collaborative whole. In addition, it is hoped that viewing addiction from this framework will allow the researcher to address the experience of addiction from a more cosmological perspective, including issues relating to the often ignored spiritual dimension of existence.

- The interventionist aim of this study is to help, care for, guide, and journey with the five participants toward a new, healthy, non-addicted and perhaps even transcendental way of being. The intervention takes place over a period of four months, whereby through the practice of various energy-based healing techniques, participants learn to become aware of their embodiment and inherent energetic capacities on all dimensions of their existence, and to channel this energy in a way that culminates in a way of being that transcends the need for substitute gratifications. Emphasis is placed on helping the participants reclaim the energy that was once fixated outside themselves, while reawakening the sense of inner harmony and integration that enables them to grow spiritually as their enjoyment of life's real pleasures once again becomes available. In sum, the aim is therefore to help participants meet their primal needs with primal satisfactions that occur within the regenerative rhythms of nature herself.
- Finally, this dissertation aims to access the lived worlds of the participants and illuminate their experiences of addiction as it evolves throughout the research process, as well as what these experiences reveal about the nature of their embodiment and their relationships with self and others. Specifically, the goal is to provide a rich, in-depth understanding of the addicted participants as *beings-in-the-world*, interpreting the changing nature of their own energetic experiences of addiction within the *Eigenwelt* (their relationship with the self), the *Mitwelt* (their connection to their individual environment), the *Umwelt*, (their relationship with the wider community), and the *Überwelt*, (their relationship with the greater universe).

Such aims necessitate an existential-phenomenological methodology, capable of capturing the changing nature or quality of inner experience open to the participants who learn to make contact and work with their energetic selves in the hope of creating a new, non-addicted way of being-in-the-world. The existential-phenomenological approach will now be explored in detail and elaborated on in the methodology section of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: THE TAO OF EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGY

"All my knowledge of the world ...is gained from ...experience of the world...To return to things themselves is to return to that world which perceives knowledge."

(Mearleau-Ponty, 1962)

The aim of this chapter is to bring the kindred disciplines of phenomenology, existentialism, transpersonal psychology, and the ancient spiritual traditions of the world into a mutually creative, integral collaboration. We focus on the philosophical underpinnings of these disciplines so as to form a common foundation upon which the interventions of this study rest, while demonstrating the relevance of each to understanding the life world of the addicted individual, and the experience of energy healing. In order to achieve this goal, the following format is followed:

- First, the philosophical underpinnings of existential-phenomenology will be examined while illustrating the concepts of the discipline's key thinkers and their relevance to understanding and exploring the experience of addiction, as well as the corresponding energy interventions of the study.
- The second section explores the world views of our ancestors, and provides a detailed illumination of their way of being-in-the-world, as well the possible ways in which such wisdom may guide our healing efforts. In so doing, this section proposes to establish a philosophical foundation for the emerging energy worldview that underlines energy therapy in its contemporary form.
- The final section intends elucidating the correspondences between existential-phenomenology and the philosophical foundations of the energy world view. The aim therefore is to bridge the divide between eastern and western, ancient and modern views, thereby arriving at a common philosophical basis for

understanding and healing addiction.

2.1. Introducing existential-phenomenology

The term “phenomenology” is derived from the two Greek words, “phenomenon” (originally meaning “to flare up”, “to show itself” or “to appear”) and “logos” (meaning “reason” or “word,” and referring to patterns or structures) (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Phenomenology is thus the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view (Smith, 2003).

In contrast, existentialism attempts to specify the persistent themes of human existence, such as temporality, spatiality, subjective embodiment, intersubjectivity, selfhood, finiteness, moodedness, personal project, and discursiveness (Ashworth, 2003). Existential-phenomenology therefore means the application of the phenomenological method to the perpetual problems of human existence (Von Eckartsberg, 1998).

Von Eckartsburg (1998) uses the ancient Chinese symbol of Yin-Yang, to represent the implicit interdependence of the phenomenological as *understood* and the existential as *lived* realms. By doing so he demonstrates that although these philosophies seem to represent divergent standpoints rather than complementary approaches to human reality, they are intimately inter-sustaining and supporting views of man. The combination of existentialism, which focuses on the problems and themes of existence, and phenomenology, which focuses on the explanation of the intentional structures of consciousness, reveals how the truth of the world in general is related to the truth of the individual experience (Von Eckartsberg, 1998).

According to Valle (1998), it is only when we reach the existential-phenomenological approach in psychology that the implicitly accepted causal way of being is seen as only one of numerous ways human beings can experience themselves and the world. More specifically, “our being presents itself to awareness as a being-in-the-world, so that the human individual and his or her surrounding environment are regarded as implicitly

interdependent, as inextricably intertwined” (Valle, 1998, p. 274). The person and world are therefore said to *co-constitute* one another, and one has no meaning when regarded independently of the other.

2.2. The relevance of the phenomenological method to this study

Edwards (2001), distinguishes phenomenology from other descriptive and qualitative approaches in its focus on the structures of consciousness as a special realm of inquiry for revealing and effecting meaningful interventions (Edwards, 2001). This method is thus ideal for exploring the changing nature and quality of inner experience open to the participants who learn to make contact and work with their energetic selves in the hope of creating a new, non-addicted way of being.

Phenomenology explores the addiction phenomenon from the perspective of human experience and what it means to be human. This view - how the subjective experience of addiction fits into the larger picture of human experience - permits a humanizing of addiction, even wonderment at the meaning evoked by the experience of altered consciousness (Gray, 2004). Drew (Wurm, 2003, p. 176), emphasizes the importance of such an understanding in the following:

“Those of us who have contributed to the literature about models of drug dependence have indulged in irrelevances. We have pursued an abstract scientific course rather than responding to existential needs. We have produced a psycho-bio-social model of drug dependence that excludes the essence of human existence – options, freedom to choose, and the centrality of human values.”

Every idea about the phenomenon of addiction derives from the particular perspective and frame of reference of the individuals who formulate it. Pharmacologists, physiologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists all differ in their formulations of the etiology of addiction, and each pursues its particular version of truth about the addictions in its own way. Unconscious biases tempt the researcher to screen out observations that

do not fit in with their preconceived notions of addiction and to see causal relationships where none exist (Weil & Rosen, 2004; Shaffer, 1986). Herein lies the value of the phenomenological approach, which avoids this pitfall by consciously suspending any assumptions and prejudice in order to allow phenomena to reveal themselves in their fresh, original reality (Edwards, 2006; Smith-Pickard, 2004; Valle, 1998).

Husserl, who is seen as the father of the phenomenological movement, used the term “bracketing” for this attitude of wonder and questioning, claiming it would let us approach the person’s experience with an open mind and come to the things themselves afresh with full awareness of what is confronting us (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997; Von Eckartsberg, 1986). In relating this point to addiction research, Weil (2004, p. 68) urges:

“Psychiatrists should listen to what their patients say about their drug experiences; patients often know more about the workings of the unconscious mind from direct experience than doctors do from their intellects.”

From a phenomenological perspective, by using a term such as “addiction” one may have already started to define and anticipate what the person is going through. It may be a label that certain people do not relate to and may offend or alienate drug-takers, as well as make it harder for them to see the role of choice in their actions, indirectly perpetuating their problems (Wurm, 2003; Smith-Pickard, 2004; Szasz, 2003). The very use of the word seems problematic and when the researcher uses it in this dissertation, it is done so without any pejorative connotation or as a pathologizing label.

Phenomenological thinkers seek to avoid such labels, which tend to channel the individual’s behaviour, thwarting his or her freedom and stipulating his or her way of being. Rather, the phenomenological method demands that we seek to comprehend the human behaviour, meaning and experience of addiction as it is actually lived in everyday social settings, by soliciting descriptive accounts of actual experiences in such settings (Smith, 2003; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997; Von Eckartsberg, 1986).

This is the starting point for phenomenological psychology – the arena of everyday life experience and action, for which Husserl has given us the metaphor of *life-world*. The life-world is the locus of interaction between ourselves and our perceptual environments, and the world of experienced horizons within which we meaningfully dwell together (Finlay, 2005; Lavery, 2003). All experience is regarded as having its basis or foundation in the life-world, the world as lived by the person and not the hypothetical external entity separate from or independent of him or her (Valle, 1998). This lived world is pre-reflective – it takes place before we think about it or put it into language and is understood as what we experience without resorting to categorization or conceptualization, and quite often includes what is overlooked or those things that are common sense (Lavery, 2003).

When Husserl formulated his ideas regarding phenomenology, he did it with the aim of “...reclaiming the unity of the lived world...” (Lippitz, 1997, p. 69). A phenomenological orientation thus assumes the interrelatedness of all phenomena, and bridges artificial, conceptual distinctions between terms such as body, mind, and spirit (Edwards, 2006), thereby allowing insights from all disciplines that touch on the life world of the addicted individual to be encompassed and explored. Explanations such as weak “will”, moral deprivation, ego deficits, social impoverishment, peer pressure, tolerance, withdrawal, and metabolic deficiencies (Shaffer, 1986), can hence be integrated to form a holistic understanding of the experience of addiction.

Although such explanations have been useful in helping us to understand the specifics of many areas of the addiction puzzle (Shaffer, 1986), they nevertheless lack the language and tools to consider the meaningful character of the subjective experience or phenomenology of addiction. Examining addiction from a subjective experience offers to situate the scientific results within the larger scope of the human condition. Such a philosophical framework creates meaning from the relationships revealed among the different parts of the addiction phenomenon and the changes in consciousness that are experienced with psychoactive drugs (Gray, 2004).

Having established the foundations of existential-phenomenology as well as the suitability of the phenomenological method to understanding the addiction phenomenon, we now move toward a more in-depth exploration of the contributions of various existential-phenomenological thinkers and their key concepts on which this study is based.

2.3. Existential-phenomenological concepts

Existential-phenomenology, as it has developed over the decades has been primarily a philosophical endeavor. Numerous works have traced its rich historical development, focusing on such key figures as Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, among others (Von Eckartsberg, 1998). These philosophers have tackled many of the persistent and thorny problems that contribute to what Shaffer (1986, p. 22) refers to as the “epistemological crisis in addiction research”, such as the concept of free will versus determinism, the mind-body problem, and the nature of perception and altered states of consciousness. As this study draws on their thoughts and applies some of their research methods as well as healing insights, a brief outline of the most vital contributions of existential-phenomenological philosophers emerges.

2.3.1. Consciousness and the essence of addiction

Husserl articulated that consciousness is intentional, that is, it is always and essentially directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world (Smith, 2003). As noted by Van den berg (1953), this bridges the gap between subject and object and has in principle, abolished Cartesian dualism. The schism between the self, the anatomical-physiological body and the external world is thus transcended allowing the energetic relationship or connections between the person and the object or substance, as well as the meaning that the substance holds for the addictive person, to be explored.

Although phenomenology came into its own with Husserl, it has been practiced, with or without the name, for many centuries. When Hindu and Buddhist philosophers reflected

on states of consciousness achieved in a variety of meditative states, they were practicing phenomenology (Smith, 2003). Similarly, when Aldous Huxley experimented with mescaline, Carlos Castaneda with peyote, Thomas De Quincey with opium, Timothy Leary with LSD, William James with nitrous oxide, Sigmund Freud with cocaine, and William Burroughs with opiates to transcend ordinary consciousness and explore parts of their own minds, they too were practicing phenomenology.

Each of these great thinkers used specific substances to access different states of consciousness, the experiences of which, held different meanings for each of them. Freud, for instance, who treated his depression with cocaine, reported feeling “exhilaration and lasting euphoria...you perceive an increase of self control and possess more vitality and capacity for work” (Szasz, 2003, p. 204). On the other hand, the great philosopher William James valued his nitrous oxide experiences for providing him with access to the “fringes of consciousness”. For James (1882, p. 2), “the keynote of the experience is the tremendously exciting sense of an intense metaphysical illumination.”

The meaning or value that Freud attached to his cocaine experiences seemed to revolve around logical academic energy, power and control, whereas James seemed to value his nitrous oxide experiences in that they provided him access to more transcendental or “ordinarily transmarginal” knowledge (Gray, 2004, p. 1159). Such personal meaning or value that one attaches to particular substances (and the experiences they elicit) are crucial to understanding what the person is seeking through their drug taking behaviour. Embedded in the experience of any craving is the dynamic of projecting power (energy) into a substance or object, while believing that one has no such power available *within* oneself (Feinstein et al., 2005; Judith, 2004; Mindell, 2004; Myss, 1996). Healing thus necessitates learning to “feel” the cravings core or deepest “essence” in order to bring that essence into conscious awareness where it may be worked with, and developed by re-channeling energy into a diversity of healthy regenerative alternatives.

“Essence” as understood by Husserl, is the invariant and unchangeable characteristics of the particular phenomenon. It is what makes a thing what it is (and without which it

would not be what it is) (van Manen, 1990). Sherwood (2007) opens up discussion to a more cosmological understanding of cravings by linking Husserl's idea of "essence" to Plato's understanding of "ideal forms", whereby the essential nature of human experiences such as truth, goodness and beauty are expressed in ideal transcendent "forms" or "essences" that are accessible by human beings through their inherent sensory experience. The macrocosm of the universe is thus reflected in the microcosm of the individual life, as "clients find within their experience of craving for the addictive substance, a sensory form within themselves, which is a reflection of a transpersonal template of that energetic form" (Sherwood, 2007, p. 262).

The pure phenomenology of Husserl was later enriched by the "existentialist movement". Expanded into *existential-phenomenology*, associated primarily with Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, and Sartre, it emphasizes that "being-in-the-world" involves more than human consciousness. Specifically, existential-phenomenology acknowledges the importance of prereflective bodily components in the creation of meaning (Merleau-Ponty); highlights the existential choices a person makes about his or her life-situation, (Sartre); and focuses on the totality of personal existence as being-in-the-world (Heidegger); including dwelling in social relations and historical circumstances (Valle, 1998).

2.3.2. Being and communion

Martin Heidegger proposed an interpretation of the concept of 'world' where the focus lay not on the natural world, but at a level below it from which all things sprang. Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another, hence *being*, from Heidegger's perspective, is being-in-the-world (Kruger, 1979; Spinelli, 1989). The *being* of human beings is always being-in-the-world, in that our being permeates the world: "I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather I am there, that is, I already pervade the room" (Heidegger, 1966, p. 257). Heidegger thus subverts the presumption of any absolute separation between self and world and, instead, insists on their essential communion.

Despite this, John Donne's familiar words "no man is an island" mean nothing to the addicted person – for he or she feels exactly that: a lonely island, a clod cut off from the mainland of humanity and the world (Clinebell, 1963). The profound sense of separation and disconnection so commonly described in the stories of addicted people may be seen as arising from a common and fundamental delusion that we all experience to a greater or lesser degree: our belief or rather our misconception that our self and world are really and necessarily separate; and therefore we identify exclusively with our supposedly separate, egoic self-sense (Adams, 1999; A'Llerio, 1999; Judith, 2004; Wilshire, 1999). James (Gray, 2004, p. 1158) illustrates the attractiveness of alcohol in its ability to impart a fleeting, yet seemingly highly valued and meaningful experience wherein one's usual self-boundary becomes permeable and we transcend our apparent separatedness from the world in the following:

"The immense emotional sense of reconciliation which characterizes the "maudlin" stage of alcoholic drunkenness – a stage which seems silly to lookers-on, but the subjective rapture of which probably constitutes a chief part of the temptation to the vice - is well known. The centre and periphery of things seem to come together. The ego and its objects, the meum and tuum, are one."

Reflecting on this essential communion, Wilshire (1999) makes reference to Emerson, who reasons that exploiting nature as if it were a machine means exploiting ourselves. He replaces the metaphor of machine with organism, in which energy flows throughout the whole, and the functioning of the parts cannot be explained in isolation of the functioning of the whole. In so doing, Emerson (Wilshire, 1999, p. 48) illustrates the primal or mythic image of "circular power returning into itself". This is the power of regeneration. It is the all inclusive energy flow of nature into her member organs and from them back into the whole. Since we are organic parts of the whole, deceiving nature or others, or damaging them in any way, means deceiving and damaging ourselves.

This view offers an interesting understanding of the way addictions cripple: they energetically split us off from the whole, and also within ourselves. Man becomes an

island. Although we are always in communion with the intimate otherness of the world, the primitive wisdom affirming this truth according to Heidegger (1966) is easily lost. It escapes us because it is a craft that we have forgotten about, yet he believes it is an essential human ability that we can retrieve. Without it we perpetually attempt to objectify the world and so become stranded subjective selves, or half selves. Because we only grasp ourselves and our world partially, we come to experience ourselves mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually as splintered, with no heartfelt understanding of who we are and what our place on this earth is (Alexander, 2002; McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

The recollection of oneself according to Heidegger (1966) requires a new type of presence to oneself and to being. This quest is not easily undertaken because in the world of ordinary experience most of our questioning is guided by “calculative thinking”, which never stops, never collects itself, but races from one prospect to the next computing ever new, ever more promising and, at the same time, more economical possibilities. This type of thinking provides us with ready-made answers that have to do with parts of our selves and our world (A’Llerio, 1999; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

The recollection of self is achieved through “meditative thinking”, which provides an opportunity to be guided by a mystical and magical relationship to the animate, natural world and to dwell in the world in a totally different way (Alexander, 2002; A’Llerio, 1999; Levin, 1988; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). Heidegger’s notion of meditative thinking is roughly equivalent to the Buddhist idea of becoming awakened. In Buddhist philosophy, the awakened person moves from an ego-centric world to a limitless world. In Buddhist terminology, one realizes the limitations of self-power and awakens to the world of Other-power (Alexander, 2002; A’Llerio, 1999; O’Murchu, 1994).

It is only in this awakened state that one is truly open to oneself and one’s world, and allows the truth of one’s existence to reveal itself. In so doing, we disclose existence more effectively, and open ourselves up to what is already there by “being the tuner which receives the radio waves of life more completely” (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 43).

Along similar lines, Emerson (Wilshire, 1999, p. 83) makes the following observation:

“The world - this...other me - lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself.”

In other words, we come home to self only when we come home to other-than-self. The resulting sense of belongingness is what catches one up ecstatically in the experience of the sacred (Adams, 1999; A’Llerio, 1999; McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999). To be caught up in the world-whole and to feel the exciting and spontaneous merging and flow of energy within and between ourselves is what roots and empowers, centers, and orients us in the world.

According to Heidegger (1979), the possibility of such experience is bound up with our earthly embodiment. The body, Heidegger states, “is ‘internalized’ in feeling” (1979, p. 99), and this feeling is that basic mode of being “by force of which and in accordance with which we are always already *lifted beyond ourselves into being as a whole*” (1979, p. 99). We are thus ecstatic, “out of ourselves” and feel no need to rely on substitute gratifications to achieve a fleeting sense of wholeness.

It is significant that practitioners from the world’s spiritual traditions (spanning religions, cultures, and historical eras) have consistently revered and cultivated experiences of this kind, and that almost all of them place great stress on breath control as a means to achieving them (Edwards, 2006; Judith, 2004; Weil, 2004). There is little surprise that the term ‘spirit’ is derived from the Latin word ‘spiritus’, meaning breath, and thus, as Edwards (2006) notes, spiritual healing is essentially concerned with holistic breathing transformations.

According to Edwards (2006, p. 3), “Vibrating our core of being-in the world, breathing forms a pre-reflective essence of our bodiliness. We experience its reassuring rhythms in harmony with nature and during rest”. The act of breathing thus involves a reciprocal exchange of oneself and the world, through which one turns into the other and visa versa

(Adams, 1999). This illustrates Emerson's reference to "circular power returning into itself", and demonstrates the utility of mindful breathing in assisting the addicted person in becoming aware of his/her intimate connection with the universe, as the sense of isolation and fragmentation inevitably diminishes (Chopra, 1007).

When a person opens to experiencing being-in-the-world through such healing techniques, they usually notice striking differences in sensations and states of consciousness. The ability to open to oneself in this way is unusual because "to a great extent our culture is still under the sway of the Cartesian paradigm" (Leder, 1990, p. 3), which results in us experiencing a certain disembodied style of life. We now turn our attention to the work of Merleau-Ponty, who critiques Cartesian dualism and separatism by emphasizing the unified, co-constituting nature of the relationship between self and world, as well as the importance of prereflective bodily components in the constitution of meaning (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

2.3.3. The addicted body

Merleau-Ponty (Adams, 1999, p. 46) insists that our body and the world are associated and intrinsically bound together: "Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system".

Body and world therefore mutually imply each other and are of the same nature. This is the primordial ground of all our awareness, a kind of continuation of our body that Merleau-Ponty expresses metaphorically as *the flesh of the world* (Von Eckartsberg, 1998). In Merleau-Ponty's words, "[M]y body is made of the same flesh as the world... and moreover... this flesh of my body is shared by the world (Alexander, 2002, p. 246). The concept of *flesh* resonates with quantum theory that reveals that all objects in the cosmos are simply various forms of a single energy (Capra, 1991; Chopra & Simon, 2004; Graham, 1990), and it is this fact that makes the interpermeation of self and world possible.

As the polar opposition between subject and object, is challenged, the distinction between mind and matter also becomes non-existent. Merleau-Ponty (1962) spoke of existence as known only in and through the body. To him, the phenomenal body is the only means of being-in-the-world, consciousness is embodied consciousness, and a person is an embodied being, not just the possessor of a body. This understanding conforms to recent discoveries in neuroscience. Northrup (Wilshire, 1999, p. 74) explains:

“Not only do our physical organs contain receptor sites for the neuro-chemicals of thought and emotion, our organs and immune system *can themselves manufacture these same chemicals*. What this means is that our entire body feels and expresses emotion – all parts of us “think” and “feel.”...*The mind is located throughout the body.*”

Pert (Flowers, Grubin & Meryman-Brunner, 1993, p. 189) describes the mind, as ‘some kind of enlivening energy in the information realm throughout the brain and body that enables the cells to talk to each other, and the outside to talk to the whole organism’. She thus makes no distinction between body and mind but understands the “self” as a “bodymind”.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) might argue however that this “body-self” or “bodymind” is by itself, a snippet or abstraction. Rather it should be “body-self-world”, as the self cannot be understood without understanding the body as we live it personally and immediately moment by moment in the world. The “self” therefore is a body, the inside of which directly experiences itself resonating to the rest of the world, and which as a being that moves itself contrasts itself frequently to everything else in the environment. Thus, by embodying the world around us and interiorising the environment, things become meaningful (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

The dangers of equating ones “self” with mind have been noted by numerous authors (Alexander, 2002; A’Llerio, 1999; Wilshire, 1999). If we perceive ourselves as “godlike minds” or consciousness that hook up somehow to mechanical bodies, we are instantly dislocated from our own bodies and from the bodies of all non-human creatures as these

have evolved together with us in regenerative earth in the most intimate communion over countless millennia.

Wilshire (1999, p. 63) observes that our very being as selves includes the body's powerful addictive cycles, including its "weirdly imperious cravings and appetites - an uneasiness in the hands, a gnawing emptiness in the stomach, an urging in the groin". To fail to grasp the body and its primal urges as body-self (all that we are) is to identify with only a fraction of oneself - the pure will or immaterial soul or intellect.

Being disconnected from our embodiment, the temptation to treat our bodies as mere machines for generating pleasurable sensations is strong. According to Wilshire (1999, p. 76) "habitual attempts to turn body into just an object, to manipulate and force its gratifications, alienates body-selves within themselves addictively". Only through the process of becoming embodied, do we become aware of ourselves as "bodyminds" or "body-selves," allowing the realization that using ones body as a mere means, or as a machine is violating its intrinsic value, and hence it is violating ourselves.

The living body as conceived by Merleau-Ponty (1962) is the very possibility of contact, not just with others but with oneself. The body therefore serves as the cornerstone to understanding and revealing the self; that is the physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects of being human (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

Becoming aware of internal functions can be an experience of the sacred and provides much of the basis for the sense of one's inner self. Becoming mindful of bodily feelings provides a new avenue for the addicted person to explore his/her inner world, the world they have long lost touch with through years of bodily objectification and drug abuse. Through such a rediscovery, bodily existence itself becomes a giver of meanings (Levin, 1988; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). This importance is further advocated by Nietzsche, who provides a lucid understanding of the body's intrinsic intelligence and source of ecstatic being and healing.

2.3.4. Ecstasy and the body

"Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty commander, an unknown sage – he is called self, he lives in your body, he is your body" (Nietzsche, as cited in Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 24).

For Nietzsche, the body is the totality of our being and the location and key to all that we are. He insists on the unity of body and soul. The soul or the self are nothing but functions of that body. Nietzsche therefore sees no need to split the human being in two or three separate parts: there is only one being, with many different attributes (Danto, 1979; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). From this perspective, what we call "body" is just one aspect of an energetic system, another being "mind" and another being the "soul".

Nietzsche attempted to "unmask" the very nature of what he considered to be the truth of Being itself. He believed that such an insight could only be had through the pleasurable "ecstatic" experience of "Primordial-Oneness," of "*das Ur-Eine*" (Borody, 2003). He argued that one enters into the experience of this cosmic unknown only through "ecstasy," which is brought about through the rapturous enthrallment of *Rausch* (Danto, 1979; Borody, 2003).

According to Borody (2003), *Rausch* is translated into "intoxication", but in its original definition, it carries the connotation of ecstasy and transport, and is less narrowly connected with drug induced states, as is the English translation. Alcoholic drunkenness is drunkenness with alcohol as its *cause*, but it is the state of consciousness rather than its cause, in which Nietzsche is interested. We can be transported into the same state in various other ways, including, chanting, exercising, dancing, falling in love, meditating, mindful breathing, making love, hiking in the wilderness (if you live in a city), visiting a city (if you live in the wilderness), and participating in religious rituals to name a few. Regardless of the means used to generate the experience, Nietzsche argues that ecstasy is a celebration of life and existence, and the most fitting response to the pain and suffering of existence (Borody, 2003; Danto, 1979).

Through ecstasy one has direct experience of the *Ur-Eine*, and thus comes to understand both its pleasures and pains, its joy and its suffering, insofar as it is both a creative and destructive force, as it both generates life and annihilates life. Furthermore, this experience emerges through the very fabric of human experience itself - the body. Nietzsche therefore argues that to pay adequate attention to one's body and to heed its advice is the secret of being at one with oneself, the way to be oneself or, as he put it: to become what you are (Borody, 2003; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche links humankind's passion for ecstasy to the Greek god Dionysius, who represents the demonic, chaotic side of nature, which can be neither tamed nor restrained by civilization. He describes Dionysius as the source of intoxication, dissolved individuality, celebration of nature, music, dance, orgiastic passion, dissolution of all boundaries, excess, and destruction. Dionysus lives in the realm of cyclical time, closely tied to feminine energies, the seasons, and the consciousness of the body (Hofmann, 1980; McKenna, 1992; Metzner, 1989; Sagiv, 2000; Schenk, 2001; Thomas, 2002).

The Dionysian longing for ecstasy contains within it a deep yearning for the negation of one's separate individual existence. Nietzsche observed that this Dionysian impulse has never been restricted to Greek culture, but appears to be a fixed element of human nature that "expresses itself through a longing to dismantle the ordinary bounds and limits of existence and to reach a state so intense that everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness" (Sagiv, 2000, p. 157) - a type of ecstasy, an intense experience of elevation beyond sensual pleasure, even beyond the sensation of space and time (Hofmann, 1980; McKenna, 1992; Metzner, 1989; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Sagiv, 2000; Thomas, 2002).

The historian of religion Mircea Eliade described this impulse as the universal desire, manifest in religious and cultic practices around the world, to "return to the womb" (McKenna, 1992; Sagiv, 2000). This may be interpreted as the longing to live ecstatically, stretching beyond spatiotemporal locality, but always within a womblike

matrix of matter and energy that flows into us and supports us beyond our ability to comprehend (Wilshire, 1999). In reflecting on the source of this impulse Nietzsche (Hofmann, 1980, p. 37) writes:

"It is either through the influence of narcotic potions, of which all primitive peoples and races speak in hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, penetrating with joy all of nature, that those Dionysian stirrings arise, which in their intensification lead the individual to forget himself completely.... Not only does the bond between man and man come to be forged once again by the magic of the Dionysian rite, but alienated, hostile, or subjugated nature again celebrates her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man."

Nietzsche emphasizes that ecstasy should not be understood as a mechanism for fleeing reality. The person sets out not so much to forget the world, but to forget *himself*, to "let-himself go", to overcome rather than emphasize the boundaries between himself and other things. It is in such moments that "mystics achieve union and celebrants attain communion and lovers touch the pinnacle of joy" (Danto, 1979, p. 49). As a primal force embedded deep within the human soul, the expressions of this longing for oblivion have accompanied human civilization from its beginnings. The ecstatic impulse played an important role, for example, in tribal societies from Siberia to Southern Africa, where it was developed and cultivated (and still is practiced) for spiritual and ritual purposes (McKenna, 1992; Sagiv, 2000). Emerson (Wilshire, 1999, p. 1) observes:

"The one thing we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety...to do something without knowing how or why...Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment....Dreams and drunkenness, the use of opium and alcohol are the semblance and counterfeit of this oracular genius, and hence their dangerous attraction for men. For the like reason they ask the aid of wild passions, as in gaming and war, to ape in some manner these flames and generousities of the heart."

Emerson reminds us of our ultimate primal need, to *be* fully, that is, to be ecstatically full beyond reckoning, and points out the danger and allure of substitute gratifications that provide the “semblance” of such ecstatic moments. Lacking bodily contact, and awareness of the body as the source of our primal needs of ecstatic fulfillment as well as the very means to satisfying those needs, we imagine immediate substitute gratifications. As secondary pleasures fail to satisfy our longing for the primary pleasure of ecstasy, our lack of satisfaction makes us crave more, forming a basis for addiction. One experiences a voracious hunger to feel pleasure, a hunger that is never truly satisfied (Chopra, 1997; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Judith, 2004; Weil, 2004, Wilshire, 1999). It is only healthy pleasure, achieved through our entire embodied being that brings meaning and satisfaction; addictive pleasure merely brings craving for more.

Lacking awareness of and contact with the “unknown sage” within us, that is, our bodily selves and our capacity for the creation of regenerative ecstasies, our energy becomes tied up in the destructive substitute gratifications that control us. For Nietzsche, the bodily self always relates to the world and if it is not in harmony internally then the reaching out will be done in a destructive and catastrophic manner, as can be illustrated in the case of addiction (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes what happens when people do not heed their bodily self. They become like “a heap of diseases that reach out into the world through the spirit” (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p. 24). The relevance of Nietzsche’s insights is that the body is the key to experiencing regenerative forms of ecstasy, forms that we have forgotten we are capable of. The intervention in this study focuses on establishing communication with the wisdom of the body. Instead of abandoning their responsibility to use their inherent capabilities in the recovery process, the participants learn to cooperate with the divine energy within – their spiritual body-selves - in a more positive and creative way. It seems that what *Zarathustra* is after, is essentially no different from what the participants in this study are pursuing; that is, the discovery of the power and strength that can be gained from our inner source so that we become capable of living deeply and passionately, and making beneficial choices. The importance of choice is

further emphasized in the work of Sartre who will be explored next.

2.3.5. Choice and openness

“Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a fucking big television, Choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players, and electrical tin openers...Choose DIY and wondering who you are on a Sunday morning... Choose your future. Choose life... But why would I want to do a thing like that? ...I chose not to choose life: I chose something else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?” (Welsh, 2007, p. 187).

The preceding quote taken from Irvin Welsh's (2007) cult classic novel *Trainspotting* amplifies the spirit of Sartre's argument. According to Sartre, the person is the totality of his or her life choices, for which he or she is fully responsible. He states that there is in fact one choice that we do not have and that is not to choose – in that not choosing in itself represents a choice. Not having the choice to not choose condemns us to freedom and responsibility. Thus, for Sartre, the notion of intentionality is linked with existential choices and radical freedom to make long-range life commitments and to choose our future through all particular acts of involvement (Gans, 1995; Von Eckartsberg, 1998).

There is a growing consensus that chemical dependence is a “disease”, which is seen as a pathological state with characteristic signs and symptoms and a predictable course and outcome if left untreated (Chopra, 1997). Numerous authors caution against the “disease model's” objectification of addictive cravings as merely physiological events (O'Murchu, 1994; Chopra, 1997; Wilshire, 1999). Wilshire (1999) suggests that when urges and desires are not willingly and happily appropriated as truly one's own, they split off from the rest of the body-self, particularly one's will, and become “not me”. Without the ability to morally judge our urges (at some moments and at some level of awareness) we could feel no guilt, thus absolving us of responsibility for our actions.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre calls denial of this freedom *mauvaise foi*, which can be translated as “bad faith” (Gans, 1995; Von Eckartsberg, 1998). This is the case, for example, of one who excuses his excessive drinking on the grounds that he suffers from the *disease* of alcoholism. *Alcoholism* becomes a magic word designed to absolve the drinker of responsibility for his actions. From Sartre’s perspective the “disease model” undermines the element of choice and is thus a de facto insult to human beings. In so doing, the overall and immediate sense of oneself as an ongoing source of initiatives in the world, a real power, and agent is reduced (Wilshire, 1999). The model thus fails to appreciate the value of our body-selves’ need for responsibility, agency and meaning in life, derived from our perpetual energetic exchange with the world and our ecstatic responsibility for mediating and accommodating this energy.

From Sartre’s perspective, people who begin to notice that substances no longer provide them with ecstatic experiences as well as they use to, have a choice. They may begin to look for other methods of creating that experience or they may pursue the ecstatic experience through the drug more and more desperately. In the former case they will evolve away from drugs in their continuing explorations of altered states of consciousness. In the latter case they will become involved with drugs in a more and more neurotic manner, and eventually will become less free to use their energy in productive ways (Chopra, 1997; Weil & Rosen, 2004).

Chopra (1997) points out that the entire process of ingesting substances involves a series of choices which take place at every level of an individual’s existence, from the conscious thoughts that direct behaviour in the larger world, to the biochemical choices made by millions of cells throughout the body. Focus should thus be on creating conditions in which the person’s body and spirit can make the natural choices of health and joy rather than of illness and pain. For Wilshire (1999, p. 108):

“Addictions are trances, tunnels of constricted alternatives: either satisfaction now or anguish. Only in moments of grace that come like miracles does awareness dilate to include other possibilities. It is as if an unimagined horizon opens and the spell is

broken."

Through energetically opening up to ourselves and the experienced world, the world opens to us and more options present themselves. As the cycle of the natural highs that occur within the regenerative rhythms of nature are restored within, we become conscious of our inherent energetic capacities on all dimensions of our existence and learn to channel this energy regeneratively and diversely rather than constrictedly and addictively. Open to countless other regenerative ecstasies and possibilities that keep life vital and alive, our primal need, to *be* fully and significantly is satisfied, and substitute urges and gratifications are replaced by ecstatic energetic living (Adams, 1999; Weil, 2004; Wilshire, 1999).

In becoming open there is a radical transformation from a supposedly separate, egoic sense of self to a transpersonal sense of self. We become open and receptive to whatever is transpiring in the present moment. This multifaceted openness – an attitude that is radically open, humble, teachable, hopeful – that is willing to learn from any source, animal, vegetable, human, inorganic, scientific or technological, living or dead, involves a privileged mode of open awareness, that of “revelatory openness wedded with a clarity of unknowing” (Adams, 1999, p. 40).

According to A’Llerio (1999) it is precisely this state of openness that our ancestors who lived *in-the-world* practiced and indeed had to practice in order to survive. A’Llerio (1999, p. 25) describes this as a “state of ‘widened consciousness’... is lived within the natural world...it is a lived state of awareness...imbued with cultural practices, meanings and nuances”. The following section provides a basis for the exploration of the ancient worldviews of our ancestors, and explores the ways in which their wisdom may be used to free modern man from the shackles of addiction and allow us to dwell, as they did, in ecstatic kinship with all that there is.

2.4. Lessons from our ancestors

In an essay entitled *“Molecular mysticism: The role of psychoactive substances in the transformation of consciousness,”* Ralph Metzner (1989, p. 1) opens by reflecting on the following question:

“The question, simply stated, was this: why did the American Indians succeed in integrating the use of peyote into their culture, including its legal use as a sacrament to this day, when those interested in pursuing consciousness research with drugs in the dominant white culture succeeded only in having the entire field made taboo to research, and any use of the substances a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment?”

In attempting to answer this question, attention is turned to the issue of consciousness and the distinctly different ways in which each of these two groups perceive of, and make use of consciousness. Through the exploration of such differences and the ways in which our diverse ways of being-in-the-world are consequently shaped, we will be able to extract clues as to our contrasting attitudes towards and uses of mind altering techniques in general and psychoactive substances in particular. What follows is an analysis of these discrepancies which concludes with the possible ways we may learn and benefit from the wisdom cultivated by indigenous cultures and our ancestors.

In the ancient world, myth making people were confirmed, and built their selves through communion with the intimate otherness of the natural world. They instilled a vivid, life-forming sense of the world as a whole and their members' vital place in it. In their seasonal celebrations – at the shortest and the longest days of the year, for example, these people believed they were participating in, and contributing to, the renewal of all things. The movements of the heavens and the cyclic seasons were not just “out there”, but unfolded excitingly within their own bodies as well. Their consciousness was embodied and they experienced a visceral sense of the whole as well as their own part and worth within it (Edwards, 2006; Graham, 1990; McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999).

Recurrent in the philosophies and myths of our ancestors are themes of the union of sun and moon, symbolic of the union of conscious and unconscious forces within the human psyche that must take place if one is to become whole (McKenna, 1992; Weil, 2004). Weil (2004) perceives the sun and the moon to be symbolic of the mind in the true sense of the word; that is, they not only represent the dualism of consciousness but are actually expressions of that same dualism, which is manifest in the sky as well as the mind.

In human experience, solar forces manifest themselves in the life of the conscious: that aspect of mind most active in ordinary waking consciousness, which uses intellect as the chief means of making sense of reality and manipulates verbal symbols. This aspect of mind is often seen as masculine, right-handed (in the symbolic sense), day-oriented (Weil & Rosen; Weil, 2004), and can be likened to what Heidegger (1966) understands as “calculative thinking”.

Complementing and contrasting with the solar force is the lunar force, which manifests in the life of the unconscious: in dreams, intuitions, trances, and all states of consciousness where what is normally hidden from awareness breaks through. This side is seen as the feminine, left-handed, night-oriented (Weil & Rosen; Weil, 2004), and may be associated with Heidegger’s (1966) “meditative thinking”. It is that hidden consciousness we try to contact by means of breath, meditation, drugs, hypnosis, and other techniques that focus attention or shake us out of ordinary perceptions gained through everyday calculative thinking. In commenting on the “universal law of co-existing opposites,” Zimmer (Weil, 2004, pp. 132-133) writes:

“Completeness consists in opposites co-operating through conflict...the pattern of existence is woven of antagonistic co-operation, alterations of ascendancy and decline...it is built of bright and dark, day and night- Yang and Yin, in the Chinese formulation.”

According to Weil and Rosen (2004), whenever there is an interchange of masculine and feminine energies between and within the solar and lunar compartments of the mind, we

experience a “high”, and that this experience is crucial to our health and development as human beings. Anxious ego tendance is sacrificed, making room for something greater to fill the gap, and the world experienced is allowed to flow through us. It is during such moments that the self boundary becomes permeable and expands, and we are able to stand out into the surrounding world and be caught up in it ecstatically (McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999).

To our ancestors, it was obvious that the dark side of existence is integrally part of things, as night and day make up one cycle of existence. They understood that it was impossible to ignore those forces in the outside world because they carried them around within themselves. These ancestors recognised a periodic need to alter consciousness and actively cultivated altered states of transcendental experience through various ritual practices that affirmed their place in the regenerative womblike matrix of Mother Nature (Graham, 1990; McKenna, 1992; Wilshire, 1999).

Living in accordance with the natural regenerative rhythms of the world and having a deep respect for and access to the lunar forces within themselves, our ancestors had a visceral or felt-sense of what it is like “to be whole” (A’Llerio, 1999; Graham, 1990; Wilshire, 1999). This wisdom was not a function of intellect or reasoning, but an intuitive grasping of the truth of things. Their instinctive apperception of reality which Judith (2004, p. 17) describes as “our inherent attunement with the magical,” affirmed the fundamental link between health and nature.

Our ancestors engaged daily in what Heidegger refers to as “meditative thinking,” by actively cultivating moments of transformative experience, which enhanced their primordial sense of being-in-the-world through rituals such as fasting, mindful breathing, participating in the sweat lodges, meditation, yoga, drumming, ritualized use of plant drugs, vision quests, and so on. These ceremonies and ritual practices were simultaneously religious, medicinal, and psychotherapeutic and expressed and reinforced the integration of body, mind, and spirit (A’Llerio, 1999; Edwards, 2006; Graham, 1990; Metzner, 1989; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Weil & Rosen; 2004). Through such practices,

they cultivated “preconceptual experiences” which, according to A’Llerio (1999) serve as a vessel in the movement toward, and change to, a wider consciousness. This state of awareness is regarded as “a highly developed mode of consciousness *within which* the intellect functions” (A’Llerio, 1999, p. 114). Drugs were seen as only one of many ways to access lunar consciousness, and when they were used, they were done so within symbolizing practices and ritual settings that have evolved through untold centuries of adaptation with regenerative nature, and with the specific intention of cultivating a state of wider or what we refer to in the west as “mystical” consciousness. The relative lack of attachment to the ego and intellect of our ancestors facilitated access to the lunar forces of intuition and ensured the natural state of openness between their conscious and unconscious minds, which according to Weil and Rosen (2004), is a precondition for the ecstatic experience, and one that we no longer experience in our day to day existence.

Analysis of the existential incompleteness within us that drives us to form relationships of dependence and addiction with plants and drugs, suggests that at the dawn of civilization we lost something extremely precious, the absence of which has made us ill with narcissism (McKenna, 1992; Miller & Swinney, 2000). Fromm (Clinebell, 1963), holds that the emergence of man from the womb of nature into self-awareness, reason and imagination brought with it the burdens of a sense of estrangement from nature and ones fellows. Mircea Eliade claims the disappearance of ritual and initiation is one of the principal differences between the ancient and modern world, the absence of which has led to modern versions of loss of soul - consumerism, feelings of insignificance, depression, addiction, identity crisis, existential despair, malaise, and meaninglessness (Miller & Swinney, 2000).

Modern technology according to Wilshire (1999) has destroyed the seamless mythic matrix that guided and empowered earlier person’s choices day by day, stage of life by stage, and provided intrinsically satisfying excitements and contentments. The lack of ritual means of coordinating the visceral center of our being with the regenerative cycles of kindred beings in nature has resulted in the objectification of the body. Lacking awareness of our true source of energy attained through ritualized practices, we intervene

directly in the brain with psychoactive chemicals that ignore traditional rhythms of sustaining interaction with the earth and their attendant stories and rituals.

According to Heidegger, we have lost touch with our natural capacity for “meditative thinking” - a craft that we have forgotten about through becoming too good at calculative thinking (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). In other words, we have become so efficient at mastering our intellects that we have lost touch with the lunar forces within ourselves and the guiding functions of intuition that sustained our ancestors for untold millennia. We are thus cut off from preconceptual experiences, and are disentrained from the natural rhythms of supporting nature (Weil, 2004; Wilshire; 1999). Consequently, we habitually rely on artificial substitutes to experience fleeting moments of integration and belonging, which only leave us more fragmented and isolated when the artificial “highs” wear off. Along with the resulting existential loneliness, comes the inevitable conviction that we are surrounded by a hostile universe.

Current society it seems, has forgotten that the intellect is only one component of the mind. We have come to believe that the intellect is equivalent to the mind, and as such, abandoning the intellect becomes equivalent to losing ones mind (McPeake, Kennedy & Gordon, 1991; McKenna, 1992; Weil, 2004). The terror the ego feels in contemplating the dissolution of boundaries of self and world not only lies behind the fear and suppression of altered states of consciousness in our culture, but more generally, explains the suppression of the feminine, the foreign and exotic, the lunar force, and transcendental experiences, the absence of which has robbed us of life’s meaning and our capacity for ecstatic living (McKenna, 1992; McPeake et al., 1991; Weil, 2004).

However, as noted by Wilshire (1999, p. 73), there is always something about crossing the boundary or horizon between civilization and wilderness that is dangerous but essential for our vitality: “Fullness of life towards which we are pulled ecstatically, and need to be, also frightens, for we are drawn into the not - yet, the unknown, and there are no guarantees of safety...The incalculable interfusing must therefore be lived through, endured or enjoyed.”

The “romantic” conception of reality as organically and energetically interdependent is just beginning to permeate into the popular consciousness. Up until now, this consciousness has been constricted by tunnel vision, that is, by addictive absorption in calculative thinking and objectivism. Certain authorities believe that the eruption of drugs into the rational, middle-class world is a social analogue of the breaking through of non-ordinary experience into an individual’s ordinary awareness (McKenna, 1992; McPeake et al., 1991; Weil, 2004). It represents, above all, the tendency of the universe to reach equilibrium and harmony by balancing forces against their opposites. Weil (2004, p. 174) quotes Zimmer:

“...every lack of integration in the human sphere simply asks for the appearance, somewhere in space and time, of the missing opposite. And the personification, the embodiment, of that predestined antagonist will inevitably show its face.”

Weil (2004) believes that the antagonistic outward appearance of drugs in current society conceals a force, which is, for us, the missing opposite. We have denied the reality and power of the nonmaterial, the non-intellectual, the non-rational, and the non-ordinary, and in the form of mass addiction, we are compelled to take these forces into account and to integrate them into our consciousness. Weil (2004, p. 175) writes: “And how perfect that this force first showed its strength in the very centres of our unbalanced rationality – our universities! Why else did Alpert and Leary, representing an opposite extreme, materialize at Harvard University in 1960, except in response to a universal law by which all forces must add up to zero at any moment”.

It seems the modern conception of mind as self-inventorying, calculating, detached consciousness places us at a despondent distance from the periodicities and spontaneities of nature, her stresses and relaxations, to which our ancestors belonged and viscerally experienced. Our obsession with the intellect, the primary functions of which are discrimination and classification – functions based upon the perception of *differences* in the appearance of things - has led us to perpetually attempt to objectify the world and so, we have become stranded, fragmented selves.

Ever repeated, impulsive, and misdirected attempts to meet our deepest needs for wholeness constitute the addictions with which our culture is rife. By contrast, our ancestors, who were in touch with the lunar forces within themselves and who learned to forsake ego consciousness, were able to experience an overwhelming sense of the essential *similarity* of all things. It is this direct perception of unity that is the very heart of mystical experience, and forms the foundation for ecstatic living (Weil, 2004).

A century ago, Nietzsche (Sagiv, 2000, p. 160) foresaw the end of reason's hegemony and the resurrection of the Dionysian spirit, as he wrote, "The disaster slumbering in the womb of theoretical culture gradually begins to frighten modern man.... the most certain auspices guarantee... *the gradual awakening of the Dionysian spirit* in our modern world!" And indeed, that same Western civilization, which for centuries had denied the Dionysian urge for ecstasy, has, in the second half of the twentieth century, witnessed the eruption of the enormous energies associated with this primal force.

The exploration of music and drug-induced trance states at mass stupefying parties or "raves" is only one element of what McKenna (1992, p. 1) called the "archaic revival" which "sought to remove social constructs and packaged identities in order to discover a primal realm of ecstatic intensity and tribal identification". Berry (Wilshire, 1999, p. 25) comments:

"We are indeed into a deep cultural pathology. The ecstatic experience functions as the basis of all civilizations. When the power of ecstasy is subverted into destructive channels, then as in the late Roman world, we are into a disastrous situation, to be cured only by a healing experience at the ecstatic level. There is no way that purely rational processes can provide a remedy."

Such healing comes, according to A'Llerio (1999) through the cultivation of moments of transformative experience during which conscious and unconscious, volitional and non-volitional, solar and lunar aspects are integrated, thereby allowing the whole world to excite resonances in the viscera, as we recollect our primordial, ecstatic sense of being-

in-the-world. Through such transformative experience, we reconnect ourselves with nature's regenerative energetic matrix, sense the mystery of oneness with everything, and develop new modes of world-consciousness as well as a visceral sense of being at home in the world.

Ancient African, Greek, Indian, and Chinese cultures have come close to living in perfect harmony with nature, perfectly illustrating the energetic and regenerative process of "power returning unto itself," and serve as prime examples of non-addictive, energetic and ecstatic being-in-the-world. The following section offers a deeper exploration of the worldviews of these cultures, which serve as the foundation on which the "energy model" in this dissertation is based.

2.4.1. African worldview

The Egyptian worldview was essentially holistic, and the universe was seen as harmoniously interrelated. Life in the heavens and life on earth were considered to be one, an indivisible unity. Human beings considered themselves indistinguishable from their environment, products of the same forces of nature responsible for creation of the heavens and the earth (Dimitrov, 2003; Graham, 1990; Hayes, 1999). Unity was ever present, and in the great Egyptian temples all branches of learning were housed under the same roof, and were regarded as aspects of the single wisdom. All diverse branches including magic, religion, and medicine were encapsulated within this sacred wisdom and were inextricably linked, catering for the whole person, in mind, body and soul (Dimitrov, 2003; Graham, 1990).

The vision of the worlds beginning was a reflection of the Egyptians experience of their own land. On an ancient hill (the "primeval mound"), the Egyptians believed that *Ra*, the Sun God stood alone in his self created form as Atum. Conscious of being alone, Atum dreamed up the universe, sent his seed into the chaos and brought life into being (Hayes, 1999). His body was scattered throughout the universe as photons, matter, and energy; the seed of all natural forms. His spirit therefore infused all things, which secretly longed

to return to the perfect spirit-body of Atum. This was considered to be the essential preoccupation of humanity and accomplished by merging the cosmic energy of Ra with earth energy in a vital human “life-force” called *ka* (Edwards, Hlongwane & Thwala, 2005; Graham, 1990; Hayes, 1999).

The African worldview is essentially holistic and emphasizes the dynamic interrelatedness of all phenomena. Reality is seen at once as spiritual and material, with an ever-present energy as the source and essence of all that exists. All that exists is perceived to be spirit manifested, whereby “spirit” is known in a paranormal way (in the form of energy/consciousness/God) and an extended self-concept, including ancestors, the yet unborn, nature and the wider community (Edwards et al., 2005).

The ancestors are regarded as people who have passed on but who remain present in an alternate form, and are often referred to as the living dead (*abangasekho*), as their presence remains with and continues to be experienced by their surviving relatives, whose lives are guided and shaped through their eternal connection to these ancestors (Edwards et al., 2005; Phillips, 1990).

The central emphasis placed on the communal psyche is expressed in the Zulu saying “*umuntu umuntu ngabantu*”, literally referring to the fact that a person becomes a person only through other people (I am because we are). As noted by Edwards, Hlongwane, Thwala & Nzima (2006), such a concept holds deeper implications of a shared sense of self, including the common ancestral heritage of contemporary humanity.

Healing is therefore an integrating force, involving a focusing of life energy (*n/um*) through breath coordinated movement, culminating in healing on all dimensions of existence, and simultaneously affecting the individual, the group, the surrounding environment, as well as the greater cosmos (Edwards et al., 2005).

2.4.2. Greek worldview

The ancient Greeks saw the universe as a kind of organism sustained by *pneuma*, meaning “breath” or “cosmic life force”, in the same way that the human body is supported by air (Graham, 1990, p. 80). All knowledge concerned understanding the meaning and purpose of natural phenomena and living in accordance with the natural order. Explorations of reality presumed identity between universal forces and the forces within the human being (the “little universe”), and an understanding of the one was believed to result in a knowledge of the other (Pierrakos, 1987).

The Greeks saw science, religion and philosophy as fundamentally linked, and were chiefly concerned with discovering the essential nature or real constitution of all things, which they called *physis* (Shapero, 2000). They perceived the material world to be “alive,” endowed with wisdom and a kind of inner life and sentience of its own, which gave the ancient Greek worldview a mystical flavour (Capra, 1991; Shapero, 2000). The sages of the Milesian school saw no distinction between animate and inanimate, spirit and matter, and perceived all forms of existence as manifestations of the *physis* endowed with life and spirituality (Capra, 1991; Graham, 1990).

Heracleitos is renowned for his theory of “all things in flux,” - a vision of the world in which all things are temporary and where there is ultimately no absolute but change (Shapero, 2000). His ideas resemble modern quantum mechanics, in which the “material world” is really composed of whirling clouds of particles, which only appear to be solid from our perspective. Heracleitos also remarked on the pervasiveness of pairs of opposites in our world: night and day, light and darkness, birth and death, good and evil—and perceived any pair of opposites as a unity and subject to constant change. This unity which contains and transcends all opposing forces, he called the Logos, an ultimate wisdom or cosmic intelligence which controlled all things (Capra, 1991; Shapero, 2000).

2.4.3. Indian worldview

The thinkers of ancient India considered there to be a connection among all phenomena, a unity which pervades the entire universe, including God (Graham, 1990). The general picture emerging from Hinduism is one of an organic, growing and rhythmically moving cosmos. All phenomenal existence is viewed as transitory, fluid, impermanent and ever changing; a ceaseless cycle of beginning and ending. This dynamic nature of the universe, expressed in the mythical language of Hinduism, is portrayed by Shiva, the Cosmic Dancer, who, through his dance sustains the multiple phenomena in the cosmos, unifying all things by immersing them in his rhythm and making them participate in the dance (Capra, 1991).

Hindu and Buddhist seers taught that the world of appearances, the world we see with our senses is *maya* or illusion, and that something more powerful, fundamental, and “real” underlies this material realm, even though it is completely intangible. Spiritual texts reveal that consciousness can intervene to experience this “higher reality”, and the purpose of man’s existence is to learn to know ourselves for what we truly are – a manifestation of the Ultimate reality or Brahman (Graham, 1990). The word *Brahman* is derived from the Sanskrit root *brih* – to grow – and thus suggests a reality which is dynamic and alive (Capra, 1991). Its teaching therefore is that a man can by personal effort and use of inner knowledge attain union with the divine while on earth. Its aim is to harmonize all. This is possible because Brahman and the individual soul (atman), though seemingly apart, are in actuality one (Graham, 1990).

Spiritual traditions from India speak of an intangible material substance that is continually in motion and pervades the entire universe. This universal energy called *Prana* or breath was seen as a force, or energetic field, and was the primary constituent of all life (Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2006; Graham, 1990; Kapur, 1975). The manipulation and enhancement of *prana* was, and still is the basis of yogic practices that sought to alter consciousness and restore vitality, allowing those who practiced it to ultimately enter into a state of divine enlightenment (Kapur, 1975).

2.4.4. Chinese worldview

The ancient Chinese put forth two classic philosophies that represent the two sides of Chinese character. Confucianism stressed social order and practical knowledge. Taoism on the other hand was far more mystical (Graham, 1990; Reisser, Reisser & Weldon, 1983). Its spiritual father, Lao-tze, expounded on the concept of the Tao, or “the way,” denoting the cosmic process in which all things are involved. Like Indian spiritualists, Chinese sages saw the world in terms of flow and change and thus gave the idea of a cosmic order an essentially dynamic connotation (Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2006; Graham, 1990).

The Chinese recognize the magical link between man, nature and the universe which flow in an endless course of continuous cycles, and therefore man’s best hope for survival is to live in harmony with the great natural forces that formed us as well as our environment (Capra, 1991; Reisser et al., 1983). One should not try resist the flow, but should adapt ones actions to it, for “to go against Tao is like trying to swim upstream against a strong current – sooner or later you will exhaust your energy, grind to a halt and be swept away by the cosmic currents of Tao” (Reid, 2001, p. 3).

The original Chinese ideogram / character for Tao consists of the symbols for ‘head’ and ‘walk’ suggesting the idea of walking and thinking, of knowing the correct path and following it (Graham, 1990; Reid, 1998). In combining the idea of a “foot” and a “head” it personifies personal wholeness (from head to foot) and since the head is often equated with Heaven and the foot with Earth, it also implies cosmic wholeness (Graham, 1990). At the centre of the Taoist thinking is the concept of *chi*, which refers to the fundamental functional force that drives all activities and transformations in nature and the universe, from the smallest molecule in the human body to the pulsation of the galaxies (Graham, 1990; Reid, 1998). Reflecting on the nature of *chi*, Edwards (2002, p. 8) observes:

“It refers to the vital breath or energy animating the entire cosmos, which manifests in polarity (yin and yang), the five elements; water, earth, fire, metal, and wood and the

vital, life-force in human beings. Chi therefore refers to the most fundamental essence of life, nuclear, physical, chemical, electrical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual, to which we have direct phenomenological access through intra and interpersonal experiences and environmental relationships."

2.4.5. Parallels between worldviews

One can note clear similarities between the mystical descriptions of reality common to the world views of all these cultures. They are all holistic in recognizing the inter-relatedness of all things: all forms of knowledge such as religion, magic, and medicine are seen as inextricably linked, and there is no distinction body, mind, soul or spirit, nor between the individual and the universe. They all appreciate the supremacy of mind, consciousness and the subjective and therefore place emphasis on the psychological and spiritual as opposed to the physical and material. Finally, and of greatest significance, they all recognize the subtle energy systems within the universe (*ka, n/um, chi, prana*) and their reflection within the human body, as well as the vital animating and energizing aspects of breathing, which form the essence of their spiritual traditions (Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2006; Graham, 1990).

The similarities between these worldviews arise from their common origin in the mystical, shamanic traditions of the ancient world, which is based on a direct non-intellectual experience of reality. In this view, reality can only be known by intuition which is a direct vision and experience, transcending intellectual processes and scientific observations and reasoning. In intuition we comprehend the truth of things as a whole, as a complete process of the dynamic life of the spiritual consciousness, and only then we are able to comprehend the Absolute, God, Brahman, or Tao (Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2005; Graham, 1990).

It is now recognized that quantum physics reiterates, albeit in the language of mathematics, the occult and mystical descriptions of reality common to these ancient world views (Capra, 1991; Edwards, 2006; Reid, 1998). In fact, many of the founders of

quantum physics such as Neils Bohr, David Bohm, and Erwin Schrodinger had major interests in spiritual matters based on these ancient worldviews (Arntz, Chasse & Vicente, 2005). The similarities between ancient mysticism and modern physics seem remarkable, hence von Franz (Graham, 1990, p. 135) comments:

“Western physicists, extroverts looking outwards towards the cosmos, and introverted mystics looking inwards into their own unconscious, had discovered the same truth: that the universe is one great unity; that the process of this whole is an energy dance; and that everything is an energy phenomenon.”

It is a central premise of this dissertation that if the ancient world view is correct, or at least consistent with the latest scientific knowledge, then perhaps we may be able to draw from their wisdom and apply it to our attempts at understanding and healing addiction. The world views of these cultures, now verified by quantum physics, has been the fertile soil from which a new paradigm of healing has grown. We will now explore this “energy worldview” on which the intervention in the study is based.

2.5. The emerging energy worldview: a paradigm shift

The emerging image of reality resembles something more akin to ancient mysticism than to traditional science (Lucas, 1985). Quantum physics reveals that the whole universe appears as a dynamic web of inseparable energy patterns vibrating at varying frequencies (Capra, 1991). These energy patterns, called quanta, are the basic stuff from which the entire universe (including human beings) is composed (Arntz et al., 2005). In addition, reality is not only dependent on the observer, but is shaped by him/her, as demonstrated by Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle (Capra, 1991; Mindell, 2004). This “observer” refers not only to the scientist in the laboratory but to every human being, suggesting everyone has the ability to observe and change subatomic reality.

In addition, the universe and human brain are regarded as holographic, where all parts of the universe are viewed as essentially interconnected, containing the information of the

hole, that nature is perfectly replicated in each person, and that every cell in the human body is a microcosm of the cosmos (Edwards et al., 2005). As a result, “we can never speak about nature without at the same time speaking about ourselves” (Capra, 1991, pp. 71-72).

The union of ancient mysticism and modern physics has given rise to a model of reality referred to in this dissertation as the energy model, which integrates the body, mind, and soul into a philosophy of health and wellness while returning humanity to its linkage with nature (Lucas, 1985; Trieschmann, 1995). In this model, energy is the foundation of functioning in the world, and all physical material, including human beings, are a product of that energy (Edwards, 2006; Chopra & Simon, 2004; Graham, 1990). Thus all parts of the universe are linked and consequently interdependent. There are rhythms to the universe and the flow of energy, which promote life, account for change, and involve natural cycles (birth, growth, death, decay, rebirth, diurnal cycle, and seasonal changes) that repeat themselves and the alignment of man with these natural rhythms of the universe leads to peace, happiness, health, and well-being (Trieschmann, 1995).

As expounded by Chopra and Simon (2004), human existence is not confined to the physical reality alone, but resonates with the energy world (quantum reality) and beyond (virtual reality). These three levels of existence are central to understanding the energy world view and are outlined as follows.

The first level of existence is the physical or material domain, the visible universe. It contains matter and objects with firm boundaries, everything that is three dimensional, and it includes everything that we experience with our five senses. All our “commonsense” understanding of the world comes from what we know of this physical domain in which experience it is governed by immutable laws of cause and effect, so that everything is predictable (Chopra, 2003; Chopra & Simon, 2004).

In the second level of existence, the quantum domain, everything consists of information and energy, and therefore cannot be touched or perceived by our five senses. At this

level, where $E=mc^2$, (meaning, matter and energy are the same thing only in different forms) the various chunks of energy fields vibrating at different frequencies that we perceive as solid objects are all part of a collective energy field. We are all expressions of this communal energy and information, and therefore there is no real boundary between ourselves and everything else in the world, as we are constantly sharing portions of our energy fields (Chopra, 2003; Chopra & Simon, 2004).

The third and most fundamental, basic level of existence consists of intelligence, or consciousness, and is referred to as the virtual domain, the spiritual domain, the field of potential, or the universal being. This level of nonlocal reality operates beyond the reach of space and time, and therefore cannot be confined by any location. It is everywhere at once, and can cause multiple effects simultaneously in various locations (Chopra, 2003; Chopra & Simon, 2004). Consciousness and the material world are in fact two aspects of the same “thing”. This framework is not only consistent with Buddhism, the Indian Vedic tradition, and the mystics of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but is also favoured by quantum physics.

The intelligence of the spiritual domain is the organizing force behind all things. It is what organizes the collective energy into knowable entities, binding quantum particles into atoms, atoms into molecules, and molecules into structures. Just as information and energy forge the physical world, this nonlocal domain creates and orchestrates the activity of information and energy (Chopra, 2003). This underlying field of intelligence is, deep down what the universe really is. NASA astronaut Edgar Mitchell (as cited in Arntz et al., 2005, p. 37) came to this conclusion on his return trip from space:

“In one moment I realized that this universe is intelligent. It is proceeding in a direction, and we have something to do with that direction. And the creative spirit, the creative intent that has been the history of this planet, comes from within us, and it is out there – it is all the same... Consciousness itself is what is fundamental, and energy-matter is the product of consciousness... If we change our heads about who we are – and can see ourselves as creative, eternal beings creating physical experience, joined at the level of

existence we call consciousness - then we start to see and create this world that we live in quite differently.”

This non local way of knowing the world has been described as “clairvoyant reality”, because many mystics and seers, or clairvoyants describe this state in which they gain information in paranormal ways (Alexander, 2002). However, it is not an experience known only to mystics. This transpersonal dimension of experiencing the life-world is accessible to us all (A’Llerio, 1999; Levin, 1988). The only difference between this world and the world of ordinary experience is, in Levin’s (1988, p. 286) words, “is just awareness and intimate observation: remembering to be open, alert, and true to the givens of each experience”.

It seems that the deepest insights of existential-phenomenology correspond intimately with those from the world’s ancient spiritual traditions as well as modern quantum theory. The significance of such convergences lies in the fact that they form a holistic theoretical framework within which theories from divergent disciplines may be united, as well as a common philosophical foundation from which to explore the experiences of the substance dependent person and facilitate the natural healing process. As such these divergences will be explored in greater detail in the section that follows.

2.6. Similarities between existential-phenomenology and the energy worldview

Ross (2003) has explored the similarities of these seemingly diverse philosophies in detail. Drawing on his work, the following section intends to elucidate these areas of convergence thereby bridging the divide between eastern and western, ancient and modern views, and providing an integrated philosophical basis for understanding and healing addiction.

2.6.1. A holistic nature

The common ground, from which the energy worldview and existential-phenomenology

arise, is the concept that we “form one body with the universe” (Leder, 1990, p. 156). In other words, the universe and human beings are made up of the same elemental stuff. In the energy worldview it is the concept of chi, or life-force, which speaks of this fundamental unity of existence. We find ourselves in continuity with all things, and this continuity sustains life and well-being. Thus, Wang Yang-ming (Leder, 1990, p. 157) writes:

“Wind, rain, dew, thunder, sun, moon, stars, animals and plants, mountains, and rivers, earth, and stones are essentially of one body with man. It is for this reason that such things as the grains and the animals nourish man and that such things as medicine and minerals can heal diseases. Since they share the same material force (chi) they can enter into one another.”

This unity is expressed from an existential-phenomenological perspective in Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the “flesh”, which constitutes both the body and the world. In this notion Merleau-Ponty demonstrates his concern with the unity of existence. Sounding much like a mystic, he states: “Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself” (Ross, 2003, p. 60).

Merleau-Ponty’s insistence that the human body has the same universal qualities of the greater cosmos implies a need for research into addiction as well as all human topics, in a cosmological sense. This has been scientifically illustrated, as each cell contains the DNA-prototype as blue-print for the whole body, while the structuring at the atomic level has been equated to the structure of the universe, and corresponds significantly with Chinese philosophy, which views the human body as a microcosm of the universe, and makes no distinctions between ‘nature’ and ‘human nature’ (Reid, 1998, 2001). Such a view maintains that people go through inner cycles and the elements are recreated within us (Reid, 1998). For instance, a person’s entire way of relating to the world, and to other people, may be infused with references to Fire, while other elements may be lacking.

Husserl advocated a methodology that would overcome the artificial dichotomies in the

study of human life, and encompass insights from all disciplines that touch on reality for the individual whose life-world is studied (Lippitz, 1997). This holistic approach is especially relevant to addiction research, as the life world of the addicted person is touched on by a variety of factors that have been the separate and exclusive domain of the disciplines of psychology, pharmacology, sociology, psychiatry, theology, and physiology, to name a few (Shaffer, 1986).

Both phenomenology and the energy worldview acknowledge that only by uniting the aspects touched on by all these disciplines will we be able to arrive at a complete and holistic understanding of the experience of addiction. Indeed the idea of energy connecting all parts of the body and mind and connecting the bodymind to the universe, appreciates the notion that no single facet of human existence – by implication, all human experience – can be studied without taking the broader physiological, social, and spiritual facets of reality into consideration.

2.6.2. The requirement of a transcendental approach

"An education which leaves untouched the entire region of transcendental thought is an education which has nothing important to say about the meaning of human life" (Manas, as cited in Maslow, 1964, p. 23).

In order to discuss this aspect, we first have to consider the term transcendental. Valle (1998, p. 276) describes the transcendent as a "completely sovereign or soul awareness without the slightest inclination to define itself in terms of anything outside itself including contents of the mind, either conscious or unconscious, personal or collective (that is, awareness that is not only trans-egoic, but *trans-mind*)". In other words, an attitude that does not depend on logical reasoning, but rather on a way of understanding that goes beyond ordinary perception or conception.

This need for a beyond-logical approach is advocated by phenomenologists such as Husserl, who hold that human realities can only be understood "...in a transcendental,

philosophical manner” (Lippitz 1997, p. 69). This view is further advocated by Heidegger, who claims: “thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries, is the most stiff-necked adversary of thought” (Henry, 2001, p. 121).

The need for conceptualization beyond the restrictions of cognitive understanding is consistent with some of the highest and most noble spiritual and religious goals of humanity (Adams, 1999). In this sense, the drug subculture’s profound interest in variations in states of consciousness resonates with the philosophies of phenomenology as well as the spiritual teachings of the ancient worldviews.

In fact, Valle’s (1998) six qualities or characteristics of transpersonal awareness, based on Huxley’s “perennial philosophy”, namely, deep stillness and peace, an all pervasive aura or feeling of love, a sense of egolessness, a transformed sense of space, a sense of timelessness, bursts or flashes of insight, have been cited by numerous authors, including Huxley himself, as fundamental characteristics of drug induced experiences (Weil, 2004; Hofmann, 1980; Watts, 1962; Tart, 2000). Although sensory or “esthetic” experiences with drugs are less profound than other kinds such as meditation and mystic rapture, they share intrinsic, transcendental qualities.

For this reason our method of enquiry must be capable of understanding transcendental phenomena if we are to completely comprehend the transcendental aspects of the addictive experience. In sum, both phenomenology and Taoism as philosophies require of the researcher in the humanities to be appreciative of the complexities of the transcendental nature of the addict’s journey, which surpasses the empirical realm of understanding.

2.6.3. The “empty” mind: an attitude of non-control of data

Phenomenology requires the researcher to refrain from controlling variables, but rather to look at all aspects of the phenomenon to be studied. It takes on a subjective approach, in

the sense that experience is of cardinal importance (Edwards, 2006; Von Eckartsberg, 1998). This sentiment regarding the approach of the researcher is also consonant with Taoist thought, as the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu (Kwok, Palmer & Ramsay, 1994, p. 165) clearly states:

*To act as if you know it all is catastrophic;
And if you try control it
You will stare into your empty hand.*

In terms of addiction research, it seems that we have been staring into our empty hands for a long time. Despite our capacity for classification, addictive behaviours still seem to defy satisfactory understanding. Addiction researchers guided by theories from the natural sciences, are often unaware of the embedded assumptions of the paradigms from which they work, and tend to form implicit attitudes, hunches, and observations about addiction and control data to support these assumptions (Shaffer, 1986; Weil, 2004).

The phenomenological strategy of “epoche” aims to avoid this pitfall in its movement away from pre-cast notions in order to let the phenomenon speak for itself. It supposes divorcing oneself from theoretical assumptions or the framework of the natural sciences and gives recognition to the subject’s field of significance. Only then will we be able to elicit the often inarticulate voice of the addict’s interior experience (Gray, 2004). This dissertation proposes that the limitations of our own cognitively-sound constructs seem unable to understand the nature of addiction and should thus be acknowledged.

2.6.4. A focus on essences

The term “essence” refers to that quality of any phenomenon that is fundamental to it, and that is central to its existence (van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological method requires an understanding of these essences as fundamental aspects of the life-world (Ross, 2003). Lao-tzu (Kwok et al., 1994, p. 57) expressed this need to focus on central key dynamics and the importance of keeping central issues in mind in the following

command: "Go towards the hub that is the center".

From the energy worldview, the body is seen in terms of *chi* (energy) without which the concept of life is unimaginable. In this model, energy *is* life, it *is* our essence, both literally and symbolically. Emotional, physical and spiritual problems are seen in terms of blockages in the flow of energy through the body, which are related to realities within the wider sphere of existence. It is a central premise of this study that the energy systems promote an in-depth understanding of the essences of human life as far as possible, and that without eliciting and understanding the "essence" (the center or fundamental aspect) of any particular addiction, repetitive cycles can not be broken.

2.6.5. An understanding of the flux between interdependent realities

This subsection deals with the continual changes that are part of reality. These can be likened to the natural cycles composed by opposites such as day and night, or birth and death. Both the phenomenological movement, as well as the energy worldview relate to this expression of reality (Ross, 2003).

Ross (2003, p. 43) holds that phenomenological analysis has to recognize dimensions of the whole in terms of "presence and absence, sameness and otherness, rest and motion". Heidegger also conceived of our existence being in progress, undergoing changes as we live. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty described the forces constituting the life-world of individuals as in a state of flux to each other (Von Eckartsberg, 1998). This idea is expressed from an energy worldview in the occult and mystical descriptions of reality as well as Einstein's questioning of a fixed and unchangeable universe, and may be seen in the human microcosm in one's experience of the natural cycles of excitements and dormancy, or "highs" and "lows".

Consonant with this notion is the Tao pattern of yin/yang, which deals with the state of motion of corresponding aspects of reality, such as the change of seasons. Significant is the adoption of the yin/yang sign by phenomenologists in order to illustrate the

interdependence between phenomenological realities as understood and as existential/lived terms (Von Eckartsberg, 1998). This point of convergence between the two philosophies is of profound importance in understanding the participants in this study holistically, and in a constant state of change or becoming.

In sum, numerous convergences may be noted between existential-phenomenology and the mystical philosophies underlying the energy worldview. The significance of these convergences for addiction research is that the life world of individuals can be enriched by viewing the addicted person as a body of energy, as a more comprehensive picture of the person and his/her personal, social, and spiritual connections would then be possible.

Moving from the philosophical foundations to their practical applications in healing, the following chapter explores the evolution of energy healing, providing the reader with an in-depth understanding of the energy interventions used in this study and the specific value that each one holds in facilitating the healing process.

CHAPTER 3: ENERGY HEALING

*"In the instant of my intent
And you reaching out for peace
Comes the healing –
Interacting fields
Chakras spinning
Meridians balancing
Energies dancing
Flows restoring
Realigning
To the center
For full-energy living."*

(Hover-Kramer, 2002)

3.1. Introduction

The following section documents the evolution of energy healing as it has been practiced throughout time, while outlining the healing interventions used in this study. The aim of this section is to provide the reader with an in-depth understanding of the nature of energy healing in all its various forms as well as an understanding of the functional value of each of these forms in the treatment of addiction. We begin by exploring traditional energy healing systems as understood and practiced by ancient African, Indian, Chinese, and Greek energy healers. We then trace the progression of western energy healing through the contributions of key thinkers and healers up until its refined contemporary form, and end with a phenomenological understanding of the experienced of being healed with energy.

Although the intervention in this study encompassed all the concepts and healing systems described below, specific emphasis has been placed on the Chinese and Indian healing patterns, as they form the basis of the intervention in this study, as well as the primary systems in which addiction will be explored in the chapters to come. A more detailed description of the intervention is provided in the methodology section of the study.

3.2. The evolution of energy healing

Edwards (2006) traces the etymology of the term “energy healing” to the Greek roots *energeia*, (activity), the German terms *heilin* (whole), *heilig* (holy) and English terms *hael* (whole), *haelen* (heal) and *halig* (holy). Thus, from an etymological point of view, to be healthy is to be whole or holy, thereby incorporating both physical and spiritual facets of humanity.

Energy healing is based on the premise that any physical or emotional difficulty one faces has a counterpart in ones energy system and can be treated at that level (Feinstein et al., 2005). Healing techniques cleanse the body at the most basic cellular level, restoring balance and harmony to the patterns of energy flow within and without the subtle energy system while simultaneously addressing and cultivating the spiritual nature of the person. The underlying energetic aspect of the problem is addressed through attunement, manual muscle tensing, and various processes that involve having clients stimulate their bodies at discrete locations by holding or tapping, assuming specified body postures and movements, visualization, use of affirmations, expressed intentions and assertions, and long distance healing (Edwards, 2006; Gallo, 2002).

3.3. Traditional forms of energy healing

Traditional forms of energy healing have their origins in the observation of the perpetual rhythms that occur in nature which promote life, account for change and involve natural cycles that repeat themselves. Human health is seen as inextricably linked to the health of the environment, as well as to the health of all living creatures. Peace, happiness, and well-being is thus dependent on the successful alignment of the human energy system with the natural rhythms of the universe. This is typically experienced through the life-breath as a form of bridge between nature, God, ancestors, body, mind and world (Edwards, 2006; Trieschmann, 1995).

3.3.1 African traditions

Magic for the Egyptians was akin to psycho-spiritual alchemy – the transformation of consciousness from the world of ordinary experience to that of the gods (Alexander, 2002). This was achieved through channeling and merging earth energy with cosmic energy in a vital human energy body called *ka* (Graham, 1990; Edwards et al., 2005). Energy healers had a cosmological view of life and acknowledged cycles of the sun, seasons, the flooding of the Nile, and the therapeutic potential of other rhythms in life, music and movement (Graham, 1990; Edwards et al., 2005).

Much of what we know about Egyptian energy healing comes from the Smith and Ebers' papyri (Schiegl, 1987). In the papyrus it says: "Lay your hand on him to ease his pain and order his suffering to disappear" (Schiegl, 1987, p. 13). The vital energies were thought to be absorbed and regulated by a finer etheric or spiritual 'body', which enveloped the physical body, and the temple priests sought to direct these forces by passes over the body (Graham, 1990).

African energy healing is a spiritual, integrating and enhancing force which emphasises the dynamic interrelatedness of all life through the ancestors. Great emphasis is thus placed on the communal psyche and extended family kinship ties, which are experienced through an ongoing communication with the energy of the recently deceased and older dead ancestors, who continue to be experienced as responsible for shaping the lives of surviving relatives and contemporary humanity at large (Edwards et al., 2005; Edwards, et al., 2006).

Edwards et al. (2006) describes a typical spiritual healing dance by the Southern African Kalahari *!Kung* people, whereby, the women of the camp sit around the fire as night approaches and begin singing and rhythmically clapping, indicating the start of the healing dance. It is significant to note that this is a spiritual-communal healing ceremony and the entire camp participates. The men of the camp, occasionally joined by the women, dance around the singers with growing intensity and enthusiasm as *n/um*

(energy), in those members who are healers, is set into motion and continues to grow in intensity until they reach "a form of enhanced consciousness" (*'kia*) during which they heal their fellow community members at the ceremony. The dance often extends into the following morning while the camp members explore and confirm their spiritual selves (Edwards et al., 2006).

3.3.2. Indian traditions

Ayurveda is Sanskrit for "science of life" and is believed to be the grandfather of all holistic health systems, evolving approximately 3000 – 5000 years ago among the Brahmin sages of ancient India (Boucher, 2005). It seeks to heal the fragmentation and disorder of the mind-body complex and restore wholeness and harmony through the recognition of the influence of consciousness on the body (Edwards et al., 2005; Graham, 1990). It is essentially cosmological in nature as the formative elements in the universe are believed to also make up the human body. The human being is therefore seen as the material expression of space or emptiness, wind or air, fire, water and earth, along with the element of thought, which resides in the body (Pierrakos, 1987). Health is therefore considered to be a balance between these constituent qualities and energies of man and the universe.

Energy patterns in *Ayurvedic* medicine are understood in terms of the three operating principles called doshas and the five elements space, air, fire, water, earth. The *vata* dosha, which controls movement is composed of air and space, *Pitta*, which controls metabolism, is made up of fire and water, and *Kapha* which controls structure, is constituted from water and earth. (Edwards et al., 2005). It is through the doshas that the energy and information of the universe makes itself present in our bodies and our lives. An individual's mind body system is defined by the proportions of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha in his/her physiology – and by the extent to which the current proportions deviate from their "ideal" doshic balance called *Prakriti*, which is set at the beginning of one's life. Chopra (1997) explicates the significance of understanding the experience of addiction from imbalances in these doshas.

From an Ayurvedic point of view, the impatience (for sensation, excitement, and acceptance) that characterizes drug use is indicative of a Vata imbalance (associated with movement and air). Drugs introduce an external artificial influence on mental functioning, and the ultimate effect is always to destabilize the mind's equilibrium and initiate the restlessness and unpredictability that characterizes Vata imbalance (Chopra, 1997).

People with predominantly Pitta constitutions are generally goal-oriented and demanding of themselves. When Pitta becomes unbalanced, they can become exceptionally driven, and it is not uncommon for Pitta types to become involved with drugs in the belief that they will help them achieve their objectives (Chopra, 1997). Sartre, for example, used corydrane, a powerful amphetamine daily for many years in an effort to write as much as possible. "To put it briefly," he told Simone de Beauvoir, "in philosophy, writing consisted of analyzing my ideas; and a tube of corydrane meant these ideas will be analyzed in the next two days" (Lanchester, 2002, p. 3).

Depression, lethargy, and an inactive lifestyle according to Chopra (1997) are common indicators of Kapha imbalance. In an attempt to deal with these symptoms, Kapha types are often drawn to powerful stimulants for quick bursts of energy, or to opiates such as heroin or barbiturates that simply exacerbate their inherent tendencies. In either case, natural sources of vitality are depleted rather than developed.

Ayurveda teaches that there is a memory of perfection within each of us, which is etched into every one of our cells. This memory cannot be erased, but may be covered over by toxins and impurities. From this perspective, our task in dealing with addiction is in reawakening the awareness of perfection that always resides within us. This is partly accomplished with a purification procedure known as Panchakarma, after which individuals experience a feeling of being "reborn" (Chopra, 1997; Chopra & Simon, 2004). As the body is cleansed at the most basic cellular and energetic level, emotions and spirit are likewise cleansed and restored to equilibrium. In addition, alternative experiences which eclipse the relatively short and low grade joys previously experienced

with drugs are instilled. Once an addict gains access to a deeper form of satisfaction than is possible through self destructive behavior, the path away from addiction will naturally open up (Chopra, 1997).

Tapping into this inner perfection is achieved through conscious intentionality, which reaches subtly into deeper and deeper regions of the body and material world through the cultivation of techniques such as meditation, breathing, and posturing. Such spiritual, mental, and physical skills are the special domain of Yoga (Edwards et al., 2005).

The term Yoga derives from the Sanskrit *Yuj* meaning to join or yoke, and it signifies the union of body, mind and spirit, as well as the joining of the individual with the Ultimate Reality or divine intelligence that coordinates the universe (Chopra & Simon, 2004; Graham, 1990). According to this perspective, we live life simultaneously on many levels, and our challenge is to find the unity in the diversity of our multidimensionality (Chopra & Simon, 2004).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are various layers of existence categorized into three primary divisions, the physical material domain, the quantum domain, and the nonlocal domain of pure potentiality which is the source and goal of life, and manifests as the infinitely diverse world of forms and phenomena. The goal of Yoga is to bring our attention to this realm through a subtle shift in consciousness, to learn to see with “quantum eyes” so that we may observe this universal domain and bask in its stillness and infinite creativity (Chopra & Simon, 2004).

Yoga proposes that life-energy flows up and down the spine in terms of three main energetic pathways/corridors. The first, *Ida*, carries prana in the form of feminine lunar energy along the left side of the body. The second, *Pingala* transmits masculine solar energy along the right side, and the third, *Sushumna* runs up the middle of the body connecting seven energy centers called *chakras* (Edwards et al., 2005).

The word *chakra* translates from Sanskrit as disk, vortex or wheel. The chakras are centers of swirling energy positioned at one of seven points, from the base of the spine to the top of the head through which energy is continuously exchanged between the person and the cosmic sphere (Pierrakos, 1987). Figure 3.1 illustrates the distribution of the seven chakras in the human energy system.

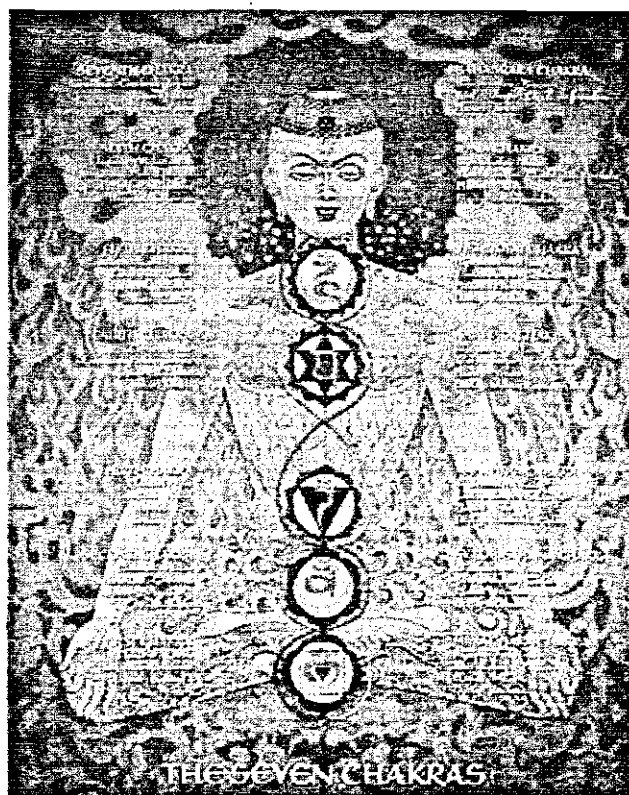


Figure: 3.1. Location of the seven chakras. Source: <http://www.chakrasystem.co.za>

Each chakra supplies energy to specific organs, corresponds to a distinct aspect of the personality, and resonates (from the bottom to the top chakra, respectively) with one of seven universal principles (Feinstein et al., 2005). Analyzing chemical dependency with the chakra system, relevance is placed on the drug of choice, which provides vital clues regarding chakra imbalances. For example, excessive eating may be an attempt to ground, related to chakra one. Stimulants or depressants relate primarily to the energy

dynamics of the third chakra (primarily concerned with identity), while alcohol creates the merging and lessening of inhibition more closely related to the second chakra (Judith, 2004). Table 3.1 below illustrates the chakra system and its basis in the wider human experience, as well as traces specific addictions to their corresponding chakras.

Name	Number	Element	Related Addictions	Location	Associated with
Muladhara	Chakra one	(earth)	Food, Gambling, Shopping, Work	Base of spine	Survival.
Svadhithana	Chakra two	(water)	Alcohol, Sex, Heroin	Lower abdomen	Emotions and sexuality.
Manipura (Nabhi)	Chakra three	(fire)	Amphetamines, Cocaine, Caffeine, Work, Anger	Solar plexus	Power and will.
Anahata	Chakra four	(air)	Tobacco (smoking), Sugar, Love, Marijuana	Just over the sternum (Heart)	Love and balance.
Vishudda	Chakra five	(sound)	Opiates, Marijuana	Throat	Communication and creativity.
Agnya (Ajna)	Chakra six	(light)	Hallucinogens, Marijuana	Center of forehead (brow)	Intuition and imagination.
Sahasrara	Chakra seven	(thought)	Religion, Spiritual practices	Top of head	Knowledge and understanding.

Table 3.1. *Addiction within the chakra system.*

Source: Judith, A. (2004). Eastern Body, western mind: Psychology and the chakra system as a path to the self (revised). Berkeley: Celestial Arts (p. 150).

Drawing on the wisdom of the Indian healing systems of Ayurveda and Yoga, numerous authors including Chopra (1997), McPeake et al. (1991), Weil (2004), and O’Murchu (1994) recommend the following energy interventions for dealing with addiction:

3.3.2.1. Yoga

Although all eight forms of yoga assist in their own way in healing addiction, postural and meditative yoga are considered most beneficial. From an Ayurvedic perspective,

when addictive behaviour has been present for some time, the excessively influential dosha is virtually always Vata. As Vata is associated with air and space, it is pacified by yoga postures that create a “grounding” effect and allow the addicted person to reconnect with the sensations of the body (Chopra, 1997). The body-mind dissociation created by substance abuse is thus reversed by the physical practice of the yoga *asanas* (Wesa & Culliton, 2004). Since emotions have been habitually suppressed through addictive behaviour and stored within the energy system of the body, it is not uncommon for the addicted person to initially experience episodes of powerful feelings that are released through postures by tuning into the body (Trieschmann, 2001).

Yoga has been used for treating substance abuse for many years both in India and the United States (Wesa & Culliton, 2004). One study suggested that the postures, breathing and meditation that comprise the practice of yoga help the addict become more sensitized to the energy of the mind and body, and teaches him/her to focus that energy intentionally (Boucher, 2005). Luskin (2004) suggests that the practice of Yoga leads the addict to long term spiritual transformation, toward an enhanced awareness of spirit, and a corresponding diminishment of identification with the mental and physical aspects of life. McPeake et al. (1991) point out the practical benefit of providing the individual with a healthy alternative to satisfy his desire/need to alter consciousness.

3.3.2.2. Meditation

All addictions have one thing in common: their power depends on something external, something extrinsic to the individual self (Chopra, 1997; Mindell, 2004; Weil, 2004; Myss & Shealy, 1999; Judith, 2004). In contrast, meditation comes entirely from within, and is the antithesis, of addictive behaviour. Weil and Rosen (2004) point out that Yoga as well as every major religion and system of mind development that stresses the value of direct experience urges the avoidance of chemical highs primarily because drug experience strongly reinforces the illusion that highs come from external, material things rather than within ones own nervous system. Herein lies the importance of meditation which helps overcome this illusion by providing enhanced, clearer highs than can be

achieved through drugs and do not diminish with repeated use (McPeake et al., 1991; Weil & Rosen, 2004).

Meditation allows one to connect to the tranquility, stillness, silence, and interconnectedness of all virtual energy operating at the quantum level through its capacity to quieten the restless chain of thoughts that we produce in ordinary consciousness (Edwards, 2006; O'Murchu, 1994). It cultivates a sense of inner harmony and integration that enables one to grow spiritually, thus reclaiming the essential unity and interconnectedness at every level of ones existence (O'Murchu, 1994). Over time, one learns to use this state of restful alertness as a kind of internal compass or centering point, a place of strength from which the influence of spirit can spread through all areas of ones life (Chopra, 1997). Through this practice the addicted person experiences a *rediscovery* of his/her inner spiritual nature.

O'Connell and Alexander (1995) reviewed 30 studies regarding the efficacy of meditation in substance abuse treatment and found it helpful in reducing alcohol and drug use in each of the 30 studies. In other studies, rates of success have ranged from 65 percent in a controlled trial of alcohol dependence in a recidivist population, to 98 percent in a retrospective analysis of drug use among meditation program participants (Boucher, 2005).

3.3.2.3. Breathing

The vital link between breath and life has been the foundation for various religions, philosophies, beliefs, and practices throughout history. In fact, the words for *spirit* and *breath* are identical in many Indo-European languages (Edwards, 2006; Weil, 2004). All eastern and many western systems of spiritual practice place great stress on breath control which is understood as the bridge between matter, life, mind, energy, and consciousness (Edwards, 2006). Weil (2004, p. 140) quotes Lama Anagarika Govinda who describes the spiritual function of mindful breathing as follows:

"The most important result of the practice of "anapana-sati" or "mindfulness with regards to breathing," is the realization that the process of breathing is the connecting link between conscious and subconscious...volitional and non-volitional functions, and therefore the most perfect expression of the nature of all life. Those experiences that lead to the deeper states of meditation...begin therefore with the observation and regulation of breath, which in this way is converted from a autonomic or non-volitional frunction into a conscious one and, finally into a medium of spiritual forces...Breath is the key to the mystery of life, to that of the body as well as to that of the spirit."

According to Edwards (2006) mindful breathing is typically experienced as a form of vitality flowing within and without the body in the form of a perpetual exchange with the environment. It involves a reciprocal exchange of oneself and the world, through which one turns into the other and visa versa (Adams, 1999). Chopra (1997, pp. 109-110) articulates this process as follows:

"With each inhalation your body takes in tens of billions of atoms, tiny fragments of the universe that over the centuries have passed through countless members of other living beings and will continue to do so long after you are gone. In this sense, breathing is literally an act of sharing. It's a biological process that puts us in touch with the past and the future of our own species, and with all other living beings as well."

Through becoming mindful of this intimate connection with the universe and allowing the whole world to excite resonances in the viscera, we realize our place in the world and the sense of isolation so commonly experienced in addiction inevitably diminishes. In addition, becoming aware of internal functions means paying attention to sensations we ignore in our ordinary waking state, and is thus often experienced as a reawakening of inner life, as well as an experience of the sacred, thereby providing a healthy regenerative source of ecstasy, peace, joy and inner strength (Chopra, 1997; Weil, 2004;).

3.3.2.4. Physical exercise

From an Ayurvedic perspective, the process of communication with self is shut down in addiction owing to vata imbalances in the system. Exercise is seen as an opportunity for *understanding*, by reopening communication with the physical and emotional self. By moving the body, the addicted person begins to hear and interpret the sensations that pass through his/her limbs, and in the process learns a great deal about him/herself both physically and emotionally (Chopra, 1997).

As Edwards (2006, p. 12) observes, movement is intrinsically meaningful. “Movers are living the experience, experiencing the energy, realizing in motion their potential, or being the beautiful picture that brings such joy to spectators”. This here and now experience and presence is according to Edwards (2006) a precondition for meaning and transcendence, and as noted by Chopra (1997) serves to provide the addict with alternative forms of meaning and joy.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, every action contains the seeds of memory, which are called *sanskara* in Sanskrit, and the seeds of desire, which are known as *vasana*. If the memory of an action (*karma*) is pleasurable, there will naturally be a desire to repeat it (Chopra, 1997). It is now commonly understood that physical activities access some of the same neurochemical subsystems of emotion and feeling that are activated by alcohol and drug use (McPeake et al, 1991). Although exercise has been frequently cited as a source of an altered state of consciousness, for example in “runners high” or being “in the zone” (Edwards, 2006), suggestions for recovering addicts to utilize exercise for this purpose do not seem common. McPeake et al. (1991) suggest that once the person experiences a pure high of this nature, the lure of an intoxicated high becomes less attractive and tempting.

3.3.3. Chinese traditions

Chinese medicine is seen as the child of Chinese religion, and at their core both have the

same ingredients: the Tao, yin and yang, the universal energy Chi, and the five elements (Reisser et al., 1983). The Chinese see life as a continuous flow of the essential life force, or chi. In this context, healing implies movement from a disturbed or impeded chi pattern to a more balanced, harmonious one (Hover-Kramer, 2002).

The meridians are a system of energy pathways through which chi moves, and are regarded in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) as the primary functional network in the human system and the decisive factor in human health (Reid, 1998). The meridians include fourteen tangible channels that carry energy into, through and out of the body. They bring vitality and balance, remove blockages, adjust metabolism and determine the speed and form of cellular change. The meridian pathways also connect hundreds of tiny reservoirs of heat and electromagnetic energy along the surface of the skin. These are the acupuncture points, which can be stimulated with needles or physical pressure to release or redistribute energy along the meridian pathway (Feinstein et al., 2005).

3.3.3.1. Acupuncture

Acupuncture treatments are the most widely used alternative modality treatment for substance abuse today (Wesa & Culliton, 2004). TCM views the chemically dependent person as “depleted”. Acupuncture is said to address the restless, unproductive behaviour of chemical dependency by nourishing the client’s inner emptiness (Carlson, 2003). This stimulation is said to activate the spinal chord, brain stem, and hypothalamus, which in turn can trigger release of endogenous opioids (Berman & Straus, 2004). The therapeutic effects of acupuncture for treating addiction include, alleviating physical and psychological symptoms associated with withdrawal (Smith & Kahn, 1988), analgesic effects, correcting neurotransmitter imbalances related to withdrawal, mood elevation, and increased vigor and decreased sleep disturbances (Lipton, Brewington & Smith, 1994).

3.3.3.2. Chi-Gung

In addition to acupuncture, TCM speaks of energy healing occurring through therapeutic practices as *Chi-gung* and *Tai Chi*. These practices aim to optimize and restore energy to the body, mind, and spirit (Warber, Deogracia Cornelio, Straughn & Kile, 2004). This is achieved through their emphasis on energy flow, energy balance, generating positive energy, sublimating sexual into spiritual energies and harmony with nature (Edwards et al., 2005). *Chi* means breath and air and by extension, energy and vitality, while *Gung* means work, skill or practice. Hence, *Chi-Gung* refers to breathing exercises or energy work, based on the subtle skill of breath control (Edwards et al., 2005).

Chi-Gung consists of still and moving forms. Still forms include microscopic orbit meditation, which is similar to Kundalini yoga of the Indian tradition. The practitioner remains seated and still and utilizes intentional imagery and focused breathwork to circulate energy along governor and conception channels of the meridian system (Edwards et al., 2005; Reid, 1998; Trieschmann, 1995). Reid (1998) distinguishes Taoist meditation from all other traditions by what he describes as the internal alchemy of the three treasures, which integrates body and mind with energy. The three treasures of essence, energy and spirit and their external equivalents of body, breath and mind, are nurtured and transformed into the spiritual realm of pure radiant energy. Internal alchemy enables the spirit to guide energy and energy to sustain the body. According to Reid (1998), once one is able to manage ones energy directly with ones mind through internal alchemy, then meditation becomes the only practice needed to achieve health and longevity.

In moving and standing forms of chi-gung (macroscopic orbit), which includes *Tai-Chi*, the focus is on experiencing stillness while moving. It is described as a low impact, low to moderate intensity exercise, incorporating elements of relaxation, flexibility, balance, and strength, in a series of continuous breath co-coordinated movements (Edwards, Roux & Hlongwane, 2006). Wilshire (1999. pp. 212-213) provides an articulate description of the actual experience of practicing this art:

"It is action as allowing: being so rhythmical, receptive, poised, and open - yin-like, female- that the effects of movements are fed back into the system and form the production of the next movement, and so on...Centered in the viscera as we move, and turning around the axis of the backbone, we are realigned with the axis of the world...As the body experiences itself poised in the initial tremulous stillness of the first position of the Form, it is like a cobra rising erect from its coils, vibrant with potentiality...In awed silence, the regenerative presence of things are held coiled within ourselves. This way of life comes to use from ancient times when shamanic healing enacted living things with verisimilitude deriving from human bodies' ceremonial incorporation of other living animal bodies. To be poised is to be caught up in the pulsing womb of the world, space a matter of time, time a matter of space, bodies intertwining with each other."

In TCM, because of such observable effect of emotional stress on general health, emotion (energy in motion), is called the chief hooligan and the senses are known as the five thieves (Edwards, 2006). Through the practice of chi-gung, the addicted person learns to become non-reactive to emotionally provocative stimuli, becomes reacquainted with the feel of the natural rhythms of the universe within the body, learns to sense the energy flow in daily life, to eliminate those influences in life which drain energy, and to access universal energy to replenish the body supply which had been depleted in previous years of addicted life (Trieschmann, 1995; Wilshire, 1999).

Reid (1998) draws on TCM to explain the axiom of internal alchemy, that energy commands essence. He reports how in terms of brain function, the enhancement and balance of the bioelectrical energies associated with brain activity observed in those who practice chi-gung result in a significant improvement in brain chemistry, eliminating the need for recreational drugs that many use in an effort to balance their own brain chemistry. Feinstein et al. (2005) have reviewed studies which confirm such findings.

TCM has been used to treat drug addiction for more than 160 years, and has accumulated valuable experience in the detoxification and rehabilitation of addicted people. Almost all published data examined by Carlson (2003), claim that acupuncture and *Chi-Gung* are

beneficial in the treatment of drug addiction. In addition, recent research reviews on *chi-gung* and *Tai Chi* have revealed significant improvements in aerobic capacity, strength, balance, flexibility, relaxation, mood, cardio-respiratory functioning, longevity, blood pressure, osteoporosis, low back pain, arthritis, stress, anxiety, depression, quality of life, and psychosocial, and immune functioning (Edwards, 2006).

3.3.4. Japanese traditions

Japanese medicine corresponds very closely with that of Chinese. Shiatsu, the Japanese word for finger pressure, is a commonly practiced technique in Japan, which is analogous to acupressure. It employs varying degrees of touch, from the laying on of hands to firm physical pressure. Akido is a system of exercise to promote *ki* (energy) flow in the body, and corresponds closely with T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Graham, 1990).

A form of Japanese energy therapy becoming more widely known in the West is Reiki, the Japanese word for "universal life energy". Reiki is a method for connecting the universal life force or energy with the body's innate powers of healing (Carlson, 2003). It involves the channelling and balancing of energy within oneself, and from person to person facilitated through light touch or the laying on of hands, and the use of visual symbols. It emphasizes the importance of creating a trusting, loving environment in which healing can take place. It has often been described as evoking striking changes in consciousness as well as feelings of tingling, warmth, coolness, calm, and security (Warber et al., 2004; Stillerman, 1996, Graham, 1990).

The benefits of this practice in treating addiction lies in the relatively quick activation of the body-minds' self regulating healing mechanisms, and does not necessitate long hours of practice and dedication to attain optimum results. In addition, it has been proven helpful in relieving the physical symptoms of withdrawal, cleansing the body from toxins, and in calming the body and mind (Staib, 2006). The ritual provides an environment of acceptance that promotes self-worth/love, a condition believed to be crucial for the successful treatment for substance misuse (Bailey, 2007).

3.3.5. Greek traditions

The ancient Greeks theorized about the unity of all things, as well as presumed identity between universal forces and the forces within individual entities (Graham, 1990; Pierrakos, 1987). Pythagoras for instance perceived a constant interplay between the cosmos and the human being, and established a doctrine of unity, which encompassed the physical and the spiritual dimensions (Dimitrov, 2003). He placed great confidence in nature's healing mechanisms and perceived a vital energy in a luminous body, and held that its light could produce various effects in people, including cures (Leigh, Polonko & Leigh, 2004; Pierrakos, 1987). Human problems were thus seen as a disharmony, disease, or soul sickness – literally psycho pathology – and of a fundamentally spiritual nature (Graham, 1990; Alexander, 2002). Apollonius of Tyana (Dimitrov, 2003) remarked:

"Pythagoras said that the most divine art was that of healing. And if the healing art is most divine, it must occupy itself with the soul as well as with the body; for no creature can be sound so long as the higher part in it is sickly."

Interestingly, current diagnostic concepts of addiction, which focus on dependence syndrome describe a phenomenon that gradually takes over a person's life, replacing all else. Drugs come to occupy the position of a higher power. In this sense, addiction is one of the clearest, enduring models of idolatry – giving to something material that which is the rightful place of God. The teachings of Pythagoras seem to add support to the contention that in healing addiction, attention should be paid to assisting the person to become aware of and access their inherent energy on the spiritual dimension of existence, as it seems that it is in this often neglected realm that the problem primarily manifests.

Hippocrates inherited the presumption of ultimate unity and established a body of theory that bears some analogies to ayurvedic teachings. He believed the human organism was made up of four humors – blood, bile, atrabile and phlegm – which correspond with the properties of heat (fire), dryness (earth), cold (air) and moisture (water) (Edwards, 2006;

Pierrakos, 1987). As such, he integrated medicine into the universal laws of nature, which were believed to direct the energies within the patient. The task of the physician was to ally himself with these internal energies to effect treatment, and look to the relationship between the disease and cosmic circumstances such as the status of the constellations, the season and atmospheric events (Pierrakos, 1987).

Hippocrates therefore placed great emphasis on the body's natural capacity for healing – the *vix medicatrix naturae* – a life force inherent in all living organisms (Graham, 1990; Pierrakos, 1987). He described a "biofield of energy" that was a force flowing from people's hands and suggested that:

"There is a vital power in every organism which not only sustains life but maintains it against all the innumerable adverse forces seeking to destroy it. It is this possession of Life-Force which makes the difference between organic and inorganic life" (Westlake, 1985, p. 27).

He therefore believed that nature, not the doctor was the source of healing, and that the healing process is only designed to facilitate the body's own self healing. Physicians were therefore instructed to find the blocking influences both within a patient and between them and the cosmos, in order to restore the healing life force (Graham, 1990; Pierrakos, 1987). Like the ancient Greeks, contemporary energy healers typically see their role as *therapia*, attendance. Drawing on the wisdom of the ancient Greeks to guide our work in treating addiction, we are reminded that perhaps our real task lies in providing an optimal healing environment in which the addicted person's inherent healing life-force can function at its maximum capacity and in accordance with the greater forces of the cosmos.

The wisdom of these ancient healers and the role of energy in healing continued to influence the western world's ideas on health and illness and provided the foundation on which modern energy interventions rest. In the following subsection we examine the key thinkers in energy healing and their contributions to attaining a deeper and more

sophisticated knowledge of working with energy in the healing process.

3.4. The history of western energy healing

Although all consequent energy healers were influenced by the traditional forms previously described, each thinker explored different facets of energy healing and came to their own understanding of the way this healing energy works. We now explore the various contributions and concepts that have helped to shape and mold energy healing into the comprehensive practice it is today.

3.4.1. Illiaster: holistic healing in the middle ages

Paracelsus (1493-1541) believed that a vital force radiated within and around man “like a luminous sphere,” and all organic functions were determined by the activity of this force (Regush, 1974). This force or magnetic influence he believed could be used to heal and even made to act at a distance. He named the healing force *illiaster* (Leigh et al., 2004) and believed it to be a spiritual essence, everywhere present and invisible.

“If there were no teacher of medicine in the world,” he once asked, “how would I set about to learn the art?” His reply was that he could learn “from the open book of nature” (Regush, 1974, p. 1). He described three kingdoms acting in the constitution of man; namely, the external physical body; the inner (astral) man, and the innermost center, or God. Mans divine spirit according to Paracelsus is therefore able to restore the health of his physical form. Medicine for him was therefore essentially a holy science.

It seems fitting to begin our enquiry as to the nature of contemporary energy healing with Paracelsus, as his work provides the context on which many subsequent theories are based. Energy healing is today very much as it was in the middle ages: cosmological, holistic, and as Edwards et al. (2005, p. 3) notes “essentially psychological, in the original and literal meaning of this term, in its concern with the logos (study) of the psyche (breath, energy, consciousness, soul, or spirit of life that leaves a person at death

and continues in some other form)". Centuries later, the writings of Paracelsus significantly influenced Franz Anton Mesmer.

3.4.2. The energy of Mesmerism

Mesmer described an unknown force which "penetrates the deepest core of any matter, pouring out from the infinite celestial space," effecting our health (Schiegl, 1987, p. 22). Mesmer viewed the body as a magnet and illness as the faulty distribution of magnetic fluid, which he attempted to redistribute by passing his hands over the body in a similar way that metal is magnetized (Graham, 1990). He believed someone well endowed with this energy he called "animal magnetism" could learn to safely transfer it to another human being and obtain miraculous healings (Regush, 1974).

Although his healing efforts were dismissed as quackery, Mesmer contributed greatly to the idea that a life energy exists, and was among the first to discover that this life force could be transmitted from one being to another (Graham, 1990). In so doing he laid the foundations for energy healing and influenced a long line of energy healers who were to adopt and refine his ideas.

3.4.3. Odic Force and energy fields

Decades later Reichenbach discovered an emanation of fluid he described as 'cosmic dynamite', and he named it Od, after the old German concept of the all-prevading god, Odin (Schiegl, 1987). He proposed that like the mysterious concept of ether, Od radiates from all physical matter and flows freely throughout the universe. This Force had a positive and negative flux, and according to Reichenbach, "with each breath, with each movement, with each contact with objects and other people, Od can be transmitted or taken in, depending on the polarization of the object or person concerned" (Schiegl, 1987, p. 34). Reichenbach discovered that Od energy displayed field-like qualities and he could manipulate a persons Odic field by passing his hands over the body without touching it. In addition, his patients and research participants were influenced by the phenomena of

co-presence, suggesting that field and consciousness must be intertwined (Alexander, 2002).

Western and Eastern spiritual traditions converge in their recognition of various increasingly subtle body layers, sheaths or shells, which interpenetrate the physical body, such as the etheric, astral and causal bodies. For example Hindu Yogic tradition, e.g. Iyengar (from Patanjali), speaks of five "Sheaths of Being", *anamaya kosa* (outer physical body sheath), *pranamaya kosa* (energetic body), *manomaya kosa* (mental body), *vijnanamaya kosa* (intellectual body) and *anandamaya kosa* (blissful soul body) (Iyengar, 2005, p. 4).

3.4.4. Élan vital and evolution of consciousness

In 1907 French philosopher Henri Bergson challenged the mechanistic view of nature through his concept of *élan vital*, "creative impulse" or "living energy." *Élan vital* according to Bergson, is an immaterial force that provides the vital impulse that continuously shapes all life. Bergson questioned the Darwinist theories of evolution and proposed evolution as a whole can be seen as a process by which living beings become more and more 'vitalised'. He saw consciousness as the essence of the *élan vital*. As living beings become more 'vitalised' the intensity of their consciousness increases; so another parallel way of looking at evolution is to see it as a process by which living beings become more and more conscious (Krishnananda, 2007).

Reflective of this conception is the use made by western theorists of the metaphor of a hologram for describing consciousness, in which mind or consciousness most closely resembles what physicists call a "field" – nonmaterial and nonpositional in space and time (Lucas, 1985). It is now clear that by focusing intention through exercises such as meditation we are able to "open" our minds and observe this higher reality or pure consciousness, which is the experience of the dynamic energy at the core of each atom in our body (Trieschmann, 1995). The subatomic world responds to our observation, and reawakens the intuitive healing energy within us. In exactly the same way that for

Bergson, evolution as a whole can be seen as a process by which living beings become more and more 'vitalised', we can also see personal spiritual development as a process of making ourselves more and more 'vitalised' as individuals (Taylor, 1999).

3.4.5. Emotions as energy-in-motion

The pioneering work of Wilhelm Reich contributed enormously to the evolution of energy healing through his conceptualization of the life-force which he called orgone energy. Reich expanded on energy healing through his pioneer work on the energy relationship between psyche and soma, insisting that psychological problems were manifested in physical ways, particularly by chronic muscular tension ("armoring") and that they were susceptible to physical as well as psychological interventions (Weil, 2004, Graham, 1990). He relied predominantly on deep breathing to release stagnate orgone energy and achieve emotional release (Stillerman, 1996).

It is now understood that every thought is a pattern of energy characterized by a certain vibratory rate and pattern, which leads to either a positive or negative emotion (Pert, 1997). Dispenza (Arntz et al., 2005, p. 242) therefore remarks, "every single cell in our body is spying on our thoughts", and we experience a vibrational state as a consequence of our most recent thoughts which trigger emotion and colour our experience of the world.

According to Pert (1997), avoidance of emotions which reside in the body as negative vibrational states lies at the heart of addiction. Anger for instance is one form of energy, a vibrational pattern, which is best dealt with by letting it rumble on through us and fade away. By using substances and stopping the expression of this energy at the outward level, we have guaranteed that the vibrational pattern will be held within our system and will require new energy and more drugs to hold in check. Pert (1997, p. 300) writes:

"What causes people to consume legal and illegal drugs-one of the central problems in our society, I believe-is emotions that are unhealed, cut off, not processed and integrated

or released... reaching for that drink or cigarette or joint is usually precipitated by some disturbing and unacceptable feeling that we don't know how to deal with, and so we get rid of it in ways we know "work."

As Trieschmann (1995) observes, the only way to bring this level of awareness to our habitual use of substances is to travel within through essentially spiritual practices. By engaging in meditation or mindful breathing, we become more sensitive to our inner state and with practice we are able to detect the thoughts which trigger negative emotions, interrupt them, allow the emotion to rumble through us, and use our breathing to calm the physiological effects. The addicted person learns not to react automatically to the threat of negative emotion, but to respond to it and understand it, providing him/her the opportunity to process and release the energy associated with it.

3.5. Contemporary forms of energy healing

Contemporary energy healing practices are based on modern physics, which demonstrates that, at the quantum level, matter and energy become interchangeable. Such practices recognize energy healing as beginning at this quantum level, beyond atoms and molecules, where various arrangements of energies are organized into particular patterns or vibrations (Edwards et al., 2005). A plethora of healing systems and techniques have been developed to facilitate the intervention of consciousness at this level, however, as the intervention of this study focuses primarily on traditional forms of energy healing, only those techniques prescribed to participants over and above these traditional practices will be explored.

3.5.1. Energy tapping

Callahan and Callahan (1996) have created an energy healing treatment called "thought field therapy" (TFT), which integrates information and procedures from the disciplines of acupuncture, psychology, and applied kinesiology. TFT is a mind-body energy psychotherapy that includes diagnostic and treatment systems that are rooted in the

Meridian theory of oriental medicine. Callahan and Callahan (1996) direct patients to stimulate specific electromagnetically sensitive points on the skin (primarily through tapping to activate energy flow), while thinking about or “attuning” to a psychological problem from which they desire relief. The tapping neutralizes or eliminates the energetic cause of the experienced problem, by addressing the body’s bioenergy system. By removing disruptions within the energy system caused by negative emotion the behavioural and emotional consequences can be rapidly resolved (Gallo, 1997). He further speculates that stimulating certain energy points reduces neural connections in parts of the brain associated with emotion that trigger problematic responses such as addiction (Gallo, 1997).

Based upon the above mentioned technique described by Callahan and Callahan (1996), Feinstein et al. (2005) have devised a specific energy tapping protocol to assist in the relief from cravings and compulsive urges to support the recovery process in addiction. The technique is premised on the idea that beneath habits of thought and behaviour are habits in the body and its energy system. The intervention involves reconditioning the meridian systems habitual response to disturbing stimuli by having the client focus on the craving while conducting a sequence of accupoint tapping, eye rotation, and humming. The intensity of the craving is monitored by rating the degree of distress experienced by the craving in between tapping protocols. The intervention is repeated until the distress is eliminated. It has been demonstrated as a powerful tool for overcoming immediate, in-the-moment cravings (Feinstein et al., 2005).

3.5.2. The Dreambody

Mindell (1982; 2004) draws on ancient energy healing techniques of the east and integrates the sciences of psychology and medicine with the physics of nonlocality into a form of somatic therapy. His approach to healing is based on the fact that ones awareness interacts with the subatomic realms of the body. This intervention does not try to fix a particular symptom, condition, attitude, or idea a client has. Instead, the therapist follows the clients somatic process to help the client reveal him (her) self to him (her) self.

Through this process the client makes contact with his/her body's intelligence and is linked to the greater universe. Of central importance to Mindell's (1982) work is the dreambody concept.

The dreambody is the psychophysical process which is trying to dream itself, so to speak, into being. It has been variously termed and presents itself in different ways depending on which perspective one chooses to view it from. When it is observed in meditation it appears in terms of the subtle body, that is, inner designs of the nervous system. When looked at through visions occurring in near death or in out-of-body experiences, it emerges as a gaseous substance, astral body, or spirit. In medicine the dreambody manifests itself in terms of physical symptoms. In bodywork it appears as the dreamlike process which tries to express itself through uncontrolled body motions (Mindell, 1982).

Drawing on physics, Mindell (2004) sees cravings as electric fields of power, filled with what physicists call virtual particles/power. He argues that marginalizing this power creates more "electricity" between the person and the thing they are after. It splits the field into parts; and the addicted person into two, leaving him/her depleted of energy and craving that which he/she believes he/she does not have. Mindell (2004, p. 181) argues: "Cravings rob one of ones multidimensional powers. You look down on yourself and up to the addiction, giving away the power of a hyperspacial, dreamlike, or magical field between you".

Embedded in the experience of any craving is the dynamic of projecting power (energy) into substances, while believing that one has no such power available *within* oneself. According to Mindell (2004), by focusing on the idea that one is projecting something about oneself into an object or substance will lead to the "essence" of that particular addiction. This is achieved through meditative exercises or "dreamland experiences", in which participants are instructed to "feel" the cravings core or deepest essence, and become the personification of the craving until one feels relieved.

We have so far explored the history and practicalities of the energy healing techniques that form the interventions of this study. The preceding reviews of the literature reveals that the language of energy is usually taken from the mechanistic metaphors of physics or from the holistic worldview of ancient eastern and western cultures. We now move to discuss the foundation for understanding energy from an existential-phenomenological perspective, and explore the presentation of energy as a descriptive metaphor of lived experience and what this experience reveals about the nature of embodiment and the relationship with self and others.

3.6. The phenomenology of energy therapy

In this dissertation, energy is understood as a metaphor for a particular style of being-in-the-world in which a person experiences a sense of connectedness with self, world, and others, and where the universe is one body. This metaphorical understanding of energy is the cornerstone upon which *Chi-gung*, *Tai Chi*, and other interventions are practiced and experienced. Energy healing utilizes this energy metaphor to display, create and recreate the meaning of health and where this study is concerned, non-addictive, free, ecstatic *being-in-the-world*.

The metaphor energy is used in the healing context with its own set of meanings that differ from the natural sciences. In this context healing is understood in terms of balance and harmony. The person is seen as a gestalt in which the harmonious functioning of body-mind, or vital life-force, is addressed, rather than specific diseases (Alexander, 2002; Feddersen, 1991; Levin, 1988). The healer does not diagnose disease, but instead assesses the energy flow that is the body-mind. As Feddersen (1991, p. 44) points out, “when the body is ‘in balance’ it is ‘in health’”. The process of energy healing takes the substance dependent person on an inner journey in which they experience a shift in perception through focused or meditative thinking, discover new realities and ways of being through preconceptual experiences, and arrive at a reordered experiential, ecstatic world through spiritual transformation. The following concepts are essential features of this transformative process.

3.6.1. Meditative thinking

According to Heidegger, we as humans have lost track of our roots, our belonging, our homeland. We are all “out there”, driven out of ourselves through modern commodities into a world that is of our own making (A’Llerio, 1999; Levin, 1988; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the case of the addict, who has convinced himself that “highs” come from external substances as opposed to being created from within. The answer, according to Heidegger, is to use the unique opportunity of a persons being ill at ease in the world to help them come to a new vision of themselves and all there is.

The experience of energy-healing begins when the addicted individual seeks a new sense of self and desires to move beyond the old self that was associated with crisis, emotional pain, isolation and despair (Chopra, 1997; Miller & Swinney, 2000; O’Murchu, 1994). This desire serves as the foundation for the healing experience in which change gradually occurs through the practice of a form of focusing, or what Heidegger refers to as “meditative thinking”, which allows the person the opportunity of being-in-the-world in a completely different way. The addicted individual discovers a new ground and a foundation upon which he/she can stand and endure the world of technology, resist the allure of substitute gratifications, recollect his/her participatory bond with the regenerative source, and surrender to the mystery of being.

3.6.2. Embodiment

According to Heidegger, the possibility of dwelling is bound up with our earthly embodiment. The body, he observes, is internalized in feeling, and this internalized feeling is fundamentally a contributory phase of thinking, in that it directs one towards an experience which is global and holistic. In other words, the body serves as the first language in understanding and revealing the self; that is the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of being human (Leder, 1990; Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

Our “felt-body” describes a sense of bodiliness that differs from the anatomical, natural body of the natural sciences. For Heidegger, feeling and sensibility move the understanding of the body beyond the mere natural body to the body as the basic mode of being human. Similarly, Leder (1990) argues that the lived experience of the inner body may be better expressed through energy systems, which have not only exploratory but also phenomenological power, charting inner experiences open to those who engage in spiritual practices. He argues: “These energetic portrayals may capture the subtle and shifting quality of inner experience better than an image of fixed messy organs” (Leder, 1990, pp. 182-185).

The living body is the very possibility of contact, not just with others but with oneself – the very possibility of reflection, thought, knowledge and ultimately meaning. Becoming mindful of the bodily feeling is central to energy healing and holds tremendous value for the treatment of addiction in that it provides a new avenue for the addicted person to explore his/her sacred inner self, the self he/she has long lost touch with through years of self avoidance. This is essentially experienced as a rediscovery of ones spiritual nature (Chopra, 1997). Gendlin (1996, p. 5) refers to this knowledge as the body “felt-sense,” “in which we feel ourselves to be inside ourselves confronted with our deepest desires, wants, needs, dissatisfactions”. It is only through such an experience that one acknowledges the body’s craving for spontaneous, non-addictive, ecstatic, regenerative living (Wilshire, 1999). Without such an understanding, the vague sense of restlessness and the nagging feeling that there should be more to life is repetitively dulled by substitute gratifications.

Levin (1988) stresses that such an existential recollection is not only a discovery of what has been but also an invitation or creation of what one can be. Energy interventions evoke a state of consciousness where the person contacts his or her felt-sense, begins to clarify *preconceptual* feeling, unformed bodily meaning, and experiences a new way of being-in-the-world. Through the process of becoming mindful of our bodily felt-sense of who we really are and what projects we are living, the connection with oneself and with ever-cycling regenerative nature deepens, new meaning is formed, and healing begins.

3.6.3. Preconceptual experience

As humans, we have a pre-reflective understanding of ourselves in situations even though it is sometimes difficult to find words to clarify this understanding. This sense of ones situation according to Gendlin (1996), is not a cognitive understanding but a somatic knowing – a felt sense. Therefore our bodily feelings, moods, and affects are not present-at-hand things but they serve as referents that illuminate how we are in the world. Gendlin (1996, p. 24) summarizes the eight characteristics of a felt-sense as follows:

1. A felt sense forms at the border zone between conscious and unconscious.
2. The felt sense has at first only an unclear quality (although unique and unmistakable).
3. The felt-sense is experienced bodily.
4. The felt sense is experienced as a whole, a single datum, that is internally complex.
5. The felt sense moves through steps; it shifts and opens up step by step.
6. A step brings one closer to being that self, which is not any content.
7. The process step has its own growth direction.
8. Theoretical explanations of a step can be devised only retrospectively

Through this felt sense, the addicted person is provided with an opportunity to make him/herself known to him/herself. The significance of this alternate route to self knowledge can be explained using Mindell's (1982, p. 39) "dreambody" concept which represents the total psyche, or what he calls, a "multi-channeled personality".

Mindell (1982) compares the dreambody to a multifaceted jewel, "since all its sides (that is, each of its channels: the world, the dream and body) reflect the same information in different ways" (p. 45). In this way, unconscious material that has systematically been suppressed through years of substance abuse and consequently unavailable through cognitive understanding can be accessed by the addicted person through interpreting dreambody signals which make themselves known through unformed bodily meaning-

sensations.

Energy therapy creates a situation where one begins to clarify *pre-conceptual* feeling, which according to Gendlin (1996) marks the beginning of change and healing. Once the addicted person understands or re-conceptualizes the subtle body as delicate, fine signals of how he/she experiences being embodied, energy talk becomes grounded in existence. Having open chakras for example is another way of saying I am open, expansive, out of myself, ecstatic. Such openness is felt on an energetic level before it can be language.

This felt sense is experienced as meaningful although not fully known. It becomes meaningful when the person becomes mindful of his/her experience and attends to signals, which allows for the possibility of growth. The process of attending to this bodily awareness has the capacity to transform how one relates to ones self and world. Gendlin (1996) suggests that this change reveals itself as a clear moving, or shifting, of the original felt-sense, as we feel ourselves gradually transforming from constrictive, repetitive, addictive *existing*, to expansive, spontaneous, ecstatic *living*.

3.6.4. Transformation

Preconceptual experiences according to A'Llerio (1999) serve as a vessel in the movement toward, and change to, a wider consciousness. Through such experiences, overt methods, and languaging of the experience, the addicted person is able to reach a state of "transformation", a "shift in understanding" which may cause him/her to "reorder his/her experiential world and to reevaluate his/her actions within it" (A'Llerio, 1999, p. 24).

The importance of preconceptual body experiences in providing meaning and transformation is illustrated well by Merleau-Ponty when he observes: "the body is the acquired dialectical soil upon which a higher formation is accomplished, and the soul is the meaning which is then established" (Ross, 2003, p. 60). This notion is articulated energetically by Judith (2004, p. 393), who stresses the importance of manifesting

divinity in and through our bodies. She notes: "To arrive at the fully blooming lotus crown chakra, our stem needs to be connected all the way to the Earth, our roots deep in the ground. Through this connection, our lotus is nourished and continues to bloom, its petals ever unfolding".

The process of energy healing over time allows the addicted person to experience a sense of spirituality in which he/she transcends addictive modes of being, discovers a new healed and integrated self through his/her embodied existence, identifies and releases fear and pain through the energy system, learns to value him/herself in a deeper way, and sees and appreciates the *energetic connection with self, others, and the world in a new light*.

They leave the world of calculative thinking and recollect their primordial sense of being-in-the-world. They live ecstatically, as they did as infants and children, and with a new regenerative source of energy, happiness and well-being, the lure of substitute gratifications gradually fades.

Up until now we have explored the philosophical underpinnings of, and areas of convergence between existential-phenomenology and the energy worldview, as well as the practical healing modalities that arise from such a view. We have also explored the interpretation of energy as a metaphor for understanding a particular way of being in the world and the experiential aspects of energy healing. We now move on to explore the experience of addiction.

CHAPTER 4

*"Far beyond all other pleasures
Rarer than jewels or treasures,
Sweeter than grape from the
Vine. Yes! Yes! Greatest of pleasures!
Coffee, coffee, how I love
its flavor, and if you would win
my favour, yes! Yes! Let me have
coffee, let me have my coffee
strong."*

(Johan Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750
from the Coffee Cantata)

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter is concerned with the experience of addiction on the physical, the social, the psychological, and the spiritual dimensions of human existence. In order to illuminate the characteristics of these dimensions, we draw on rich, subjective descriptions of experiences of addiction, attained from a variety of sources including philosophical texts, research articles, and creative literature such as poetry, plays, and novels. In so doing, it is hoped that we will come to understand the experience from as many views as possible, while relating such experiences to their corresponding chakras as understood by energy healers such as Judith (2004) and Myss (1996).

4.2. The lived experience of addiction

It is difficult to gain perspective on a field as diverse as the addictions. The field is rooted historically in a variety of disciplines that include medicine, psychology, physiology, sociology, biology, chemistry, politics, and witchcraft to name only a few. The various discipline specific perspectives can neither disprove nor invalidate one another, but simply co-exist, resulting in intense polarization of views and considerable confusion (Shaffer, 1986). Consider the following quote illustrating Gary's experience of addiction.

"I started smoking weed in high school. I thought it was cool and it helped me bond with my friends ... it also gave me an escape – there was tension at home...my parents were always fighting. I discovered that alcohol did the same for me – it helped me forget my problems and made me feel free. My parents were both alcoholics so the house was never short of alcohol. After school I moved out of home and experimented with whatever gave me a buzz... I tried e, acid, speed, coke, you name it. But when I tried H, I fell in love...."

Gary's spiral into self destruction may be interpreted in many ways, depending on the paradigm one is working from. Pharmacologists would point out the progressively harder drugs he used over the years and might attribute his addiction to a tolerance resulting in the need to escalate the strength of drug choice and quantity in order to avoid withdrawal (McNeece & DiNitto, 1998). Genetic theorists would be particularly interested in the fact that Gary's father is an alcoholic, which would suggest that he is constitutionally predisposed to develop a dependence on alcohol or drugs (Levin, 1988). From a systems perspective, Gary's addiction would be seen as the result of peer pressure or the negative environmental forces in his home (McNeece & DiNitto, 1998). Psychodynamic theorists would be more interested in Gary's association of "H" (heroin) with love, suggesting an attempt on Gary's part to regain the maternal love deprived in infancy through direct physical gratification in the form of drugs (Winnicott, 1951).

All these theories provide a piece of the puzzle to understanding Gary's addiction. They nevertheless remain divided and are each unable to offer a holistic understanding of the process and experience of addiction, which affects every aspect of the human condition (Warfield & Goldstein, 1996).

The great value of the energy model lies in its unifying essence, which provides a conceptual framework in which to unite all these theories into a collaboration of understanding. For instance, while addiction involves cognitive, hormonal, neurologic, genetic, neurochemical, and environmental factors, at a fundamental level bioenergy is involved (Gallo, 2002). Energy is therefore the glue that bonds all theories together into a holistic understanding of our previously fragmented view of addiction.

We now move on to explore the experience of addiction on the four dimensions of human existence, while drawing on the respective theories related to each level, and relating these issues to their corresponding chakras thereby illustrating the energetic underpinnings of both theory as well as experience.

4.3. Physical domain

On the physical dimension of experience, we relate to our environment and to the givens of the natural world around us. This includes our attitude to the surroundings we find ourselves in, to the body we have, to our bodily needs, to health and illness and to our own mortality (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997). It is on this dimension that one somatically experiences those aspects found in biological theories of addiction such as cravings, tolerance and withdrawal. The emphasis on bodiliness corresponds with the first chakra, or *muladhara*, meaning “root support” (Judith, 2004). It is here that we establish connection with our body through which we bond with the earth and are grounded in the biological reality of existence. This level also concerns the second chakra, the realm of emotions and the unconscious mind, whereby the addict experiences the pull of the bodily instinctual drive for pleasure.

4.3.1. The addicted body

Phenomenological descriptions of the experience of addiction occur on numerous levels of the individual’s existence. The following quote by William Burroughs (1977, p. 34), from his autobiographical book *“Junkie”* illustrates one such experience which resonates predominantly on the physical level.

“Junk is a cellular equation that teaches the user facts of general validity. I have learned a great deal from using junk. I have seen life measured out in eyedroppers of morphine solution. I experienced the agonizing deprivation of junk sickness and the pleasure of relief when junk-thirsty cells drank from the needle. Perhaps all pleasure is relief. I have learned the cellular stoicism that junk teaches the user...Junk is not ... a

means to increased enjoyment of life. Junk is not a kick. Junk is a way of life."

Burroughs frames his experience of addiction in scientific, biological terms. He personifies the addicted cells in his body, so that it seems as if it is no longer he who is experiencing the pain of addiction, but rather a collection of anonymous biological entities - the "thirsty" individual cells that constitute him. His description of addiction seems to reflect a disconnection with or objectification of his body, and a subsequent disconnection from life itself. Such an experience is according to Judith (2004) a sign of a damaged first chakra – a disconnection from the very roots of existence. Severed from his body, Burroughs is cut off from the regenerative rhythms of nature, making true ecstatic living impossible, which is perhaps why heroin for him has subsequently become "a way of life".

Burroughs' reference to the dose of drug in the eyedropper suggests the clinical characteristic of addiction called tolerance; the process whereby receptors of cells shrink up and become desensitized or down regulated due to constant bombardment at high intensity by the drug (Pert, 1997; Weil, 2004). It seems that it is not only the cells that shrink in addiction, but also, as noted by Wilshire (1999), the will, imagination, criteria of judgment, as well as the self. Only the next fix, seen by Burroughs as "life measured out in eyedroppers of morphine solution" is imagined. In this shrunken world, it appears that his hunger is all encompassing and overwhelming, and he is not paced for ecstatic life in the fullness of time but must have ecstasy immediately.

Without immediate "relief", Burroughs experiences withdrawal, a low vibratory state experienced throughout his body, leaving him craving more of the drug in order to feel satisfied. The pharmacological concept of withdrawal can thus be seen as an energy crisis, a basic depletion of life-force. For this reason, the pleasure attained through drugs diminishes with repeated use, which is a great contrast to reports by those who exercise, meditate, do yoga, chant, commune with nature, and play music to get "high", who usually report that their experiences get better and better over time (McPeake et al., 1991; Weil & Rosen, 2004).

From an energetic perspective, the solution for Burroughs would be to reestablish communication with his body, thereby allowing his mind to dialogue with it and learn about its experience (Judith, 2004; Myss, 1996). Perhaps tolerance and withdrawal are the body's way to communicate to Burroughs in its own language - through physical symptoms - true "pleasure" does not come in needles or pills, but arises from within.

Although this may be an inarticulate and painful way to communicate information for survival (a prime theme of the root chakra) (Judith, 2004), it may be necessary to generate understanding on the part of the addicted person. According to Myss (1996), such symbolic information may be disturbing, but this intensity is necessary in order that the body's message can break through the habitual mental or emotional patterns that cause the problem to form in the first place. In energy terms it is significant that Burroughs' physical health has deteriorated, as his symptoms are a symbolic reflection or statement of his feelings of emptiness, pain, or emotionally "agonizing deprivation".

4.3.2. Returning to the body

William James (Wilshire, 1999, p. 64) described the disowned body as "the excrementitious stuff, the sorry remainder of the dualized self" A person who is disconnected from his/her body is cut off from complete participation in life. Instead of *being* a body, he/she *has* a body. Instead of living and loving he/she has instincts for survival and copulation. Disconnected from the body, instincts according to Watts (1962) drive the addict as if they were blind furies or demons that possess him/her. When body-self's primal needs and urges are regarded as physiological events to be conquered they cannot be owned and accepted as truly ones own. In a live performance at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, entertainer Frank Sinatra made the following comment:

"Well, I guess you are all dying to know why I drink. Well, I'm going to tell you. Now this aint funny... I was born with an arterial deficiency. I mean it...My structure craves and needs alcohol. I'm ok, my bodies a drunk. That's what's wrong. Mentally I'm a nun."

Sinatra's absurd comment, which was clearly employed for its entertainment appeal, nevertheless illustrates the destructive result of disembodiment in the addictive process. Such a statement reflects unwillingness on Sinatra's part, to accept his urges and desires as truly his own. They are thus split off from the rest of himself, particularly his will. Wilshire (1999), points out that if addictive cravings could be objectified as merely physiological events, they would not excite guilt, as guilt implies some responsibility for the condition, and this implies that *self* is at work on some level, the *bodily* level, not merely some mechanical or impersonal force.

Leder (1990, p. 3) observes the destructive impact of the Cartesian paradigm, which he believes has created a *cultural trance*, leading us to experience a certain disembodied style of life and "a rising interest in finding ways to 'return to the body' whether via exercise, hatha yoga, body therapies, craft-work, or intimacy with nature; [these are] but a reaction to this general trend toward a 'decorporealized' existence".

The soothing presence of mindful breathing for instance can surpass this mind-body separateness. With practice involuntary systems become progressively more open to voluntary conscious control, which influences brainwave activity, production of neurochemicals, such as endorphins and higher levels of consciousness as in meditation (Edwards, 2006). This transformative experience allows one to recollect ones primordial sense of bodiliness through which healthy and regenerative moments of ecstasy may be cultivated and realized (Chopra, 1997).

Once one is grounded in ones body, one no longer needs to rely on external chemicals to produce high states of consciousness. One learns to rely on ones internal "endogenous drugs", which provide the same type of "high" that we get from whatever drug humans are capable of becoming addicted to (Pert, 1997; Weil, 2004). High states, mediated by the body's own energy can be stimulated equally by many different influences, including meditation, yoga, physical exercise, and even ones own thoughts (Chopra, 1997; Weil & Rosen, 2004), hence, in Salvador Dali's words, "I don't do drugs. I am drugs". The rush of excitement during a roller coaster ride, for example may feel a lot like the effect of a

dose of amphetamine, and no doubt both these techniques are popular for the same reason – because they give people a sense of increased mental and physical energy and make them feel, temporarily at least, more alive.

4.3.3. Intoxication as evolution

But why should our brains have receptors designed to fit molecules made by poppy plants? Why have the human brain and the poppy evolved chemicals with similar effects when they are so unlike each other? In considering an evolutionary explanation of the phenomenon, we might ask if intoxication is in some way beneficial to the species. What then could be the evolutionary value of such a condition?

History demonstrates that in every age, in every part of this planet people have pursued intoxication with plant drugs, alcohol, and other mind altering substances (Siegel, 2005). The omnipresence of the phenomenon has led numerous thinkers to suggest that we are dealing not with something culturally or socially based but rather with a biological characteristic of the human species (McPeake et al., 1991; Siegel, 2005; Weil, 2004). The force and persistence of the behaviour according to these thinkers, suggest that it functions like a drive, just like our drives of hunger, thirst, and sex.

This “fourth drive” is seen as a natural part of our biology, creating the irrepressible demand for altered states of consciousness or ecstasy, which may be cultivated by various means. Often this is achieved initially through chemical agents and then cultivated through spiritual practice once chemicals begin to fail with repeated use. Consciousness changing substances merely *introduce* us to the potential intelligence of the body, to new states of consciousness, and ways of being-in-the-world, which can then be matured and deepened by the various forms of meditation for instance in which drugs are no longer necessary or useful (Maslow, 1964; Smith, 1964; Stolaroff, 1993; Watts, 1962; Weil, 2004).

Numerous authors (Grof, 1994; McPeake et al., 1991; Siegel, 2005; Weil, 2004) have noted that the need for periods of ecstasy or non-ordinary consciousness begins to be

expressed at ages far too young for it to have much to do with social conditioning. In all societies throughout history, infants rock themselves into blissful states. As they grow, children discover that whirling, or spinning is a powerful technique to change awareness; some also experiment with hyperventilation followed by mutual chest squeezing and choking and tickling to produce paralyzing laughter. Interestingly, it seems as though children are far more in touch with the natural capacities of the body to produce moments of ecstasy than their adult counterparts.

These nonordinary experiences according to Weil (2004) are vital to us because they are expressions of our unconscious minds, and the integration of conscious and unconscious experience is the key to life, health, spiritual development and the fullest use of our energy systems. Suppression of this drive according to McPeake et al. (1991) sends it into the shadow realm, where the need for ecstasy goes underground, becoming a very private affair, much like masturbation, thereby fueling addiction.

The goal of the second chakra is to reclaim the shadow, representing repressed instinctual energies that are locked away in the realm of the unconscious (Judith, 2004). Stevenson (1981) provides an insightful illustration of the way this shadow is experienced by an addicted individual in his classic tale *The strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, written in six days and nights under the influence of cocaine (Siegel, 2005).

4.3.4. Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: energy as the shadow

Henry Jekyll was a highly respected physician, who, in an effort to separate his noble aspirations from his darker side, created a chemical potion modeled after cocaine. To his horror, Mr. Hyde, a self-seeking, sensual, aggressive madman emerged on the other side of his chemical fix.

From a Freudian perspective, Hyde will be understood as the primitive, instinctual nature of human beings turned loose without censure or balance. Hyde represents the energy originating in bodily processes, generally equated with sexual energy and libido, driving

an uncivilized craving for reckless bodily pleasure. The course of this instinct is always from a state of tension to a state of relaxation, creating a cycle of *repetition compulsion*, seen for instance in sexual desire followed by sexual gratification (Hall, 1999).

Weil (2004) makes a Freudian analogy between sexual experience and the experience of altered consciousness and suggests the possibility that the former may be a special case of the latter. He argues that like the urge to relieve sexual tension, the urge to suspend ordinary awareness arises spontaneously from within, builds to a peak, finds relief, and dissipates – all in accordance with its own intrinsic rhythm. The pleasure, in both cases, arises from relief of accumulated tension or energy, which satisfies an inner need. Jekyll confesses that he had “come to despair his reformation and improvement efforts” and that he had not conquered his “aversions to the dryness of a life of study” (Stevenson, 1981, p. 85). Applying Weil’s (2004) analogy, one might argue that the mounting tension of Jekyll’s “dry” and mundane life built to a peak and, with no other avenues to ease the tension, found relief through the appearance of Hyde and his irrepressible energy. In other words, the tedium of Jekyll’s ordinary consciousness made him susceptible to the energy of Hyde and ignited the compulsion.

This compulsion was however accompanied by a tremendous amount of guilt and self-hatred as Jekyll fought to keep the uncivilized energy of Hyde at bay so as not to tarnish his respectable reputation as a medical doctor. Judith (2004) describes guilt as a demon of the second chakra, and an emotion which precipitates addiction. She writes: “Compulsive activities are often instincts of the pleasure principle, driven to repetition because the guilt prevents satisfaction” (Judith, 2004, p. 119). Guilt she argues sequesters the shadow into its dark and unconscious realm.

Jekyll’s instinctual impulse for ecstasy or periods of non-ordinary consciousness was deemed reprehensible by his superego and was consequently repressed into the unconscious, where it survived as a shadow. The repressed instinctual drive, as an energy-form, was no longer part of Jekyll’s conscious awareness, and was thus enacted unconsciously, with great force. It chased Jekyll in his dreams and energized his

compulsive activities. After being relegated into the recesses of unconsciousness, Hyde seemed to be growing with an energy too powerful for Jekyll's body. The subtle, creeping return of Hyde is colourfully described as follows:

"... and as the first edge of my penitence wore off, the lower side of me, so long indulged, so recently chained down, began to growl for license. Not that I dreamed of resuscitating Hyde; the bare idea of that would startle me to a frenzy; no, it was in my own person that I was once more tempted to trifle with my conscience; and it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation" (Stevenson, 1981, p. 95).

Keeping the shadow in chains according to Judith (2004) requires a great deal of energy and robs the whole of its grace and power. As the instinctual energies are a large part of the child psyche, Jekyll is also removed from the innocence and spontaneity of his inner child. By reclaiming the shadow, Jekyll reclaims the instinctual energies of his needs and desires for ecstasy so that they can be channeled in appropriate, healthy, regenerative ways.

4.4. Psychological Domain

The psychological dimension deals with the way in which the addicted person relates to him/herself. We explore his/her search for a sense of identity, a feeling of being substantial and having a self, and the ways in which intoxication has illuminated as well as concealed such a self. This personal or private dimension correlates primarily with the third chakra involved in the creation of this autonomous separate self and the integration of experience on the inner planes (Judith, 2004; Myss, 1996).

4.4.1. The flight from anguish

Man seeks to escape himself in myth, and does so by any means at his disposal. Drugs, alcohol, or lies. Unable to withdraw into himself, he disguises himself. Lies and inaccuracy give him a few moments of comfort. (Cocteau, 1958, p. 67)

As illustrated by Cocteau (1958) man has always been tempted to use substances among other techniques, to hide from those aspects of himself that he deems reprehensible. The importance of the effect of the drug in the inner life of addictive people is explained from a psychoanalytic perspective as an artificial or surrogate defense against overwhelming emotions (Wurmser, 1974), as well as replacement for a defect in the psychological structure of the individual (Dodes, 1988; Kohut, 1971). Moreover, there evidently exists some degree of psychopharmacological specificity in the choice of the drug for this purpose.

People prefer those substances which specifically help them to cope with those aspects of self and corresponding affects that trouble them most (Khantzian, 1989; Wurmser, 1974; Judith, 2004). The use of substances to manage negative affects corresponds with the second chakra, the realm of emotions, sexuality and pleasure, and is seen by Judith (2004) as an instinctual move away from pain and toward pleasure. However, the choice of drug to compensate for a defect in the formation of the self relates more to aspects of the middle chakras concerned with ego consciousness and identity (Judith, 2004).

Wurmser (1974) found that amphetamines and cocaine eliminate emptiness, boredom, and a negative self image, which appear mostly to be caused by repression of feelings of rage. Accordingly, these stimulants provide a sense of aggressive mastery, control, invincibility, and grandeur, as well as offer a defense against a massive depression or general feelings of unworthiness and weakness (Wurmser, 1974). Energetically, the use of amphetamines finds expression in the third chakra, which primarily relates to issues of power, a lack of which may arise according to Judith (2004), as found by Wurmser (1974), by inner rage being blocked.

Judith (2004) has noted the tendency of people with an excess third chakra to use amphetamines to overcome feelings of helplessness, or diminished power through an excessive attachment, with intoxicating power and control, and bolstering ones self esteem. A person with a deficient third chakra on the other hand may experience a lack of vitality and suffer from depression, as the energy of the body is literally depressed and withdrawn. In this case, the use of stimulants helps a deficient system feel normal. We

may see a combination of the two in the case of Freud, who treated his depression with cocaine and reported feeling “exhilaration and lasting euphoria...you perceive an increase of self control and possess more vitality and capacity for work” (Szasz, 2003, p. 204).

Wurmser (1974) found that alcohol relieves feelings of isolation, emptiness, and anxiety, as well as pressure from an archaic superego, freedom from which allows denial and suppression of anxiety, shame, disillusionment, and guilt. Alcohol therefore combats internal inhibitions where, says Fenichel (1980, p. 379) “the superego has been defined as the part of the mind that is soluble in alcohol”. On an energetic level, alcohol creates the merging and lessening of inhibition more closely related to the second chakra. Judith (2004) sees this “soluble superego” as the downward energy current, which focuses and limits, and when it becomes excessive, the life force can feel restricted and relief is felt by overthrowing its dominating influence.

Alcohol, Judith (2004) observes, lessens the inhibiting control of the conscious mind, which allows the liberating current to come up from below and move unhindered toward the crown, releasing energy and discharging the system. An alcoholic may free up his anger or liberate the ability to express emotions that were previously blocked as the energy moves upward. Free of inhibition, he can be spontaneous, share emotion, and feel alive. However if there is no integration with this temporary release, the action must be repeated, hence precipitating addiction (Judith, 2004).

Psychedelic drugs, according to Wurmser (1974), counteract the emotional state of emptiness, boredom, and meaninglessness. The drug induced perception that the self is mystical, boundless and grandiose ensures that the world becomes endowed with unlimited meaning. It artificially recreates ideals and values when they have been irreparably shattered inside and outside. In Judith’s (2004) formulation, hallucinogens relate to the energy of the sixth chakra, the realm of the unconscious and internal perception. By dissolving the barriers to this realm with psychedelic drugs, we get a temporary glimpse of its mystical contents, providing a sense of meaning.

In all categories, the intended functioning of the pharmacological effect is as a defense against intense emotion and perceived inadequacies related to unresolved issues in the various chakras of the energy system. The choice of the drug of preference is specifically related to the affects engendered by these psychodynamic and energy conflicts related to ones self concept (Judith, 2004; Khantzian, 1989; Wurmser, 1974). This flight from anguish is of course in Sartre's term "bad faith". As Sartre (1996, pp. 43-44) observes:

"I can in fact wish "not to see" a certain aspect of my being only if I am acquainted with the aspect which I do not wish to see ... I flee in order not to know, but I cannot avoid knowing that I am fleeing; and the flight from anguish is only a mode of becoming conscious of anguish. Thus anguish properly speaking, can neither be hidden nor avoided... This attitude is what we call bad faith ... this bad faith intended to fill up the nothingness which I am in relation to myself, precisely implies the nothingness which it suppresses."

From this description, one may assume that the addicted person knows what part of himself he is fleeing from, and consciously selects the most effective means in terms of drug choice to achieve this flight. Interestingly, in addition to functioning as a form of self-medication, Shiffer (1988) interprets repetitive drug use as representing an ineffective attempt by the addicted person to deal with early psychological trauma. He believes drug abuse functions as a component of a repetition compulsion in which old psychological traumas are unconsciously and symbolically recreated and intensely re-experienced in the post-drug dysphoria. Energetically, the avoided emotion is re-experienced as the vibrational pattern of previous trauma reemerges and resonates through the energy system (Trieschmann, 2001). Such a view energetically confirms Sartre's (1996) position that the illusory fleeing from aspects of ones experience through intoxicants is ultimately self defeating.

Judith (2004, p. 113) believes emotions have a spiritual function as the language of the soul, and by running from these emotions "we run from the very gateway to our transformation". Understanding arises when we resist addictive impulses so that buried

emotions can emerge from the unconscious and move up from lower chakras to enter consciousness. The positive function of “negative” emotions is illustrated beautifully by Gibran (1991, pp. 70-71) in the following:

“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding...Much of your pain is self chosen. It is the bitter potion by which the physician within heals your sick self.”

While it is common to use negative internal states as one of many variables explaining dependence, it is rare to find substance dependence explained by the desire to experience more sought after states. These explanations leave out the “joy”, “ecstasy” “bliss” buzz” and “high” so often described by the drug dependent person as the state being sought. We now explore such experiences and their potential value to gaining insight into the self.

4.4.2. Exploring the beyond within

“People think it's all about misery and desperation and death and all that shite, which is not to be ignored, but what they forget is the pleasure of it. Otherwise we wouldn't do it. After all, we're not fucking stupid. At least, we're not that fucking stupid. Take the best orgasm you ever had, multiply it by a thousand and you're still nowhere near it”.

As illustrated by Welsh (2007, p. 76), human beings are pleasure-seeking animals who are very inventive when it comes to finding ways to excite their senses and gratify their appetites. The use of chemicals for this purpose has accompanied humanity from its beginnings. French author Henri Balesta (Siegel, 2005, p.109) described the experience of absinth as “an artificial paradise, removed from the bonds of reality, where [the drinker's] craziest, most frenzied thoughts, are garbed in poetic form.” With nitrous oxide, Davy (Gray, 2004, p. 1158) experienced a “highly pleasurable thrilling, particularly in the chest and extremities” followed by “an irresistible propensity to action”. Castaneda (1973, p. 169), with peyote, described “the feeling of floating in a world undifferentiated, indifferent and beautiful”. Gautier (Siegel, 2005, p. 147)

experienced the “floating, ecstatic bliss” of a hashish intoxication that took him “into heaven and the abyss of delight”, while De Quincey (1956, p. 395) experienced “passions exalted, spiritualized and sublimed” during opium intoxication.

Aside from easing pain, and providing pleasure, intoxication has also given humans sights to see, voices to listen to, thoughts to ponder, and altered states of consciousness to explore. These mind-altering delights have served, in H.G. Wells’s phrase, as “Doors in the Wall”, providing access to William James’ “fringe of consciousness” in which other ideas, new ways of being-in-the-world and experiencing reality and the self are possible.

Curious individuals throughout history have taken psychoactive substances to explore and investigate ordinarily inaccessible parts of their own minds. De Quincey (1956, pp. 389-390) described opium’s ability to create “order, legislation, and harmony to mental faculties and to create intellectual pleasure out of sensory data”. Philosophers like William James believed that nitrous oxide intoxication revealed the uniqueness of our species to contemplate the hidden meaning behind language and thought (Siegel, 2005). Oscar Wilde once said that with the gas “I knew everything” and Coleridge had only to drink “the milk of paradise” for his mind’s eye to focus (Siegel, 2005, p. 108).

Drugs are fascinating because they can change our awareness and vary our conscious experience. Their ability to temporarily make the ordinary extraordinary has been cited as one of the primary reasons for their popularity. Numerous thinkers (Maslow, 1964; Watts, 1962; Weil & Rosen, 2004) have stressed the value of such experiences. For instance Maslow (1964) observed that these experiences teach us that joy, ecstasy, and rapture do in fact exist and that they are in principle available to the experiencer. They confirm that life *can* be worthwhile, that it *can* be beautiful, valuable and pleasurable.

Pleasure according to Judith (2004) is a primal means of getting energy to flow through the body. If we have lost touch with our primary internal sources of joy, and the happiness that originates outside ourselves is the only joy we know, then that is the experience we will seek for ourselves (Chopra, 1997; Weil, 2004, Wilshire, 1999). Since

these secondary pleasures become dulled with repetition, they cannot really satisfy our longing for primary pleasures, and our lack of satisfaction makes us crave more, forming a basis for addictions.

4.4.3. Power and transformation

Ironically whatever satisfactions we gain from external “sources” of pleasure originate from within ourselves. Without such awareness, we project our energy into external substances and activities, which provide a temporary sense of well being. This draws some power away from our own energy field and into the external substances that begin to control us. With repetition, our energy circuits become thoroughly connected to the external power target into which we release our energy, leaving us drained and depleted (Chopra, 1997; Feinstein et al., 2005; Judith, 2004; Mindell, 2004; Myss & Shealy, 1999).

Lacking direct experience of and contact with our own sense of sacredness and power within, substitute gratifications become all the more tempting. The solution according to Myss & Shealy (1999) is to reclaim ones power by restructuring the way we think of power, and to channel and contain it within our own being. It is in the fiery realm of the third chakra that true power is created. The third chakra rests on building ego strength, which develops by sorting through the impulses and instincts coming up from the lower chakras and deciding which ones to activate. By doing so one develops the will, as well as contact with the authentic self through the body and through its feelings and aspirations (Judith, 2004).

Healing addiction thus necessitates the experience of reclaiming ones power, and recognizing that ones wounds must be healed from within (Judith, 2004; Myss & Shealy 1999). Once we reclaim our inner power, we open ourselves up to new experiences of true inner joy, which according to Chopra (1997) is as a preexisting internal condition that is always available to us. Once these channels have been re-opened, the flow of the body’s natural joyful energies becomes directly and readily available (Feinstein et al., 2005).

Once this occurs, one gains access to a deeper form of satisfaction as the memory of inner perfection is reawakened and creates a desire that is stronger than the addiction itself. Hence Chopra (1997, p. 21) writes: "You must know the experience of true pleasure before you can renounce the sensations of addictive behaviours. And the first step towards knowing joy, is simply knowing yourself". However, as mentioned the self is only completely understood in relation to its surrounding environment, which brings us to the social dimension of existence.

4.5. Social Domain

On the social dimension we explore the way in which the addicted person relates to and interacts with the world of other people. This dimension includes their response to the culture in which they live as well as the often pejorative attitudes of others towards them as "addicts". We explore these issues in terms of the addict's experience of acceptance versus rejection, belonging versus isolation, cooperation versus control and the way in which these dynamics impact on their social identity. We follow their search for meaning, which on this level is achieved through striving with others for the establishment of value: love being a prime example of a commonly shared value on this dimension (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

These issues find expression primarily in the fourth or heart chakra - the realm of love - through which we are energetically grounded through our connection to traditional family and societal beliefs that support the formation of social identity and sense of belonging to a group of people in society (Judith, 2004). Myss (1996) has also emphasized the importance of the first or "tribal chakra" in the formation of this social identity. The sacred truth inherent in the first chakra is *All is one*, carrying the message that we are all energetically connected to each other and to all of life. Such a union empowers us and energetically enhances our personal power and our creative strength through belonging.

4.5.1. In search for love

Many addicted people speak of their drug and the paraphernalia and circumstances surrounding it with a loving and adoring tenderness as if it were a real person or love partner. The following description by author Eve Babitz (Nickles, 1994, p. 56) illustrates this common tendency:

"I got deflowered on two cans of Rainier Ale when I was 17. For the Green death, I have reserved a kind of dazzling and cherished intensity that you hear in the voices of Frenchmen in movies when they speak of their first love, an older woman who is no more but is savored in memory to the day they die. The trouble with Rainier Ale is, its still there...The Frenchman can go on with his life, get married and have grandchildren – the temptation of his first love is out of reach."

Babitz paints a romantic picture in her comparison of her first experience of intoxication with the amorous rapture of a Frenchman's first true love, suggesting it is perhaps the object character or energy of the drug that assumes a central motivating power for her, rather than its pharmacological character previously described by Wurmser (1974). Object relations theorists trace addiction to one's first experience of love - the relationship with the mother. An example of this may be seen in Annie Meyers' (Siegel, 2005, p. 207) autobiographical book *Eight years in cocaine hell*, in which she described her "relationship" with cocaine as an "expression of motherly love". Meyers felt that cocaine tempered the loneliness of her recent widowhood and would pet the bottles and refer to them as "my baby".

As humans our first need is to love and be loved, and our first object relationship is organized around this need. It is in the fourth chakra stage of development that this first experience of love and the relationship with the initial love object becomes internalized, shaping all our future love relationships (Judith, 2004). Summers (1994) suggests that if love is frustrated as an infant so that the anxiety of object loss becomes unbearable, the infant longs to devour the object in order to keep it securely within. However this desire

triggers a more intense fear of object loss – destruction of the love object – and now the infant itself is the potential source of the destruction. As the infant fears that its love will destroy the object it so desperately needs for survival, it withdraws from object contact.

The person shuts down the energy connection with the object, closes off the heart chakra, and pulls back into himself/herself. The resulting despair tends to draw the ego to non human replacements such as food, drugs, and alcohol, as these substitute objects are more easily controllable and are therefore unlikely to repeat the frustration already experienced in human relationships. Since the longing is for *human* contact however, the substance cannot succeed in providing the needed gratification, and it must be continually sought (Judith, 2004; Summers, 1994).

In such a case according to Judith (2004), such a person may develop a deficient heart chakra, which is an avoidant response to too little love. Without opening the channels to love someone else, one cannot receive love from others, leading to the isolation and loneliness so commonly experienced by addicted individuals. The energy cathexis to drugs and a concurrent de-cathexis from true relationships perpetuates the isolation and addictive behaviour.

From a Winnicott's (1951) perspective, if mothering has been good enough until some point and then fails significantly without repair, the child will seek to regain what has been lost – essentially motherly love. Winnicott (1951) therefore sees addiction as an attempt to regain the lost object (love) through direct physical gratification in the form of food, alcohol, drugs and sexual promiscuity. He believed that such addictions are similar to transitional phenomena because they represent the mother and yet are recognized as not being the mother. The period of transitional phenomena can be seen as the phase in which the infant internalizes the mothers psychological matrix or maternal energy. Drugs provide the opportunity to dwell in omnipotent security but unlike the child's transitional possessions, addictions are not given up naturally because they are a regressive response to deprivation, an effort to regain an earlier relationship before deprivation (Winnicott, 1951).

To have experienced love which was later withdrawn inevitably results in a sense of rejection - a fear that dwells at the core of the human heart. Fear of rejection according to Judith (2004) is the prime reason we hold back our love and close down the heart chakra, which becomes withdrawn and blocked as the natural flow of energy cannot move forward. This is experienced as being disconnected from our ground, feeling lost and lonely. As the central integrating chamber, the heart chakra is the healer, and love is the unifier and integrator - the basic ingredient necessary to assemble ourselves, without which unintegrated parts will seek bonding elsewhere, often through drugs (Judith, 2004).

Corresponding to Winnicott's (1951) conceptualization of the internalization process, numerous authors postulate that the shared energy field of mother and infant may play a role in chemical dependency problems found from generation to generation. The unconscious dynamics of the mother's psyche are powerfully cathected to the unconscious dynamics of the infant. This recurrent energy exchange results in enduring energy patterns and transformations, including characterological types, attitudes, and personality traits that occur within the life of the individual (Webb, 2005; Leigh, 2004; Taub-Bynum, 1984).

4.5.2. Addiction as social experience

Given the energetic connection between the addicted person and his/her social environment, any exploration of the experience of addiction must necessarily be framed by the experience of living in a society where pejorative attitudes exist towards images of addiction. Szasz (2003) asserts that the association of addiction with criminality and moral depravity results in stigmatization, social distinction and separation. Freud (Smith-Pickard, 2004, p. 57) also noted this phenomenon and suggested that addiction represents a conflict within ourselves where there are times when we want selfish enjoyment in the belief that:

"The wishes and desires of men have a right to make themselves acceptable alongside of exacting and ruthless morality."

Given the powerful source of energy provided by unified beliefs, it is difficult to be at variance with one's tribe, as violating tribe rules causes a loss of power to an individual's energy system, blocking access to the healing power of the sacred truth *all is one* (Myss, 1996). The addicted person may learn to identify with negative social perceptions of him/her and dis-identify with himself/herself, thereby moving against the natural self-acceptance of the love chakra and toward self rejection and grief. He/she consequently holds back his/her love and closes down the heart chakra (Judith, 2004). Given the resulting pain, it is surprising that so many people pursue such a venture. Szasz (2003, p. 174) illustrates a possible motive for this in the following:

"So-called addictive drugs often help a person to deceive himself; but they also help him to escape from the authorities who deceive him."

The authorities, according to Szasz (2003) attempt to deceive the addict by declaring war on those drugs that people themselves *want* to take, while forcing upon them those drugs they often *don't want* to take, resulting in a struggle between individuals aspiring to care for themselves, and collectivities subjecting its members to procedures they define as therapeutic.

Weil (2004) points out that the tribal slogan that drugs are an "escape from reality" applies only in a society that equates reality with ordinary waking consciousness. Far from seeing the use of drugs as an *escape* from reality, many users look upon it as one possible means of *embracing* reality, even more dramatically and soulfully than is possible through normal reality or what Tart (1986) refers to as "consensus trance" Hence Robin Williams' derisive statement: "Reality is a crutch for those who can't cope with drugs".

According to numerous authors (Goode, 1970; Hoffman, 1980; McKenna, 1992; Metzner, 1989; Siegel, 2005; Weil, 2004), certain natural substances used in ritualized manner drive the user into life more intensely, magnifying the emotional significance and enjoyment of the best things that life has to offer, and that by trying these substances,

man probes a fuller set of human possibilities and dimensions. By accepting societies restrictions, man becomes alienated from the multiplicity of selves that he might become, and therefore to “just say no” to drugs is to deny all that we are and all that we could be.

4.5.3. Tribal energy and the forbidden fruit

Since the motto of the tribal chakra is *all is one*, the ever growing problem of addiction may be seen as something growing out of an energy imbalance on a societal level. According to Myss (1996, p. 107), “when an entire tribe becomes infected with fear, that energy extends to its children.”

McPeake et al. (1991), McKenna (1992), and Weil (2004) argue that western societies fears toward not only intoxicants, but altered states of consciousness in general is the real cause of addiction, beginning when our first experiences of these states during early youth through hyperventilation, choking, and other means, is thwarted by concerned parents who instinctively try to stop us. It is only a matter of time before children find out that similar experiences may be obtained chemically, and without the guidance to experience alternate states of consciousness in constructive, ritualized, socially approved ways, these children grow up to believe chemical substances to be the *only* doorway to this fascinating realm. However, because this is a forbidden realm, the desire to alter consciousness may go underground in the individual, and the power of ecstasy is subverted into destructive channels.

According to Szasz (2003), because of mans rule following nature, every prohibition generates the possibility – and hence the *temptation* to break the rule and defy the authority who made it and thus enjoy the triumph of successful self assertion. Herein lies the motivation of defiance and rebellion for drug use captured by Irvine Welsh (2007, p. 165) in the following:

“We took morphine, diamorphine, cyclozine, codeine, temazepam... methadone... we took them all. Fuck it, we would have injected Vitamin C if only they'd made it illegal.”

The very process of forbidding something calls it to mind turning it into an “irresistible” temptation: hence the familiar adage about forbidden fruit tasting sweeter. Thus Mark Twain (1964, p. 26) writes: “Adam was but human – this explains it all. He did not want the apple for the apples sake; he wanted it only because it was forbidden”.

Willis (1989) has noted the way in which cultural influences surrounding a person can control drug-using habits in beneficial ways. The low incidence of alcoholism among Jewish people has long been ascribed to the integration of occasional social and ritual use of alcohol into family life in a way which encourages temperance. Similarly, Ruspoli (1998), Weil (2004), and McKenna (1992) have observed that Amazon Indians recognize the value of periodically experiencing altered states and choose to introduce children to these experiences by letting them try natural drugs under supervision of the tribal expert in such matters – the shaman. Children therefore learn the value of altered states which are not entered into for negative reasons, such as escape from boredom or anxiety, or rebellion, but in a ritualized and spiritual manner.

4.5.4. Language and energy

Society’s language towards drugs and addiction is infused with anger, conflict, and despair. Pejorative cultural attitudes are articulated quite explicitly in phrases like “the war on drugs” (Chopra, 1997), descriptions of the addict as “dope fiend” or “junky” (Wurm, 2003), as well as in what Szasz (2003) describes as the “psychiatric mythology” of addiction, describing the addicted person as having a “personality defect” or “disease” which has given birth to tribal sayings such as: ‘Once an addict, always an addict’. Since our language both shapes and reflects our experience, Szasz (2003) argues that the verbal shaping of the “problem” itself contributes much or even all of the subsequent problem, and suggests that we had no problem with drugs until we literally talked our way into having one.

Energetically our bodies absorb such phrases often without our awareness (through our etheric body) which is highly sensitive to emanations around us. It is in the fifth chakra

that such words find resonance, influencing our consciousness at each and every moment (Judith, 2004). Words, as noted by Trieschmann (1995) reverberate deeply and persistently within one's energy field. This provides an energetic basis for the contention held by existential thinkers that the label "addict" serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy, and gives new meaning to Kipling's statement that "words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind". Our reckless languaging has even seeped into our healing efforts, for instance, in the AA, the alcoholic is told to repeatedly reaffirm, "My name is ... and I am an alcoholic", which forever locks the person into that energy vibration and identity, so that the addiction is never owned and retired. The person continually identifies with that which he/she is trying to push away and release, which denies him or her the possibility of complete and utter transformation (Arntz et al., 2005).

As Wurm (2003) asserts, by using the term "addiction" one has already started to define and anticipate what the client is experiencing, suggesting that we as health professionals have not listened to what addicted people are telling us. If we are not listened to we get the message that our inner truth does not matter, and shut down our fifth chakra. The voice of the addict - as a living expression of his/her basic vibration and interior experience is therefore ignored (Judith, 2004) and predefined by notions such as "disease" and terms such as "addiction" (Gray, 2004). How can the addict hear his or her own unique vibration in a world deafened by the roars of society's pejorative perceptions of him/her?

4.5.5. Isolation, love, and the ecstasy experience

Various thinkers have noted the profound sense of estrangement experienced by modern man. This sense of separation is, according to Adams (1999), humankind's predominant myth. We see ourselves as separate from nature, each other, and the divine (Judith, 2004). If we take the myth of separation to be ultimately real we dis-member self and world, leaving ourselves alienated, dissociated, and estranged, and thereby prone to defensive and destructive reactions such as addiction.

Judith (2004) traces this feeling of separation to the heart chakra, arguing that collectively we are falling out of love with the world. Love, she says is the all pervasive glue of the universe, through which we are able to satisfy our basic human need for community. Fromm (Clinebell, 1963) calls this our need for relatedness, and similarly views it as love in the broadest sense, which is union with somebody, or something, outside oneself, while retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self. It allows us to transcend our separateness without denying us our uniqueness.

It's only through moments of ecstatic experience during which we transcend the supposed separation of self and world - moments of interpermeation - that we tend to understand ourselves and reality differently, and to be more aware of and compassionate with others and the natural world: awareness of interpermeation generates love as love generates awareness of interpermeation (Adams, 1999). This involves an ongoing, mutual interchange.

The use of intoxicants to activate/simulate feelings of love and satisfy humankind's need for relatedness can be seen in organized celebrations throughout the ancient world, involving the combination of wild music, sensuous dancing and chemical intoxicants. In ancient Greece, for example, ecstatic festivals were elaborately organized in honor of the god Dionysus. In these "Bacchanalia," men and women gathered in remote locations and experienced a unity with one another that transcended class, race and sex. As Nietzsche (Sagiv, 2000, p.163) put it in describing the Bacchanalia:

"... all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice or 'impudent convention' have fixed between man and man are broken. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him... ."

Sagiv (2000) and Thomas (2002) have noted the return of this Bacchanalian energy in the stupefying modern day mass parties called "raves," which combine electronic "trance" music and mind altering drugs (predominantly the drug "ecstasy") and held in remote locations under open skies, on beaches, and in forests or deserts across the world. As the

Tel Aviv weekly *Ha'ir* (Sagiv, 2000, p. 167), reports:

"Trance cuts across ethnic and economic classes. Whoever took part in one of the raves last summer surely noticed an amazing thing: That everyone was there. Druggies from India and greasers from the suburbs, girls from development towns with their tank tops and platform shoes dancing alongside buttoned-up BA students. This is the true power of the rave: It creates an unstoppable surge of humanity. At the raves there is no fighting, no arguments; the atmosphere is saturated with love..."

According to Sagiv (2000), the youth culture of the last few decades is gripped by the same emotional alienation characteristic of post-modern culture. Coupland (1991) coined the term Generation X to describe a group of "twentysomethings" who experience a sense of estrangement with their fellows, and tend to mask their sense of alienation, lost direction and hopelessness behind a hardened pose of apathy, irony and cynicism (Clinebell, 1963). It is a generation that craves love but can not express it. Energetically, it is a generation with a shut off heart chakra. Disconnected from their tribal energy source, they feel ungrounded, unloved, and isolated from the environment as well as each other, leading them to channel their energy into the drug "ecstasy" and the passive euphoria of the "rave". Once again we see the power of ecstasy being subverted into destructive channels.

The ever increasing popularity of the drug as well as the rave scene in general, is symptomatic of the growing hunger among young people for relational connections and spiritual direction (Zervogiannis, 2003). The fundamental affect of ecstasy is that it removes the fear that inhibits one from expressing love, moving freely and letting oneself go (Thomas, 2002; Zervogiannis, 2003). The resulting euphoria generates what has been described as a sense of "unconditional love" (Thomas, 2002; Zervogiannis, 2003), eliminating feelings of alienation and disconnection, by providing a fleeting, yet highly valued sense of unity with others and the greater cosmos. However, it is not solely the pharmacological effects of the drug that produce such feelings of relatedness and connection. One interprets the drug effects in accordance with the energy exchange with

the wider phenomenological field, and only then are the effects experienced and meaning is generated (Watts, 1962).

At these “raves” the effects of ecstasy are amplified by communal ritualized drug taking. There is a tangible energy that goes along with dancing to extremely loud beats with hundreds of other people. Race, gender, age, sexual preference and everything else on which society places so much emphasis disappear into the background, creating an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and belonging. This is the essence of the “vibe” so commonly talked about in groups of ravers. According to one description as cited by Sagiv (2000, p. 162) of the drug’s effect in this setting:

“It begins in the stomach, and from there it slowly spreads through the entire body, like a bursting stream of energy...The dancing sweeps you up more. The beat too. The more you are drawn into the music, the more you forget - everything. The ecstasy reaches higher and higher, becomes more intense. The feeling of time is lost, together with all inhibitions.”

There is little surprise that ecstasy is known as the “love drug” in the drug subculture because of its reputation for producing feelings of platonic love in groups of people which may account for the “collective energy” commonly experienced at raves Zervogiannis (2003). This may impart a temporary sense of “tribal” unity. However, when the effects of the drug wear off and the ego returns, it is typically accompanied by a crippling sense of isolation and emptiness, which sheds light on the criticisms of experienced ravers who commonly report that the love experienced at raves is artificial (Thomas, 2002). Such experiences therefore cannot satisfy ones long term need for relatedness in Fromm’s sense of the term.

What follows the life affirming experience of enlightenment and unity is the inevitable “crash” - loss of the sacred and ruination of the “vibe” and the promise of the notoriously traumatic and painful “comedown” often lasting up to a week. This depression can only be overcome by the thought that the next weekend will come round, presenting the

opportunity to repeat the process as the cycle of dizzying highs and terrifying lows continues and escalates out of sync with regenerative nature (Wilshire, 1999; Zervogiannis, 2003).

Through chemically induced ecstasy, we are certainly able to transcend our sense of separateness and bridge the gulf between the island that is ourselves and the mainland of humanity. However when these enchanting moments pass, one discovers that the gulf is wider and the isolation deeper than before, leaving the person desperate to bridge the gap again, perpetuating the addiction cycle, as we progressively drift further and further from the mainland of humanity. In contrast, after true moments of regenerative ecstasy, moments that are the result of cultivation and patience, the gulf becomes progressively narrower each time it is crossed.

In such moments there is no “crash” or “comedown”, and the “vibe” only gets better with practice and time, as we reaffirm, strengthen and enhance our connection with our fellow man and the universe. The *!Kung* healing ceremony described by Edwards et al. (2006) which shares many common features with these raves, albeit without the use of chemical intoxicants, bears testimony to the regenerative nature and healing properties of naturally produced ecstasy. Ecstasy becomes healing, regenerative, and energy enhancing as opposed to destructive, addictive and energy depleting. Such experiences can serve as a point of departure for even deeper psycho-spiritual development. This may occur through appropriating an authentic moment of ecstasy experienced within the rhythms of the regenerative earth and cultivating it into a stable, enduring structure of consciousness and way of being (Adams, 1999). This brings us to the spiritual dimension of existence.

4.6. Spiritual domain

On the spiritual dimension - the world above or meta-world - we explore the way in which the addicted person relates to the unknown, and how this unknown is both uncovered and obscured through the use of drugs. We follow the addict's quest for the eternal beginning with flashes of illumination and ending in disillusion and nothingness.

This level is regulated by intuition and concerns putting all the pieces of the puzzle together into an overall philosophy of life. It therefore relates to the sixth chakra, the task of which is to assemble information into meaningful patterns, and thereby find our way to insight – the ability to see within. One's preoccupation on this dimension is with meaning, the prime activity of the seventh chakra, a balance of which leads to the discovery of a sense of purpose.

4.6.1. Archetypes and the vertical dimension

When ancient man stumbled by accident on the product of fermentation, he must have felt that strange, even miraculous, things were happening to his inner world. When he drank the juice of fruit, grains or honey, his fears and burdens lost their weight...He felt lifted out of the horizontal earth-boundness of his daily existence into a temporary experience of the vertical dimension of life. Small wonder that he regarded the substance that could produce these effects as a mysterious gift of the gods (Clinebell, 1963, p. 475).

Consciousness altering drugs have been used as religious and curing aids since the very beginning of human existence. The Mexican mushroom has been used by the Aztecs for centuries in their sacraments. Their word for it, significantly, meant "God's flesh" — a striking parallel to "the body of our Lord" in the Christian Eucharist. The mysterious drug called *soma* was used in India for religious purposes, and the *haoma*, better known as marijuana, was used by the Zoroastrians to unite people with the higher realms. It has also been suggested by Hofmann, Ruck and Wasson that the mystic *kykeon* that was eaten and drunk at the climactic close of the Eleusinian mysteries - the ancient world's most awe-inspiring mystical ritual - contained a psychedelic plant (Metzner, 1989).

More interesting than the fact that consciousness-changing devices have been linked with religion is the possibility that they actually initiated many of the religious perspectives which continued after their psychedelic origins were forgotten. Bergson (Smith, 1964) for instance saw the first movement of Hindus and Greeks toward "dynamic religion" as associated with the "divine rapture" found in intoxicating beverages.

The striving for a pseudo-mystical experience through the use of intoxicants has accompanied man since the earliest of times (Weil, 2004). Huxley (Weil, 2004, p. 18) comments the following:

"That humanity at large will ever be able to dispense with Artificial Paradises seems very unlikely. Most men and women lead lives at the worst so painful, at the best so monotonous, poor, and limited that the urge to escape, the longing to transcend themselves, if only for a few moments, is and has always been one of the principal appetites of the soul."

Mind-altering drugs have always been used in religious rites and festivals relating to the mysteries of man's existence, such as birth, marriage and death. It was undoubtedly due to their power to give experiences of the ecstatic and the transcendent that these substances found such widespread use as a symbol of these elements in religion (Clinebell, 1963). The same properties which make them valuable religious symbols for many people also lend them to use as a substitute for religion by others. This phenomenon is illustrated in the following remark by Tennessee Williams (Szasz, 2003, p. 46):

"...for a long time I couldn't walk down a street unless I could see a bar- not because I wanted a drink but because I wanted the security of knowing it was there"

For Williams alcohol seems to serve as a source of security in the face of uncertainty, and ultimately a religious function. He substitutes a symbol – the very nature of which is to point beyond itself – for that which is symbolized. For Williams, alcohol is not a symbol of his experience of a higher power; it is his higher power. Perhaps this is the meaning of the statement, "before AA we were trying to find God in a bottle". He continues:

" I don't want any car at all. I used to get panicky on the California freeway. I always a little flask with me and, If I forgot it, I would go into a panic" (Szasz, 2003, p. 46).

The flask of alcohol evidently had the same function for Williams as a religious icon would have for a formally religious person. In these two quotes we can detect a certain pattern in William's belief system – his reliance on alcohol and its associated paraphernalia as a pseudo-religious source of the vertical dimension of life. Without realizing it, he adopted the illusion (the demon of the sixth chakra) that security and essentially spirituality can be found in the bottle. Through perceiving and integrating such patterns, symbols and images – the task of the sixth chakra – bits of information assemble and begin to reveal the identity of the whole, and we enter the world of archetypes (Judith, 2004).

The archetype is the composite of images and experiences within the universal storehouse of the “collective unconscious” that are constellated by a common theme. They are born of the collective soul, but are accessed and enacted by individual souls and provide primordial images and thoughts of substantial transformative power (Chopra, 1997; Sherwood, 2007). Their mythical dramas play out daily in our physical world and fuel unconscious subroutines in our behaviour and belief systems (Chopra, 2003; Judith, 2004; Myss, 1996).

Judith (2004) reminds us that archetypal energies are found at the core of all mythology and religion. Imbued with a powerful energy that resonates deep in our psyches, embracing the archetype is a spiritual experience, and opens us up to the spiritual states associated with the upper chakras. Over time, archetypes get invested with collective psychic energy, and strongly influence the culture.

An example of this may be seen in ancient Greece. Realizing the pain and alienation generated by the notion of reality in which self and world are separated, and man stands face-to-face with the outer world, which has become an object, the ancient Greeks supplemented the multiformed and richly coloured, sensual as well as deeply sorrowful Apollonian world view created by the subject/object cleavage, with the Dionysian world of experience, in which this cleavage is abolished in ecstatic inebriation (Hofmann, 1980).

In the wild cultic celebrations held in his honour, his followers entered a trance in which they lost all sense of self, becoming “empty vessels” into which the essence of Dionysus could enter. The Dionysian longing for ecstasy therefore contains within it a deep yearning for self-annihilation, and the negation of one’s separate individual existence. Mircea Eliade (Sagiv, 2000, p. 158) described this impulse as the universal desire, manifest in religious and cultic practices around the world, to “return to the womb” as a prelude to being born again. As Miller and Swinney (2000, p. 7) put it, “the ego yearns to drown its pain in a nostalgic return to undifferentiated unconsciousness – a reunification with the Great Mother”.

4.6.2. The decent into Hades

Dionysus was related to the afterlife, and was believed to suffer, die and rise again from the dead. The ritualized atavism of Dionysus was associated with *katabasis*, or a ‘descent into the underworld’ of which Dionysus was also regarded as lord; thus Heraclitus considers Hades and Dionysus as one and the same, indicating the underworldly nature of Dionysian experience (Schenk, 2001). The ritual that accomplished this appears to have been for men the identification with the god Dionysus involving the enactment of his myth of life, death and rebirth, including some form of ordeal (McKenna, 1992; Miller & Swinney, 2000).

Addiction is often understood as an archetypal process - an unconscious attempt at initiation, a search for the sacred and transcendent, a need to transcend one’s present state of meaninglessness through a relentless pursuit for personal regeneration (Chopra, 1997; Miller & Swinney, 2000). The archetypal pattern seizes and possesses the addict, and drags him/her like Persephone into the underworld. As noted by Judith (2004, p. 366), spiritual awakenings, like the light of most dawns, are often preceded by darkness: “It is darkness that makes us reach into the depths of our soul beyond where we have been before, in order to create a new reality”.

When the addicted person hits “rock bottom”, she/he quite unexpectedly experiences a new spiritual awareness, and begins to call upon a higher power to lift her/him out of the depths to which she/he has sunk. Some even experience a moment of dramatic revelation, a spiritual “rebirth” similar to a religious conversion, in which they recognize they are in the hands of some supreme destiny. The process of addiction itself has therefore been interpreted as a deluded attempt to reach this point – a descent into hell that must precede the vision of paradise (Chopra, 1997; Miller, 1990; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Stolaroff, 1993).

Miller and Swinney (2000) see the addictive process as a bastardization of the shamanic form of drug and ritual induced initiatory healing and transformation - a spiritual process where initiatory death is followed by regenerative rebirth. However, in the self-initiatory attempt of addiction, the initiation is inverted. The person experiences a rebirth first (during intoxication), then a death experience (during the post drug dysphoria). It is a downward initiation toward the underworld of death and darkness, as drug-initiation deteriorates into drug-addiction. Addiction literally becomes a matter of life and death, and a search for regeneration often ending in a literalized or symbolic “trip to hell”.

As Schenk (2001, p. 32) observes, the underworld mythically is a realm to be entered for the sake of learning what cannot be known in the world above, thus Hades-Dionysius embodies the “incredible, fathomless depths of the psyche”. This corresponds with the purpose of the sixth chakra – the development of the mystical third eye – the organ of inner perception that provides us with self-knowledge and understanding (Judith, 2004). To grasp concepts of cosmic and transcendent consciousness (the realms associated with the upper chakras) a direct means of perception is necessary and attainable only through intuitive understanding. Through such understanding we are able to open the third eye, allowing us to see the big picture, transcend our ego centricity and find the deeper meaning inherent in all things (Judith, 2004; Myss & Shealy, 1999).

Judith (2004) describes intuition “as a flash of a match in the darkness” that for a brief moment illuminates the psyche revealing its underlying wholeness. Through systematic

development of intuition one slowly learns to sustain illuminated moments for longer and longer periods. Chemical substances, like other catalysts of altered states of consciousness, provide access to this realm of transpersonal consciousness which is beyond both ego and the instincts of lower chakras (Judith, 2004; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Sherwood, 2007; Stolaroff, 1993). They dissolve the boundaries to the unconscious mind, and allow access to repressed and forgotten material, to Jung's Shadow, to the archetypes of humanity, and to the wellspring of creativity and mystical experience that Jung called the "collective unconscious." Such glimpses of the numinous are experienced as highly pleasurable and even rewarding for some, and equally frightening and destructive for others.

In the moments following drug ingestion, one experiences more or less intense ego-death, a distancing of consciousness, rationality, and lucidity. This death however is not consciously accepted, nor is it experienced as death, but as a loosening of excessive tension as the ego is de-activated. Loss of consciousness results in the emergence of archetypal contents to fill the vacuum (Miller & Swinney, 2000; Sherwood, 2007; Stolaroff, 1993). The resulting often mystical experience has been noted by Maslow (1964) in his observations of psychedelic induced peak experiences as a "rebirth".

Under normal circumstances such an illumination and inner vision would only occur once the individual has integrated the lessons and reclaimed the shadows from lower chakras (Judith, 2004). However, with the use of drugs, the awesome power of the numinous is instantaneously revealed when the doors of perception swing wide open. As opposed to a gradual understanding and illumination described by Judith (2004), the psyche is suddenly lit up with a light so bright that it may be blinding.

It is only when the drug wears off that the death-experience comes violently as a person may find him/herself overwhelmed by the eruption of repressed unconscious material without knowing how to deal with and integrate it, resulting in a variety of dysfunctional mental states (Sherwood, 2007; Stolaroff, 1993). As Stolaroff (1993) notes, most of us have made its contents unconscious for very specific reasons, and it seems not all are equipped to navigate successfully through these dimensions.

The spiritual life gained through leaping prematurely into an “alternate reality” is typically thin, evanescent, and addictive. William James spoke of the dangers of premature crystallization: “satisfactions so great and early that one is fixated on them, and fails to achieve the greater satisfactions that might have come from long work and more risk” (Wilshire, 1999, p. 106). In the words of Maslow (1964, p. 4), “the sudden insight becomes “all,” and the patient and disciplined “working through” is postponed or devalued”.

The addict attempts to jump from peak experience to peak experience, artificially avoiding the valleys that allow the system to recharge, assimilate and integrate overwhelming experiences (Maslow, 1964; Miller & Swinney, 2000; Stolaroff, 1993). However it is in these valleys that the healer within becomes activated and the addict comes to an understanding – that there are no shortcuts to intuitive understanding. During such revelations the addict may see with new eyes and understand that only with authentic initiation, with experiential contact with soul, the sacred, and undifferentiated source, comes a healing that calms the tensions and frenzy of the addictive cycle.

Through inner dialogue with the soul, energy no longer bound up in previous wounds and repressed material is free to flow forth abundantly from the true regenerative source, the unbound self. This is the primordial source of spontaneous healing. In addition, the creative energy that was wrapped up in the repetitive addictive cycle is free to flow in positive channels, and may be used quite fruitfully to expand the boundaries of ones being as the energy travels into the seventh chakra (Miller & Swinney, 2000; Stolaroff, 1993).

4.6.3. The quest for spiritual fulfillment

Deep within each one of us is an indescribable desire to make sense and meaning out of life, to discover ones ultimate true nature and relationship to the universe (O’Murchu, 1994). This has been described by Clinebell (1963, p 473) as “mans religious-philosophical-existential need” - the need for the numinous and the transcendent – the

need to feel that there is something wonder-full, transcending the mundaneness of life achieved through the "vertical dimension", as well as the need for a sense of meaning and an experience of being a part of the whole universe. William James (Clinebell, 1963, p. 473) acknowledged the role of alcohol in generating/simulating an experience that might temporarily satisfy these needs:

"The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour...Not through mere perversity do men run after it...the drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystical consciousness."

James (Grof, 1994, p. 105) observed that "sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says no; drunkenness expands, unites, and says yes" and believed that the alcoholic and by extension, the substance dependent person, is in search for the experience of the sacred and transcendent. Based on this observation, James suggested that the real cure for addiction is passionate religion. Chopra (1997, pp. 4-5) emphasizes the positive nature of this search, and argues:

"A person who has never felt the pull of addictive behaviour is someone who has not taken the first faltering step toward discovering the true meaning of Spirit."

Chopra (1997) points out that the addict is a person in quest for a transcendent experience. Such a search he argues provides a foundation for true hope and real transformation. In her autobiography, alcoholic Elizabeth Burns (Clinebell, 1963, p. 477) writes:

"Liquor wasn't a crutch for Liz, it was an exit. A quick flight to a world of her own making ...it wasn't that this present world was too much for her; it was that it wasn't enough."

As illustrated by Burns, addiction represents an aspiration towards a higher level of experience, and although that aspiration cannot ultimately be fulfilled via pseudo-

religious means, the very attempt suggests the presence of a genuinely spiritual nature (Chopra, 1997; Clinebell, 1963; O'Murchu, 1994). It is a search for meaning and fulfillment that every human being pursues, although this pursuit may be misguided or poorly informed.

According to Clinebell (1963), contemporary religion in the west has lost much of its sense of the numinous, the mystical, the ecstatic and the transcendent, and that when religion loses its spine-tingling quality, drugs are substituted by many. The psychedelic movement of the sixties, regarded by Clark (1970) as essentially a religious movement is a prime example of this phenomenon. Watts (1962, in prologue, p. xii) observes:

"Thousands of young people, fed up with standard-brand religions which provided nothing but talk, admonition, and (usually) bad ritual, rushed immediately to LSD and other psychedelics in search of some key to genuine religious experience... As might be expected, there were accidents."

Maslow (1964) puts forth two categories for describing religions: the Apollonian (legalistic and organizational) and the Dionysian (mystical or experiential). Clinebell (1963) suggests that the Apollonian has taken over and that the Dionysian has been squeezed out. In Jungian terms, the masculine (reason, ethics, logic, controls) has become dominant; the feminine (feeling, giving, mothering, accepting) has been repressed. It was for this very reason according to Hofmann (1980) that the ancient Greeks supplemented the Apollonian world view with view with the Dionysian world of experience in which all logic, separation and control is abolished in ecstatic intoxication.

Various authors have noted striking parallels between the ancient Bacchanalia held in honor of Dionysius, and the "raves" and trance parties of today (Sagiv, 2000; Thomas, 2002; Zervogiannis, 2003), the most important of these being: the total experience of ecstasy, the feeling of union with nature, the effacement of individual identity, and the sensation of overwhelming love. Indeed, descriptions of the experiences of "ravers" at

such parties carry decidedly spiritual and mystical overtones, as illustrated by Ronald Tzvi Trotush (Sagiv, 2000, p. 163) in the following:

"You connect to the life energy of the galaxy and become a part of it. You feel, you love, you are open, liberated and happy--this is the peak...."

Zervogiannis (2003, p. 74) has noted the religious aspect at raves, whereby the DJs are the "digital shamans", "priests", or "channellers of energy" of the rave "ceremony", with their mixing decks symbolizing the altar, the desert, forest or beach is the church, the holy water the ecstasy, while dancing is construed as the method by which ravers 'worship' Dionysius - the god of altered consciousness. A part of the charm of mind altering substances are their ability to impart the Dionysian spirit and thus satisfy, albeit temporarily and with considerable danger, mans need for the numinous, transcendent and relatedness to all life.

Maslow (1964) has cautioned against the sole reliance on mystical or experiential methods of satisfying these needs. He argues that as the more Apollonian type can forget the subjectively religious experience and redefine religion as a set of habits, behaviours, and dogmas, which at the extreme becomes entirely legalistic and empty, so does the mystical or Dionysian type run the risk of being reduced to the merely experiential. Focused on these wonderful subjective experiences the "polarized" mystic may be tempted to *seek* them, *ad hoc*, thereby exposing him to the danger of turning away from the world and other people in search for triggers to peak-experiences, *any* triggers. In other words we gradually give up communicating with the beyond, and concentrate our attention on what was supposed to be the means to an end - the drug itself.

Although drugs appear to be able to induce religious experiences, it is less evident that they can produce religious lives. There is no inherent connection between a mystical experience of oneness and the expression or manifestation of that oneness in the affairs of everyday life (Maslow, 1964; Metzner, 1989; Stolaroff, 1993). Religion must therefore be more than religious experiences.

Judith (2004) traces the use of psychedelic drugs to attain “spiritual highs” to an excessive crown chakra. Such an excess she argues results in us pulling ourselves up into our heads to avoid feelings and to distance ourselves from worldly demands. In Kierkegaard’s (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997) terms, the person attempts to dwell in the infinite, while escaping the problems and limitations associated with the finite. It is for this reason that Zen Buddhism insists that once students have attained *satori*, - (which some Zennists say resembles LSD) they must be driven out of it, back into the world (Smith, 1964).

Judith (2004) describes the crown chakra as a two way gate to the beyond. It opens outward, beyond ourselves to the infinite, as well as inwards and downwards to the world of visions, creation and eventual manifestation. The aim of moving up through the chakras is one of constant transcendence and liberation of the spirit, however, Judith (2004) stresses that if we are to avoid getting lost in the infinite we must retain a home to which the spirit can return.

The challenge for the crown chakra therefore, is to connect the limited with the infinite, while still retaining both qualities. In this way the two ends of the spectrum connect the individual self with universal creation. One contacts the divine, but also manifest divinity in ones body and actions, thereby allowing divinity to speak from within. Judith’s (2004) ideas resemble Kierkegaard’s (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997) suggestion that it is in the tension between the finite and the infinite, between the reality of everyday experience and the demands of the universal which leads to the generation of spirit.

It is only through the gradual cultivation of insight and experiential contact with the soul, developed through intimate energetic communication with the body that one achieves true spiritual enlightenment, thereby attaining what Nietzsche (Danto, 1979) considered to be the strength of the Greek culture - its weaving together of Dionysian passion with Apollonian discipline and restraint.

4.6.4. Facilitating the natural healing process

According to Miller and Swinney (2000), the majority of substance abusers “mature out” of their addictive behaviour. They observe that these people don’t identify with having a “disease” or being “powerless” in their lives, and emphasizes that this is not denial. They have a moment of personal epiphany when they dis-identify with and detach themselves from the habit pattern, and change their lifestyles accordingly.

Miller (1990) has noted sudden and dramatic transformations in addicted people calling them “quantum change” experience, in which the personality is permanently turned upside down in a short period of time. This phenomenon has been likened to spiritual conversion experience, and linked to treatment methods that are explicitly spiritual and meaning-focused such as meditation and prayer (Chopra, 1997; Grof, 1994; Miller, 1990).

The experience of Bill Willson (co-founder of the AA), for instance was sudden, dramatic and life changing. In his personal account he reported that he was “catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence. I was to know happiness, peace and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes (Miller, 1990, p. 261).

Chopra (1997) has illustrated the energetic underpinnings of such “quantum changes”. He points out that once the patterns in the body are altered at a bioenergetic level by the experience of higher levels of pleasure the desire for self destructive highs naturally diminishes. This is essentially spirituality. What in fact is happening to the person is a *rediscovery* of their inner spiritual nature. There is no real need therefore, for an attitude of constant vigilance against the dangers of alcohol or anything else. These dangers and temptations will vanish like mist when our enjoyment of life’s real pleasures once again becomes available (Chopra, 1997; O’Murchu, 1994). Krishna (Weil, 2004, p. 166) sums up this situation neatly in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

“The abstinent run away from what they desire but carry their desires with them: when a man enters Reality, he leaves his desires behind him”

It is common for people to begin to move in a spiritual direction in connection with drug experimentation sooner or later (Stolaroff, 1993; Weil & Rosen, 2004). Many long-time drug users and supporters, give up drugs for regenerative ecstatic experiences, developed for instance through conscious breathing and meditation. Ram Dass, formerly Richard Alpert, for instance, who was an enthusiastic promoter of psychedelics while on the faculty at Harvard University, later came to feel that his drug experiences were an obstacle to self-realization and that yoga and meditation were more valuable and regenerative techniques (Weil, 2004).

This observation supports the contention that the highs obtainable by means of meditation are ultimately more pleasurable than the highs obtainable through drugs. Methadone maintenance for heroin addicts according to Weil (2004, p. 164) is shockingly off the mark. He writes: “Instead of showing heroin users how to get high without drugs, it gives them drugs without highs – exactly the wrong direction in which to change things”.

The primary need in healing addiction therefore, is to facilitate this natural healing process, thereby reawakening the sense of inner harmony and integration that enables people to grow spiritually. In this way, the person reclaims the essential unity and oneness of their self, and the interconnectedness to the “sacred” at every level of their existence, while reestablishing their linkage with the natural rhythms of nature. Regaining inner fullness, suffering automatically dissolves and need no longer be avoided (or medicated) through addictive behaviour. The person disconnects from the illusions and attachments they place between themselves and the divine, from the substitutions they use to fill the emptiness of their soul, thereby reclaiming the energy that was once fixated outside themselves and redirecting that energy to the Self (Chopra, 1997; Judith, 2004; Miller & Swinney, 2000; O’Murchu, 1994; Stolaroff, 1993).

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

*"If my heart could do my thinking
And my head begin to feel,
I would look upon the world anew
And know what's truly real."*

(Van Morrison)

The overarching aim of this study is to uncover the changing nature of the lived experience of five addicted people who practice energy healing over a period of four months, and explore what this experience reveals about the nature of their embodiment and their relationship with self, others, and the world. In this chapter, the study is positioned in the context of its existential-phenomenological framework, the research aims are explained, and the qualitative research paradigm is described. This is followed by a detailed description of the design of the study, including such aspects as the sampling and selection of participants, the methods of data collection and finally the analysis of the data.

5.1. Introduction

The meaning of "method" has been traced to the Greek word *hodos*, meaning 'street' or 'way' (Todres, 2006). Regarding research within the field of the social sciences, the term refers to the plan (process, principles, and procedures) used which outlines the researcher's investigative journey in the pursuit of valid knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1989). These guiding plans are informed by philosophical positions regarding the nature of reality and ways that reality can be known, and guide the nature of ones methodological excavation of the phenomenon in question.

For the most part, research in the addictions field has been guided by the philosophical

assumptions of the natural sciences, in which reality is seen as objectively given and can be described by measurable properties which are independent of the observer (researcher) and his or her instruments (Lavery, 2003). Such a model aims mainly at the search for causality and favours quantitative forms of analysis (Giorgi, 1985). In order to do its work of precisely correlating processes and trying to establish causal linkages, it must objectify the body and quantify it. In so doing, however, it masks out crucial features, experiences and *qualities* of the “body as self”, and consequently is only able to provide pieces of the picture of addiction.

In light of the above, this study is framed within a qualitative methodology and uses an existential-phenomenological approach with the aim of providing a more expansive, imaginative, and organic vision of how these pieces might fall together into a whole. In this model, man *is* his body and resonates with the world through a perpetual energy exchange.

Such a perspective assumes the existence of multiple realities constructed by those who experience the world (Maykut & Morehouse 1994), and “acknowledges the reality of the realm of meaningful experience as the fundamental locus of knowledge” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 43). From this perspective, the body-self’s immediate experiencing and minding of the world cannot be objectified or quantified, and it is only in this experiencing that the addictive condition really shows itself. Likewise, it is only in this immediate experiencing that non-addictive, integrated and ecstatic involvement of the body-self in the world, as experienced during energy based healing, is revealed. Such studies of experience must begin with phenomenological research.

5.2. Theoretical framework of the study

Given the habitual tendency to think that there is really and necessarily an absolute separation between self and world, and that self is further divided into mind and body, with mind as the heart of the self, buffered from the world, addiction can never be fully understood.

When Husserl formulated his ideas regarding phenomenology, he did it with the aim of "...reclaiming the unity of the lived world..." (Lippitz, 1997, p. 69). In a very basic sense, he advocated a methodology that would overcome the artificial dichotomies in the study of human life through understanding lived-experience, without relying on theories such as those in dualism. A phenomenological orientation thus assumes the interrelatedness of all phenomena, and bridges artificial, conceptual distinctions between such terms as body, mind, and spirit. Rather, it gives attention to the lived experience of such phenomena, in terms of bodiliness, mentality, and spirituality (Edwards, 2006). Such an orientation transcends dualistic separatism and reductive, merely mechanistic determinism, thereby allowing phenomena to be revealed and explored holistically.

Phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience or the life-world (van Manen, 1990). The life-world comprises the world of objects around us as we perceive them and our experience of our self, body, and relationships (Finlay, 2005). All experience is regarded as having its basis or foundation in the life-world, the world as lived by the person and not the hypothetical external entity separate from or independent of him or her (Valle, 1998). "There is no inner man [*sic*]," Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 11) explains, "man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself". This lived world is pre-reflective – it takes place before we think about it or put it into language and is understood as what we experience without resorting to categorization or conceptualization, and quite often includes what is overlooked or those things that are common sense (Lavery, 2003)

Husserl argued that experiences are constituted by consciousness and thus could be rigorously and systematically studied on the basis of their appearances to consciousness (Groenewald, 2004). He viewed consciousness as a co-constituted dialogue between a person and the world and saw access to the structures of consciousness not as a matter of induction or generalization, but as a result of direct grasping of phenomena (Lavery, 2003). This grasping was seen as an intentional process. "Intentionality" refers to the fact that consciousness is directional; it is always "of something" and therefore an activity

guided by human intention rather than determined by mechanical causation (Polkinghorne, 1989). In order for consciousness to 'occur', it must exist in relation to an object. Van den berg (1980, p. 33) explains:

"In perception, something is perceived, in judgment something is accepted or rejected, in love something or someone is loved... Something of the so-called external world is necessary, essential for any mental phenomenon. The subject is in its slightest manifestations intentional, that is, directed toward an object, referring to an object intended."

This bridges the gap between subject and object and has in principle, abolished mind-body dualism (Van den berg, 1980). The significance for this study lies therein that the body/mind dichotomy is non-existent within this paradigm thereby making it possible to interpret addiction in terms of blockages in the flow of energy through the body, which are related to realities within the wider sphere of human existence.

To study consciousness, Husserl introduced the methodological tool of the "phenomenological reduction" or *epoche*. The word "reduction" is derived from the Latin compound "*re-ducere*" meaning "to lead back to origins" (Koestenbaum, 1975) and in terms of phenomenology can be defined as:

"The philosophical effort to circumvent all interpretations, presuppositions, and adventitious aspects of the phenomena themselves. Only by going back to the original and unadulterated presentations of the experiential phenomena themselves can the facts of being be adequately understood" (Koestenbaum, 1975, p. LVI).

According to Spiegelberg (1975), phenomenology was not founded but instead existed, grew and continued changing till the end of Husserl's life. Heidegger expanded on Husserl's phenomenology to include not only consciousness but also the individual's world in which he lives (Vonder Hoeven, 1965). According to Heidegger's existential phenomenology, 'being-in-the-world' precedes all our thinking of the world and as such

man as being here (Dasein) should be the starting point for all questions about being (Giorgi, Barton & Maes, 1983). The concept of being-in-the-world represents the individual's process of perceiving and experiencing the biological, social, personal, and spiritual world around him/her. Therefore, in order to understand a person's behaviour or expressions one has to study the person in context, since it is only there that what a person values and finds significant, exists (Mohamed-Patel, 2002).

Whereas Husserl viewed consciousness as separate from the world, existential-phenomenology conceives of consciousness as having been formed from lived human experience (Lavery, 2003). The person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from the person (Valle & Halling, 1989). Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another, hence *being*, from an existential-phenomenological stance, is being-in-the-world (Kruger, 1979; Spinelli, 1989). In emphasising the union of consciousness and the environment, the approach is concerned with an investigation of how human beings are in-the-world (Valle & Halling, 1989).

As such, more explicit attention is given to ontological issues and there is an interest in understanding the actuality of Being (Osborne, 1994). Specifically, existential-phenomenologists are concerned with how the ontologic givens of human existence (death, meaninglessness, isolation, freedom of choice, responsibility, etc.) are negotiated (or not) by the individual and how the individual interprets and gives meaning to these experiences, to the self, to others, and to the world and how, in turn, the experiences shape his/her sense of reality (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

As people and the world are in constant dialogue with one another, it is through the world that the very meaning of the individual's existence emerges for both himself or herself and others. Existential-phenomenology views people as being in a constant process of interpretation as they journey from one situation to another and that each situation has meaning only through people's interpretation and definition of it (Giorgi et al., 1983). The existential-phenomenologist thus attempts to capture the process of interpretation

through empathic understanding that requires the ability to internally reproduce the feelings, thoughts and actions of others (Mohamed-Patel, 2002).

The term *empathy* is translated from the German term *Einfühlung*, meaning “feeling into,” or gently sensing another person in the process of trying to appreciate it. When this idea is applied to the study of the human world, empathy is generally understood as entering another’s world. Finlay (2005, p. 273) quotes Rogers who defines this process as follows:

It means entering the private world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person...It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments...as you look with fresh and unfrightened eyes...

Polanyi (1958) refers to this ‘posture’ adopted by the phenomenological researcher as ‘indwelling’: “To indwell means to exist as an interactive spirit, force or principle, and to exist *within* as an activating spirit, force or principle. It literally means to live between, and within” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 25). Although “indwelling” involves the attempt to ‘live in’ and experience the world of the subject as experienced by the subject, it is simultaneously reflective in nature. Thus the researcher not only seeks to experience the world of the subject, but also to place himself outside of the situation and review the meanings of the experience.

As Hertz (1997, p. 8) explains, “To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about the experience while simultaneously living in the moment”. Existential-phenomenological researchers strive explicitly to understand some of the connections by which subject and object influence and constitute each other. Of importance is the researchers’ ability to be reflective about the influence of earlier experiences and assumptions in their own background. Such reflexivity embraces the human science perspective of intersubjectivity methodologically as well as philosophically.

Existential-phenomenology draws heavily on the work of Heidegger regarding the way in which lived experience is explored. Heidegger advocates the utilisation of hermeneutics as a research method founded on the ontological view that lived experience is an interpretive process (Mohamed-Patel, 2002). Simply stated, hermeneutics is the science of interpretation or understanding (Kockelmans, 1987). Here the researcher is seen as an integral part of the research process, entering into the world of the research participants and coming to understand their experience through a process known as the hermeneutic circle (Koch, 1995).

The “hermeneutic circle” refers to the idea that for in depth understanding, one must have some knowledge of the object or subject of study. Critics posit that nothing new can be learned if investigations are based on presuppositions (Moran, 2000). Heidegger rejects this notion and postulates that the circle is not “closed” per se; rather, further knowledge lends itself to improved understanding of a phenomenon (Higgs & Smith, 2002); the development of knowledge involves a process that moves between understanding the parts to understanding the whole (Polkinghorne, 1983). It is assumed that the researcher will bring a level of precomprehension to the study and that, through a circular process, the research participants’ knowledge (data) is revisited and elaborated upon, to gain meaningful interpretation of their experiences (Bleicher, 1980).

Hence, from a Heideggarian perspective, truth is not something that can be objective and unaffected by personal bias or perspective, as truth itself lies within peoples’ engagement with the world (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 224). Heidegger therefore believed the idea of bracketing to be idealistic as one cannot stand outside the pre-understandings and historicity (the historical foundation of our understanding) of one’s experience, because it serves as an ontological base for our being-in-the-world (in Polkinghorne, 1983). More realistic, he supposed, was to reflect upon our presuppositions in order to recognize their presence (Heidegger, 1982).

The researcher nevertheless remains true to the phenomenon by acknowledging these preconceptions and by allowing openness to new and unexpected phenomena. The

'bracketing' process, from an existential-phenomenological perspective therefore involves engaging in a process of trying to see the world freshly and to attend more actively to the participant's own way of seeing the world. The researcher strives for a 'transcendental attitude' in that he/she seeks to be open to the Other. Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom (2001, p. 97) describe this open stance as "the mark of a true willingness to listen, see, and understand. It involves respect, and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility".

It is within this existential-phenomenological framework that the experiences of the participants in this study will be explored. The following section outlines the aims of the study while illustrating the suitability of the selected framework in achieving such aims.

5.3. The aim of the study

The aim of this research study is both descriptive and exploratory, as well as interventionist in nature. It is descriptive in its attempts to capture and describe the experience of addiction as it is actually lived and evolves throughout the research process; and interventionist in its intentional effort to care for, guide, and journey with co-researchers toward a whole new, healthy, and perhaps even transcendental lived world. Existential-phenomenology therefore serves in this study not only as a method to explore new worlds with new eyes, but also as a way of helping others live in new worlds (Edwards, 2001).

Specifically, this study aims to provide a rich, in-depth understanding of addicted people as *beings-in-the-world*, interpreting the changing nature of their own energetic experiences of addiction within the *Eigenwelt* (their relationship with the self), the *Mitwelt* (their connection to their individual environment), the *Umwelt*, (their relationship with the greater community), and the *Uberwelt*, (their relationship to the greater universe).

Such research aims necessitate a research methodology that would be suitable in capturing the changing nature or quality of inner experience open to the participants who learn to make contact and work with their energetic selves in the hope of creating a new, non-addicted way of being-in-the-world. The selected research paradigm will now be explored in detail and elaborated on in further sections of this methodology section.

5.4. Research paradigm

Neuman (2000, p. 62) defines a paradigm as “a basic orientation to theory and research”. It is a set of beliefs that constitutes the researcher’s ontology (concerning the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it), epistemology (concerning the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known), and methodology (concerning how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever s/he believes can be known). Osborne (1994) insists that the methodology used needs to follow from and reflect the philosophy chosen as it carries on throughout the project and therefore it is essential that the nature of the research design incorporates the nature of the research questions and the manner in which they are to be studied.

Traditionally, research in the area of substance dependence has relied on objective methodologies which contribute to an epistemological understanding of the problem from the researcher’s perspective (Smith, 1998). In contrast, this study focuses more on the ontological aspect of the problem, that is, the lived experience of the substance dependent person.

The present study is therefore conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, using an existential-phenomenological approach to access and validate the rich, emotional *lifeworlds* of the co-researchers, and gain a deep, novel understanding of the embodied meaning of addictive and non-addictive energetic being-in-the-world. Consistent with the philosophy that informed this research, this method preserves the uniqueness of the experience from the sufferer’s point of view by allowing the participants to speak for themselves, relying on the knowledge and first-hand experience of the research

participants.

5.5. Qualitative research

Qualitative researchers attempt to recover the richness of human experience that cannot be recognized when phenomena are studied from the perspective of human science as natural science (Osborne, 1994). Human experiences are captured from the participant's worldviews and researchers focus on the qualities, processes, and meanings of individual differences and contexts, rather than on measurement and causal relationships. As opposed to quantitative research, such approaches use an inductive form of reasoning, developing concepts, insights and understanding from patterns of data, deriving meaning from the participants own perspective (Mohamed-Patel, 2002; Osborne, 1994).

From the qualitative perspective, the richness and profundity of human reality is seen as closely related to the structures and meanings of natural language (the native language spoken by the subject) (Polkinghorne, 1983). In order to capture these subjective meanings, the researcher becomes immersed in the data, that is, he enters the participant's minds and lives, exploring their assumptions and biases and discovering what they take for granted, what they believe in and deny about their own experiences. Researchers tend to develop a close relationship with the participants, who become co-researchers, and together, they arrive at mutually agreed-upon meanings. As such, the researchers acknowledge their impact as researchers in the research process (Lavery, 2003).

The research design in qualitative approaches is usually flexible and unique and evolves throughout the research process (Groenewald, 2004). Such flexibility allowed the researcher to design a study that was immediately relevant to his ongoing clinical interests and work, namely addiction, energy therapy, and existential psychotherapy. Specifically, it was hoped that the research would reveal the experiential nature of this therapeutic process.

Typically, qualitative studies begin with a broad question in response to which an extensive amount of verbal data is collected from a modest number of participants. Data are analysed by extracting themes and are presented in the form of words, quotes from documents and transcripts. Babbie and Mouton (2002) define the main features of the qualitative approach as follows:

- Research is conducted in the natural setting of the participants. That is, that the subjects are viewed holistically within their context.
- Research is based on the process rather than the outcome. This will allow for underlying meanings to emerge.
- The aim of research is to gain an in-depth, rich description of the life of the participants, where actions and events are included.
- The main concern of research is to view social action within a specific context and to try not to generalize according to some theoretical population.
- The research is inductive, resulting in new hypotheses and theories.
- The researcher is the main tool in the research process.

5.6. Trustworthiness

The language of reliability and validity was originally developed for use in quantitative science and signify adherence to a positivist reality which is not applicable to existential theoretical frameworks. The issue of trustworthiness is however crucial to the acceptance of the research methods employed by phenomenologists working in the existentialist tradition (Von Eckartsberg, 1989). Maykut & Morehouse (1994) define the trustworthiness of a qualitative research design as the extent to which confidence can be placed in its results, and emphasize the transparency of the research process. They maintain that by providing detailed information about the purpose and methods of the study and inviting the consideration and scrutiny of the readers of the work, the researcher increases the likelihood that the reader will seriously consider and trust its findings. Poggenpohl (1998) regards the most important issue to be that the researcher is able to logically account for stages in the data analysis and that the final conclusions are

based on the generated data. In order to provide for trustworthiness, the following section provides clear and detailed information regarding the process of the research, including how the participants became part of the sample, the data collection methods used, the procedure of analysis as well as the way in which the results and findings were communicated.

5.7. Criteria for selecting participants

In phenomenological research, the only legitimate informants are those who have lived the reality (Hycner, 1985). Therefore, in recruiting participants, attention was directed at selecting individuals based on their knowledge and current experience of being powerfully drawn to substances, and their ability and willingness to reflect on and communicate such knowledge with openness and fluency. In addition, due to the interventionist focus of the study, a further inclusion criterion was that the currently addicted participants be consciously striving toward a change in the way of being, that is, were seeking freedom from their various addictions, and who therefore would be willing to partake in and be consciously present throughout the intervention process.

The selection process attempted to adhere to a final criterion suggested by Stones (1986) who recommends that subjects be preferably naïve with respect to psychological theory, as their being untrained would increase the probability of their verbalizing the data of their awareness without undue interference from implicit philosophies of various schools of thought. With this in mind, the researcher attempted to select participants who had not been previously exposed to mainstream rehabilitation establishments, such as those emphasizing and psycho-educating clients as to the disease theories of addiction, in order to achieve fresh and untainted descriptions of experiences.

5.7.1. Process of obtaining participants

As the phenomenological researcher seeks to clarify human experience (Hycner, 1985), s/he searches for those individuals that have had the particular experience under study.

Purposive sampling was used to identify the primary participants as it allows the researcher to deliberately select specific participants who fall within a difficult-to-reach specialized population - addicted persons eager to undergo energy healing (Neuman, 2000). In order to trace additional participants, the researcher used snowball sampling, which is a method of expanding the sample by asking one participant to recommend others for interviewing (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

With the employ of the former method, one participant (who was known to the researcher) agreed to partake in the study. An additional four participants were recruited using the latter method, bringing the total sample to five participants, three of whom were males and two were females. All participants were English-speaking and experienced themselves as being powerfully drawn to an array of chemical substances from which they sought relief, including marijuana, opiates, alcohol, ecstasy, cocaine, and cigarettes.

The selected participant's experiences with energy ranged from limited direct experience and practice in energy healing in one case, to theoretical knowledge of energy and its healing characteristics in two cases, and limited or no knowledge of energy in the other two cases. It is noteworthy that three had never received any counselling or therapeutic intervention in the hope of breaking their addictions; one had seen a psychologist briefly but did not consider the experience to have been helpful; while the other two had been involved in various 12 step programs.

5.8. Ethical considerations

The participants in the study allowed the researcher into a very privileged place, sharing deep feelings and emotions that they may not have shared with anyone prior to the research process. The researcher thus took the stance of being very respectful, empathetic, and warm throughout the research process and was careful to follow strict ethical procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all those who participated.

Neuman (2000) suggests that, in order to conform to ethical codes of practice with regard to informed consent, the researcher should be as open and detailed as possible about his objectives and interview procedure. The participants in this study were therefore informed as to its nature and aim of the research, namely to enhance and extend the understanding of addiction from the perspectives of addicted people themselves, as well as to explore the experiential process and potential effects of practicing energy based interventions in the hope of finding relief from addiction. The ultimate goal explained was that of providing some input to theory building and an important contribution to counseling and intervening practice.

Furthermore, participants were notified that the aim of the intervention was to access, uncover and resolve their experience of addiction, and were cautioned that this healing process may elicit profound feelings and potentially painful emotions as they learn to make greater contact with their deeper energetic selves. Steps were therefore taken to ensure that the participants did not feel forced or coerced into the study and they were told that they could withdraw at any stage of the research process. Furthermore, all participants were provided with the researcher's contact details and were encouraged to keep in contact throughout the study in the event that they required further support, or if they simply wanted to clarify additional information. Special care was taken to ensure that those participants who became very emotional during the interview or intervention process were adequately contained through continuous support and care.

Participants were informed as to who will have access to the information supplied by them, how it will be used, recorded, and presented. They each gave written consent for the interviews to be recorded on audiotape and for the information gleaned from the interviews to be used in this study. (See Appendices A1 & A2 for copies of the consent forms). In addition, they were afforded the option of anonymity. Three participants are referred to by their original names, and the remaining two by a pseudonym of their choosing.

5.9. Data collection

Data collection took place over a period of six months during which a total of three interviews were conducted with each participant. The researcher conducted two unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews with each participant prior to and after the intervention which formed the data for analysis. These interviews were recorded, with the participants' permission, using an audiotape recorder which allowed the interviewer to concentrate on the nonverbal communication during the interviews. In addition, an intervention planning interview was conducted with each participant within a two week period of the initial interview, with the aim of constructing an individually based energy healing program. The following section documents the process of this data collection procedure offering examples of challenges and insights generated at each stage of this period.

The aim of the data collection phase of phenomenological research is to attain rich descriptions of lived-experience (Von Eckartsberg, 1998), in this case, of addiction prior to and after practicing energy therapy. According to Kruger (1979), the spoken interview allows the subjects to be as near as possible to their lived-experience. Dufrenne (1967, p. 215) explains:

"In effect, when I speak, I am my speaking; I become one with words. Certainly...to speak puts me at a certain distance from that of which I speak. But between my consciousness and my speech there is no distance at all: I am in union with the language I use."

Face-to-face interviews were therefore conducted with each participant. According to Polkinghorne (1983, p. 267), the "face-to-face encounter provides the richest data source for the human science researcher seeking to understand human structures of experience." Such encounters enable the researcher to perceive and record the subtle experiences of participants that are conveyed through facial expressions, vocal tones and other gestures, thereby allowing him/her to convey the meaning intended by the participants as

accurately as possible.

Kvale (1996, pp. 25-32) conceives of the qualitative research interview as a discourse, or a specific form of conversation, aimed at eliciting descriptions of and understanding dimensions from the interviewees' life-world. According to Kvale (1996, pp. 1-2), it is "literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest," whereby the researcher attempts to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences.

In order for this interpersonal engagement to take place, the researcher enters into a relationship of dialogical openness, ready to allow the participant to speak and ready to listen (Parse, 2003). Such openness is facilitated by conducting the conversation in an environment that places the participant at ease. For instance, one participant in the current study requested to meet in his favourite café on a Sunday morning in which live music was being played in the background. The atmosphere was not considered ideal by the researcher, who was initially apprehensive about the lack of privacy and somewhat distracted by the background noise. Nevertheless, the participant seemed to be comfortable, open, and at ease as evidenced by his relaxed demeanour, and appeared to be truly engaged in the conversation. After this was realized, the researcher slowly became aware of his own demeanour, which slowly became more relaxed, and experienced a heightened degree of focus as the surrounding activity progressively became less distracting.

This example illustrates the importance of Finlay's (2005, p. 277) suggestion that in addition to skilful listening, the researcher also needs to be open to "being with the participant in a relationship". As Burns (Finlay, 2005, p. 277) observes, a researcher's own "embodied subjectivity interacts with that of the respondent in the mutual construction of meanings/bodies ... no 'body' can exist neutrally outside this process of inter-corporeality or inter-subjectivity." As the relevant data may be constituted by the interaction itself, in the specific situation which is created between the interviewer and the interviewee, the researcher attempted to maintain a reflexive awareness of the

intersubjective relationship between himself and each participant. This was achieved by continually reflecting on and recording his own embodied experience of the relationship along with other thoughts, feelings, and experiences throughout the data collection process.

Although each of the three interviews conducted with participants followed the basic tenets of existential-phenomenological interviewing described above, subtle variations and differences existed regarding the focus of and preparation for each interview, which were determined by the specific goals of each stage of the data collection process. The following describes the process of each interview in greater detail.

5.9.1. Interview 1 – pre intervention interview

As a preparatory step to gathering data from the co-researchers, the researcher reflected on his own personal experiences of being powerfully drawn towards addictive substances and activities. Groenewald (2004) views this as the role of bracketing. It is a process whereby the researcher becomes open to his or her own and to others' perspectives. The analysis of the researcher's reflections were helpful in clarifying the parameters and dimensions of the experience as well as alerting the researcher to presuppositions and biases, thereby ensuring that they would not intrude on his capacity to listen to the participants.

Since it was important to create an opportunity for participants to give voice to their experience, the conversation was held in an informal and unstructured manner, the interviewer attempting to influence the interviewee as little as possible. This method of interviewing according to Kruger (1979), allows for flexibility in allowing the investigator to grasp more fully the participant. The interview began by asking participants to reflect on and describe their experiences of addiction. The researcher aimed to empathise with the participant's situation and offer further prompts geared to existential dimensions of that situation, for instance the experience in terms of his or her embodiment, felt space or relations with others. Aside from this the researcher spoke as

little as possible intervening only when clarification was needed or when the co-researchers began to philosophise about addiction in general. When this happened, the researcher gently asked the participant to return to his or her felt sense of the experience, bearing in mind that the felt sense is composed of body sensations, feelings, and thoughts (Gendlin, 1996). It was hoped that this phrasing would assist participants to access and express their sense of self/embodiment and lived relations with others as directly as possible.

At the end of the interview, the co-researchers were given an opportunity to reflect on what had been said in order to unload thoughts and feelings the interview may have raised. This was considered an important step as insights generated from this interview were to be incorporated in the intervention planning interview that followed.

The length of the interviews were self-determined, and ranged from approximately 45 minutes to nearly one and a half hours in length. Notes were taken during and immediately after the interview, with respect to general impressions (i.e. presentation, behaviour, and demeanor), emotional content and gestures of the interviewee, as well as the embodied experience of the interviewer.

5.9.2. Interview 2 – intervention planning interview

The second interview was conducted within a two week period of the first and involved a decision making and problem solving dialogue between the researcher and co-researcher. Through a collaborative effort, the two parties worked towards planning and designing a unique energy healing program within the context of each participant's diverse life circumstances. As noted by Edwards (2001), the research event in itself essentially constitutes a form of intervention. Whereas the previous interview was minimally and perhaps indirectly interventionist in the sense that it assisted co-researchers to reflect on and conscientize themselves to their experiences of addiction, the second interview was increasingly and directly interventionist in its attempts to incorporate and utilize the personal meanings and insights generated from the initial dialogue into the formation of

an individually designed treatment plan with the intention of creating a new and healthy way of being.

This change in context inevitably affected the roles of and relationship between the researcher and co-researchers, which seemed to have evolved into what was now experienced by the researcher as a healing partnership. The role of the researcher during this interview thus shifted to one of supporter, nurturer, and direct facilitator of change. As a result, the inequalities of power in the relationship were felt to diminish and in all cases, a therapeutic alliance or working partnership was firmly established.

During the interview, the co-researchers were familiarized with the philosophical underpinnings and practical applications of energy based healing and were encouraged to raise any concerns and questions regarding the healing process. Against the backdrop of each co-researchers diverse addictions and life-worlds, the suitability of various energy healing techniques were explored.

Participants were provided with the option of following either the Chinese or Indian systems outlined in chapter 3. Table 6.1 in the following chapter provides a detailed summary of each co-researchers selected interventions. It should be noted that although participants were initially provided a choice between systems, they were not restricted to those interventions belonging to any particular system, and in some cases practiced a combination of the two. The rationale behind the choice was directed more towards the degree to which they related to the philosophical underpinnings of each system. Choice of intervention was arrived at based on the degree to which co-researchers related to each intervention (and its philosophical underpinnings) as well as the examination of empirical data on the effectiveness of such interventions with regard to their specific addictions.

In addition, all participants were briefed on and encouraged to practice Mindell's (2004) "dreamland" exercises illustrated in chapter 3, for the purpose of discovering the essence of their addiction so that it may be brought to conscious awareness and worked with accordingly. Finally, all participants were briefed on the energy tapping techniques

described by Feinstein et al. (2005) to be used during times of craving.

As ethical guidelines for energy interventions (Hover-Kramer, 2002) prevent untrained researchers working with energy healing, the participants were referred to professional energy practitioners throughout the city of Johannesburg in order to familiarize themselves with the practical applications of the selected techniques before commencing practice at home. Although all participants attended a minimum of ten sessions with trained energy healers in their selected interventions, two participants continued to attend these sessions twice weekly throughout the entire intervention period as well as at home as often as time would allow. The remaining three attended the minimum requirement of ten sessions after which they continued to practice at home at their own time and convenience. Based on their reports, these three participants practiced these interventions a minimum of once per week.

The participants were provided with contact details of the researcher and encouraged to make contact whenever they wished. The extent to which co-researchers maintained contact during this period varied from once every week, to 5 times throughout the entire intervention period.

Responsibility during this interview and throughout the intervention rested on the researcher for:

1. Guiding co-researchers towards the appropriate interventions while encouraging them to acknowledge their agency in, responsibility for, and contribution towards their healing process.
2. Providing reliable and appropriate theoretical information regarding selected interventions which participants were requested to familiarize themselves with before practical application began.
3. Motivating and encouraging participants to practice these interventions.
4. Ensuring no harm was incurred by participants through providing correct referrals to legitimate, experienced and accredited energy healers in their area of residence.

5. Offering support, care and information to co-researchers throughout the intervention process. One participant for instance experienced an overwhelming surge of emotion during the initial stages of the intervention period and was therefore assisted with supportive counseling.

Edwards (2001, p. 2) reminds us that as human beings our individually unique existences are essentially intersubjective and radically social, and as such, “our very ‘selves’ are continuously changing social constructions, in which we continuously influence each other through interpersonal encounters / interventions in one another’s worlds”. In research terms, a mutual dialectic takes place within this intersubjective relationship as researchers affect and are affected by their participants through a process of *reciprocal transformation*.

On a more personal note, while the researcher remained mindful of his potential impact on participants during the data collection period, he initially lost sight of and in fact was surprised to discover the extent to which the co-researchers impacted on him. By means of my involvement in the healing process, a varying degree of intimacy was experienced with each co-researcher, with all the accompanying opportunities, hazards, and challenges that such closeness brings. Each relationship was experienced as unique.

Through the process of persistently empathizing with and entering into the participant’s life-worlds, and reflecting on the changing nature of my own perceptions of addiction and energy healing throughout the various stages of the study, I formed many new insights with regard to my personal experiences with consciousness altering substances and practices. Specifically I gained a deeper awareness of what these phenomena mean to me, as well as the functions they serve in my life. These realizations seemed to grow progressively deeper as the research process evolved. They became clear while reflecting on my own embodied experiences during and after each face-to-face encounter.

Such reflection provided me with insight into the nature of my own cravings and urges, which interestingly seemed to heighten and lessen to a varying degree, depending on the

co-researcher with whom I was engaged. Such awareness bears testimony to the suggestion made by Finlay (2005) that empathic understanding of another and reflexive uncovering of self are in fact inseparable. Furthermore, this experience suggests that the empathic understanding of another's experience of embodiment is intimately connected to the lived experience of the researcher's own, as evidenced by the varying intensity of cravings experienced by the researcher during and after engagement with each participant.

Reviewing the results of reflection prior to the initial interview and those post intervention, my biases regarding addiction shifted dramatically during the course of the study. My original definition of addiction was rather stagnant, theoretical, objective, and cerebral. After the intervention it had evolved to a more dynamic, holistic, open-ended, and embodied understanding of the phenomenon. My understanding of addiction and energy healing thus evolved throughout the course of the study and in retrospect it is clear that I was in fact being transformed together with the co-researchers as we engaged in what was felt to be a time of mutual learning, shaping, and growth.

5.9.3. Interview 3 – post intervention interview

Once again, the researcher engaged in self-reflection before commencing the final interview. Analysis of this reflection revealed certain expectations regarding changes that might have been experienced by the group as a whole as well as by individuals within the group. In anticipating the results of the intervention on a group level, the researcher had supposed that participants would experience changes on all dimensions of their existence, but assumed this change would manifest primarily on the spiritual dimension. Further individually based expectations were noted based on interaction with and personal feedback provided by participants during the course of the intervention process. With an awareness of these assumptions and expectations as well as their potential to impinge on the researcher's ability to hear the participant's stories, the researcher began the final interview with an attitude of as much openness as possible.

The final interview proceeded along the same lines as the initial interview whereby participants were once again invited to reflect on and describe their current experience of addiction. In addition further open ended questions were used to elicit participant's experiences of the process of energy healing. Further access to the lived worlds of participants was achieved using prompts geared to existential dimensions of their experiences which facilitated exploration of the changing nature of their way of being and in what ways the phenomenon of being addicted might be interwoven with different aspects from their life-worlds. This interview was experienced as more spontaneous and fluid than the initial interview and generally lasted longer (approximately 2 hours on average). Once again, notes were taken during and immediately after the interview, with respect to general impressions as well as the embodied experience of the interviewer.

5.9.4. The results of data collection

The data gathering process produced a collection of experiential descriptions of the topic under investigation. The gathered descriptions included the subject's pre and post interviews, their reflections and feedback during the intervention period as well as personal reflections by the researcher. The pre and post interviews were fully transcribed, safely stored, and formed the focus of the analysis.

Strauss (1987) suggests that an effective transcription process is essential for a full and varied analysis of the data. Following Strauss's (1987) recommendations, the recordings of the interviews were listened to intensely and repeatedly in order to remind the researcher of any aspects of the interview that were not fully recorded, that were forgotten, or that were not noticed at the time. As consistent with the phenomenological approach, it was deemed important that non-verbal information be analyzed alongside the verbal data. The notes taken both during and immediately following the interview assisted in the clarification of any ambiguities in emotional content.

5.10. Data analysis

Rapmund (1996, p.118), defines the analysis of information as “the process whereby order, structure, and meaning is imposed on the mass of information that is collected in a qualitative research study”. Within this vast amount of information, the spoken word of the participants is linked with their thoughts, understanding, beliefs and meanings. Vygotsky (1934, p. 285) links these concepts with consciousness by expressing that:

If language is as ancient as consciousness itself, if language is consciousness that exists in practice for other people and therefore for myself, then it is not only the development of thought but the development of consciousness as a whole that is connected with the development of the word.

In this study, the thoughts and feelings of participants are expressed through language and language provides the vehicle for analysis of these expressions. In this way, the researcher is able to describe and clarify how addiction and the energy healing process are experienced and revealed in consciousness. Phenomenological data analysis proceeds by systematically and rigorously interrogating descriptions of participants’ experiences step by step to gain a holistic understanding of the experience under investigation (Hycner, 1985). The following provides the reader with a detailed description of this process.

5.10.1. Steps in data analysis

Before beginning analysis, the researcher once again reflected on his perceptions and biases in order to clarify his understanding of the phenomenon and prevent the imposition of his own meanings, interpretations or theoretical concepts into the unique worlds of the participants during analysis (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Sadala & Adorno, 2002). Using the complete transcription of each research participant, the data was then approached with an openness to whatever meanings emerged and analysed in accordance with accepted phenomenological research guidelines (Hycner, 1999; Kruger, 1979; Van

Kaam in Moustakas, 1994) via the steps outlined below:

Step 1: *Obtain an intuitive and holistic sense of the data*

Firstly, with an optimum openness to the descriptions at hand, the researcher read the entire transcription straight through in order to acquire a feeling sense or impression of each individual's lived experience in its totality (Hycner, 1985). After the initial reading of the descriptions, they were read again, repeatedly in some cases with a more reflective attitude in order to gain a holistic and intuitive understanding of the phenomenon in the words of the participant. This was done in accordance with the two principles taken from the field of hermeneutics outlined in the theoretical framework of the study; namely pre-understanding and the 'hermeneutic circle', by which written text may be more and more deeply understood and interpreted (Valle, King & Halling, 1989).

Step 2: *Discriminate natural meaning units (NMUs)*

With as much openness as possible, the researcher then re-read the data, breaking them down (reducing them) into natural meaning units (NMU), each conveying a particular meaning as they were presented in different parts of the description (Kruger, 1979). Hycner (1985, p. 145) defines a NMU as "...those words, phrases, non-verbal or paralinguistic communications which express a unique and coherent meaning (irrespective of the research question) clearly differentiated from that which precedes and follows". This breakdown into NMU's was accomplished by recording each time a transition in meaning was perceived, for instance, a change in subject matter or a change in activities being described based on the participant's stated experience of the phenomenon of investigation (Giorgi, 1980). The intention communicated by each NMU was then expressed in a reduced form in the participant's own terminology as succinctly and correctly as possible in order to remain faithful to the participant and his or her data.

Mohamed-Patel (2002) describes the task of this phase as an effort to extract central themes presented, with the awareness that each meaning unit and theme is inter-related.

This is accomplished through the use of judgement and intuition while allowing the data to “speak for itself”. This ensured that the meaning units highlighted expressed the participant’s own meaning of the experience (Moustakas, 1994) rather than those imposed by the expectations of the researcher’s theoretical position.

Step 3: Constituent Profile description

Having listed all the reductions of the NMU’s in step two, the researcher then eliminated those that were repeated, that is, those which represented an identical meaning or intention (Kruger, 1979). When this was done, irrelevant units were eliminated. Since the determination of irrelevance can be rather subjective, only those units that were of blatant irrelevance to the question being investigated were discarded. From the remaining units, the researcher constructed a constituent profile description, which is a condensed summary of the original data containing the essences of the experience of the participant, as expressed by the participant.

Step 4: Second order profiling

During this phase, the researcher repeated steps one to three, but on the constituent profile description. Data were checked to ensure no repetitions and the profile was reconstituted based on any further eliminations. This step included the examination of each NMU in relation to the topic under investigation. The researcher addressed the research questions to the NMU’s to determine whether what the participant had said responded to and illuminated the research question. Non-verbal and paralinguistic cues which significantly seemed to emphasize or alter the literal meaning of the words were also be taken into account (Hycner, 1999). Those NMU’s that did not relate were eliminated. The NMU’s that emerged from this procedure were listed, and then translated from the everyday language of the participant to the language of the scientific discipline being utilized, that is, psychological and phenomenological language (Kruger, 1979).

Polkinghorne (1989) states that the researcher inevitably reads the texts from the point of view of his own interests and discipline, and therefore suggests transforming the data by way of "...the ordinary human capacity to understand the meaning of statements" (p. 52). In other words, the meaning that dominates the unit will be stated as simply as possible in the researchers own language. Polkinghorne (1989) warns that during this process, the researcher should take care not to theorize, but should regard the text as a naïve description of the participants experience. The products of the process of transformation should thus reflect the participant's experience and not that of the researcher.

Step 5: Perform a hierarchical categorisation

In this step, the researcher determines if any of the NMUs naturally cluster together. In other words, if there seems to be some common theme or essence that unites several discrete NMUs. Such an essence emerges through rigorously examining each individual NMU and trying to elicit the essence of that unit within the holistic context. Hycner (1999) cautions that as there is more room for "artistic" judgment here than in previous steps, the danger that the researcher's presuppositions might interfere is increased. In discussing this step Colaizzi (Hycner, 1999, pp. 150-151) states: "Particularly in this step is the phenomenological researcher engaged in something which cannot be precisely delineated, for here he is involved in that ineffable thing known as creative insight".

In this procedure, there is a constant process of going back and forth from the transcript to the NMUs to the clusters of meaning. NMUs with similar but not identical meanings are clustered into categories, which are then arranged in a hierarchical fashion to facilitate the remaining steps in analysis. The researcher interrogates all the clusters of meaning to determine if there are one or more central themes which express the essence of these clusters. Clusters of themes are then formed by grouping units of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). Both Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) emphasize the importance of the researcher going back to the recorded interview (the gestalt) and forth to the list of non-redundant NMUs to derive clusters of appropriate meaning. By interrogating the meaning of the various clusters, central themes are

determined, “which expresses the essence of these clusters” (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

Step 6: *Write an extended description of categories*

Based on the examination of the categories, the researcher is able to write an extended description of how the participant has experienced the phenomenon in general, incorporating the themes that have been elicited from the data. This description gives a sense of the whole as well as provides the context for the emergence of the themes. As Ellenberger (Hycner, 1999, pp. 153-154) puts it:

Whatever the method used for the phenomenological analysis the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject. Each individual has his own way of experiencing temporality, spatiality, materiality, but each of these coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner ‘world’.

Step 7: *Transferring individual experience to general experience*

Once the process outlined in steps one through to six was completed for all the interviews the researcher looked for “the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations” (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). This procedure requires the phenomenological viewpoint of eliciting essences as well as the acknowledgment of existential individual differences. Common themes from the individual interviews were first clustered together as indicating a general theme that emerged in most or all of the interviews. Hycner (1999) warns that when the themes from individual interviews are clustered into a general theme, significant variations *within* that theme manifested in the individual interviews should not be obscured, as the variations may indicate the significance of the theme. The researcher then noted themes that were unique to a single interview or a minority of the interviews. These individual variations are regarded by Hycner (1999) as important counterpoints to the general theme.

5.11. Conclusion

In sum, a qualitative approach, grounded in a theoretical framework of existential-phenomenology was utilized in this study. This was deemed the optimal method for accessing the rich, emotional *lifeworlds* of the co-researchers involved and to gain a deep, novel understanding of the embodied meaning of addictive and non-addictive energetic being-in-the-world. Purposive and snowball sampling was employed in the selection of the participants, and data was collected through pre and post in-depth, unstructured interviews, which were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The data was then analysed via the aforementioned steps allowing the researcher to immerse himself in the world of meaning; that of word and text, in order to make sense of the experience of the participants. The following chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data according to the methodology described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

The following chapter presents the results of this existential-phenomenological investigation. Firstly, a brief introduction to each of the five participants is provided, including basic demographic details, the substances to which they found themselves being drawn, their corresponding chakras, their previous efforts of rehabilitation, and the interventions that they selected and practiced. For the sake of clarity it should be noted that although each participant attempted specific exercises based on the system chosen, they each discarded and introduced alternate exercises and healing techniques during the course of the intervention, and as a result, table 6.1 on the following page includes a section entitled “attempted interventions” (those they were introduced to) and “selected interventions” (those they ended up practicing). After this introduction to the participants, common and contrasting themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of the transcribed data will be described.

6.1 Introducing the participants

Name	Dino	Gerry	Wanita	Sameer	Karina
Age	30	40	28	25	33
Job	Advertising Executive	Pet shop owner	Painter and assistant art director	Restaurant manager	Journalist
Status	Single	Divorced with one child	Single	Single	Two year relationsh
Drugs of choice	- Sex - Marijuana - Cigarettes - LSD	- Alcohol - Opiates - Cigarettes	- Magic mushrooms - Marijuana - Cocaine	- Alcohol - Ecstasy - Cocaine - Cigarettes	- Chocolates - Cocaine - work - Cigarettes
Related	2 – Sex	2 – Alcohol	3 – Cocaine	2 – Alcohol	4 – Chocolate

Chakras	4 – Cigarettes 4,5,6 – Marijuana 6 – LSD	4 – Cigarettes 5 – Opiates	6 – Mushrooms 4,5,6 – Marijuana	3 – Cocaine 4 – Cigarettes	1,3 – Work 3 – Cocaine 4 – Cigarettes
System	Chinese	Chinese	Indian	Indian	Indian
Attempted interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chi-Gung - Reiki - Energy tapping - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chi-Gung (microscopic) - Acupuncture - Energy tapping - Reiki - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing - Yoga - Meditation - Exercise - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing - Reiki - Exercise - Energy tapping - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yoga - Meditation - Breathing - Exercise - Energy tapping - Dreambody
Selected interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chi-Gung (microscopic and macroscopic) - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reiki - Energy tapping - Swimming - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing - Meditation - Nature - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise - Energy tapping - Breathing - Dreambody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yoga - Meditation - Dreambody

Table 6.1. *Introducing the participants: addictions and interventions.*

A. Dino's Story

Dino is a 30 year old advertising executive originating from the U.K, who began smoking marijuana during high school when his parents divorced and his mother, with whom he was extremely close, moved away. In addition, he has experimented extensively with numerous hallucinogens, including LSD, hashish, and magic mushrooms, and began to seek help when his escalating drug use started to interfere with his work. He reported being addicted to marijuana and cigarettes and described a compulsive pursuit of short-term sexual relationships. Dino has been in numerous 12 step recovery programs over a period of 7 years. After persistent relapses he was eager to try an alternative approach and participate in the study. Based on his spiritual beliefs, Dino identified strongly with the Chinese system of energy healing. For the purpose of confidentiality, the participants' name has been substituted with a pseudonym.

B. Karina's story

Karina is a 33 year old highly motivated journalist who has been in a relationship for the past 2 years. Her first experiences with drugs began during her final year of schooling during which she discovered that diet pills, and coffee provided her with a source of energy and stimulation that allowed her to study throughout the night, as well as suppress her cravings for chocolate. Suffering from low self-esteem and a negative self-image, she began using cocaine in her first year of university with her friends as she found that it provided her with a sense of emotional self-control and motivation for exercise, as well as a source of energy for academic diligence. She reported being addicted to cocaine, chocolates, and work. Karina has never sought help for her addictive behaviours and related primarily to the Indian system of healing. For the purposes of confidentiality, the participants' name has been substituted with a pseudonym.

C. Sameer's story

Sameer is a single 25 male who works as a manager in a family owned restaurant. He described his poly-substance abuse beginning with alcohol when he lost his father at the age of sixteen. In addition to alcohol, Sameer reported experiencing difficulty controlling his use of cigarettes, ecstasy, and cocaine. He believed these substances served primarily to ease his sense of guilt associated with his fathers passing, as well as assisting him to feel more comfortable and communicable in social situations. He had never sought professional assistance before the study. Sameer found that he did not relate very well to many of the healing systems, and was somewhat reluctant to try Reiki, but agreed that the sense of contact and unconditional love prevalent in this setting might be instrumental in his recovery. After this as an introduction to the energy healing process he began to follow the Indian system, as well as energy tapping techniques.

D. Wanita's story

Wanita is a 28 year old homosexual painter and assistant art director in the movie

industry. She initially began using marijuana at the age of 17 with her closest friend, which she believes inspired her interest in art, literature, and music. Since then she has experimented with magic mushrooms, marijuana, hashish, and cocaine which she feels has provided her with an “infinite source of creativity,” and has never been involved in any therapeutic programs. Wanita described experiencing a discomfort with intimate human contact, and was thus initially somewhat reluctant to take part in the study. She nevertheless found she related to the nature of the study, and agreed to participate and follow the Indian system of health care.

D. Gerry’s story

Gerry is a divorced forty year old pet shop owner with one child. He reported experiencing a long term problem controlling his alcohol use which he believed provided him with a “social edge” and eased his persistent self-criticism. He identified his alcohol misuse as playing a large role in his failed marriage, and expressed much regret and sadness over losing close contact with his child. After being involved in a car accident during which he suffered a spinal injury, he found himself becoming dependent on progressively stronger prescription opiates such as *Lentogesic*, *Vicadin*, *Codeine* as well as sleeping pills. Gerry actively sought help for his misuse of substances by attending AA meetings as well as psychotherapy for a period of four months, but was ultimately unable to find freedom from his addictions. Gerry was unable to perform many postural movements due to his spinal injury, and opted to practice microscopic orbit meditation from the Chinese system, combined with Reiki. In addition, he supplemented these techniques with energy tapping and acupuncture to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

6.2. Emerging Themes

The following section explores the common and contrasting themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of the transcribed data of the two interviews. We first explore the results of the initial interview followed by those attained from the post-intervention

interview.

6.2.1. Pre-intervention interview: fear and loathing of addiction

The five final comprehensive themes that emerged from the analysis of the pre-intervention interview are as follows:

- 1. Disconnection, alienation, and isolation**
- 2. Deep seated pain**
- 3. Self destructive life-theme**
- 4. An endless void within**
- 5. A search for meaning**

These five themes, although relatively distinct in their categories of experiencing, feeling, and perceiving, nonetheless represent the core of the experience of addiction. At this stage, participants reflected on their lived experience of addiction prior to the energy intervention of the study. These themes capture the inner turmoil of the addicted person in attempting to search for meaning, acceptance, love, peace, and in essence, a new way of being. A discussion of each theme follows, with several examples taken from the participant's descriptions to represent the flavour of each theme.

6.2.1.1. Disconnection, alienation, and isolation

All five participants experienced a profound sense of disconnection on numerous levels of their existence, and found their drug use to be instrumental in both reducing as well as amplifying this sense of detachment. This disconnection was experienced as alienation from aspects of their self, others, and God. For some, this experience was equivalent to that of being homeless whereby they felt cut off from the universe itself. The essence of this experience was captured in the following:

Gerry: "It felt like I was on the outside looking in at the rest of the world."

Karina: "Sometimes, after a big shnarf [cocaine] night, I feel as if I'm not even part of this world, like I'm just a visitor (pause) and an unwelcome one at that."

Wanita: "...no roots, that's it. I'm sort of, um, just blowing in the wind..."

All five participants described a sense of disconnection with their fellow human beings. Two participants perceived their use of substances as a conscious effort to transcend their sense of separateness. **Gerry** for example experienced a prolonged and intense feeling of loneliness, and described feeling "uninteresting." He found that alcohol provided him with a "social edge" that made him more enjoyable and acceptable to others. **Sameer** reported feeling fundamentally different to those around him and experienced social discomfort while in a sober state. He attempted to overcome this feeling through intoxication, and described his first experience with ecstasy as a "bridge" between himself and others that allowed him to relate without his usual defensiveness. These experiences were captured as follows:

Sameer: "Everyone just opened up bru [brother]. It was crazy. My gym partner put his arm around me and gave me a little squeeze and thanked me for being his friend....This chick I just met brought me a glass of water (pause). I couldn't believe how sweet that was...I told okes [the guys] things that night that I couldn't have sober."

Gerry: "When I'm drunk I feel alive, I can communicate better and I'm more fun to be around...it [alcohol] gives me a social edge."

In contrast, three participants experienced their drug use as a deliberate means to disconnect from others. For these participants, the attraction of intoxication lay not in its ability to bridge the divide between themselves and others, but rather in its capacity to deepen that divide by allowing them as **Karina** put it, to "emotionally disconnect from a hostile environment". For **Karina** this disconnection was associated primarily with those closest to her, including her family and boyfriend, as can be seen in the following description:

"First thing I do when I have a fight with my boyfriend is cut a line. After that it's like he no longer exists...It's the same with my sisters. It takes me away emotionally. I can emotionally disconnect from a hostile environment."

Similarly, **Wanita** emphasized the benefits of "tuning out" from the tribal energy of others in order to experience what she described as the "safety of being alone." Unlike **Karina** however, **Wanita's** desire for disconnection was not situation based, but rather occurred across contexts and with the aim of creating distance from all others in order to avoid the potential pain she associated with intimate contact. (This became evident during the interview where she reported experiencing a considerable amount of anxiety while sharing intimate information). A remarkably similar desire was expressed by **Dino** who reported feeling the need to distance himself from humanity at large, in order to avoid the risk of abandonment and corresponding feelings of rejection that he first experienced when his mother immigrated to the U.K. Their experiences were captured as follows:

Wanita: "My thing is people, being too close. I use weed [marijuana] to um, sort of ease the pain of, of connectivity, to tune out you know? Even now I'm feeling a little dodgy chatting to you, um. (laughs) Drugs help me disengage, because I've been hurt. To protect myself I avoid closeness with others...I like feeling alone, it feels safe hey."

Dino: "I just prefer my own company man. (pause) Maybe that's not true. I think I prefer the security of not getting involved. I have lots of sexual relationships, but I avoid becoming too close. Maybe deep down I'm scared I'll get rejected...(smiling) Rejection issues, what a cliché."

Interestingly, both **Wanita** and **Dino** described their addiction to marijuana as if it were a relationship. In **Dino's** case, this was explicitly stated and experienced as a safe and predictable substitute for an authentic human relationship, which was uncomplicated by human unpredictability and potential for abandonment. Although not expressed explicitly by **Wanita**, her personification of marijuana as a person and the love she described for it was suggestive of a relationship:

Dino: "Addiction is a relationship man, between you and the drug. The drug is constant yea? It doesn't have moods... It's like you in control. (pause) A relationship with a dog is more difficult. The herb is only activated when you smoke it. Its one sided. With a

person you got to accommodate the crap.”

Wanita: “I’ve done many drugs hey, but I’ll always been faithful to sweet Mary Jane [marijuana]...I don’t think I’ll ever abandon her.”

The other three participants however, did not share the sense of comfort and security that **Wanita** and **Dino** associated with social isolation. Rather, for these participants, the progressive and uninvited disconnection from loved ones was accompanied by feelings of sorrow and regret. The following descriptions capture this process of disconnection and the painful emotions associated with it:

Sameer: “I used to take ecstasy with my first chick. Shit, it was amazing, we connected. Like one mind. It was like, like telepathy bru. When we came down though the dynamics were fucked up... I think we saw too much of each other. Like too deeply into each other when we were trashed, like, there was nothing to hide, you know? It freaked us out... and destroyed the relationship.”

Gerry: “Now I’m lonelier than ever. I don’t even see my son much anymore. I don’t want him to see me in this state.”

Karina: “I met my boyfriend on shnarf [cocaine]. We just clicked...Before we knew it, we were hiding it from each other, and lying about how much we had. Basically it became more and more about the shnarf and less about the person. We try not to indulge anymore, but there’s always an uncomfortable suspicion, (pause) that he’s taking behind my back, and I’m sure he has the same suspicion. (pause) There is no more trust.”

All participants experienced a sense of estrangement from their sense of self - a loss of who they really are or used to be. Two participants understood their misuse of substances as a deliberate attempt to facilitate this disconnection and self-deception, thereby concealing certain undesirable aspects of themselves. **Gerry** for instance expressed feelings of failure and recognized his use of alcohol and opiates as an attempt to conceal such failure from his consciousness. Similarly, **Karina** noted that her use of cocaine obscured her sense of worthlessness by providing her with artificial confidence and aggressive mastery over herself. In their own words:

Gerry: “I often feel like I haven’t achieved as much as I could have. I have no self-esteem. (pause) I get irritated with myself. But after a few valiums I don’t think about it anymore, I feel like nothing matters.”

Karina: “Ah, cocaine, (singing) running round my brain. I’m not sure what it does on a chemical level, but emotionally (pause) it sort of (pause) I don’t know. I’m in control of myself, more confident, less fragile.”

The opposite phenomenon was experienced by the other participants, who identified their drug use as instrumental in discovering different aspects of themselves and ways of being, through disconnecting from or transcending the limitations of their normal states of consciousness:

Sameer: “I didn’t really know how it could be to really connect with people bru....When I’m on a pill I’m chilled, no defensiveness. It’s mad, but at least I know now that I can be different, and chilled and that it can be smooth.”

Dino: “Acid makes you, it sets your mind free man. You go to other places that you didn’t know existed. I can’t even explain it, it’s out there...”

Wanita: “On shrooms [magic mushrooms] I sort of (pause) tap into a kind of, um, alternate world. Everything is different, I’m different, more creative (laughing). It sounds crazy hey, but sometimes it doesn’t even feel like it’s me doing the painting ...It’s mad, but I learn what I’m capable of.”

Two participants described moments during which they experienced themselves as being disconnected or depersonalized from their physical sense of self. **Karina** for instance described a sense of disembodiment following an excessive night of substance abuse, while **Wanita** experienced a conflict between her conscious will and her involuntary bodily instincts during times of craving. In their own words:

Karina: “It was a big night...Lots of shnarf [cocaine]. I remember the next day I looked in the mirror and didn’t even recognize myself... I freaked out. It was like seeing a stranger.”

Wanita: “... as if my body has a mind of its own. It runs on autopilot, cutting a line or rolling a spliff [joint] before I even realize what it is doing.”

Finally, three participants experienced a sense of spiritual alienation or divine disconnection. This was described in numerous ways relative to their perception of and relationship with a greater force or higher power. For these participants, this was experienced as a loss of connection that was at one time felt to be powerful. **Dino** described a feeling of being estranged from his previously felt spiritual connection to a

“higher power”, which he believed to be significantly related to his addiction to marijuana. **Wanita** experienced her divine alienation as being “spiritually homeless,” while **Gerry** described his spiritual disconnection as follows:

“It’s like Gods hung up the phone on me...like he doesn’t want to even know.”

6.2.1.2. Deep seated pain

Each participant described experiencing a deep seated psychological and emotional pain, often resulting from an early childhood trauma, which was both intensified and relieved by their drug use. Feelings of inadequacy, insecurity or low self-worth often preceded their drug taking behaviour, which initially helped them cope with or numb these negative emotions and thoughts. The function of repetitive substance use in easing this pain was captured in the following descriptions:

Dino: “I was broken kid man. My step mum hated me and my dad always took her side. Guess I felt sort of rejected. When I toked [smoked] the herb [marijuana], a weight was lifted.”

Gerry: “Alcohol has been self-esteem in a bottle.”

Karina: “My parents always compare me to my sisters, and so do I. It makes me feel inadequate... The ugly duckling syndrome you know? When I found the white lady [cocaine] I felt like, like I became the beautiful and strong duckling.”

Sameer: “...my dad and I were lank [very] close bru. When he died I was angry, you know what I’m saying? I was a miserable bastard, and I hated myself for not always being there for him. When I dop [get drunk] I feel better.”

Some participants were ambivalent regarding the ability of their substances to ease their pain and in some cases felt that their drug use intensified rather than eased their emotional turmoil. **Wanita** for example felt that her experiences with hallucinogens had changed her significantly and had made her more sensitive to the joys as well as horrors of life. She became highly emotional when describing this and expressed both regret as well as gratitude for the heightened intensity to both pain and pleasure she now

experienced:

"I think drugs are the cause of my suffering hey. I was a happy kid, always sort of, um, happy-go-lucky. (Long pause) I only tasted pain and depression after I began using them... On the other hand, I also only tasted ecstasy after I started to use them. Hard to say if it was worth it hey."

"...its [marijuana] made me more sensitive. I feel things more deeply hey. It's made me so sensitive (becoming tearful). I get hurt so easily."

"Part of me feels that if I stop I will lose that sort of thinking. My mind has been opened to a lot of beauty, but also to a lot of shit that I would rather have not known about."

Contrary to **Wanita's** experience, **Gerry** felt that in the process of sedating his suffering with substances, he simultaneously numbed his capacity for happiness, which progressively came to be experienced with less intensity and spontaneity. In his own words:

"Sometimes I don't even feel anything. Nothing. It feels like my senses have, like, sort of been slowed up...Sometimes I wonder if I continue maybe I'll stop feeling things altogether."

Through **Gerry's** use of substances to disconnect from his sorrows, he experienced a concurrent disconnection from previous sources of joy. He described a process whereby he came to regard opiates and alcohol as the only forms of relief from suffering, and simultaneously the only source of pleasure. As this pattern became progressively established he reported feeling cut off from activities and people that previously provided him with both relief as well as joy. He expressed much sadness while describing this phenomenon in the following:

"When I used to get blue I would take my kid to the zoo and just sit on the bench. He would always cheer me up... Now it's just alcohol and pills, alcohol and pills, alcohol and pills. They've become my life. It's the same when I'm happy, alcohol and pills. I don't even do the things that I used to enjoy."

Two participants expressed concern that by avoiding negative emotions they may be cutting themselves off from the potential benefits and lessons that these emotions may

offer, thereby stifling their journey to self discovery and development. The following descriptions capture the essence of this fear:

Karina: "Before I knew about the white ladies' anesthetizing powers I used to write in my journal when I was in a shitty mood. It helped (pause). In a way it felt like I was getting all the negativity out...I would read what I wrote and put it all into perspective... I sometimes wonder where that negativity goes when I shnarf it up [ingest cocaine] (pause) and if anything gets into any perspective."

Wanita: "You don't fear being in pain or inadequate, you fear being strong and beautiful beyond measure. What you know is running through your veins hey...you know that going through the pain will make you free and beautiful, and then you can leave that pain away".

All participants experienced their use of drugs as inevitably increasing their emotional turmoil rather than easing it. This was experienced primarily and with the greatest intensity either while "coming down," as the drugs began to lose their effect, or throughout the day following ingestion. At such times, two participants reported ironically experiencing the very pain or psychological traumas they attempted to contain or repress with a heightened intensity. **Wanita** and **Dino** capture the essence of this experience in the following:

Wanita: "Its like the demons in your closet come back to haunt you. When you get spaced out you lock them up, which just irritates them even more and when you come back down they take their revenge."

Dino: "The day after I pay the price big time man. It's that universal balance thing... I know when I'm having a great night that I'm going to suffer the next day. The higher you go the lower you fall. Fair enough yea?"

6.2.1.3. Self-destructive life-themes

All five participants expressed self-destructive tendencies which were acted out through their addiction process. This was experienced and expressed in numerous ways and motivated by a variety of reasons, but the underlying theme was consistently one of a desire on some level for self-annihilation. The use of drugs were intimately tied into these self-destructive life-themes which were described and experienced by two participants as

being firmly enmeshed into their sense of identity. In many cases, participants related their process of addiction to images of romantic deaths and suffering which gave these descriptions archetypal undertones.

For **Gerry** and **Dino** this theme was related to their sense of self-identity and fuelled by the association of them by others with intoxication, which provided a sense of self expression and meaning, and energized their downward spiral to self-destruction. **Dino** traced his destructive streak to high school when his peers began to associate him with the common stereotype of the “pot head” with no direction and no future, to which he identified and derived a strange sense of pleasure from. For **Gerry** this destruction was similarly spurred on by the recognition among fellow drinkers of his ability to hold his alcohol, and his identification with iconic legend Dean Martin gave this process an archetypal nuance. In their own words:

Gerry: “I’m a different person when I drink. I become very charming, like Dean Martin, you know, the fun loving drunkard...People shake their head and smile, and say that’s Gerry.”

Dino: “The only way people knew me was through the ganja [marijuana] yea? I liked being a bit weird. You know, the tortured philosophical type that would never get anywhere, (pause) reach his full potential...The sort of bloke you would feel pity for but would never be able to reach. I made myself unreachable.”

In others, the pursuit of oblivion was experienced in less subtle and symbolic forms. **Sameer’s** self-destructiveness for instance, was motivated more by his need to alleviate his feelings of guilt through self-sacrifice. He described being consumed by a sense of guilt over his fathers passing, and felt that in some way he deserved to be punished for his emotional absence at a time when his father needed him the most. The decline in physical health that accompanied his addiction was therefore deemed appropriate:

“I can check what I’m doing to myself bru. I’m killing myself off slowly. Sometimes I reckon it’s not a bad thing either...like I deserve it, you know what I’m saying? I can’t explain it.”

Karina on the other hand, experienced her addiction as a process of losing herself with the aim of finding herself. She believed that only through her suffering could she discover happiness and spiritual enlightenment, and experienced her use of drugs as crucial in facilitating this journey. She identified with this process strongly and quoted a memorized phrase by Salmon Rushdie to support her belief. She describes her experience as follows:

“We need to go through the wrong places to find out where the right ones are. It’s like you don’t know how great it is to be thin if you’ve never been fat. You don’t know how good it feels to be in tune unless you’ve been really fucked up. That’s the way I see it. (pause) Have you read ‘a ground beneath your feet?’ ... a beautiful novel. Salmon Rushdie wrote, ‘Power, like love, only reveals its full dimensions when it is irrevocably lost.’ It’s a necessary step, for many of us. But I admire those people that have never taken a drug and are really enlightened.”

Wanita painted a more romantic picture of her sense of suffering and her process of self destruction. Her experience carried decidedly archetypal themes and was fuelled by romantic images of a struggling artist and the idea that she had a brilliant future somehow ruined by her drug use:

“... I have like a sort of secret sense of how romantic it is that I’m in such a bad way... I get a black and white picture like in the old movies, of sort of like, um, a lonely Humphrey Bogart type at the end of a bar. You know, smoke rising to the roof...just drowning my sorrows. Sort of wasted talent. There’s, like a, like a beautiful sadness in that hey.”

6.2.1.4. An endless void within

All five participants experienced a gnawing emptiness that was felt to originate from the very depths of their being. This feeling was often described in vague and illusive terms and was experienced on various dimensions of existence. While all participants attempted to fill their emptiness with drugs, some used additional substances and activities which related to the level of existence on which this emptiness primarily manifested and was experienced. Three participants identified this feeling of emptiness as a lack of meaning or purpose and in two cases identified it as essentially spiritual in nature.

For **Karina** this void was experienced primarily on the physical level of her existence. She described an intense feeling of starvation and craving for chocolate which could never be satisfied, and expressed much frustration while describing this experience. Upon deeper reflection, she associated this craving with her drug use and symbolically compared it to a crater in her soul. Although **Karina** reported experiencing transient periods of wholeness, predominantly through pouring her energy into her work as well as exercise, she found that she ultimately never felt fulfilled, and consequently experienced her life as devoid of meaning. In her own words:

“I have this ravenous hunger (pause) in the pit of my stomach. I often crave chocolates and freak out when I don’t have any...when I’m on my last chocolate I start panicking. (pause) I never get full. I think it’s the same with drugs. It’s never enough, never satisfying...like a crater in my soul.”

Dino experienced this vacancy in terms of a deprivation of love. He reported experiencing moments whereby he felt temporarily satisfied, primarily after a sexual experience or an LSD “trip”, but felt this sense of emptiness returning soon afterwards as the love he experienced drained away. He described this process as follows:

“There’s just no love inside me man. (pause) Nothing! I feel better a little after sex. The same thing with weed or a really good [acid] trip. But then I feel like, empty again.”

Sameer experienced difficulty identifying the source of his emptiness, and described a vague sense of “something missing”. He experienced this vacancy primarily on the social level of existence whereby he only felt complete while in a relationship, or during intoxication. In his own words:

“It’s weird, some days I just feel like there’s something missing. It drives me mad. (long pause) When I met my ex I felt like I found the missing piece. But I got very possessive... I used to call her like six times a day. She said I used to smother her. It’s fucked up bru.”

Both **Wanita** and **Gerry** experienced their sense of emptiness as essentially a spiritual vacancy. **Gerry** considered the emptiness he experienced to be a direct result of his addiction to alcohol and opiates and regarded this as the reason why God was absent in

his life. **Wanita** on the other hand identified her emptiness as being “spiritually homeless”, and the result of neglecting her spiritual nature. In their own words:

Gerry: “My soul is empty, like a hole where God should be. At the AA they said it’s a common thing with addicts and the only thing that fills it is a higher power. I think they right, it’s a religious problem.”

Wanita: “It’s hard to explain. I think it’s a spiritual thing. I’m spiritually homeless...There’s something missing in the spiritual department that I’ve been neglecting. I used to go to church with my grandmother. I felt better afterwards. I feel the same after a spliff... There’s definitely a link.”

Two participants associated the sense of emptiness with early loss, including physical and spiritual separations with parents. In these cases the vacancy was not experienced as being present until such separation, and was understood as a direct result of such loss:

Dino: “The day she [his mother] left, a deep wound opened up inside me man, and, and it just got bigger and bigger.... a part of me went along with her.”

Sameer: “When my dad died it was like my guts was ripped out, you know what I’m saying? That’s when I started to dop [drink] heavy.”

This sense of emptiness intensified for some participants during transient periods of sobriety. In two cases, participants only became aware of a vacancy within during such periods, whereby they were forced, for the first time to turn inwards, and to draw on their own inner resources in search for a sense of fullness. The following descriptions noted by **Karina** and **Gerry** capture the essence of this experience:

Karina: “The first time I was really conscious of it was when I got sick and had to stay home from work. I decided to use the time to clean up...I wasn’t working, couldn’t exercise and wasn’t taking drugs. Just (pause) emptiness.”

Gerry: “When my wife threatened to leave me I tried to lay off the alcohol. I even saw a shrink. We did these imagery exercises where you look inside yourself... I avoided it for a long time. I guess I was scared about what I was going to find, like there’s some dark secret I don’t even know about. He [psychologist] kept pushing and pushing but I just couldn’t find anything.”

6.2.1.5. A search for meaning

Related to this sense of emptiness, all participants spoke of a desire to find something that seemed to be missing in their lives. They all experienced being prodded by an intense stirring from deep within – a yearning for a sense of meaning and confirmation that there was more to life. For some, this search emerged in childhood and was experienced throughout life. For others, this desire was only experienced later on in life and in many cases, was considered to be the driving force behind their drug experimentation. The experience of the search for meaning is illustrated in the following descriptions:

Wanita: “I was always quite a philosophical little chick hey. I always used to ask my self: is this it?”

Dino: “I went to an African sangoma once – it was powerful, but I couldn’t accept the whole thing. The sangoma was my neighbor. I believe I have ancestors, or guardians or helpers that are around me...I also go to astrologists, psychics, tarot readers. I don’t settle on anything, but pick up stuff.”

Sameer: “It’s like there’s something missing bru...like a piece missing. I want to feel comfortable in my own skin, you know what I’m saying?”

Karina: “I’m planning a trip next year. (pause) Do a pilgrimage, find the key. Have you read Shantaram? ...really good book. But I’m sick of reading books...”

Gerry: “The x-factor (pause) I think surely there’s more. Something just hanging over the edge, (pause) like a table cloth. I would like to just be more ok with everything and not have to worry about that extra thing. I wonder, did alcohol make that happen or was it always there?”

The search for a larger purpose and greater meaning to life was linked by all participants to their drug use. Each of them reported having a transient glimpse of such meaning through their drug experiences. **Wanita** for instance, described being able to “see the beauty in life” while on magic mushrooms. **Dino** likened his LSD experiences to “seeing the world from outer space”. With alcohol **Gerry** described finding a sense of liveliness, while **Sameer** experienced feeling complete while intoxicated. Some participants experienced a feeling of gratitude for their drug experiences, which they felt provided them with a valuable source of wisdom. Some regarded their addiction as proof to themselves that they were not content as **Karina** put it, with “the mundane aspect of

life.”

Dino: “I think I’ve learned a lot through drugs, and despite the crap I’ve put myself and everyone around me through, I don’t regret any of it man.”

Sameer: “...everyone should take a pill [ecstasy] at least once bru. It did a lot for me, and I think the world would be a better place if everyone could feel the love at least once.”

Numerous contradictions emerged regarding the role of drugs in finding this sense of meaning. Even those who had adamantly advocated drug use as a means to discovering purpose expressed some regret for their experimentation and felt that they were not emotionally prepared to digest the information revealed to them through their chemically induced experiences. All participants came to the conclusion that drugs hindered, rather than brought them closer to their discovery of meaning, purpose, and peace.

Dino: “I think I was just impatient... but it did a lot of damage in the process.”

Wanita: “Drugs have increased my awareness hey. They made me think about things I never thought about before...gave me creativity for my work. They opened my eyes, and sometimes I wish I could just close them hey. Its like, um, Pandora’s box that once you open it, you can’t close it... There’s no turning back.”

Karina: “I took magic mushrooms once. It was exciting at first, (pause) but it became very hectic and I freaked out. I’m getting chills just talking about it. I’ll never be the same again... It destroyed my self-esteem, and I’m still recovering. Shrooms are not for me.”

6.2.2. Post-intervention interview: where healing begins

The following four final comprehensive themes that emerged from the analysis of the post-intervention interview are as follows:

- 1. The reawakening of inner life**
- 2. Discovering the essence of the addiction**
- 3. The reconnection with outer life**
- 4. A new way of being**

6.2.2.1. The reawakening of inner life

All participants reported experiencing a gradual reawakening of what was previously felt to be a dormant inner life. They each experienced their inner worlds with a heightened sense of awareness and intensity, which was often accompanied by overwhelming emotions, including sadness, love, grief, and joy. The following descriptions capture the essence of this experience:

Gerry: “I’ve started to feel things again, (pause) real things. Looking back I think I was dead inside. I feel alive. I can’t say I feel happy, but I feel. Before I was dead.”

Dino: “Intuition. That’s it, intuition man. You know like you are in touch with the little guy inside. Things are clearer...”

Wanita: “It’s strange, I sometimes feel like I did when I was a little girl...I’ve got more energy. (pause) I’m like, more carefree.”

For **Karina**, the reconnection with her inner world was accompanied by a cascade of powerful negative emotions, such as anger, shame, and sadness, which emerged both during and after practicing yogic posturing. These emotions were experienced independently from any intellectual understanding, and with an intensity she expressed as “unbearable”. **Karina** described being particularly susceptible to cravings after the initial sessions and would often give into them in order to numb these overwhelming feelings. She described her experience of this process as follows:

“After every session I would just cry, actually sob. Honestly I just cried...not being able to focus on or realize why or what the actual issues were that were making me upset...I could feel pain in every cell in my body. It was hard to keep going because I knew how I would feel afterwards...I would often do a line afterwards because it was unbearable.”

Karina began to record her experiences in a journal in order to gain a deeper insight into her self and the emotions that were being released through her yoga practice. She interpreted her cravings as a persistent desire to hide from these feelings which she had been avoiding for a long time. **Karina** found that by journaling these experiences she was integrating them into her being, and described this process as befriending her pain,

whereby she got to know it as opposed to avoiding it.

Others experienced the reawakening of inner life through remembrances of their childhood that were accompanied by both positive and negative emotions. **Dino** for instance described re-experiencing the profound sense of pain and loss that accompanied his mother's immigration during his teen years. At this point he reported feeling an irresistible desire to smoke marijuana and often gave into the cravings. In contrast, **Sameer** experienced a great feeling of joy after the resurfacing of previously forgotten positive memories of the time he and his father spent together. He experienced these memories as increasing in frequency and intensity the longer he abstained from chemicals, which served as motivation for "staying off the shit." In his own words:

"Memories just started to pop into my mind bru. Arb [arbitrary] things that I had forgotten about, like helping my dad open the restaurant or going fishing with him...but they feel so good. It was weird at first. Its like I forgot all those times."

All participants reported feeling more in touch with their body and its potential for generating meaning and revealing aspects of themselves they had lost touch with. After **Karina's** emotional experiences with yoga for instance, she described her relationship with her body as changing dramatically from one of objectification and hatred to acceptance and love. Similar experiences were reported by other participants:

Gerry: "I'm starting to respect my body more. I used to abuse it...Getting in touch with what my body is saying I need."

Wanita: "Breathing has helped a lot, especially with the cravings. It gives me a way to tune into my body and ask myself why I want to smoke. When I crave a spliff [joint] I just breathe hey. It helps me to, to control the reaction to smoke when I get bleak or think of something shitty. I don't just reach for a spliff instantly."

Three of the participants reported becoming progressively more sensitive to the "high" states of consciousness attainable through physical activities, including running, weight lifting, swimming or simply through mindful breathing, and regarded such states as new sources of pleasure and valuable alternatives to drug induced "highs." These experiences

are noted in the following descriptions:

Wanita: "I literally feel spaced out sometimes during and even after breathing exercises, its great... it's taken a lot of practice and patience, but it's worth it hey. I guess that's why I appreciate it. Any idiot can smoke a joint to get spaced. Besides, it's different, no paranoia."

Sameer: "...we whacked a ten k [kilometer] jog last week... I felt high as a kite afterwards, and strong bru."

Gerry: "I'm loving swimming. The more I do it the more I love it. I feel at peace in the water, and I feel great afterwards. I look forward to it every time."

For two participants, the re-awakening of their inner life was revealed through their dreams, which were experienced with increased intensity and frequency, and were often remembered and experienced as "real" and occasionally with disturbing clarity. For **Gerry** the content of these dreams were distinctly unpleasant and frequently revolved around disturbing patterns of his drug use. These nightmares were experienced with such intensity that he reported being "scared to go to sleep at night". In contrast, the content of **Dino's** dreams were primarily pleasant, and he found himself looking forward to his dreams, which he regarded as a source of guidance, providing him with "messages" and "insight".

6.2.2.2. Discovering the essence of the addiction

Each participant reported experiencing their inner world as being more accessible and available to them. By traveling inwards, they each experienced a greater awareness into the parts of themselves they felt they were missing and the role their drugs of choice played in provided the missing piece. They consequently became mindful of the unique ways in which they were projecting their energy into external substances, leading to the discovery of the essence of their addiction.

Dino for instance connected his excessive experimentation with LSD to the spiritual vacancy that he experienced when his mother (his source of spiritual guidance)

immigrated. He projected his innate spiritual energy into hallucinogens believing he had none without them. Dispirited by what he experienced as abandonment, he reported seeking a safe and consistent substitute for a human relationship and found it in marijuana. Related to this he identified his series of short-lived sexual conquests as a search for the loving presence he felt he had lost. In his own words:

"I used to see the drugs as the only way to go to other worlds....But I know I can get there by myself. I've been to a better place even, more pure. It just takes longer, that's the only bummer, the time factor."

"I think it was related to my mum somehow. I think I got spiritually lost when she left, and LSD helped me to, I don't know, sort of, find my way you know? ...Also with the herb [marijuana]. I feel safe with it you know? No rejection problems there. Safe love."

Wanita identified the essence of her addiction as creativity, a perceived lack of which led her to project her innate creative energy into marijuana. In the process she lost touch with her inner pool of resources which fueled her addiction. Her realization of this was expressed as follows:

"Fear (pause) and no confidence. That's my biggest problem hey. I thought I didn't have any inspiration in me, and I was scared to stop in case I found out I didn't... I guess I just got caught up in it. The less creative I felt the more I smoked. It was like a cycle."

"Inspiration and creativity don't come in the joint, the line, the, uh shroom, whatever. It's from my own heart and soul. (laughing) It's all me."

Sameer identified his use of alcohol as being intimately connected to his father's passing and the feelings of guilt associated with it. He discovered that in intoxication, he felt a certain freedom and came to believe that he could not experience this sense of release while in a sober state of consciousness. He thus projected his innate healing energy into alcohol, and felt powerless without it. He described this realization as follows:

"Booze helps me to let go, big time! When I'm trashed, I can be free of all the shit. Without it I just feel guilty and sore, you know what I'm saying? ...It came to me the other day. The booze helps me, to, to get over it [fathers death]."

Karina came to a profound realization that her craving for chocolate was in essence a need for a sweet and loving presence of which she felt deprived.

“I would cry and cry and cry. I felt unworthy and basically just unloved... and I couldn’t love myself. I think what I really wanted was to be loved (pause) and accepted...not have to fight for love all the time. Chockies [chocolate] became my source of love...I’m trying to give myself love now. Little bits every day.”

In addition **Karina** discovered that her attraction to cocaine lay in its ability to provide her with a sense of energy and control which she felt she needed in order to live up to her parents expectations. The energy cathexis to cocaine and concurrent de-cathexis of energy towards herself and her own reservoirs of strength led her to become disconnected from herself and feeling powerless. In her own words:

“The white lady [cocaine] put me on form. I delivered and really achieved. I came to think I was useless without it...I was in control. That was the attraction. It gave me a source of strength.”

Gerry found that his addiction to opiates, cigarettes, and alcohol was intimately linked to his issues of self-esteem, and that each substance played a role in easing his sense of worthlessness and lifelessness. He identified alcohol as providing him with a false sense of courage and sociability that he believed he innately lacked, while his use of opiates gave him time out from constant self-criticism. **Gerry** also came to the realization that he smoked the most at times when he felt dead inside and that watching the smoke being exhaled served as proof that he was actually still alive. In addition, he found exhaling smoke was on some level the equivalent of “getting stuff out”.

“I think I drain my own energy. I beat myself up all the time. It’s draining. It makes me feel dead...I’ve noticed that seeing my breath of smoke leaving my body is my way of saying to myself, hey Gerry, you still alive.”

“All that the drugs did was make myself ease up on myself....”

Through the realization of the way in which they projected their innate energy onto external substances, each participant experienced an increase in their own reservoirs of previously untapped energy.

6.2.2.3. The reconnection with outer life

All participants experienced a greater involvement in and deeper connection with their outer world, to which they found themselves becoming increasingly more attentive as previously bound up energy became more available. The redistribution of energy was experienced and consciously channeled in numerous directions. The three common directions in which this energy was channeled were as follows:

- 1. Interpersonal relationships**
- 2. Physical activities and hobbies**
- 3. Spiritual contact**

6.2.2.3.1. Interpersonal relationships

All participants experienced their relationships in a new, although not always positive light. Some invested a greater amount of energy into the rejuvenation of old relationships, while others began to channel energy into new relationships, which were often experienced as daunting and energetically draining, and accompanied by feelings of disappointment, anxiety, and rejection. For these participants, difficulty was also experienced in regulating the flow and amount of energy invested in the pursuit of meaningful relationships, often ending in challenges maintaining personal boundaries. The following descriptions capture this experience:

Dino: “It’s hard man. I think I’m trying too hard, or just pouring too much into trying to make it work...I always end up feeling I’m giving more than I’m getting back. Its draining...I think I have a sort of, (pause) ideal image of love, and get disappointed all the time man.”

Wanita: “Sometimes I feel like I get trapped you know...It’s like I don’t know where I begin and she ends...I met this girl I really liked, funky chick, and we got really close really quick. I think maybe too quick. Then I freaked out and had to pull back. (pause) I think I freaked her out too.”

Other participants experienced a more positive and deeper energetic connection and exchange with their loved ones. **Gerry** for instance began to revive his relationship with his son, with whom he felt that he had lost connection. He reported deriving much delight from this process and felt as if he was “getting to know him all over again”. **Karina** described feeling a deeper and more energetic connection with her boyfriend. This was experienced on both an emotional as well as sexual level whereby she felt a greater exchange of energy between the two of them as well as a feeling of an increased awareness and sensitivity of each other. She described one such meaningful experience as follows:

“It was weird, it just felt like we were in harmony, like the love just flowed. It hasn’t felt like that for a long time. I don’t think it ever felt like that. Maybe it was because of me, because I wasn’t letting go before. But it’s different now.”

For others this connection was experienced more on a societal level through a deeper relation with humanity at large. **Gerry** for example, described having a new found respect for humanity of which he felt himself to be an inextricable part. Similarly, **Sameer** experienced a greater sense of community and developed an increased ability to see things from the other’s perspective. In their own words:

Gerry: “We’re all human, and that’s that. When I realized that, things changed. Less pressure... I’m more open with people, more confident too.”

Sameer: “That was probably the beginning, when I started to relax at work.... I still get a little anxious sometimes. But customers don’t piss me off as much, because I can see myself in them, and I can check things from their perspective.”

Both **Gerry** and **Sameer** nevertheless experienced a disconnection with their friends during moments in which they were not in a similar state of consciousness. During such times, they both experienced feeling susceptible to drinking and drugging binges as they found it challenging to relate to intoxicated friends while in a sober state of mind. This disconnection was described as follows:

Sameer: "...when I saw my buddies I don't know what happened, we spoke for a minute and...wham! I suddenly had a drink in my hand. I tried to keep it to one because I wanted to go to gym, but when okes were getting out of hand (pause), they were on a different buzz...I ended up getting trashed bru."

Gerry: "I crack when I meet my friends in bars. And when I crack I really crack. So I stay away and rather meet them for coffee in more relaxed places... I just can't keep it to a few drinks. The more I have the better I feel, the more we click and on it goes. There's no stopping."

6.2.2.3.2. Physical activity and hobbies

The redirection of energy into physical activities and hobbies was experienced by all participants as a reawakening of life, and was described as being a joyous experience. The meaning derived from such experiences nevertheless varied to a great degree. For some, these activities were experienced primarily as avenues to spiritual growth, while for others the redirection of energy into activities was experienced simply as new sources of pleasure, whereby previous experiences of pleasure derived from substances were outshined. In both cases all participants found this redirection of energy to be instrumental in controlling cravings and providing an outlet for previously suppressed emotions.

Sameer experienced a reawakening of interest in physical exercise. He described feeling "high as a kite" after a long jog for instance, and found himself deliberately avoiding any potential triggers that might distract him from cultivating these experiences. He reported looking forward to these activities with eager anticipation as he found them to be valuable in "venting" his anger and frustration, and provided a source of energy that drove his exercise to new heights. In his own words:

"It's weird, all that anger and frustration I feel. I don't know. It's like I get it out on the road or in the gym. I can feel it coming out of me."

"I got a bit pissed off the other day, so I went to gym and just pumped it bru. I vented big time...I felt so good afterwards."

For some participants, the investment of energy into these activities was experienced as providing a source of psycho-spiritual growth. **Dino** spoke of his tai-chi sessions with great enthusiasm after which he felt as if he was “walking on sunshine,” and described his passion for marijuana decrease as his passion for tai-chi increased. He found his tai-chi practice as essentially a way to cultivate his spiritual nature by providing him with a sense of inner harmony. In contrast to Sameer’s experience, **Dino** found his sessions served not as way to vent or to get out emotions, but to contact, feel, and embrace his emotions more deeply than before. In his own words:

“I tune into myself. I’m more in touch with my emotions. I feel them with more clarity. It’s strange man because they not always good emotions, but it feels good to understand them...It helps to get in touch with my spiritual side.”

Wanita experienced herself being drawn towards nature, and found herself spending as much of her free time as possible communing with nature, while incorporating her breathing techniques into these trips. She reported feeling “complete bliss” during her hikes on mountains and through forests, where she experienced being rooted in nature. The meaning **Wanita** derived from these experiences was a sense of spiritual grounding. She surrounded her apartment in plants and bought a puppy, which she regarded as a source of unconditional love, and a constant reminder to her that love does in fact exist in the world. She describes these experiences as follows:

“My thing is nature now. I love it... and it feels like it loves me back.”

“When I’m walking in the forest or sitting by a lake I feel like I contact the, the, (laughing) the cave woman inside me, you know, and it feels spiritual hey.”

Karina gradually came to derive a great deal of pleasure from her yoga sessions, which she began to look forward to with eager anticipation. She described becoming dedicated to the practice and ensured that she would not miss a class. When she did miss a yoga session she experienced going “into withdrawals”. Reflecting on this phenomenon, **Karina** expressed a concern that yoga had become her “new addiction” and that practicing it may be a way of avoiding life, as her drug abuse was - substituting one addiction for another. In her words:

“The other day I missed my class. It literally felt as if I was going into withdrawals. I didn’t feel right all day. What’s that about?”

“It’s like a drug, a very powerful one at that. Sometimes I think I’m just substituting one addiction for another. Sort of avoidance. It scares me, but it’s a good addiction and it’s made me a happier and better person.”

Gerry expressed a similar phenomenon relating to his newly discovered passion for swimming, which came to occupy a central position in his life, to the exclusion of many other activities, including drinking. He described his love for the water and the feeling of peace it provided in great detail. In addition, he felt grateful for the sense of camaraderie he experienced with his swimming team, who motivated and encouraged him along the way. He reported occasionally “craving” to be in the water. He described an experience whereby he went for a swim after a “big drinking night” as follows:

“... I had a hectic hangover...Each stroke I took sent a pain into my head. I could feel my stomach going and it completely destroyed my swim. I even felt like throwing up. I was so sluggish it was pathetic and I ended up just floating. I felt useless. After that I thought forget it. Nothing would interfere with my swimming, especially not booze.”

6.2.2.3.3. Spiritual contact

Each participant experienced a deeper contact with their spiritual nature and all described a meaningful moment of spiritual awareness and connection, whereby they felt contact with either “nature”, “something wiser”, “God”, “the universe” or simply contact with “another place”. These experiences were described as follows:

Gerry: “Something was different this time. I don’t know if it was her [reiki practitioner] or me. Maybe I was getting more used to it. She said it was normal for it to get better. I could feel myself being filled up by (pause) love that was just being poured into me. It just kept coming and coming and I realized that I was empty of it before. I could feel energy in my body, especially in my palms and feet. It felt warm. It definitely changed my view of myself, and even other people (pause) and definitely God. It felt like God was inside me. That was a new one. I couldn’t believe it.”

Karina: “...I started drifting away from myself, into a dark space. It scared the shit out of me at first... I felt like it was out of my control, (pause) like I was out of control. Then I just gave up fighting it, and told myself to relax, and I started to feel calm. It actually felt good to give up. It felt like something wiser than me was in control”.

Sameer: "It's like when I think of my dad and get bleak I just say to myself, do your breathing, and I breathe and relax and its like I go to another pace, and he's there with me."

Dino: "It sounds cheesy, but I felt like I was a part of everything, like part of the universe. (laughing) It just felt like love. That's the only way I can describe it. Love man, love, love, love! I remember thinking no drug could ever put me in this place... This was real man, and pure."

Wanita: "It was amazing hey. (pause) It was hectic and beautiful...It felt like I was meditating for days. On my walk back the trees seemed greener, the sky was bluer, and I was part of it, I felt connected to the life, to nature. I didn't want to leave."

Reflecting on their dark years of addiction, three participants became mindful of the dangers they took, and came to a conclusion that there was something protecting them during these times. These participants felt guided, inspired, and protected by a higher force beyond their limited individual capacities, and expressed gratitude for keeping them safe during these times:

Dino: "...stupid shit, like driving on acid man, that was crazy. I know my guides were watching me, they were there."

Gerry: "It was terrible... [driving drunk] sometimes I'm surprised that I didn't wipe myself out, or someone else. I think I was being protected. God was protecting me."

Karina: "I'm just grateful. It feels like I've been given a second chance. Buying shnarf [cocaine] in dodgy areas. (shaking head) It felt good at the time, a sort of adrenaline rush. But looking back, it was extremely dangerous...I definitely think I was being watched over."

For three participants, spiritual practice was experienced and consciously integrated into all aspects of their existence, and in essence, became a way of life. These participants reported experiencing a deep connection with a force which they deemed infinitely greater than themselves. They experienced this force as providing guidance and direction in their lives and drew on its strength during times of weakness and despair. They expressed this connection as follows:

Wanita: "I've become much more spiritual. I can feel there's something greater guiding me. Something wiser and stronger that keeps me on the right track."

Dino: "I know the universe talks to me (pause). Yea. It's hard to explain. But it talks to me all the time man. It sort of speaks to me through people and other things, and gives me little messages."

Karina: "Its funny (pause) I think what I was really addicted to was my own ego...to be in control. In retrospect what I needed was to be connected to something beyond my own ego."

While practicing breathing exercises, **Sameer** came to realize that he was spiritually still connected to his father and could feel his presence at any time. As he experienced contact with his spiritual nature he began to identify that his feeling of "something missing" was in retrospect a "spiritual thing".

6.2.2.4. A new way of being

All participants experienced a shift in their thinking, their attitudes, and actions, ranging in intensity from subtle changes in life-style to a complete transformation of worldview. For three participants, this shift was experienced as a gradual process developing over time as their sense of awareness increased and new meaning became integrated into their sense of self. In their own words:

Wanita: "I don't know, I think I'm slowly becoming more settled, I feel more spiritual, more connected (pause) not really with other people but with myself and nature...I feel like a tree, (laughing) like I'm growing roots."

Gerry: "I didn't really notice the changes in me until some guys from the swimming team started to comment on little changes that they saw in me, like my sense of humour and being more open and sociable. I was surprised at first (pause) then I realized how much I've changed."

Sameer: "It feels like every day little pieces are starting to come together, you know? I'm getting calmer at work and don't feel so jittery when I speak to big tables, I feel different."

In contrast, for **Karina** and **Dino**, this shift was experienced as being sudden and rather dramatic, where there was a distinct recognition of a turning point and change in their way of being. For these participants, this experienced shift followed a meaningful encounter with a higher power or greater force during meditation.

Dino for instance experienced a distinct moment when everything seemed to click, after which he began to view his life with increasing clarity and reported feeling connected to “the universe”. **Karina** similarly experienced a sudden shift, whereby she experienced the world and herself in a new light. The feelings of acceptance, love, guidance, and unconditional love experienced by these two participants during this moment were described as being far more enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful than drug induced altered states, and created a desire to experience them again.

Karina found herself drawing on the memory of her experience which provided her with strength during times of craving, abruptly ending her drug use to support her new positive outlook towards life. **Dino** on the other hand continued to smoke marijuana occasionally, but experienced his relationship with it differently. He felt he no longer craved or *needed* to smoke, and only did so when he was in positive space. Interestingly, he reported experiencing his marijuana induced “highs” differently after his experience of boundless love, and without the usual accompanying paranoia he previously experienced.

“I’ve completely changed my thinking regarding what addiction is. I thought I literally had a disease and all that...this made me feel pathetic and useless man. I used to crave so badly because of it. I still sometimes feel like smoking, but don’t have to... I try to smoke only when I’m happy.”

Similar experiences were expressed by **Wanita** and **Sameer**, who reported giving up their attempt for complete abstinence, which they felt drew them towards drugs more intensely.

Sameer: “I’m trying to stay off the hard shit. That’s over bru, but I’ll still have a dop [drink] sometimes. The more I try to stop completely the more I just want to get pissed. It’s a fine line though, and sometimes I can feel myself slipping. I still get trashed, but when I do, I don’t go all the way down (pause) and it’s easier to come back up.”

Wanita: “If I want to smoke a spliff [joint] to enhance a sunset or when I’m painting I do. It’s become more spiritual, I don’t do it as often, only special occasions but when I do it’s not with all the guilt and feeling of failure like before.”

In contrast, **Gerry** found that when he did drink, it became excessive and out of control. He therefore attempted to avoid alcohol completely by re-channeling his energy into his

passion for swimming.

“I just feel better when I haven’t taken anything. More pure. More confident. I’ve cut down from 30 to 5 cigarettes a day and that is going next. I think the energy tapping is making a big difference. But the alcohol is the real problem. When I start I just can’t stop until (pause) completely paraletic. I think if I swim often enough I could stay away from it completely.”

All participants experienced a sense of reclaiming inner power, and a realization of how this power was previously “given away” to the substances that controlled them. For some, this was experienced as a discovery of an internal source of strength. For others, this was described more as a reawakening of the power that was always there, lingering below the surface that had previously gone unnoticed.

For all participants the feeling of reclaiming inner power and wholeness resulted in a decreased sense of isolation and disconnection from themselves, from others and from the greater forces of the universe, and significantly decreased (although in most cases did not eliminate) their use of drugs.

Some expressed a sense of sadness and anger at what they perceived as “wasted time” of depression, anger and guilt that they experienced. For others, the turmoil experienced during their time of addiction was seen as an important stage in their spiritual journey and that the pain of their personal, social, and cosmic alienation was necessary in order to create the incentive that would drive them towards their sacred source.

CHAPTER 7: INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

7.1. Introduction

The following chapter offers a comparative analysis between the common themes that emerged from the five participant's stories and the literature presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Although each participant's account of his/her experience is unique to his/her diverse life circumstances, certain common themes flowed through each of their stories. These included:

- 1. Disconnection: the experience of being an island**
- 2. The experience of love**
- 3. Pleasure and pain**
- 4. Reclaiming inner resources of power**
- 5. Addiction in the chakra system**
- 6. Addiction as archetypal healing and transformation**
- 7. Finding wholeness and a new way of being-in-the-world**

Although the following themes emerged as distinct categories, they exist in relation to one another and should not be viewed as separate entities.

7.2. Disconnection: the experience of being an island

Clinebell (1963) has likened the addicted person to Camus' stranger, as though wondering in a foreign land where he does not know the language and has no possibility of learning it. This articulate illustration of the acute isolation associated with addiction captures the essence of the experiences of all participants in this study. Most of them experienced themselves as isolated entities rather than as parts of the whole and the reconnection with human relationships and humanity at large proved to be extremely challenging. This correlates with the literature cited by Siegel (2005), Smith-Pickard (2004), and Thomas (2002) who perceive such disconnection primarily in terms of

isolation from interpersonal relationships and society in general.

Unlike Camus' stranger however, and contrary to the above mentioned literature, the participants in this study reported experiencing this sense of estrangement on all dimensions of their existence, including an alienation from their inner world. This inner dimension was also experienced as an unfamiliar land, with a foreign and unknown dialect or language – the language of intuition, of insight, or self perception. During their various practices they each gradually became more fluent in this dialect through the process of traveling within.

As their inner designs slowly became more accessible through the interpretation of their subtle dreambody signals, unconscious material that had been systematically suppressed and previously unavailable through cognitive understanding became known by means of progressively deeper communication with the subatomic realms of the body. Such information about the body-self was experienced in distinctively different ways and reflected through a variety of channels by each participant, bearing testimony to the Mindell's (1982, p. 45) description of the dreambody as a "multifaceted jewel". **Dino** and **Gerry** for instance described the emergence of positive and negative feelings respectively through a greater access to their world of dreams. **Sameer** described feelings of joy associated with the resurfacing of previously forgotten positive memories, while **Karina** experienced a flood of overwhelming negative emotion through conscious contact with her body.

The development of this self-reflective consciousness was experienced by all participants as the primary catalyst to change, healing and growth, and supports the findings of Chopra (1997), Grof (1994), Judith (2004), O'Murchu (1994), Pert (1997), Miller and Swinney (2000), and Weil (2004), who all advocate reconnection with the previously estranged body-self as the first step in the transformation towards natural, ecstatic, non-addictive being-in-the-world.

For three of the five participants, the body was experienced as a strange and unexplored territory, the unfamiliarity of which was described by **Karina** as being equivalent to that of “seeing a stranger” in the mirror. This finding lends support to the literature cited by Wilshire (1999) who stresses that without experiential contact with the primal body we live in and are, one becomes susceptible to treating the body as a mere “machine” for the generation of pleasure.

Consistent with the literature cited by Judith (2004) and Myss (1996), learning the language of the body - the language of emotion and feeling - that has long been avoided and repressed through years of drug use, proved especially challenging, painful, and equally rewarding for all participants. This finding suggests that the addiction process in itself may be understood as a deliberate, repetitive means to repress, numb, and disown the painful emotional affects and memories that reside within the body through persistent objectification and identification of the body as “not me”. This calls for a greater emphasis in rehabilitation on directing addicted persons to “return to the body” as a means to acknowledging and integrating previous wounds and traumas, the importance of which seem to have been underplayed in the literature cited.

Through being grounded in their bodily existence, all participants began to experience their body with a new appreciation and were able to hear its subtle communications with increasing clarity. Contact with these emotions, although painful and overwhelming at times, was experienced by most participants as key to clarifying unformed bodily meaning, allowing a deeper sense of knowledge about the self, others and the world to emerge (A’Llerio, 1999; Edwards, 2006; Gendlin, 1996; Leder, 1990; Levin, 1988).

For all participants, the body became a new and easily accessible source of ecstasy. They each experienced the joys of naturally produced altered states of consciousness, through various means including chi-gung (**Dino**), yoga (**Karina**), breathing techniques (**Wanita**), and physical exercise (**Sameer and Gerry**), which were often regarded as being more “pure” and “real” than artificially induced altered states.

The value of these experiences in the recovery process supports the findings of Chopra (1997), O'Murchu's (1994), and Weil (2004), and serves as further support to the argument made by McPeake et al. (1991) and Weil (2004) that teaching addicted people to get "high" without drugs should be a greater focus in substance abuse treatment. Furthermore, this finding confirms Wilshire's (1999) contention that without experiential contact with the body through which healthy, regenerative, and expansive ecstatic living is realized, the lure of addictive and repetitive substitute gratifications, which provide what Emerson (Wilshire, 1999, p. 1) called a "semblance" of such ecstasy become all the more tempting.

The greater world, cosmos or spiritual dimension was also experienced as a foreign land, and in some cases, as an uncharted territory. Sameer for instance was plagued by sense of "something missing" and only came to the realization after a meaningful breathing experience, that the mysterious "something missing" was in essence, spiritual in nature. It seems all participants experienced a degree of estrangement from their innate spiritual nature and were unaware of their availability of and capacity to channel their energy on this dimension. Corresponding with the literature cited by Judith (2004), Chopra (1997), Clinebell (1963), Grof (1994), and O'Murchu (1994), each participant experienced the divide between themselves and the divine gradually decrease after a meaningful spiritual experience, bearing testimony to the insistence of the above mentioned authors that addiction is essentially a search for the sacred and transcendent and an aspiration for spiritual wholeness.

7.3. The experience of love

An experience that came up consistently during the post intervention interview was that of love, which was identified by some as being essential in discovering and integrating parts of themselves, and by others as instrumental in reaching beyond the self and connecting with greater forces around them. During the latter part of the intervention, a distinct sense of "we-ness" began to emerge for many participants, whereby relationships on all levels were experienced more in terms of an I – thou as opposed to I-it or I-you.

Such experiences seemed to follow meaningful experiences of love, after which separations between parts of the self, other, and even God or the universe were transcended.

After his profound experience of boundless love, **Dino** for instance felt his spiritual connection being reestablished, and as a result decreased his reliance on drugs and meaningless sexual conquests to experience what he termed “safe love”. **Gerry** experienced a deeper connection with himself, his son, humanity in general, and God after being “filled with love” during a reiki session and consequently attempted to reduce his use of substances to maintain these connections. **Wanita** experienced her inner world becoming integrated after encounters with love in nature and relied less on marijuana to access her internal reservoirs of creativity, while **Karina** was able to develop a deeper energetic connection with her boyfriend after a sexual experience during which “the love just flowed.” It seems from these experiences that the encounter with love was directly related to attaining connection or unification with the self, others and the universe, suggesting love to be the ultimate unifier and glue that binds all things together in ecstatic harmony.

This finding supports the literature cited by Adams (1999), Bailey (2007), and Judith (2004), who see disconnection and isolation as a basic lack of love, relating from a deficient heart chakra which has become withdrawn or shut down. Viewed energetically, it appears that without the integrating power of a healthy forth chakra and the bonding energy of love, the participants sought substitutes for love and its unifying power on various levels through chemicals and related addictive behaviours.

This was illustrated on an interpersonal level in the cases of **Dino** and **Wanita** who, after being wounded by rejection withdrew from relationships entirely and sought safe non human replacements in marijuana. This corresponds with Judith’s (2004) findings that people with *deficient* heart chakras expect energy to be poured into the system without taking any risks, as risks open one up to the possibility of rejection, a fear that dwells at the core of the human heart, and the prime reason we hold back our love and close down

the heart chakra. This is also consistent with the literature of psychodynamic theorists such as Summers (1994) and Winnicott (1951), who suggest that a lack of love draws the ego to non human replacements such as drugs, as these substitute objects are more easily controllable than human relationships.

It is interesting to note that after the intervention both **Dino** and **Wanita** continued to experience difficulty in relationships and felt drained by an excessive investment of energy in the pursuit for human contact. In the former case, disappointment was experienced in his frantic pursuit for an “ideal love” and in the latter; difficulty was experienced in maintaining boundaries, both regarded by Judith (2004) as signs of an *excessive* heart chakra. It would seem that although these participants found a universal connection, their craving for a connection with human contact remained unfulfilled, which may account for their inability to refrain entirely from their use of substitute gratifications.

7.4. Pleasure and pain

A more obvious finding was that all participants used substances both to ease emotional pain as well as to attain pleasure, which combined formed the primary motivational factors in their drug seeking behaviour. Such motivations are consistent with the research cited by authors across disciplines including Khantzian (1989), Weil (2004), Gray (2004), Shiffer (1988), Wurmser (1974) and McPeake et al. (1991). The use of substances in both cases was often experienced as an instinctual reaction, which is consistent with the findings of Judith (2004), who sees addiction as most closely related to the instinctual impulses of the second chakra. **Wanita** for instance experienced her body as running on autopilot and was often taken by surprise when she found herself cutting a line without complete conscious awareness. Motivated more by pleasure, **Sameer** described a similar phenomenon whereby he was surprised to suddenly find a drink in his hand when he met up with his friends.

In all cases, the instinctual reactions to pain were gradually brought to conscious awareness. This occurred through an increased capacity for inner dialogue, whereby participants became *more mindful of and accepting of the feelings that emerged from the lower chakras and gradually allowed them to enter consciousness*. **Wanita** described the process of tuning into her body at times of craving and consciously asking herself the reason for her craving.

Interestingly, both **Karina** and **Wanita** recognized pain as having a functional value in the creation of a deeper form of pleasure even before the intervention of this study. For others, *this realization came only after making contact with and releasing the pain they had been suppressing*. In all cases, pain and pleasure came to be seen as two sides of the same coin, whereby contact with painful emotional states were no longer avoided instinctually, but eagerly dialogued with, which brought about a new sense of relief, release, and joy. These findings support the literature cited by Gibran (1991) and Judith (2004) on the functional value of negative emotions as the key to transformation and getting the energy to flow in the second chakra.

Interestingly, the impulsive drive towards pleasure through substitute gratifications remained in most cases below the surface of conscious awareness, as **Gerry**, **Dino**, and **Wanita** continued to use substances when they so desired. In other words, participants became acutely mindful of their use of drugs to *avoid* undesirable states of consciousness, but seemed less mindful of their drug use to *create* more desirable states of consciousness. This supports the findings of McPeake et al. (1991) who suggest that the pursuit for pleasure in contributing to addiction may be underscored in the current literature.

Although all participants discovered new regenerative sources of ecstasy in sync with the natural rhythms of the universe, and no longer relied on drugs as the *only* source of pleasure, the use of drugs to facilitate or enhance this pleasure was in most cases not eliminated. **Dino** and **Wanita** reported incorporating chemical substances into their new sources of pleasure, which they felt heightened their intensity and beauty. This finding

runs contrary to the research of Judith (2004), Chopra (1997), and Wilshire (1999), as it was found that even when primary, natural, regenerative pleasures had been reestablished, many participants remained susceptible to the temptation of using drugs to enhance pleasure, albeit to a lesser degree and in more spiritualized and ritualistic forms.

7.5. Reclaiming inner resources of power

During the latter part of treatment, each participant identified the phenomenon of projecting or “giving away” their power or energy to the substances that controlled them. This was experienced in most cases as pouring energy into the chemicals of choice, while feeling drained of the qualities that they believed these drugs provided them.

The realization of this phenomenon occurred at different points in the recovery process and with a varying degree of difficulty while practicing Mindells’ (2004) “dreamland experience”, which necessitated traveling within in order to discover the “essence” of the addiction or that which they experienced themselves as lacking and consequently craving. The discovery of this essence was reported by all participants as being a vital impetus to change, and supports the contention of Chopra (1997), Feinstein et al. (2005), Judith (2004), Myss and Shealy (1999), Sherwood (2007), and Mindell (2004) as being a crucial step for the addicted person to recovering the power within.

After redirecting energy and reclaiming power that was previously trapped in external chemicals, each participant experienced a greater vitality and in some cases a surge in energy reserves, which was contained within and later invested in alternate activities. This redirection of energy was however accompanied by considerable challenges, as four of the five participants experienced difficulty regulating the amount of energy they channeled towards various activities. **Wanita** and **Dino** for instance described feeling drained after over-investing their energy in relationships. Interestingly, **Karina** and **Gerry** pursued their spiritual and physical activities respectively with a passion and intensity that was experienced as a substitute, albeit positive and regenerative addiction.

7.6. Addiction in the chakra system

All participants found that they used drugs and in some cases performed compulsive actions to make up for aspects of themselves they felt they lacked, as well as alleviate the pain associated with those issues that troubled them most. By identifying the essence of their addiction, they were each able to come to a deeper understanding of the meaning their addiction held for them, and gain a deeper insight into the underlying issues which were holding their addiction in place.

Consistent with both psychodynamic literature cited by Wurmser (1974), as well as the energetic perspectives cited by Judith (2004) and Myss (1996), it was found that there existed a distinct specificity in the choice of drug to achieve these aims. It was interesting to note that the drug of choice corresponded in many cases (although not in all) to Judith's (2004) conceptualization of addiction within the chakra system, as illustrated in Table 6.1 in chapter six. It was found that the issues that participants struggled with most and their choice of drug used to assist in solving as well as avoiding these issues could often be traced to the developmental issues of each chakra.

For instance, **Karina** identified her chocolate use as a substitute for maternal love and unconditional acceptance, which corresponds with Judith's (2004) understanding of sugar addiction being related to issues of love in the fourth chakra. In addition, **Karina** described her use of cocaine as providing a source of control over herself, which is consistent with Judith's (2004) association of stimulants with issues of power in the third chakra.

Dino experienced his pursuit of short-lived sexual relationships as essentially a search for love. This correlates with Judith's (2004) understanding of sex addiction being linked to issues of the second chakra – the realm of sexuality, instincts, and pleasure. In addition, **Dino** identified his use of LSD and marijuana as being connected to his search for spiritual enlightenment. Interestingly, the use of these substances have been cited by Judith (2004) as being related to chakra six, the development of which she regards as the

beginning of spiritual awakening.

Wanita identified her use of hallucinogens as being connected to her search for inspiration and creativity, which correlates with Judith's (2004) relation of marijuana with the upper chakras including the fifth chakra associated with creative identity.

Gerry found that his use of alcohol provided him with a sense of relief from constant self criticism. Similarly, **Sameer** found that alcohol helped him to "let go" of his fathers death and provided him with a sense of relief from the guilt he experienced and associated with his fathers passing. The use of alcohol in both cases corresponds with Judith's (2004) association of alcohol with the merging and lessening of inhibition related to the second chakra.

Although all the participant's drug use and compulsive behaviours did not correlate neatly with certain chakras and significant overlapping was evident, tracing addiction to corresponding chakras does seem to provide clues as to the meaning behind the addicted person's dilemmas. Such findings illustrate the relevance and benefit of using the chakra system to place the addiction into a wider context of human experience and identify the underlying and deeper issues involved.

7.7. Addiction as archetypal healing and transformation

All participants experienced their addiction as a process of self-destruction which was often expressed as meaningful aspects of their identity and in some cases as integral components of their life-themes. Descriptions of the addiction process were often associated with romantic images of pain and suffering, and carried idealistic or dreamy undertones of sensitivity to the intensity, cruelty, as well as beauty of life, which seemed to shape their drug-taking behaviour and fuel their descent into oblivion. In some descriptions addiction resembled a mythical quest, a search for regeneration through initiation, suggesting archetypal identifications.

Miller and Swinney (2000) offer three archetypal backgrounds to addiction: The archetypal wounded healer or shaman, the Dionysian – god of sensuality, ecstasy and intoxication, and the “negative hero” driven by self sacrifice. Although not explicitly stated, each participant identified with one of these archetypes on some level.

While intoxicated, **Gerry** for instance described feeling free, fun-loving, and sociable, and identified himself with the adored, often inebriated, crooner Dean Martin, suggesting the mythological identification with the Dionysian archetype.

Dino derived a certain pleasure from being the “tortured philosophical type” that everyone pitied but could never reach. **Wanita** envisioned romantic black and white images and identified with the melancholic and romantic sadness of being a struggling artist. **Sameer** felt that he somehow deserved to drink and drug himself to death as a form of self-punishment which alleviated his guilt over his relationship with his father. The experiences of these three participants seem to reflect the negative hero archetype, whereby one is ones own victim through self sacrifice.

Of most interest, **Karina** identified the dark years of addiction as an important stage in her spiritual quest and saw the predicament of her suffering as necessary in order to create the incentive that would drive her towards spiritual enlightenment. Her experience resembles the journey of the archetypal wounded healer who experientially resolves his/her own illness or psychic crisis through the process of initiation, which requires initiatory death followed by a virtual resurrection to a new mode of being.

All participants seemed to derive meaning out of these negative life themes and archetypal identifications, which appeared to fuel their spiral into addiction and self-destruction. Many of these identifications, associations and images were punctuated by an inability to move forward as if something was mysteriously holding them back. In most cases, this was not consciously understood by these individuals, but rather seemed to arise from fundamental archetypal themes by which they became slavishly possessed. This lends support to the findings of Chopra (1997), Miller and Swinney (2000), who

suggest that addiction is essentially an archetypal process and an attempt at regeneration through self-annihilation.

Interestingly, **Karina** reported having somehow sensed even while in the grips of her addiction that she was on the right track. Her embracement of her archetypal identity may be considered the impetus to her “rebirth” or spiritual growth, which supports the finding of Judith (2004) who stresses the importance of bringing ones archetypal identity to consciousness so that it becomes an ally rather than an invisible dictator. These findings invite us to look more closely at the transpersonal dimensions of addiction, including life themes and archetypal influences relating to the sixth chakra.

7.8. Finding wholeness and a new way of being-in-the-world

Wanita’s curiosity about whether there was more to life, **Karina’s** attempt to discover the object of her “ravenous hunger”, **Dino’s** quest for spiritual fulfillment, **Sameer’s** desire to feel complete and **Gerry’s** questioning about the mysterious “X-factor” are all examples of the human search for meaning pushed to its most developed levels. Ironically, it was these complex and provocative questions regarding the value and meaning of life that prodded the participants into the self destructive cycle of addiction. They all found a temporary sense of wholeness and purpose in their drugs, which became intimately, tied into their life themes.

Although the feeling that something was missing was initially experienced as a vague, and illusive unquenchable thirst, all participants came to regard the intense, and at times painful cravings as essentially what Jung (Grof, 1994, p.1) referred to as “the spiritual search of our being for wholeness... the union with God”.

The experiences of these participants add further support to the insistence of Chopra (1997), Jung (Grof, 1994), O’Murchu (1994), Weil (2004), Miller and Swinney (2000), and James (Chopra, 1997), that addiction is essentially, a desire to transcend meaninglessness, to discover a greater purpose, to see beyond what is visible, to touch the

transcendent, and experience the sacred and ecstatic.

Throughout the healing process, all participants experienced, albeit in varying degrees, conscious contact with nature, a greater force, a higher power, the universe, or God. This contact was experienced and cultivated through the numerous techniques they practiced, and was seen to be a direct influence on their sense of meaning and purpose, which resulted in a shift in consciousness and a way of being-in-the-world, ranging in intensity from new habits, different ways of thinking, changes in life style, to what was experienced as an awakening or complete rejuvenation.

All participants described a specific situation in which they encountered spirituality in their own unique way. They all experienced an enhanced awareness of and deeper relationship with ultimate regenerative sources of guidance, energy and inspiration, and a corresponding decrease in their reliance on substitute, addictive sources. It is important to note however that although all participants experienced a greater awareness of and capacity to channel their energy on the spiritual dimension, as well as a consequent change in their way of being, they did not all experience what would be considered a complete spiritual transformation. The participants varying degrees of connectedness to the sacred seems to relate to the interventions on which they focused as well as the intensity with which they practiced them.

It was found for instance that some absorbed the spiritual elements of these techniques to a lesser degree than others. Although both **Gerry** and **Sameer** initially practiced reiki, breathing exercises and meditation, they both came to rely almost exclusively on energy therapies that are considerably less spiritual in nature. During the latter half of the intervention, they seemed to focus more on interventions such as acupuncture, energy tapping techniques, and exercise (swimming, running and gym). This may explain the lesser degree to which they experienced spiritual transformation, as well as their more subtle and delayed shifts in ways of being-in-the-world compared to their fellow participants. This may also shed light on their greater propensity for relapses and binges throughout the healing process.

Direct experiential contact with transpersonal realms seemed to significantly increase the depth and speed of the shift in ways of being-in-the-world. After their transforming spiritual encounter with a greater force, **Karina** and **Dino** experienced a sudden and dramatic change in consciousness and being. These shifts may be seen as equivalent to the “quantum change” experiences cited by Miller (1990) and Grof (1994), whereby ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the addicted person are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate his/her life.

Following her meaningful moment, and consistent with literature by Chopra (1997) and Weil (2004), **Karina**’s desire to re-experience this state of love and unconditional acceptance, led her to redirect her energy away from drugs and towards spiritual development. She found her desire to use drugs significantly decreased after what she considered to be a more beautiful, memorable and meaningful encounter with the divine. In contrast to **Karina**’s experience and contrary to literature reviewed by Chopra (1997) Miller (1990), and Weil (2004), after his meaningful encounter, **Dino** still felt the desire to smoke marijuana. He continued to smoke, albeit less frequently and in a more ritualized and spiritualized manner.

For **Wanita** the shift occurred more steadily through moments whereby she felt connected to and part of nature. These moments gradually increased in frequency and she began to experience a new way of life whereby meditation and breathing were cultivated to improve conscious contact with nature and her spiritual self. Her experience seems to reflect the literature cited by Adams (1999), whereby moments of spiritual communion become appropriated and cultivated into stable enduring structures of consciousness and way of being.

In contrast to **Gerry** and **Sameer**, these participants found themselves becoming immersed in the more spiritual practices as well as the religions and philosophies on which these practices are based. This may account for their greater spiritual transformation and more significant restructuring of consciousness experienced.

Although **Gerry** and **Sameer** did not experience any remarkable shift, they nevertheless gradually came to realize the presence of a spiritual dimension deep within themselves. **Sameer** came to this realization during a meaningful breathing experience whereby he recognized his eternal spiritual contact with his deceased father, and found himself in the possession of a new degree of completeness and tolerance for others which he had previously believed himself incapable of. Similarly, after the spiritual experience of being “filled with love” during reiki, **Gerry** experienced a new found love for himself that he had previously denied. It is interesting to note that **Gerry’s** perception of God changed during his process of healing. God became something that was felt in his heart rather than understood by his brain or as a powerful figure above. He came to believe that God had not deserted him as God had always been within him. This realization provided him with a sense of self-worth and value, as well as closer bonds with others, whereby he felt intimately connected with humanity at large.

Becoming conscious of and experiencing contact with a greater force encouraged a new way of being-in-the-world for all participants. Each of them became more receptive of and attuned to the power and wisdom within, resulting in lives of greater love, peace and awareness, and a decreased reliance on external agents to achieve these experiences.

Interestingly, three of the participants came to redefine their perceptions of “addiction” which, consistent with literature by Wurm (2003) and Gray (2004), was felt to be a limiting and degrading term. Related to this, these participants felt that the striving for complete abstinence was found to increase their desire for intoxication, and although in most cases cravings subsided to a manageable level, drug use was not entirely abolished. **Wanita** and **Dino** for instance believed that their use of certain drugs provided a sense of meaning and increased enjoyment of and sensitivity to the beauty of life. Interestingly, they both reported that their drug induced highs were experienced as being more spiritual in nature as the motivation for their use changed, and occasionally incorporated certain drugs into their spiritual exercises.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

*"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploration
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."*

(T.S Elliot , as cited in Edwards, 2001, p. 6)

The concluding chapter of this existential-phenomenological study on addiction and energy healing offers an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the current research. This is then followed by the implications of the study, including proposed recommendations for future research possibilities.

8.1. Strengths of the research

Firstly, this dissertation provides a theoretical overview of both modern and ancient energy healing techniques and offers a philosophical background to the emerging energy model in complementary and alternative healing. A more unique contribution is that it provides a comprehensive knowledge base for viewing current theories of addiction within this energy paradigm, specifically within the chakra system.

The value of this conceptual framework is that it allows us to rise above the dichotomizing constraints of natural science understandings of addiction and permit the current theories to be integrated into a collaborative whole, culminating in a more expansive, imaginative, and organic vision of how the pieces of the addiction puzzle might fall together into a whole. In addition, viewing addiction from this framework allows the researcher to address the experience of addiction from a more cosmological perspective, including issues relating to the often ignored spiritual dimension of existence.

Secondly, the existential-phenomenological design of the study allowed the researcher to cross the divide between mind and body and offer a unique view of the addicted person as a resonating node of the world through which energy exchanges freely and fluidly or constrictedly and addictively. Such a method preserves the uniqueness of the experience from the sufferer's point of view by allowing the participants to speak for themselves, thereby providing a deep, novel understanding of the embodied meaning of addictive and non-addictive energetic being-in-the-world.

Examining addiction from this subjective experience allowed addiction to be revealed and explored holistically by encompassing insights from all disciplines that touch on the experience of the addicted individual. Such an orientation permits the addiction researcher to situate the scientific results within the larger scope of the human condition, and creates meaning from the relationships revealed among the different parts of the addiction phenomenon.

Finally, the intervention component of the study provided a rare insider's view of the changing nature or quality of inner experience open to persons who learn to make contact and work with their energetic selves in the hope of creating a new, non-addicted way of being-in-the-world, and what this experience reveals about the nature of their embodiment and their relationship with self, others and the world.

8.2. Limitations of the research

As is consistent with phenomenological investigations, the generalizability of the study's findings was compromised by the desire to investigate the in-depth, qualitative experience of a small number of participants. The findings that were derived from this study must be interpreted within the limited context of the phenomenological investigation, and therefore may by no means be generalized to the broader population of addicted people.

Another limitation may be found in the subjective influence of the researcher. As with all qualitative research, the researcher's presence and contribution to the entire research process had without question an influence on the outcomes of the findings. It is possible for instance that the researcher, in all his attempts to remain unbiased, still exerted some influence over the direction the interviews took, as well as in the interpretations of gestures, language, and emotions portrayed by the participants. Related to this a further limitation may be the use of one participant with whom the researcher was personally acquainted. The resulting recommendations are based on the researcher's interpretations rather than on a completely objective view of the phenomenon of addiction.

A final limitation concerns the intervention of the study. It is worth mentioning that the time restraints imposed upon the research may not have allowed a sufficient period for the participants to derive the maximum benefits from the energy interventions practiced. The results may therefore fail to reflect the long term benefits of the practice of such healing interventions.

8.3. Recommendations for clinical practice and future research

8.3.1. Clinical practice

The findings of the study illustrate the relevance and benefits of perceiving the addicted person as the energetic selves that they are. It is only through such a view that we will be able to come to a holistic view of the addicted person and the energetic connections that have been formed between him/herself and the substances that control them.

The research findings suggest that in treating addiction, we as health care professionals must go beyond the building of ego strength and the facilitation of social support associated with psychological and social levels of existence. Although these approaches are crucial in the recovery process, the research suggests that the addicted person is searching for something greater, something transcendent. On this basis it appears that we should pay greater consideration to the often neglected spiritual dimension of experience.

Findings call us to address the underlying spiritual disconnectedness through the facilitation of the addicted person's inner journey. It seems that only through the experiential contact with soul, the sacred, and undifferentiated source, can non-addictive ecstatic being-in-the-world be possible and addiction can be healed.

On the basis of the study it seems that energy interventions have the potential to facilitate the addicted person's journey to this place of self re-discovery and transformation where self understanding and the essence of one's being are experienced. The purpose of these interventions is to lead the practitioner to long term spiritual transformation and an enhanced awareness of spirit. Only once this connection is achieved can the addicted person disconnect from the substitutes he/she places between him/herself and the divine.

Although findings suggest that certain contemporary energy healing procedures such as the energy tapping techniques developed by Feinstein et al. (2005) appear to lack the capacity for complete transformation when used independently from their traditional counterparts, they do demonstrate utility in relieving cravings and may be considered important supplements in the healing process.

A final recommendation concerns the unique nature of every individual's addiction, and the importance of discovering the meaning that each addiction holds for the individual involved. The study illustrates the necessity for uncovering the "essence" that drives the addiction in order that it may be brought into conscious awareness from where it may be worked with and resolved.

8.3.2. Future research

Future research could include a deeper look into the use of specific substances and the degree to which they relate to the issues associated with certain chakras. Such a study may contribute to a more thorough working out of Judith's (2004) formulation and provide an avenue for not only the therapist, but the client as well to discover the deeper issues relating to or fuelling the specific addiction. In addition, future research could

explore the relative effectiveness of different energy healing techniques, by documenting the specific interventions practiced and the resulting transformations that occur.

In addition, it would be interesting to track the lives of addicted persons who practice and incorporate energy healing into their life-styles periodically over many years, in order to better grasp the long-term effects of the experience of energy therapy on the addiction phenomenon. Such a study might provide answers regarding the ways that these interventions improve with practice over time, and whether addictive cravings would vanish all together with prolonged practice.

Finally, due to the well documented experience of loneliness that often accompanies addiction, it would be of particular interest to determine the effectiveness of group based energy healing interventions on addiction, such as communal-spiritual dancing, drumming, and prayer, as perceived by the sufferers themselves.

8.4. Conclusion

Within the context of existential-phenomenology, the current study provided a rich, in-depth understanding of addicted people as *beings-in-the-world*, interpreting the changing nature of their own energetic experiences of addiction within the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of their existence.

We journeyed with five participants in their efforts of creating a new way of being-in-the-world. Their feelings of isolation, sadness, loss of control, pain, and anger are expected and common elements of the experience of addiction; their strength and persistence in creating new meaning and ways of being-in-the-world, as well as their courage in sharing the difficulties and challenges they faced along the way in the hope that they might help others who suffer from similar difficulties however, is truly admirable.

In conclusion, it is hoped that some of the recommendations made as a result of this study will be followed, and that further research will be prompted that will result in improving the quality of life and rehabilitation efforts of addicted persons in the future.

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Appendix A1

Consent form

I have been completely informed regarding the nature of the study, as well as my participation in it. I hereby consent to participate in a one-on-one interview that is to be conducted by Dimitri Kelaiditis, a Clinical Master's Student, under the supervision of Professor Steve Edwards, at the University of Zululand. I understand that by taking part in this study, I incur no risk of harm to myself and that I have a right to withdraw at any given time during the study, without any negative consequences.

Signed.....Date.....

Appendix A2

Consent form to be audiotaped

I.....have been completely informed that participation in this research involves being audio taped. I am also aware that the researcher Dimitri Kelaiditis as a Clinical Master's Student at the University of Zululand will ensure that my anonymity is kept, by restricting review of these tapes to himself and his trainer, Professor Steven Edwards. I understand that these audio taped materials will be destroyed immediately once the dissertation has been accepted, to ensure my confidentiality and to further guarantee that my responses and identity will not be identifiable, by virtue of replacing my name with a pseudonym, if chosen to do so.

Signed:.....Date.....