ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

SPIRITUALLY INFORMED ART THERAPY: AN INQUIRY INTO FORMATION

by

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Abstract

The principal objective of this dissertation, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Ministry degree at St. Stephen's College, was to explore the concept of spiritually informed art therapy as it was experienced by the author while studying, working, and teaching in the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality at this college. The scope of this transdisciplinary research drew on themes related to spiritual formation from literature in the fields of art therapy, expressive therapies, arts-based research (including a/r/tography), art education and higher education, spiritual care, medicine, nursing, theology, and spiritually informed psychotherapy. This dissertation tells the author's story of personal and professional formation as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher. Her narrative experiences and artwork are included as well as excerpts from the writings and artwork of some of her graduate students during the six years she taught the foundational art therapy course at St. Stephen's College. Doctoral research projects provided the framework for reflecting on teaching spiritually informed art therapy and on the potential for spiritual development and spiritual formation through art therapy-based practice and art therapy pedagogy.

Keywords:

art therapy, expressive therapies, arts-based research, a/r/tography, theology, spiritually informed psychotherapy, spiritual formation, art therapy education, narrative

Dedication

"There is only one thing to be understood—

Know the one thing that liberates everything—

Awareness itself, your own true nature."

—Dudjom Rinpoche (as cited by Bauer, 1998, para 1)

I dedicate this work to all my teachers—especially my daughter Eliana (Hebrew, "God has answered my prayer"), my parents (Edward and Ilene), my chosen and birth families, those inspiring teachers from a lifetime of classes and studios, those who contributed through the legacy of their art and writings, dear friends past and present, my mentors and my dedicated colleagues, and especially my clients and students.

Acknowledgements

"Every life is a story.

Telling the story and seeing our life as story

are part of the creative process."

—Deena Metzger (1992, p. 49)

"Light from Light"—"In Lumine Tuo Lumen"

—St. Stephen's College crest motto

This work would not be possible without the support of St. Stephen's College, which invited me into this ministerial work in art and theology in 2012 and provided generous professional development resources that benefited these studies over the past six years.

St. Stephen's College is not just an institution, but rather a community of scholars, teachers, students, volunteers, and staff, who care deeply about creating and sustaining a culture of hospitality that allows for transformative learning and services to others. Among those, I must thank the students who participated in this research and took my classes.

I especially appreciate my DMin chairs (Kae Neufeld, Heather Jamieson, Danielle Ayana James, Henriette Kelker), deans (Earle Sharam, Kae Neufeld, Fred Tappenden), Board of Governors chair (Margaret-Ann Armour), Senate chair (Charles Bidwell), Program [sic] Committee members, colleagues, staff (especially the unsung hero of the college, Director of Administration Shelley Westermann), doctoral instructors (Margaret Clark, Joanne Olson, Diane Conrad, Leslie Gardner, John Carr, and Geoff Wilfong

Pritchard), and European Graduate School instructors (Ellen Levine, Stephen Levine, Paolo Knill, and Melinda Ashley Meyer). In particular, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my dissertation advisors (Denis Haughey and Janet Greidanus) and my Dissertation Committee members (Janet Greidanus, Heather Dawson, and Nick Zwaagstra) for their commitment over these past six years and their tremendous patience, support and encouragement that allowed this work to be personally transformative. Special gratitude is also given to internal reader Leslie Gardner and editor Sharon Williams.

Finally, a special memorial acknowledgement is given for my father, Edward Parker, who was confident that someday I would be fulfilled as a teacher of adults, and to whom I am grateful for the magical gift of honouring story.

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Glossary of Terms: Working Definitions of the Author

Art: visual creative productions and creations

Art therapy: visual arts-based psychotherapy

Arts-based research (ABR): research that is done through art-making that honours the creative method as more than data collection and the production of an artifact

A/r/tography: artist or art therapist/researcher/teacher—arts and education-based research methodology.

Atheism: lack of belief in a god or gods

Creative arts therapies/Expressive therapies (ET): refers to specialized, arts-based modalities of psychotherapy including art therapy, dance and movement therapy, drama therapy, music therapy, and expressive arts therapy

Expressive arts/Creative arts: the spectrum of creative expressions that includes visual arts, spoken and written word, poetry, performance, ritual and ceremony, dance, movement, drama, play, and music

Expressive therapies continuum (ETC): a theoretical model used in art therapy and expressive therapies

Formation: the development of the individual in relation to their psychological, philosophical, physical, emotional, intellectual, artistic, educational, theoretical, and spiritual development

Healing: restoring to, or creating, health

Holistic: to make whole

Integration: from Latin *integrat*—to make whole

Ministry: in the service of others

Psyche: breath, life, soul

Sacred: holy

Soul: essence

Spiritual: divine, breath, non-material

St. Stephen's College: a divinity school in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Temenos: the place for the sacred to live

Theology: referring to the divine, spiritual, and sacred frameworks; not necessarily in theistic terms

Transdisciplinary: across various disciplines seeking integration; interdisciplinary

Introduction

This transdisciplinary study aspired to serve the form of a traditional doctoral dissertation in organizational format and style while also reflecting the desire to be congruent with the creative aspects of arts-based research at the heart of the inquiry. This research embraced, in form and function, the principle of the transformative third element, trinity, which resolves and unifies through creative practice the tensions of diversity and offers the potential of integration and individuation.

As a treatise on formation and integration, the separation of content into distinct chapters was not religiously adhered to. Instead, as the research subject and processes of doctoral inquiry invited synthesis, so too, the content, literature, and discussions were woven throughout this paper as a way to tell the story of that work. The writing style incorporated aspects of academic scholarship and creative narrative, allowing the dissertation form and style to be representative of reflexive, arts-based, spiritually informed art therapy. My doctoral work was inspired by aspects of the narrative, arts-based, and a/r/tography methodologies that enabled me to address my formative identity as a spiritually informed art therapist, researcher, and teacher.

This doctoral work was inspired by the work of my administrative and teaching positions at St. Stephen's College from 2012–2018. As chair of the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality at St. Stephen's College, I was responsible for the direction of art therapy training and education at this theology school. The Master of Psychotherapy and Spirituality degree-Art Therapy Specialization (MPS-AT), and the Post-Master's Art Therapy Certificate (PMATC) are designed to be both professional formational training programs [sic] (accredited by the Canadian Art Therapy Association

and recognized by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association) and personally transformative educational enterprises.

In many ways, this dissertation was an inquiry that was meant to serve the college where I was teaching. I was not only conceptualizing the work of an art therapist as being a form of ministry, but I also wanted to embody what I was learning about model ministry through dedicating my doctoral efforts to the service of my academic community.

My research was my lived experience of being a student and teacher simultaneously and reflected on how each informed the other in ways that deepened reflections on the research question. In order to inquire into theory and pedagogy related to spiritually informed art therapy, I explored its components as a student, teacher, and arts-based researcher. As a teacher, I also discovered how my students were living the question and learning to articulate their discoveries of what meant to become a spiritually informed art therapist. Later chapters (4, 5, & 6) share those arts-based and written explorations. I was always amazed at how psyche and spirit worked together, in the nurturing conditions of the art therapy studio, to support my students' spiritually informed formation as art therapists. Their articulations of this phenomenon in class and in their final papers were equally inspiring. I always felt so privileged to teach them and witness their emerging art therapist identities.

Throughout my earliest training in the 1990s as an art therapist and during this doctoral work, I have deepened my experience with the imaginal and the world of my dreams. Many of my literature explorations have been influenced by the work of Carl Jung, and my artistic practice since first studying art therapy has always felt like it

belonged to the liminal and numinous space between consensual and dream realities. As I finished my writing, I had one more culminating dream that I have chosen to include at the end of this paper as testimony to the continual unfolding of the formative journey and the awakening spiritual aspects of my life.

The main objective of this dissertation was to share my journey of formation during these doctoral studies and reflect on how my concurrent academic work and teaching became significant parts of my art therapy ministry. This dissertation functioned as a storied record of these inquiries, reflections, and discoveries. It also served to open the dialogue about the role of the spiritual in art therapy education and practice. Many questions are explored while new areas for exploration are suggested.

Chapter 1

Researching Spiritually Informed Art Therapy

"We are living most authentically in the image of the Creator
when we are creative."

—Christopher Edwards (2000, p. 13)

In the Beginning

The introduction of art therapy education at St. Stephen's College, with the first degree in the specialization of art therapy conferred in 2008, was intended "for those interested in integrating theologically and spiritually informed art therapy into their professional practice" (Simonson, 2008, p. 183). Within the Master of Arts in Psychotherapy and Pastoral Counselling (MAPPC) program [sic] (which itself had been started as a core counselling degree in 1998) was the first iteration of this degree as a specialization of Art Therapy (MAPPC-AT). The certificate was later named a Spiritually-Informed [sic] Post Graduate Art Therapy Certificate. The certificate required some reworking when I arrived in 2012 in order to comply with certifying requirements of the day. These programs [sic] have evolved into what is known today as the Master of Psychotherapy and Spirituality–Art Therapy Specialization degree (MPS-AT) and the Post Master's Art Therapy Certificate (PMATC). Both programs [sic] are recognized training programs [sic] with the Canadian Art Therapy Association. Upon approving these programs [sic] in 2005, the Academic Senate commented that "St. Stephen's has always held a special place for the creative in each of us as an integral part of our spirituality and theological expression" (Simonson, 2008, p. 183).

Coming to St. Stephen's College: Context

I first arrived at St. Stephen's College in April 2012 to take the position of associate chair, responsible for the art therapy programs [sic] alongside the department chair, psychologist Dr. Julie Algra, who was responsible for the recently re-named Master of Psychotherapy and Spirituality degree and Post Master's Art Therapy certificate. *Spiritually-informed* [sic] *art therapy* was the language used to describe the program [sic] offerings at St. Stephen's College. Spiritually-informed [sic] art therapy was referenced as such in promotional materials, in dialogue with students, with the department's program [sic] committee, and the sessional instructors and faculty.

As the art therapist on the faculty, I wondered aloud what was meant by spiritually informed art therapy. The reply from many was, "You're the art therapist, we hoped you could tell us!" I soon discovered that the department had not explicitly defined what theologically informed or spiritually informed art therapy was but rather offered an educational experience that integrated personal transformation, reflective thinking toward reflexive clinical practice, art making, and professional formation in a theological context. For these degree students, many of whom did not have any academic theological background, theology was conceptualized as a practical, lived theology applied in the service of others. In this way, a professional degree that historically married the arts and theology in the ministry of helping others seemed to be a good fit for the college.

Over the next years, I worked alongside other department chairs, including theologian Dr. Margaret Clark and psychologist Dr. Janice Owens, before I became the sole chair in 2014.

St. Stephen's College is recognized as a degree-conferring divinity school by the province of Alberta. The college has a long history of liberal education with pedagogical approaches that are appreciated as ecumenical and embracing of diverse faith traditions. The diverse faith backgrounds and interests of many students in the MAPPC, MPS, and PMATC programs [sic] have included Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, various Christian traditions, Indigenous traditions, atheism, and Islam. These students regularly reported during their admissions processes that they were attracted to graduate education at St. Stephen's College as a way to engage with and explore their spiritual development alongside their professional formation as counsellors, psychotherapists, and art therapists.

In 2014, the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality recognized that the MPS, MPS-AT, and PMATC programs [sic] allowed students the opportunity to learn and integrate their spiritual and theological education throughout the department's curriculum. The previous pastoral counselling specialization (MAPPC-PC), the enrolment of which had dropped, was abandoned. Explicitly, spiritual language was used to describe the pedagogical approaches in this unique department's training and educational programs [sic], which was then featured on the college's website and in published manuals. As the new chair of the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality in 2014, my responsibility was to support all sessional instructors in the program [sic] in the further development of their course syllabi to include theologically and spiritually informed, relevant material—whether the class was an art therapy studio class or a counselling skills class.

Not unlike my experience upon arriving at St. Stephen's College in 2012, many of the department's faculty lecturers did not have academic or professional backgrounds that

included formal education in theology, religious study, or spirituality per se. They needed guidance on how to embrace and develop a method of teaching that would allow for the integration of spiritual and theological frameworks. I began corresponding and conversing with my colleagues and newly contracted instructors about the spiritual aspects of human development and the importance of spirituality in the professional work we do and were training others to do. How might they include this focus in the classroom, studio, assignments, and readings? I made a point to regularly distribute information about teaching tools, texts, articles, and opportunities to audit classes at the college to all teaching instructors in the department as part of their professional development. Interestingly, most of the art therapy instructors were graduates of the department or were already engaged in art therapy and expressive therapies clinical and teaching practices that included approaches to art therapy as arts-based, transformational, and deeply sacred work.

Art Psychotherapy (Art Therapy) in the Context of a Theological Education

"It is interesting that relatively little theological attention
has been devoted to mental health."
—Christopher Cook (2013, p. xi)

What does it mean to be spiritually informed? What does it mean to integrate spirituality into one's practice? Does spirituality always need to be addressed explicitly in art therapy to be spiritually integrated? How is the experience of becoming a spiritually informed art therapist and art therapy student take form in art making? What factors contribute to the development of a spiritually informed art therapist? How can an art therapy educator promote spiritual awareness in art therapy students? How is spiritually

informed art therapy identifiable? What are its benefits to clients? What is spiritually informed art therapy and how do we teach it?

I had taught the course "Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful-Spiritual Connection" (PPSCY5841/ CHRTP521) for five years (2012–2017) for approximately 10 sessions (see Appendix A). Doing so allowed new and prospective master's degree and post-master's certificate students to be introduced to the pedagogical culture and mission of St. Stephen's College. They begin their art therapy academic journeys in this course, which is oriented to arts-based clinical, experiential, and theoretical approaches designed to inform, initiate, and integrate spirituality-informed professional and personal formation. The course is foundational in our degree and certificate programs [sic] in art therapy. I also taught several sessions of this course for the University of Alberta in the college's studios, which allowed graduate students from other departments within the university to take the course as an elective in their programs [sic] of studies. Frequently, other non-degree students, prospective MPS-AT and PMATC students, and professionals from other fields (including many working teachers and school counsellors in the public school system, arts administrators, a physician, a psychologist, and an arts-based scholar) also enrolled, either for credit and to audit.

My doctoral research included my experience with teaching and directing art therapy education at a theological college. Theoretical approaches that influenced my teaching of art therapy as a spiritually informed practice were examined. In addition, my lived experience and arts-based research as an art therapist, researcher, and teacher (aspects of the work of an a/r/tographer) contributed to my spiritual development in ways that increased my appreciation for spiritually informed practice.

I chose to combine the two programme types offered as options for the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) project dissertation requirements for the degree. My lived experience as an art therapist, researcher, and teacher intrinsically required explorations of both project types: research in ministry and model ministry. I was exploring the field of art therapy through a developing theological lens while modelling ministry as an art therapy teacher to my students. I have drawn from my lived personal, educational, and professional experiences, arts-based practice, teaching experiences, and literature from a variety of related fields relevant towards developing an emerging theory of spiritually informed art therapy education and practice.

The focus of this dissertation is the specialization of art psychotherapy (as it relates to transpersonal psychology, theology, art therapy practice, art therapy education, and arts-based research). The scope of this research was limited to my experience at St. Stephen's College (between 2012 and 2018) as chair, art therapy lecturer, and doctoral student as it related to my ongoing spiritual formation as a spiritually informed art therapist working alongside my students. In addition, I have included excerpts from the writings and artwork of some of my students' final papers produced upon completion of their introductory art therapy class. I hope that art therapy and expressive therapies education and practice, arts education and practice, and the field of theology may benefit from this contribution.

Notes on Research Program [sic] Type

My ministry over my professional tenure and doctoral studies of six years concurrently corresponded with the DMin's two program [sic] types: model ministry and research ministry. As model minister, I served the needs of the department's graduate

students and our department's instructors by (a) supporting the formation of the next generation of art therapists, (b) advocating locally and internationally for the education and profession of art therapy and applied spiritually informed art therapy practice, (c) developing curriculum, and (d) supporting students' and supervisors' art therapy work in the community through art therapy practicum placements.

My research for my doctoral studies and project took place in my "ministry laboratory"—the art therapy studio/classroom where I taught the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course. My lab was also the studio for my creative art production and reflection. My lab included the lived experience of relationships with students and instructors as I advised students along their paths, providing students and supervisors with clinical supervision support during their practicum work in the community, supporting students in the formation of their research through thesis and capstone work, and preparing them for responsible and ethical professional practice. This lived experience also included providing pedagogical and professional development support for instructors in finding approaches that incorporated theology and diverse, multicultural, and spiritual approaches into their counselling, psychotherapy, and art therapy curricula.

To design a psychic and physical container/cauldron for my DMin lab meant finding time and space for the project of fully engaging with literature (beyond a literature review). The lab also needed room for creative explorations in the fields of spirituality, theology, education, the expressive arts, spiritually informed psychotherapy, mindfulness and contemplative studies, the helping professions, spiritual direction, and art therapy as related to my research question, what is spiritually informed art therapy

education and practice? My doctoral studies allowed me to explore spirituality and theology from a scholarly perspective and reflect on the cross-over and intersections between related disciplines of spiritual direction, transpersonal psychology, nursing, occupational therapy, leisure and recreation studies, teaching and education, ministry in its various forms, the arts, and theology.

In order to meet the invitation of being engaged in model ministry (as a spiritually informed art therapy instructor, clinician/practitioner, DMin student, and department chair), I needed to engage in these studies myself. I used my art (a), research (r), teaching experience (t), and spiritually informed art therapy doctoral journey (influenced by a/r/tography methodology) to reflect on experiences and theory that support the development of emerging, spiritually informed, art therapists.

A Few Words about Literature

In 2012, St. Stephen's College decided to provide a spiritually informed art therapy education. Some of the syllabi in the program [sic] included the literature that was available, but few specific titles on the subject, beyond Mimi Farrelly-Hansen's "Spirituality and Art Therapy: Living the Connection" (2001), were available. Occasional references were made to the sacred and soul-making aspects of the work in the writings of Bruce Moon, Shaun McNiff, and Pat Allen. No published or articulated theorizing about spiritually informed art therapy, per se, could be found. I came across art therapist Ellen Horovitz's (2002) contribution to spiritual art therapy with her belief art therapy assessments after doing research into spiritually informed assessments in public health for a course I took at St. Stephen's College as a doctoral elective with Drs. Margaret Clark and Joanne Olson. I thought about the need for intake assessments in public health,

especially in hospitals, that could include questions about the patient's artistic interests as well as spiritual needs—not just questions about religious affiliation. I created a mock assessment that I considered as a direction for my doctoral research project (Appendix B).

I felt called to align my studies with this inquiry into what is meant by spiritually informed art therapy education and practice. If I was going to be responsible for representing spiritually informed art therapy education and practice at the college, I felt I should be knowledgeable in it. I hoped that my doctoral projects (research into literature, art making, journal writing, academic studies, reflections on teaching and clinical practice, and students' writings) and the written dissertation would articulate what this could mean. I also hoped that those outside the college would find inspiration in these explorations and reflect on the further development of art therapy as a spiritually informed profession and practice. Dr. Clark encouraged me to apply my doctoral work toward theorizing about spiritually informed art therapy. I wondered if theorizing on the process of spiritual formation, through education, might lead to a different language than *spiritually informed art therapy*. I began to reflect on the concept of *spiritually integrated art therapy* and how it might differ from ideas about spiritually informed art therapy as related to spiritual formation; personal, individuation processes; and art therapy clinical practice. In preparation for this dissertation, I wrote an article about the development of a theory of spiritually informed art therapy in education and practice, which was published for the Canadian Art Therapy Conference book (Parker, 2015b).

The time was ripe for the development of theory, research into practice, and the establishment of the field of spiritually informed art therapy practice that acknowledges

the formational milestones and competencies and promotes well-rounded ethical practice. This doctoral work is a move in this direction by acknowledging the role that St. Stephen's College, as a theology school, has played (and is playing) in the education of spiritually informed art therapists in Canada.

As chair of the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality at St. Stephen's College and faculty lecturer on art therapy at this theology school, the topic of the formation of spiritually informed art therapists became my ministry on a daily basis. This work included advising prospective and current students on the nature of their formation personally and professionally as spiritually informed and spiritually integrated therapists. In order to do this work, I needed to enter into a deeply personal, intellectual, and creative process of reflection on my process of spiritual development. In turn, I shared this journey with my students and have been deeply curious about their processes with this theme. As an instructor and department chair, I provided oversight for other instructors as we developed curricula to encourage and nurture this enterprise in higher education. St. Stephen's College encourages personal transformation alongside professional formation, so understanding how to promote the development of these qualities and experiences through art therapy, as well as how to provide an integrative educational experience, was critical. This doctoral work has included research, reading, art making, reflections, reflexive clinical and teaching practices, the formulation of particular approaches to theory and pedagogy, and the promotion of understanding the need for spiritually informed art therapy research and practice in scholarly and professional communities of arts and health.

During their art therapy training at St. Stephen's College, graduate students are encouraged to become involved in professional associations, which in this country are completely volunteer-run organizations. Students are encouraged to contribute to the advancements of the profession at large and the regulation of art psychotherapy throughout Canada and to participate in art therapy conferences. The college is small, and resources are few but despite this, we continue to forge academic, institutional, and community partnerships that increase the profile of art therapy and the work of the college, the profession of art therapy, and the employment outlook for our graduates.

Mentoring students throughout the program [sic], during their coursework, field placements, and research projects and beyond graduation into the profession of therapy practice is also important to me. Encouraging students and colleagues to continue to contribute to research and publishing is critical. Transitioning from the student/teacher relationship into one of professional collegiality is a great reward of teaching. The college's spiritually informed art therapy education affects not only the formation of our students but as a result of their spiritually informed approach to working with others, it also affects the wider professional community.

Identifying the Need for Research: A Holistic Model

Increasingly, patients and clients seek remedies for what ails them through methods and integrative experiences that are holistic and incorporate body, mind, and spirit. Art therapists and those who benefit from integrating and applying this work in their personal and professional practice (occupational therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, teachers, social workers, mental health therapists, community leaders and social animators, arts and health practitioners, parents, and caregivers, etc.)

have few art therapy theoretical resources available to them that address the spiritual aspects of the work and the intersectionality between our fields. Many allied health professionals are including both arts-based initiatives and spiritually informed approaches compatible with holistic and complementary healthcare. Academic publications about the use of the arts for spiritual fulfillment in these fields, as well as the benefits of spiritual practice and the arts for mental health, in particular, became more available in the past 20 years. Spirituality lies at the core of foundational texts in nursing (Barnam, 2011)—one only need to think of Florence Nightingale's ministry—and occupational therapy. The field of counselling psychotherapy itself has become concerned with clinical competencies for regulatory purposes and recently, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association's board has been working on drafting competencies that include the word *spirituality*.

Lately, a huge rise in the popularity of mindfulness workshops; the inclusion of breath work, meditation, and yoga in counselling practices; and applied expressive arts (music, drumming, and art-making) has been seen in occupational and recreational therapy approaches. Peer-reviewed literature from the fields of nursing, education, and occupational therapy, in particular, seek to incorporate spiritual aspects into the definitions of health and sees creative expression as a means to experience both mental and physical health. From literature in art education (Campbell, 2006) to ecology (Bregman, 2014), from neurobiology and its implications for addiction and trauma treatment, we see a respect for the applications of creativity and spirituality in the service of integrating the polarizing Cartesian split between body and mind (Malchiodi, 2012; Mate, 2009). Similarly, emerging literature from the fields of education (Corbett, 2012;

Miller, 2015; Pinar, 2004; Tisdell, 2003), psychology (Geller & Greenberg, 2012; Helminiak, 2008; MacIsaac, 2014; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000; Pargament, 2007; Sperry, 2012; Wilber, 2000), and theology (CASC, 2011; Cook, 2013; Kaufman, 2007; Paintner, 2010, 2011, 2013; Palmer, 1993) point to the intersectionality of creativity, the arts, transpersonal experience, individuation processes, self-realization, meaning, and fulfillment.

Carl Jung's collected works were a testimony to this intersectionality and formed the foundation for the field of transpersonal transformative psychology, which seeks to respect Indigenous wisdom traditions (Casement & Tacey, 2006). I have considered the word *integration* in this dissertation as a term that denotes psychological development. Integration is a process-oriented term that seeks a synthesis of different elements, and I use it conceptually to refer to an on-going process of maturation and, in Jungian terms, individuation. As a teacher, I am extremely curious about the student's process of maturation and how the arts can support this transformative journey into selfhood and professional identity.

Recent popular interest in exploring the imaginal realms for healing also raises ethical issues around the cultural appropriation of nonwestern shamanic and Indigenous traditions used in educational and clinical practice, while also revealing a hunger for creative and spiritual transformation. The phenomenon of shifting consciousness through art making and trance-like states has much in common with the mechanisms of shamanic techniques. "At the same time, the practice of this attention produces near-sensory evidence of the divine, that is the psychological consequence of the type of practice this

kind of faith encourages…. Those rare moments can become quite powerful, even transformative" (Luhrmann, 2012, p. 148).

Few educational or professional resources for art therapists and art therapy students are available that can help them develop clinical competencies for addressing these kinds of professional and formational issues (Arrington, 2016) and their clients' spiritually related issues. With the exception of spiritual care providers, whose competency-based formation is supported by the work of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC), spiritually informed competencies are not a particular requirement at present in the professional associations in Canada for psychotherapists, counsellors, or art therapists, although some schools are introducing courses in spirituality and art therapy into their curricula (Gerber, 2004). My hope is that this dissertation will help pave the way for the development of a theory of spiritually informed art therapy that can also include a scope of competencies for professional mental health and art therapy clinicians. The implications of this research are relevant not only to art therapy students and teaching faculty at St. Stephen's College and elsewhere, but to our professional associations, regulatory bodies, and the wider communities we serve as well.

This inquiry into my personal and professional formation as a spiritually informed art therapist and art therapy educator includes reflections on my teaching experiences at the college as my living laboratory. My art therapy students' integrative final papers and evaluations provided the evaluative evidence of the success of this form of model ministry, alongside those of University of Alberta graduate students (faculties of

secondary education, leisure and recreation, and drama), and open studies students I also taught in the three-credit graduate foundation art therapy course.

During my six years at the college, I saw enrolment increase tremendously in the department, establishing it as a well-respected, academic and professional degree-conferring graduate program [sic] for art therapy in Canada. My DMin learning enterprise included educational, academic, and artistic projects related to the themes of this work.

The Course

"Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful Spiritual-Connection" (PPSYC5841/ CHRTP521; see Appendix A) is the first course taken in the MPS–AT program [sic], and the only required degree course available to prospective degree students or non-degree (graduate-level) students who are interested in bringing spiritually informed art therapy experiences into their respective research, personal lives, and related professional practices. This course sets the tone and foundation for the rest of the art therapy training courses in the department's programs [sic] and seeks to meet the college's mandate to engage in theological studies. When students begin to experience an appreciation for what they understand to be spiritually informed art therapy through their personal experiences of creating art in the art therapy studio, the groundwork is laid for their further education and professional formation. One of the key issues of the course is to introduce the idea of "self-as-instrument" while exploring traditional and creative approaches to the development of clinical competencies as a holistically oriented art therapist.

Reflections on the Sacred and Art

The transpersonal and transformative aspects of art making are accorded a central role at St. Stephen's College. This allows for students to explore and evolve emergent ideas and aspects of their being and to find their voices through creative and artistic expression. Instructor Dr. Markus Alexander described the spiritual aspects of the work with and by the students in the studio as allowing for the "unique expression of the One" (personal communication, November 2015; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Class activity. Spontaneous group creation at the conclusion of the experiential learning directive in the "Introduction to Art Therapy" class, illustrating the experience and manifestation of Oneness.

The idea of unity, or Oneness, is at the heart of the mystical/religious/spiritual experience. Thomas Moore (2014) wrote about the *devotional eye* that the viewer brings

to an appreciation of artwork, allowing for a transcendent experience (p. 163). Art therapy had permitted me throughout my training, professional clinical experience, and teaching to discover and honor the transpersonal nature of art-making and its psychotherapeutic benefits. Prior to that, as an art student, I had felt art's potential for fulfilling a spiritual need but those art studies had not made that experience explicit. Religious art on the other hand, especially icon writing, represented a historical and religiously condoned art portal into a relationship with the divine. Several authors throughout art history have illuminated the connections between the sacred, art, and creativity for the benefit of the viewer (Beckett, 1992; De Botton & Armstrong, 2013). Art therapy invites the client/student to move from a passive role as a viewer of art to an active creator.

Thomas Moore (2014) explained what art therapists and transpersonal psychologists also know—the power of art to heal is relational:

> Art has the power to affect us and for that reason has served the spiritual traditions of the world in all of human memory; the observer has to know how to be in the presence of the artwork for it to have its impact. (p. 163)

In this way, art is not serving as a representation of the spiritual but as an invitation into a relationship with the spiritual:

> In art you see reality, but not ordinary reality. You see the sacred understood as the lifeblood and heart of the world. You see myth hidden within an ordinary image, and you behold the eternal, the timeless, and the archetypal only a thin layer away from the everyday. (Moore, 2014, p. 170)

Our human minds are designed to help us integrate and give meaning to our diverse experiences in a coherent way. This allows us, psychologically speaking, to find congruence between our thinking and our actions, helping us to trust the process (McNiff, 1998). In the art therapy studio, the artwork that emerges in a session usually is a result of this ability to resolve conflict in a creative way, allowing a new element to emerge and transcend its parts. “When we enter the realm of the creative, we pass through the threshold of the merely rational and analytical and enter a world where the mystery of possibility invites us to explore that which wants to emerge” (Conforti, 2014, para. 1).

My DMin research into spiritually informed art therapy (practice, education, and personal and professional formation) explored how art therapy (alongside the other expressive arts therapies and inter-modal expressive therapies) can lead to transformational experiences and spiritual awakening. Art therapy, of course, is not the only path to wholeness but is an important method of inviting such experiences into being and nurturing them as part of the therapeutic clinical relationship for those who are interested in holistic human development.

Contemporary theologian Matthew Fox (2016) referred to the *Via Creativa* as a spiritual path. In his description, one can also see connections to Carl Jung’s notions of the animus and shadow, that both the light and dark are required, the yin and yang, to come to wholeness—the goal of a mature formation through individuation. The *Via Positiva* teaches us to trust the cosmos, including our bodies and passions, while the *Via Negativa* teaches us to trust darkness and nothingness. In contrast, *Via Creativa* teaches us that our images are trustworthy. These images reveal truths about us and the cosmos since both are inextricably linked together.

Sub-research Questions

What is it about the art therapy experience itself, as taught in the graduate training program [sic] at St. Stephen's College, that allows students to become spiritually informed practitioners? What aspects of selfhood contribute to spiritually informed art therapy practice? What kinds of competencies are required for this kind of work, and how are these fostered through reflective exercises, readings, artwork, personal therapy, and related academic and clinical explorations?

In the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course, considerations were given to (a) the kinds of art materials used, (b) the safety of the art therapy studio space, (c) the facilitated group dynamics for artistic creation and reflections (physically and psychologically), (d) the context and requirements for art therapy education and professional practice, and (e) the clinical skills and theory related to supporting the creation and processing of artistic content. In the course, students explored themes related to the quality of presence between clinician and client, self and other, and self and one's creativity. We reviewed (a) the scope of ethical considerations for practice and considerations for spiritually informed and other clinical assessments, (b) the nature of clinical context versus the use of art therapy education for personal exploration and professional development, (c) the nature of the art therapy art-making practice, (d) the creation of safe therapeutic space, and (e) personal spiritual development competencies.

From a theological perspective, this doctoral work also asked an implied question. What is it about the spiritually informed art therapy experience itself that might be called sacred work, inspirited work, and even ministry, in the broadest sense of the word? This emergent question is related to the ability and potential of this kind of art therapy to heal.

Research Premises and Assumptions

"All means are sacred when called upon my inner necessity."

—Wassily Kandinsky (1977, p. 58)

Inspirited sacred work in art-making is not the sole domain of art therapy. Art therapy builds on diverse traditions and ceremonies experienced by humankind since time immemorial—arts and healing, arts and theology, and arts and religion. Arts and medicine and arts and education have made contributions to the professional field of art therapy since the profession was established in Canada 50 years ago. Canadian medical schools are demonstrating a rise of interest in applying the humanities and the arts to medical research and training. This focus has resulted in initiatives such as the Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine and the Integrative Health Institute, both at the University of Alberta. I had the opportunity during my time at St. Stephen's College to engage with both groups as an educator and scholar. What has not been attended to in the development of the profession thus far is research into the effects of the sacred aspects of art therapy (the healing, soul-making aspects that have been acknowledged and researched through case study work) on the spiritual formation of clients and therapists alike.

Because spiritually informed art therapy practice is being taught in a theology school (St. Stephen's College), where the definition of *ministry* incorporates the ethical professional practice of therapists whose calling is to be of service to others in need, I was moved as an educator to engage in a deeply personal exploration and development to ensure my therapy practice and instruction were spiritually informed.

One of the tasks in writing a dissertation is to outline the researcher's assumptions. I have reflected at length about my research questions and the assumptions I have consciously made. To this end, I feel it is important to include them as they resulted from reflective meditations on issues of language, experience, education, art, theology, and research into the story of this inquiry. This doctoral work is guided, therefore, by these assumptions and revelations:

- The primary readers of this dissertation will be art therapists, art therapy students, and art therapy educators who have an interest in arts and theology education, arts-based education and research, and/or spiritually informed psychotherapy theory and practice.
- Spirituality is an integral part of health and a holistic approach to the promotion of health, particularly mental health.
- Spirituality is both inclusive of diverse faith traditions as well as an individual definition of what it means to be spiritual.
- Spirituality and religion are related but not the same.
- Spirituality is an important aspect of personal development, and art therapy promotes personal development.
- Art therapy, when approached as a spiritually informed vocation and profession, is a form of transformative ministry.
- One’s spiritual growth has a direct effect on one’s approach to practicing as an art therapist.
- When spirituality is integrated into the education and training of art therapists, their practice will be sensitized to the needs of their clients’ spiritual growth.

- Spiritually informed art therapy is both deeply personal and transpersonal work affecting both individual and society.
- Art therapy encompasses both individual and group work and processes in the contexts of (a) being a student in a formational process of becoming an art therapist as well as (b) working with others as a professional art therapist and art therapy educator.
- In order for an individual to mature as a "fully human" being (Abraham Maslow), the developmental and individuation process (Carl Jung) must include not only psycho-social-physical-emotional aspects but spiritual aspects as well (drawing primarily from fields of theology, philosophy, and transpersonal psychology).
- Art making and creativity are connected to healing and a holistic paradigm of health.
- Just one graduate course in art therapy can provide enough exposure to encourage students to embrace the possibilities of working therapeutically through the arts.
- The experience of developing a curriculum and formation of spiritually informed art therapists at St. Stephens' College will be of interest to other art therapy schools and the profession itself.
- Ministry can be defined broadly as the work we do that is of service to others.
- Art therapy educational experiences are not the same as art therapy clinical work with clients but reveal much about the spiritually informed development of art therapists and how they might work with others.

- Arts-based research is a valid research method that posits art making as a reflective activity that benefits one's spiritual formation.
- Although art therapy is a distinct profession with educational standards and professional scope of practice, the expressive arts (visual art, movement/dance, drama, play, music/sound, narrative/ poetry, and multimedia) are understood by this researcher to be related to statements about "art" or "the arts," arts-based research, expressive therapies, and the use of the arts in therapy.
- My theological perspective on art therapy includes references to a personal and intimate relationship with that which is sacred and divine, often experienced through a numinous, transformative interplay between material and internal realities.
- A/r/tography, narrative inquiry, and arts-based research are valid forms of research methodology that can be congruent with both "research as ministry" and "model ministry" dissertation types and make important contributions to art therapy research.

I have attempted to outline the landscape in which I found myself and the tasks of educator I faced upon my arrival to St. Stephen's College, as both chair and student in 2012. The college provided an intellectual framework for reflections on theory and practice related to spiritually informed art therapy education. My formation as a spiritually informed art therapist during my doctoral studies deepened my attention to pedagogy and the formational educational enterprise of my career responsibilities. I am grateful for the congruence between both missions and that both aspects could be explored through art, journaling, scholarship, research, and teaching.

Chapter 2

Formation and Meaning: Becoming a Spiritually Informed Art Therapist

"Where the spirit does not work with the hand, there is no art."

—Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)

Personal Disclosure and Research Method

You may wonder what an art therapist, raised as an atheist, was doing in a divinity school working toward a Doctorate in Ministry! I had been searching for a school for my doctoral studies and began studying Expressive Arts Therapies at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland the year before arriving at St. Stephen's College. It made sense to inquire as to what my new employer would have to offer; however, I doubted my eligibility because I wrongfully assumed that St. Stephen's College would expect me to pursue religious studies as part of this path. I discovered that the ethos and values of this small college constellate around the ideals of practical theology, meaning, and service as we *do* in the world.

What compelled me into art therapy years ago was the need to be of service—greater service to others than I had been in my previous career in arts management and promotion. I learned I could comfortably use the theological language of "calling" for this need when I began my studies at St. Stephen's College. And so, whereby ministry was understood as "being of service," the possibilities of pursuing further studies as part of my formation as an art therapist—and that of others—were easy to see at this school.

How important is it that psychotherapists, counsellors, and art therapists know themselves in order to work with others? At St. Stephen's College, this question is answered throughout the curriculum in the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality,

where the development of professional competencies is linked to one's personal, transformative education and development. These competencies include the ability to engage in self-care and to work on one's psychological projections, assumptions, and psychological transference issues in order to serve the needs of another across diverse gender, class, social, age, racial, cultural, religious, and faith experiences. Understanding one's spiritual development and diverse cultural and faith traditions is extremely important (Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013). This emphasis is true as well in the DMin program [sic], in which the first contact with students in the first Integrative Seminar and Research course addresses notions of world view and paradigms of knowledge.

I wondered privately if I could share my lack of religious background, which was so different from those in my class (many were professional ministers) and most of the students and faculty in my program [sic]. Being able to "come out" as who I was—and for much of my life, in the unknowing about what that meant—has been an enormous part of my experience at this college. This public revelation would be the biggest test of trust for me—and this was to happen at a theology college! In order to accomplish this, I would need to feel safe, included, respected, not judged, validated for my unorthodox pedigree—and make myself vulnerable. The integrity of the college's stand and statements on diversity and inclusivity would also be implicated by the pursuit of my lived experience of becoming a practical theologian in this context. I became more and more relaxed and reassured through years of discussions with Dean Sharam in particular on these matters. However, as I edit this study, I am sadly aware of a changing sense of personal and community safety due to recent socio-political shifts in the public arena

aimed against immigrant, non-white, and non-Christian communities. I wonder how pedagogy is affected as safety issues shift.

Discussing my religious background was not something with which I have ever felt comfortable. I was raised to be mistrustful and very discerning about disclosing information for fear of persecution. Throughout my life, the question of my cultural and religious identity was not easily answered—not by myself at least. Even my last name *Parker* was camouflage, a name that was given to my Russian Jewish grandfather at a Halifax immigration center over a century ago when the officials couldn't pronounce *Pachter*. Our new last name provided social privilege for my father, not drawing attention to his ethnicity when it was convenient for him during the 1950s–1970s in Canada—an important currency in his politically and socially sensitive career in public relations, working for elite corporate clients who were anti-Semitic.

Research Method

"I never made a painting as a work of art, it's all research."

—Pablo Picasso (as cited by McNiff, 2008, p. 29)

In my doctoral research course at St. Stephen's College, I was introduced to a variety of qualitative research methods and found that a transdisciplinary approach to methodology for my inquiry was appropriate. Initially, I considered a literature-based reflection to this work but as the arts-based approach to the research question unfolded into many projects (both arts-based and literature-based), I knew I needed to work creatively with the concept of research method. Storytelling felt appropriate as a way to honour tacit knowledge and lived experience, and it served to express the developmental trajectory of my own spiritually informed formation as well as that of my students.

Journals that reflected on the art-making process and experience became significant as research data. I decided to include excerpts from the art, writings, and journals of my students as well. According to Clandinin and Connelly, "educational experience should be studied narratively" (2012, p. 19). Narrative inquiry supports the idea that meaning for the participant can be created this way, which explains its popularity as a method for art therapists.

My own personal experience of living with questions about spiritually informed art therapy education and its relationship to an art therapist's personal and professional formation deepened my heuristic approach to method. Indeed, I was discovering that as a researcher I was also the instrument (Moustakas, 1990). As such, the aspects of arts-based research and a/r/tography that related to my forming identity as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher felt like an appropriate conceptual framework from which to borrow for this inquiry.

The personal and professional formation and integration that I sought, through living the experience of this doctoral work, provided the invitation to a deep process of engagement with heuristic phases of inquiry (Kenny, 2012) that pointed towards the potential of creative synthesis. Through creating art in a reflective way while holding the research question (begun in 2012), I experienced a direct phenomenon of psychological integration and synthesis: the coming together of theory, inquiry, and transformative experience through artistic practice. In this way, I was also able to discover a story that had stayed with me and inspired me. My developmental story affected my current and future work, my practice, and my academic experience; my story was situated in culture, politics, and society (O'Hara, 2018).

A/r/tography (Irwin, LeBlanc, Ryu & Belliveau, 2018) is a newer arts-based methodology that attracted me for its ability to conceptualize various relationships that contribute to the development of a reflexive praxis. For my dissertation, I was heavily influenced by the aspect of a/r/tography that related to the living inquiry of these three roles of art therapist, researcher, and teacher and their contiguous relationship with each other.

The researcher voice of this dissertation was dedicated to an autoethnographic, self-inquiry narrative of my work as an art therapist and teacher in the context of a theology school education. The artwork and art journaling I created concurrently to the dissertation focused on the research question of spiritually informed art therapy as it related to my story of formation. After I had begun my studies, I noticed my teaching became more crystallized in the ways it lifted up the themes of spiritual formation and related to my students' education. Simultaneously, their writings and voices on the subject became even more distinctive and clear. I realized the importance of including some of their work, with their consent, later in the dissertation as evidence of the symbiotic development of teacher and student. This evidence is offered to the reader as examples of the students' development and their articulations of the benefits of a spiritually informed approach to art therapy education from the very first course undertaken in such a graduate programme.

In many ways, my a/r/tographic, arts-based narrative doctoral projects and this dissertation point toward an emergent theory of spiritually informed art therapy. This theory draws on personal, artistic, clinical, scholarly, and teaching experiences in art therapy, together with an in-depth exploration of pertinent literature drawn from allied

and related disciplines. Earlier steps along the way on this doctoral journey included pilot projects based on my research investigations. At times, these projects were heuristic and autobiographical in method and certainly included arts-based research practice as well as scholarly approaches to a literature review, firmly situated in the qualitative research methodological tradition.

A/r/tography in the Service of Identity Formation

A/r/tography (Irwin, 2004, 2013; Irwin, LeBlanc, Ryu, & Belliveau, 2018; Irwin & Sinner, 2015) is a recently named, arts-based research methodology (Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2008) first introduced to me in my foundational doctoral research course for the DMin degree (Dr. Diane Conrad's course "The Theory and Practice of Arts-Based Educational Research" [EDSE 612], conducted in the arts-based research studio at the University of Alberta). "A/r/tography is an arts and education practice-based methodology recognizing that the practices of artists and educators are often reflective, reflexive, recursive, and responsive acts of living inquiry" (Given, 2008, p. 27).

A/r/tography's intellectual roots go back to Aristotle's three kinds of thought: *theoria* (knowing), *praxis* (doing), and *poesis* (making). A/r/tography is interdisciplinary and integrative by nature, and Dr. Rita Irwin of the University of British Columbia is one of its premier proponents. Irwin conceptualized a/r/tography as the locus in which "knowing, doing and making merge … a 'metaphor' for artist-researcher-teachers who integrate these roles in their personal/professional lives; it creates Irwin suggests, a 'third space between theory and message while opening up the space between artist-research-teacher'" (as cited in Pinar, 2004, p. 9).

For the purpose of my doctoral work, I liberally borrowed from the framework of this methodology as it applied to the conceptual aspect of my formative professional identity, expanding it to include the hyphenated appellation of art therapist/researcher/ teacher—a trinity identity. Art therapists are very familiar with the significance of the trinity as it is evidenced through the concept of the "third" element—the relational, psychodynamic space. In art therapy, this third space is mediated through the art. Carl Jung spoke of the significant and transformational third element in psychoanalysis, and D. W. Winnicott introduced to psychology the notion of transitional space and the transitional object (a function is served by the art in art therapy as well). Art therapy pioneer Edith Kramer (an early student of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis at the Staatliches Bauhaus, an art school in Germany) referred to the role of the art therapist as providing the "third" hand (Malchiodi, 2012). Art therapists are trained to be aware of the relational space and art-making product/process between the art therapist and the client (student/patient/beneficiary) as being the third element, wherein transformational and even transcendent opportunities lie.

Arts-based methodologies are most suitable, alongside narrative and literature-based reflections, for this kind of doctoral research and examination of professional and personal formation. Working as chair and faculty lecturer of art therapy simultaneously with this doctoral work allowed immediate reciprocity between my scholarship, spiritually informed art therapy formation, and my work with others. St. Stephen's College proved a hospitable host for these developments in the cauldron of theological and spiritual education in the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality. The

relational aesthetic inquiry of a/r/tography (Irwin, 2016) is congruent with my method of art therapy research:

> A/r/tographical works are often rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess which are enacted and presented/performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. (Irwin & Sinner, 2015, p. 1)

I was not alone in being influenced by a/r/tography as a way to conceptualize the transdisciplinary work and identity of being art therapist/researcher/ teacher. Jena Leake is a contemporary expressive arts scholar who also played with the concept and identity of a/r/tographer. She explored the concept of this methodology by changing the appellation and acronym of a/r/tographer to include "artist/researcher/ teacher/therapist" (2015, p. 291).

Leake referred to her dissertation as a curatorial process that navigated "the transdisciplinary practices of a/r/tography and expressive arts therapy" (2015, p. 296). Leake's desire to open the conversation about transdisciplinary principles, inquiries, and practices resonated most profoundly for me. This approach guided my creative hybrid method of arts-based, narrative, a/r/tographic, and art therapy research. Leake wrote:

> In specifying my particular practices and identities in a/r/t, I added another "t" to a/r/tography in this study to symbolize the additional multiple identity I live as a therapist along with the discipline of expressive arts therapy. Through a/r/t/t, I resist locating who I am and the work I do in one domain. I also risk the critique

> of expressive arts therapists and a/r/tographers who might question this border crossing. (2015, p. 294)

The theological framework of this doctoral programme also allowed for new ways to conceptualize the work of being an art therapist/researcher/teacher. Upon admittance to the DMin program [sic], I was invited to situate my art therapy research in the newly evolving definition of ministry embraced by the degree:

> The St. Stephen's College DMin chooses to define "ministry," within specific faith communities and the broader society, as the work of those persons involved in human service in which the practitioner is self-reflectively aware of the nurturing quality of that activity. Persons who define their work activity as being committed to the improvement and nurture of society and the world community, including such fields as education, faith/religious community assignments, chaplaincy, mediation, management, media services, the arts, health care, counseling, intercultural relationships, and care of the earth are recognized by the St. Stephen's College as being in ministry.
>
> Persons interested in advanced and graduate level work in a variety of fields associated with ministry as the practical interface between the arts, the humanities, science, learning theory, and psychology, on the one hand, and religion/theology/spirituality, on the other hand, find the St. Stephen's College Min program [sic] ideally suited for them.
>
> The DMin program [sic] is for active practitioners who wish to pursue intensive, praxis-based, specialized studies in their area of interest. (*Guidelines,* 2014, p. 3)

My work—teaching, developing, and shepherding the spiritually informed graduate art therapy programs [sic] at St. Stephen's College—was certainly appreciated as a model of ministry in this context. Model ministry has also been rooted in my clinical practice, professional contributions, professional and academic writings, advocacy work, studies, research, readings, curriculum development, and programs [sic] within the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality, alongside ongoing discourse, inquiry teaching, advising and engagement with students, and teaching faculty and colleagues. As such, my emerging identity as a/r/tographer at St. Stephen's College followed the form of model ministry. According to the *Guidelines: Doctor of Ministry Manual* (2014), the projects of my doctoral work fit into the categories of research in ministry and model ministry and were aligned with the interdisciplinarity of a/r/tography and its diverse arts-based research methodology.

My DMin education became increasingly relevant to my responsibilities as chair of the department. The separation between roles and identities as an a/r/tographer in my daily lived experience as an artist and art therapist/teacher/researcher continually diminished.

The work of the practice of art therapy includes various theoretical approaches fundamentally drawn from diverse psychological traditions (including psychoanalytic, behavioural, cognitive developmental, Freudian, gestalt, humanist, expressive arts therapies, object relations, symbolic, phenomenological, Jungian, transpersonal, etc.). I practiced an eclectic approach, drawing from many of these theories. Whereas I am simultaneously an art therapist, researcher, and teacher (a/r/tographer), this doctoral work

meets the requirements for both types of research: research in ministry and model ministry.

The subject of spirituality has been rarely, explicitly addressed in art therapy literature, as noted in Chapter 1, with the exception of fewer than a half-dozen recent publications in the field and some of the foundational literature in expressive arts therapies. However, many of the themes important to the integration of spirituality with a holistic art therapy practice were found and applied from literature in related fields of spiritually informed health care practices, spiritually informed education, and theology.

Notes on the Ethical Scope of Practice for Art Therapy Education

At St. Stephen's College, it becomes clear to students in a short amount of time which parts of their personal formational work belong in the studio and classroom discussions, which parts should be taken to clinical supervisors, and which parts should be shared with personal therapists. Modelling, sharing, supporting, nurturing, being curious and enthusiastic, celebrating discoveries and advances are all part of my philosophy of teaching. In my clinical practice, I borrow from an eclectic approach that is mostly grounded in person-centred, humanistic approaches (some Jungian work too), spontaneous art therapy practice, feminist theory, interdisciplinary work, and art theory, while having also benefited from training in the expressive arts.

We discover together how important it is to be receptive, supportive, and creative with our clients while not enabling nor rescuing them. We encourage discussion about current events and cross-cultural issues affecting the work we do. My teaching also extends beyond the classroom to advising students about practicum and capstone or thesis work required by the department. Advocacy for our profession is a large and important

part of the work of being an art therapist, and I am excited to meet with new practicum partners interested in learning about the benefits of art therapy. The college has more art therapy placements in the Edmonton community available than students to fill them. The need for art therapy is great. However, finding ways to professionally deliver services and receive appropriate compensation after graduation remains a problem.

At St. Stephen's College, we teach about the open studio model (Pat Allen, Bruce Moon) as well as the art psychotherapy-medical model (Edith Kramer, Elinor Ullman, Lynn Kapitan, Judith Rubin) so that art therapy competencies are developed across this spectrum of approaches: art as therapy, therapeutic art, and art psychotherapy. In addition, there is awareness of advances in the field of arts-based research and allied fields of practice in psychology, neurobiology, the arts, and integrative healing arts.

Art therapy instructors are trained to explain to their students the ethical perimeters of in-studio learning. Although the art practice in art therapy classes closely mimics art therapy sessions (group and individual), as well as art practice, it is neither therapy nor art education per se and yet certainly involves both. However, learning how to engage in art therapy in the classroom-studio is therapeutic and confidential and promotes the development of the students' formation as art therapists. The art therapy instructor may model art therapy approaches, directives, interventions, reflections, and group and individual therapy approaches. The agreements and consents involved in entering a therapeutic relationship with an art therapist and the quality of that therapeutic relationship over time are different from those required by the educator. In the program [sic] at St. Stephen's College, students are asked to engage in personal therapy concurrent with their studies. This allows the student to take personal issues that are not appropriate

for classroom/studio processing to their therapist and receive the emotional, psychological, and development support they require. What happens in the studio is very close to what happens in an art therapy session.

Ethical Considerations for this Dissertation

This dissertation involved me as a subject and the story of my lived experience as an artist, art therapist, teacher, and researcher. Considerations for the safe and effective use of self in the a/r/tographic (auto-ethnographic) research projects and dissertation were taken when needed. My personal and spiritual history is mentioned, and the story unfolds to include my parents' and grandparents' viewpoints on religion and spirituality as I experienced them, with respect for their privacy and without intention to incriminate or libel.

No personal information or identifying information is presented on any student's or instructor's experience without their consent. All quotes, imagery, and citations from students' unpublished work are accompanied by their consent to publish with due credit given, using a permission letter and consent forms (see Appendices C and D). The inclusion of my writings, artwork, and statements is protected by copyright by virtue of the publication of this dissertation.

While teaching and advising students and supporting art therapy colleagues in their work, I also maintained a small private art therapy practice and conducted some art therapy clinical supervision parallel to these responsibilities. These clients also influenced my ongoing formation. Due to confidentiality concerns, I have not made this the subject of these studies per se. However, my developing spiritually informed art therapy competencies and knowledge affected this work as well.

The course I taught (see Appendix A) allowed for engaging in research in a living, arts-based, a/r/to/graphic lab where didactic and experiential work, as well as reflections on readings and group processes, unfolded for my students and myself. Certain directives, such as the arts-based, spiritual life map/story, helped to orient new students to this spiritually informed approach and way of thinking. Art therapy individual and group directives related to mindfulness and sensory high sensitivity were also included.

This focus on integrating approaches—including contemplation; theories of individuation; arts-based self-care; explorations into new ways of seeing, exploring, and sensing; introducing ideas of liberation and empowerment versus specific problem-solving, cognitive behavioural therapy directives—opened up the field of play and dialogue for spiritually informed art therapy. We also revisited human development theory in the classroom with arts-based directives related to stages of development from spiritual and artistic development points of view.

About the Research Projects

Initially, I thought defining my approach to spiritually informed art therapy from a Jungian perspective would be important to this doctoral investigation since this perspective had influenced my approach to art therapy. As such, I made a research project of enrolling in teleseminars on the psyche and creativity from the Assisi Institute with Dr. Michael Conforti, whom I discovered was presenting on psychotherapy from both a Jungian and spiritual perspective. As a teacher of spiritually informed art therapy, situating my pedagogy accordingly was important. This helped me define my focus to be less about its theoretical clinical roots in Jungian psychology and more about positioning

spiritually informed art therapy within the context of transformational psychology, informed by emergence theory. “There can be no significant nor sustainable change without a conscious engagement of the creative” (Conforti, 2014, para. 4).

As part of the doctoral work, in addition to my teaching and scholarship, I engaged in many arts-based projects, including reading about the religious in art history (Andreopoulos, 2006; Kandinsky, 1977; Viladesau, 2000) and learning about religious icon writing. I knew a little bit about the latter but had no direct creative experience outside of the art therapy studio with religious and mystical art.

I started framing in my own mind the meta-project of teaching spiritually informed art therapy. Another level of questions emerged: What are the conditions in the studio/classroom that support students in experiencing art making and their development from a spiritual framework? What was the artful-spiritual connection in art therapy as advertised in our college posters and in the title of the required curriculum course I taught? How can art therapy students begin to articulate these experiences? Can they be evidenced? What are the healing benefits? How might these experiences serve them in their formation as spiritually informed art therapists working with others?

Many projects and activities emerged to constitute the “living inquiry” of my research into spiritually informed art therapy—normally understood as data collection (see examples in Chapters 4, 5, and 6). This list of research projects included:

- studies with the Assisi Institute;
- reading in transpersonal psychology and transpersonal therapy literature, as well as resources on spirituality in art, arts and theology, art therapy, arts-based research methods, and narrative inquiry;

- conducting ongoing, arts-based research, creating multiple pieces of art aimed at my research questions in the art studio from 2012 through 2018. This activity included taking a course on icon writing and the art resulting from that study;
- ongoing design and teaching of the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course over six years, including reflection processes with the student participants;
- conceptualizing and creating a "Graphic Map Toward the Development of a Theory of Spiritually-Informed [sic] Art Therapy 2017–2018"; and
- engaging in my journaling reflective process.

These activities were a testimony to the intersectionality and transdisciplinarity of the research experience and were constantly interacting with, advancing, and influencing each other.

A form of traditional data analysis and interpretation was happening concurrently with the above activities and projects. The research combined experiential and didactic learning, and the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course itself was, each time, a living lab to explore themes of transformation and encounters with the divine through art and self-inquiry for the students and myself alike. Each time I taught the course, I became more and more curious about how the students could begin to develop their sense of what the spiritual aspects of the work might be and how they were developing as a result. In their final integrative papers, they were challenged to articulate these new discoveries. It became clear that their voices should also be heard in this doctoral work. I have included excerpts from their writings and some of their artwork in this dissertation (see Chapter 6).

Coincidental to and congruent with my students' learning, I became keenly aware of how my formation as a spiritually informed art therapist and teacher was evolving alongside that of my students. This contributed to the further evolution and development of my course syllabus and other syllabi in the department; a lived experience of spiritually informed pedagogical practice was emerging. Each time I challenged myself to go in the studio to address the content of my research questions artistically, I was brought back into the experience of the creative process as well.

The seeds of my next research project began to emerge. Could I create a map conceptualizing and showing these paths of inquiry that might contribute to a developing theory of the various aspects of spiritually informed art therapy?

Art therapy is not meant to be a solitary experience but a relational one. I often remind students of this. Working on one's own, making art in a therapeutic way is not the same as working with an art therapist as a witness and guide. Although the arts-based reflexive process is relational, it is not the same as being in the studio with another live body to engage with about one's creative process. Something unique happens in the art therapy classroom as students learn clinical competencies and most importantly, explore themselves through psychodynamic creative play with art materials, welcoming one's spirituality into the mix. We engaged and reflected upon in this endeavour in the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course.

In Canada, our ethical codes and professional standards—as they relate to the Canadian Art Therapy Association, the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario, and the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association as the leading exemplars—reflect the need for training, supervision, and practice that respects diversity.

Daniels and Fitzpatrick (2013) pointed to the spiritual competencies—identified by the Association of Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling as a way to integrate spirituality into counselling. However, the competencies do not address the particular ways in which spiritually informed art therapy intrinsically supports clients in their spiritual development.

Daniels and Fitzpatrick (2013) outlined the competencies that go a long way to outline the competencies required in art therapy counsellor training and practice. The self-reflective aspects of an art therapist's learning and development around one's personal spirituality will inform his or her future practice of considering the spiritual beliefs and practices of one's clients. Spiritual assessments for art therapists can be developed by art therapists, adapting available models from psychotherapy and counselling literature. However, specific models need to be developed related to art therapy practice. By nature and method, art therapy for the client is a very reflexive and relational process of an aesthetic experience. Students in the art therapy studio classroom come close to the experience of their clients, with the exception that their reflections on their work with peers and the teacher stop short of psychotherapy with a therapist. The psychodynamic aspects of the work are nonetheless active and animate the developmental learning process.

Depending on the context in which one is engaged in art therapy (medical model, classroom, or open studio) and the related mental health treatment goals, learning outcomes, or developmental objectives, an art therapist may wish to conduct different kinds of spiritual assessments as part of creative engagement with one's client. Instead of an intake form asking about favorite types of music and preferences for materials and art

forms, one could engage in art making related to these preferences and explore ways in which they are related to beliefs, spiritual needs, and competencies of the client.

In order to become spiritually competent, the art therapist needs the opportunity to assess and explore one's personal spiritual development, beliefs, and practices. A few excellent models of spiritual assessment can be adapted to art therapy and some can be arts-based activities. Spiritual life maps and spiritual genograms are among the directives that can also be art-based. This adaptive work has often been a curricular unit in my "Introduction to Art Therapy" course at St. Stephen's College in order to nurture reflective spiritual development and self-awareness among the art therapy students. We discuss how consideration should be given for incorporating verbal questions about spirituality and belief systems as part of the client intake process (Hodge & Holtrop, 2018; Horovitz, 2002), and how this would contribute to a spiritually informed art therapy practice.

My Story: Inherited World Views

> "Without memory and the representation of memory in the tangible object (which in turn stimulates memory), the currency of living exchange, the spoken word and the thoughts, would disappear without a trace."
>
> —Hannah Arendt (as cited by Wix & Dicker, 2010, p. v)

The trauma of the Holocaust was certainly felt by me in my childhood in various ways, contributing to my anxiety as a child. The post-war adages "never again" and "forgive but don't forget" were regularly referenced in our home and my Yiddish Sunday school. I have discovered in this research that many of the artistic, aesthetic, and educational roots of art therapy find their way back to the Bauhaus, where artists like

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis studied. “The cornerstone of the [Bauhaus] school: understanding the materials; art of self-discovery … relaxation and breathing and rhythmic exercises … The goal [was] to develop the whole person” (Wix & Dicker, 2010, p. 44).

Dicker-Brandeis taught Edith Kramer before the war in Czechoslovakia at the time of her Bauhaus training, in the midst of a peer group which included Paul Klee, Rudolf Steiner, and Wassily Kandinsky (Wix, 2010). Kramer, who emigrated to the United States, is considered one of the foremost pioneers of art therapy. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis’ story is compelling, tragic, and inspiring. She was the art teacher for the imprisoned children at Theresienstadt (Terezin) and was murdered alongside them in the camps. This doctorate has brought me full circle back to my childhood when I attended an exhibition on a field trip with my Sunday school that profoundly imprinted on me at age 5. The exhibition was of children’s art from the Holocaust—the art of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis’ children! Only recently, in exploring these early roots of my childhood vicarious trauma that later influenced my decision to pursue art therapy did I discover she taught Edith Kramer, and in many ways, seeded this work (see Journal, April 2017: Looking for a spiritual framework, p. 119).

I was raised with socialist, progressive, humanist values in a home culture of atheism. This upbringing was in sharp contrast to Zionist expressions of my predominantly religious Jewish Toronto neighbourhood and public school. I was not regarded as Jewish in the predominantly Jewish neighbourhood and public schools of my childhood where peers attended extra-curricular Hebrew schools and synagogues. Those children were absent from my public school on Jewish holidays while I attended school on those days with a handful of non-Jewish teachers and students. I was the product of a

"mixed marriage," as it was called. Since my mother was not Jewish and had not converted, I was not considered Jewish in the eyes of my Jewish peers.

My mother was born into a Catholic and Lutheran household in which communist and socialist values were held dearly before, during, and after the Second World War. My parents met and bonded because of these values while attending the World Youth Conference in Prague after WWII. My mother was a pianist and delegate representing the Croatian youth of New York, and my father reported on this major cultural event for the *Montreal Star* newspaper. 1947 was a new beginning for the world, and my parents embodied new hope.

My parents were also the first generation on both sides of my family to intermarry, and no rule books existed. Atheism and humanism provided a common ground for the family culture and parenting. A core value of my upbringing was to strive to become an agent for change in the world. My mother was concerned not to offend Jewish neighbours or my father's sensitivities, so we did not celebrate Christmas in our home, although Christian holiday food did make its way to our table for holiday gatherings. I was also raised before the commercialization of high holidays and, although I felt I was missing something, not decorating the house with trees and lights was not so unusual at the time. Jewish holidays were not celebrated regularly, although occasionally menorah candles were lit if relatives visited, and Passover dinner was served to draw attention to the plight of all the oppressed in our world. My father would remind me to remain vigilant against the rise of tyranny and fascism, at all costs.

I was sent to a progressive, socialist Yiddish Sunday school—the Morris Winchevsky School in Toronto (socialist ideologies prevailed there)—for an appreciation

of the dying Yiddish language and culture of my father's youth. I learned to love the writings of Sholem Aleichem and Yiddish folksongs. This too set me apart from the other Jewish children at my public school who experienced their identity and role in the Jewish community through experiences at Hebrew afterschool programmes and religious services at the local synagogues—and never on a Sunday.

In fact, religion was a bad word in our house. My maternal Croatian grandfather's anger at the church for, as he saw it, taking money from the poor to gild its own assets translated into my mother's parenting style that was strongly anti-religious and anti-spiritual. (To this day, if I say the word *pray* in a sentence, even benignly like, "Oh, I pray they're ok," she will admonish me with "Don't say that word!") So, in terms of my developing identity in school, at home, and in the neighbourhood, I was damned if I did acknowledge my mixed faith, spiritual background, and interests, and I was damned if I did not.

Most of my conversations about faith throughout adolescence were conducted in private with my father in the backroom of our house, where I would seek him out during his times of contemplation and ply him with questions about whether I was Jewish or not, and what the meaning of life was. He was very patient with me in this, and I remember him saying that if I were raised at a different time and place, perhaps I would have made a great rabbi. He instilled in me the appreciation for a Jewish identity if it supported the questioning of authority, questioning and seeking in general, humanism, compassion, and the compelling search to discover what it meant to become fully human (a *Mensch*). As I became a teen, he would say that he didn't want to bias my beliefs with religious education and would leave it to me to pursue it if I wanted it when I was fully grown. As

an adult looking back, I can appreciate that the many conversations over the years between my father and me, although not religious, were indeed very theological and philosophical. They were also progressive, liberal, and deeply respectful. However, in the absence of religious practice, what was missing in my development was a spiritual compass. I had no way of understanding at the time that this was likely the root cause of great personal angst. In the theological terms of Jones's (1989) process theology, this existential angst became my *obsessio*, leading me, again and again, to seek experiences of *epiphania* through art therapy-related explorations. In these arts-based experiences of self, I found resolution—via creative and mysterious alchemy—for the sometimes seemingly irreconcilable.

Sometimes my questions and interests were received by my father as being the stuff of mysticism, which he denounced as ignorant thinking. He valued intellectual, scientific thought over alternate ways of knowing and metaphysics. Discussions about contentment and happiness were eclipsed by his assertions about the important value of "one's reach always extending past one's grasp." To me, this seemed like a futile recipe for failure in life and left me with profound dissatisfaction, anxiety, lack of true validation, and even depression. Attempts at undergraduate studies in philosophy as a way to answer questions into the meaning of my existence proved frustrating as I failed to understand the systems of thought the discipline promoted. A course in comparative religion was of little help. During adolescence and early adulthood, I struggled, besieged with inner torment and a need to have some personal answers. I could appreciate my father's legacy and heritage (Jewish traditions, language, and culture), and he honoured my many questions by responding that to question was at the core of what it means to be

Jewish. What I hungered for was a spiritual framework in the absence of personal theology and religion. I was not sure what it looked like but I wanted to find out through my doctoral studies.

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." If my father, as my first intellectual mentor, had instead known to share with me these words that I came across during my first months at St. Stephen's College, attributed to Jesuit theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (n.d.), perhaps I might have been spared years of psychological torment.

Art Therapy for Personal Development

Six years after my father's death and a year after my best friend's death from AIDS (Toronto artist Rob Flack), I had an inner urging to change course. I had achieved some personal and professional goals in the arts community working as a producer and host of educational arts television programmes but felt the need to direct my work in different ways to engage with the world. Perhaps it was my maternal urge as well, but I felt drawn to work with children in war-torn countries and thought art might be the way. I am sure this related back to early childhood impressions about the Holocaust and the artwork of children from Terezin. I was deeply affected by news of the war raging in Bosnia (my mother's ancestral roots were Croatian) and an opportunity manifested to go overseas and provide humanitarian relief through the arts. I had no experience in this and the approaching reality of entering the trauma scared me. I knew I needed to prepare properly, both personally and professionally. I began my studies in 1994 at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute (TATI) concurrent with my Master of Arts in Expressive Therapies at Lesley University (1997). To my surprise, I found spiritual inspiration, freedom, and

creative expression in the art therapy studio. The art therapy studio was for me both a psychic cauldron and healing sanctuary (Corbett, 2011).

Art making—in the conscious, reflexive way of the spontaneous art therapy approach of my training—allowed for confusion, toxicity, and unconscious and conscious psychic material to be transformed through a magical alchemy of creation. This kind of creativity allowed for the process and products of self-expression and aesthetics to play and transcend identifications with self-limitations. Art making contributed deeply to my individuation process, and I engaged enthusiastically in Jungian dreamwork, analysis, and literature. Jung's approach to healing the mind/body split, with which I struggled, made sense to me. I explored these ideas through art making as part of my art therapy training (1994–1997), using art as psychologically transformative and unifying to the psyche. Art making in the art therapy studio at both institutions and in personal art therapy provided a much-needed antidote to being stuck in the Cartesian dichotomy by inviting creativity and art-making to become the transcendent third element in which mind (unconscious and conscious), body, and spirit could relate with each other:

> The cooperation of conscious reasoning with the data of the unconscious is called the "transcendent function" … This function progressively unites the opposites. Psychotherapy makes use of it to heal neurotic dissociations, but this function had already served as the basis of Hermetic philosophy for seventeen centuries. (Jung, 2014, p. 244)

Making and reflecting on the art, sharing it with others, assimilating and integrating new understandings into a newly developing self were all tremendously exhilarating and contributed to my personal development and formation as an art

therapist. A basic curriculum contributed to the development of clinical competencies and an understanding of psychological principles and counselling theory. But most importantly, a profound respect for the offerings of the psyche through art-making as soulful expressions existed in the safe and nurturing psychodynamic environment of the TATI art therapy training studio and Lesley University's expressive therapies studios.

A Student Again: Twenty Years Later

"The task of therapy is one of 'narrative repair.'"

—Ronald R. Irwin (2002, p. 123)

A fellow student in my DMin cohort encouraged me in our first class in 2012 to use my tools as an artist and art therapist to explore what my spirituality looked like after I disclosed that I could not identify with a religion or faith as others did. I spoke of my need for a spiritual framework, and she wondered what that might look like. I had never used my art in the service of such a question. Her art therapy-type of invitation was powerful and appropriate. It prompted the beginning of a profoundly meaningful process and series of projects that formed the basis of my own arts-based inquiry into my spiritual formation as art therapist, researcher, and teacher (a/r/tographer).

What *did* my spirituality look like? I needed to start making art to find out. The more I did this over the next few years, the more comfortable I became asking my students to do the same. I asked them about their world views, their inherited religious and spiritual values, and how they saw their spiritual development in relation to that of their ancestors. I asked them to explore how the art materials and the aesthetic play of matter through various media might bring them into contact with their spiritual selves. We spoke of the environment and nature, the Creator and the creative. We discussed how

these personal inquiries might be transformative and healing, and we engaged with counselling theory, clinical psychology and ethics, theology, and art therapy literature that spoke to the relationships and realities of our inner and outer lives (see references in Appendix A) and the development of therapeutic clinical competencies.

For myself, I made art that was spontaneous and used materials that included collage, mixed media, writing, and photography and allowed for a dialogue with the image and the imaginal (McNiff, 1992, 2004; Richards, 2003). I visited and revisited these questions: *What does my spirituality look like?* and *What is my spirituality?* through art making and reflection.

I also became curious about the role of the arts in religion, the liturgical arts, and the arts for contemplation and meditation. Dean Sharam explained to me in our regular tête-à-têtes that the idea of an important relationship between the fine arts and theology had a long history at St. Stephen's College prior to the establishment of the art therapy degree and certificate programs [sic]. I felt reassured by him that my inquiries were indeed well positioned for the DMin degree despite the apparent unorthodoxy of both the questions and the methods. This arts-based, reflective inquiry also fit easily into the concept of practical theology, as he often reiterated to me by saying, "It's what we do in the world."

My doctoral studies afforded me the opportunity to explore the intersectionality between theology, educating, creating, and being an art therapist. I circled back to some earlier literature that I needed to revisit with these research questions in mind, including works by my previous art and expressive therapies teachers (Fehlner, 2015; Kossak 2009).

In my DMin classes, I was introduced for the first time to theologians Parker Palmer, John O'Donohue, Henri Nouwen, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Christine Paintner, and others, whose descriptions and evocations of spiritual life resonated deeply with my experiences of creating art and witnessing creativity in art therapy practice. I recognized parallels between their work and the work of certain depth psychologists who helped me make sense of the world and human experience, including Carl Jung, James Hillman, Christina and Stanislav Grof—who coined the term *spiritual emergence* (as cited in Dance, 2002)—John Welwood, Michael Conforti, and Marion Woodman, to name but a few. More and more, I could affirm that the locus where the worlds of art, psychotherapy, and spirituality intersect was where the numinous could be found.

Roots of a Calling

Exposure in my early childhood education (at Morris Winchevsky Yiddish School in Toronto) to an exhibition of Holocaust art made by children who died in the concentration camps implanted deeply in my psyche and soul. This experience guided me subconsciously throughout my life. I am convinced these children, through their art, called me later in my life to work with children as an art therapist—work that I perceived as life-affirming. This exhibition and the art made by children at the "model" Czech ghetto and concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezin) is addressed later in this dissertation.

Motivated by a calling to work globally as an art therapist, I began my training as an art therapist initially (at TATI and Lesley University, 1994–1997). The war in Bosnia ended while I did practicum placements with youth in Toronto public schools, seniors in retirement homes, psychiatric hospital patients, and newcomers through the Canadian

Red Cross. Like many art therapy students before and after me, I soon discovered I did not have to travel far to find a great need. Global work had to wait.

Art Therapy Missionary

Twenty years after graduating with my master's degree in 1997, I finally volunteered to serve in global humanitarian art therapy missions with The Red Pencil International (RPI) after seeing a posted call for art therapists through the Canadian Art Therapy Association. I accepted the offer to work with Hmong children in Thailand. These children were assessed and invited to live in a 24/7 shelter by RPI partner RADION of Thailand for having a history of trauma or considered to be at high risk without intervention (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Hmong children participating in art therapy. Facilitated by the author at RADION, through The Red Pencil International, Thailand. 2017.

Each mission involved a commitment to make three trips to design and implement art therapy work with beneficiaries (and train their caregivers) over a year and a half. Interestingly, this work is called a “mission” by RPI and RADION. I doubt I would have thought of this work in theological terms—as my *ministry* and as being congruent with my *calling* to art therapy prior to coming to St. Stephen’s College.

Although I only learned the word *tikkun* during my DMin studies at St. Stephen’s College (*tikkun olam* is the Jewish concept of "mending the world"), surely such humanist Jewish values and tenets, as taught to me by my father, provided the seeds for such a call to art therapy ministry. Ministry can be not only an expression and sharing of one’s faith but also caring for others (Greek, *diakonia*). Working as an art therapist in global humanitarian missions closely aligned with my new understanding of ministry. I perceived my ministry, in several senses of the word, to be spiritually informed and spiritually integrative work. A study that was part of the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA’s seven-year project on “Spirituality in Higher Education” (2003–2010) by Astin et al. (2006) on the importance of spirituality in the lives of faculty, found that those with a reported higher spirituality were more likely to engage in humanitarian volunteer work.

First (Related) Teaching Experiences

Before I knew about art therapy, I knew that empowering others through the arts was exciting and generated engagement. My first summer job while in college as an undergraduate was at the International Language Institute at the University of British Columbia. I was hired to be a cultural monitor and teacher’s assistant in the ESL programmes. Because of my love of theatre, I was able to lead improvisation (Second

City style) workshops. I discovered how quickly and playfully students could become uninhibited, which in turn allowed them to speak English with a confidence they normally did not have. I also introduced a method of found poetry (circling words in a newspaper article to form poems), which showed their command of a language they barely knew—at least enough to delight them in the discovery of poetic turns of phrase and encouraging an enthusiasm for learning more.

I was hooked on teaching in this creative way but would not find another outlet for it until becoming an art therapist. In the meantime, I worked as an arts administrator. In the following years in my role as a promoter of the arts, I wrote about the arts and produced educational programming for various media, including educational public television. Advocacy work in the arts is very close to teaching and hones skills I have used with great effect in my ongoing roles in community arts and when educating about art therapy.

Art Therapy and Teaching in a Theology School

"Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen."

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (n.d.)

When I started working as an art therapist, I was sometimes surprised at how closely aligned to the work of an art teacher or a creative ESL teacher it could be; yet, the goals were different for the most part. What excited me was the discovery of an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem in the clients—consistent, measurable benefits of the work. Much of early art therapy literature (Kapitan, 2010; Naumberg, 1987; Rubin, 2010) included efforts to measure quantitatively such benefits alongside qualitative research, as art therapy advocated for its efficacy in establishing itself as a profession. The field of art

therapy research is expanding in methodology as art as research (McNiff, 2013) and arts-based research (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2018) gains academic validity.

I have taught art therapy at the former British Columbia Art Therapy School (Victoria, BC) and at St. Stephen's College (including an intensive of the same "Introduction to Art Therapy" course at the Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, in 2016). Whether the course was "Introduction to Art Therapy," "Child and Adolescent Art Therapy," "Theoretical Approaches to Art Therapy," "Independent Art Therapy Studio," or "Art Therapy and Psychopathology," there was always something powerful, transformative, and in common with all these experiences for my students and me. I found the same excitement in my clinical practice as well. A felt, personal empowerment through artistic creative expression was evidenced in each session—a compelling phenomenon that remains central to my teaching and clinical practice. This empowerment is palpable and can be transformative and even revolutionary in an individual's life (client or student) and in community work (Levine & Levine, 2011). Facilitating and witnessing it is always a deep privilege.

The great benefits of art therapy and art psychotherapy that I appreciate the most (and impart a passion for with students as they engage in their process of personal discovery) include the spirited curiosity and enthusiasm for creativity and life that can result. The creative principle is infectious and liberating. I confess that it seems to be some of the most revolutionary work one can do: inspiring others to be in their own power, to find their authentic voices, to create and trust in their own healing impulses, to allow for the give-and-take of a therapeutic respectful relationships, to witness

transformation, to celebrate and honour different experiences of being human, and to "trust the process" that reveals aesthetic delights along the way.

At St. Stephen's College, I have enjoyed the luxury of teaching in small-sized classes in a circle, adjacent to an art studio. This setup allows for a Socratic learning experience as well as an opportunity to engage and then distance oneself from the subjectivity of the creative work in order to reflect upon it. It also allows for these spaces to alternately be identified with certain respective or share practices that include approaches to scholarship, confidentiality, safety, and sanctuary.

Learning to cultivate a quality of presence in supporting another person therapeutically is a learned clinical competency that is encouraged and practiced through various means early in our students' training. Presence is a key concept in spiritual care and pastoral counselling and has been integrated into the pedagogy of art therapy education at the college. Learning how to be present to another is practiced in class as a clinical competency. Students explore ways to witness another's art and physical and verbal expressions (Allen, 2005).

Turning to the art materials as a way of exploring relationships between *self* and *other* and *Self* and *Othe*r as I did in my doctoral projects and in the course with students is always a great pleasure. Pritchard (2010) proposed in her doctoral work that the small self (oneself) is in a relationship with the archetypal Self (Higher Self/Soul) alongside relationships between self/Self and (an)other (person, thing), as well as with the divine Other (*theos*). Not only were these relationships and concepts explored in the alchemical art-making process but the reflexive aspect of making art this way also contributed to journal writings and dialogue following making the work in class. All of this contributed

to the conscious integration of new developments in the psyche for the students and me. Symbols and their meaning and the engagement with the aesthetics of the art-making all came into play as we explored and reflected on emergent content and processes that were at once deeply personal and universal.

My pedagogical approach includes modelling how I might be with a client through holding the space with a quality of therapeutic presence. I assist with and explain artistic and theoretical approaches to creative methods and the psychodynamics of the work where needed. I may engage very little in the art making (only providing materials, suggestions, and support) but on occasion will model the *artist as therapist* role (Moon, 2008) and the opportunity to reflect on the experience and the art. I include a person-centred approach (Rogers, 1993) that sees my role as a companion (checking in as we go), as a way to create the psychic container for the work (Naumberg, 1987). In order to form this kind of therapeutic relationship, a felt sense of safety and trust in the classroom and the clinical environment must be present. This approach allows for uninhibited freedom of play while creating a strong framework and psychological container for personal art inquiries and expressions.

Discussions about the field of art therapy, the contexts for the work in the community, the spectrum of the expressive arts continuum, and various theoretical approaches to the work all find their way into the weaving of the curriculum in an organic but intentional way. Working from readings, personal narratives, art experiences, reflections on the art product and process, extrapolations from clinical applications, and the integration of learnings are the core elements in my teaching.

The educational approach at St. Stephen's College has been to encourage integrative learning. A final integrative paper caps each course, wherein students share their personal experiences and reflections on their art and learnings while commenting on clinical applications (various populations, presentations of clients, cultural issues, gender issues, socio-economic issues, etc.) and theory.

A thematic focus and explicit intention on transformational art making and spirituality are also teased out, encouraging students to explore and articulate what it means to be spiritual and to work in a sensitive way with others' moral values and faith traditions. This aspect of pedagogy aligns with the theology coursework and parallels the kind of theological reflection method written about by Killen and de Beer (2011).

Students are encouraged to identify what is sacred in their lives and in their art. They are asked to be mindful of self-care and to model behaviours they would wish to promote. Great attention is paid to developing awareness and competencies that allow students to grow, becoming art therapists who can meet clients *where they are* (examining projections, transferences, and counter-transferences). This service includes honoring the ways their clients experience their respective spirituality. As part of their education, students engage in learning about multicultural issues, various client populations, social justice issues, class and racial issues, gender issues, local and global issues, and political and environmental issues. Various theological world views are considered in a classroom that supports respect for divergent opinion and diverse experiences.

Understanding human development across the lifespan, including spiritual development, has been central to how I have taught and practiced art therapy over these

past six years at St. Stephen's College. In addition to the classic psychology literature included in the program's [sic] other syllabi for in courses on the human lifespan, ethics, and counselling theory, skills, and practice, we challenge established concepts about what is normal or pathological and explore human development beyond the physical, psycho-social, and emotional developmental milestones framework. We include discussions about creativity, ableism, and spirituality as a determinant of health. There is an appreciation for the role trauma plays in development with a generational perspective as well as a personal one, which is particularly informed by the legacy of residential schools and Sixties Scoop in Canada (the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission).

I have encouraged students to reflect on the roles of spirit and religion in their lives, to make art about it, and to articulate, explore, and write about what they understand to be sacred about their work. I ask whether the studio can be a place for *temenos* (McNiff, 1992) a sacred sanctuary for creativity. I have taught students who are in St. Stephen's College's training programs [sic] as well as from other university faculties (education, social work, psychology, occupational therapy, fine arts, and recreation and leisure) who wish to learn about art therapy for their personal and professional development. To witness how each student, regardless of circumstance, discovers themselves to be a natural artist and potential art therapist when given the opportunity to discover, explore, play, engage, and demonstrate abilities throughout the courses has been a remarkable experience. Learning alongside my students about spirituality and creativity, making the conversation explicit, has affected my practice. As a result, I also am no longer shy about engaging in conversations about spirituality with clients, colleagues, and students and am deeply curious about the ways in which

spirituality manifests in their lives, art making, and being. I want to know about the ways that their spirituality sustains them and the roles that faith and hope play in their lives. I notice how many students, including myself, have become stronger during their studies and more resilient as their sense of self grows. This self-esteem includes a sense of themselves as creative spiritual beings who are part of something unique to themselves and connected to the *All.* They share their ways of knowing with each other and myself through their art, studies, research, writings, and practicum placements. The classroom may include opening prayers from various faith traditions, including drumming and smudging alongside the expressive arts.

Sharing current research and publications with students and encouraging them to do the same beyond specific assignments contributes to feeling connected to the global community of art therapists and expressive arts therapies. Studying how benchmarks for the profession and evaluations for competencies of clinical work are attended to, not only in this country but in the United States, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere is important. Noting commonalities and universal experiences is a part of teaching, alongside becoming aware of differing cultural paradigms that make working in diverse contexts challenging.

My art therapy work in Mexico and Thailand with clients and students and my art making have shown me how arts and culture can be experienced so differently in different cultures and often in a more integrated, holistic way than in our dominant western society. The arts are alive, alongside ritual and ceremony in these cultures. Notably, therapy is not as popular there as in the west where we may need therapy to play the role that religion has in the past. It has been argued that therapy's rise is concurrent

with secularization. However, the systems and interprofessional services we take for granted and have come to rely upon (health, judicial, educational, and social services) do not necessarily exist in the same way in other societies. Students are encouraged to challenge their assumptions about their and others' experiences.

Other Influences

As an art therapist, I also have drawn upon my formal art education from a four-year undergraduate degree in fine arts at York University (where I studied printmaking, painting, experimental directions, video, theatre, filmmaking, and photography), the Banff Centre for the Arts film studies at New York University, and a second bachelor's degree in journalism, which prepared me for documentary work. I apprenticed with and learned from "A" level Canadian artists including Vera Frenkel, Barbara Astman, and General Idea; worked in parallel art galleries and the established Art Gallery of Ontario; and produced arts programming for CBC, TVOntario, and Knowledge Network. In my arts management work, I promoted the work of leading Canadian and international directors, performance and video artists, choreographers, and musicians, as well as working for the galleries, symphonies, museums, theatres, and companies that supported their work.

I am informed not only from having been trained in a more traditional clinical art psychotherapy medical model (with Gilda Grossman at TATI) but also from my expressive arts training at Lesley University with instructors such as Karen Estrella and Mitchell Kossak, who in turn were mentored by Shaun McNiff, Mariagnese Cattaneo, Ellen and Stephen Levine, and Paolo Knill. These pioneers in the field have shaped the discourse for art therapy and expressive arts therapy education, practice, and scholarship.

The roots of our work are as ancient as the cave paintings, and yet I am aware of being among the first generation in a newly emerged field of interdisciplinary allied health. I also studied process work with David Roomy (who was mentored by psychotherapy pioneer Arnold Mindell) and took advanced graduate studies at the European Graduate School directly with Ellen and Stephen Levine and Paolo Knill in the community of expressive arts therapists there.

I see the many ways that our work as art therapists is complementary to and congruent with these approaches to expressive arts therapies work, and the ways in which art therapy is distinct as a specialization too. What these therapies have in common is the strong belief and conviction in the power of creativity and the arts to heal alongside the pleasures of aesthetic transpersonal experiences. The crossover between the specializations has increased, and I have brought an expressive arts therapy approach to my art therapy teaching and practice by including intermodal and multi-modal approaches with the creative work in the studio. I often tell my students of a spectrum on which the therapies line up—on one end is art as therapy and at the other end is the psychoanalytic approach to art therapy. Community art making, in which students increasingly find jobs upon graduation, tends to stay clear of the word *therapy* and the work that can be done at the psychoanalytic end of the spectrum. My training was rooted in this foundational psychology theory (Freud, Jung, Erikson, Winnicott, and Carl Rogers). Students and practitioners need to be aware of all these influences, even if they decide to work in a recreational therapy approach to the work, facilitating art making for general enjoyment and well-being. We also discuss spiritual and psychological growth as not always being pleasant, enjoyable, or a feel-good experience. We live in a western

culture that is quick to rescue from pain. Our therapy work sometimes involves the hard work of "becoming" that does not involve the quick fix, although single sessions are common. Not everyone is ready to do the hard work, let alone pay for it. Another research question could be: What is the cost, to self and society, of not doing the hard work of developing creatively and spiritually? What is the cost to self and society? Spiritual bypassing (Masters, 2010) of personal issues can happen early in the art therapy studio as elsewhere, and student practitioners need to become aware of their shortcuts and unwillingness to work through the growing pains of individuation.

Sometimes I share from my clinical experiences in teaching. I usually draw attention to how much my clients have taught me about their needs and how to best serve them as we co-created approaches to the work—exploring the improvisational play between therapist and client.

An Art History Context for Spiritually Informed Art Therapy

As my doctoral studies progressed, I realized that the broader framework for defining theology at St. Stephen's College was something that I also embraced as an artist and art therapist. At St. Stephen's College, the value was placed on exploring the difference, intersectionality, and interconnectedness of spirituality and theology. Especially relevant for our Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality was the freedom to explore our work as art therapists in community and as being of valid ministerial service.

Because of my personal history and relationship with organized religion, my atheist/humanist upbringing, and various diverse explorations in religion and art on my faith journey, I came to understand that my theology is closer to a theosophical

understanding of human experience. The great symbolist artists of the last century, such as Wassily Kandinsky, were drawn to the spiritual aspects of art. As such, they had a great deal to do with the early intellectual context, which in turn created the fertile ground out of which art therapy grew—a context rooted as much in creative expression as in theology.

The first paintings I ever saw in an art museum that riveted me to my core as an adult were the paintings of Sonia and Robert Delaunay. These artists were part of the theosophic movement in Europe at the start of the last century. They influenced and were influenced by a community of artists including the emerging Bauhaus. Robert Delaunay's use of "pure colour" (Düchting, 2015) seemed to communicate a power beyond and through the materials themselves. The Delaunays were influenced by and influenced their friends Chagall and Kandinsky, who in turn were influenced by the anthroposophical writings of Rudolf Steiner (later developed into the Waldorf education movement) and the new theosophical philosophy of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. The relational experience of the divine was at the core of inquiry into knowing, as opposed to the study of theology with its focus on the study of God and religious belief. Kandinsky reflected on the material world:

> This experience of the "hidden soul" of all things that we see with the unaided eye, through a microscope or through a telescope, I call "inner sight." This sight penetrated the hard shell, the "external" form, into the interior of things and lets us perceive the inner "pulsation" of things with all our senses." (as cited in Düchting, 2015, p. 80)

Kandinsky foreshadowed the work of expressive arts and art therapists who attend as much to the imaginal unseen realms as to the representational elements in the art process. Working with art therapy (with students in the classroom, in practice with others, and in one's art-making) in a way that allows for the spiritual qualities of the imaginal realms can be enchanting. The role of enchantment holds an important place in many indigenous and shamanic healing traditions (Casement & Tacey, 2006) and arguably in the work of Jungian psychoanalytic art therapy that I practice.

Spiritually Informed Art Therapy Education and Practice: Forming Theory

"Knowing through art is the emanation of meaning

through the process of creative expression."

—Shaun McNiff (as cited in Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 40)

Expressive arts therapies educator Shaun McNiff's contributions to expressive arts practice and my theoretical approach to art therapy are significant. I was heavily influenced by his writings (especially *Art Heals,* 2004 and *Art as Medicine*, 1992) during my graduate work at Lesley University, which he helped found, and at TATI. McNiff understood the ancient role of the shaman as a creative healer and the importance of ritual and artistic expressions in healing work. Creativity, play, and the arts in all their forms (expressive arts and expressive therapies) are integral to personal and spiritual development.

As I have brought resources into my teaching over these past six years, I have come to know other important art therapists and artists who embrace the transformative role that art can play when done as a form of self-discovery. The work of Anna Halprin (Gerber, 2016) and M. C. Richards (Kane-Lewis, 2003) also contributed profoundly to

my curriculum at the college and have greatly influenced me and my students as models of spiritually informed art therapy ministry. Through screenings of the films of their lives and work, we come to see women whose art has become inextricably woven with the purpose of their lives as a living inquiry into what it means to be human. Art therapist Pat Allen's writings have also played an important role in the curriculum through required readings and are much loved by students who are drawn to her open studio approach and the assertion that art is a way of knowing and a spiritual path (Allen, 1995, 2005). These pioneers knew each other and were in dialogue with each other about the work. Shaun McNiff calls his and their work a *therapy of the imagination* (McNiff, 1992), and they are exemplars as practitioners of this.

Deeply personal and archetypal transformation occurs in the alchemically charged sacred space, found in some art therapy experiences. What makes this possible? Are there preexisting and coexisting conditions that contribute to this phenomenon? What would it mean for art therapists, in their training and practice, to engage in their personal spiritual inquiries in ways that might better serve the needs of their clients?

The expressive arts therapies (various artistic modalities and intermodal use of the arts in and as therapy) and art therapy as a field have been shaped by pioneers and researcher/artist/teacher/practitioners such as Shaun McNiff, Paolo Knill, Stephen and Ellen Levine, Mitchell Kossak, Karen Estrella, Pat Allen, Cathy Malchiodi, and Bruce and Cathy Moon. In turn, their work has been built on the shoulders of earlier artists/healers/educators/therapists in the field and hugely influenced by psychology in the last century, particularly the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

However, the formation of the expressive arts therapies (and within that art therapy) as a field includes an understanding of the arts as inherently therapeutic apart from its psychological theoretical frameworks (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005). The creation of a postmodern framework for understanding *poeisis* puts play and creative imagination at the centre of the work of "therapeutic aesthetics" (Knill et al., 2005, p. 10) and builds on the work of Donald Winnicott (transitional space and objects), Carl Rogers (person-centred psychology), and Victor Turner (communitas, liminality, creativity, and anthropological ethnography).

Nurturing soul through art making is a piece of ministering and healing work that practitioners can embrace this as part of our deeply personal work with others and our care and healing of our planet. What are creativity's role and art's role in developing and experiencing spirituality? How is spirituality present in creativity and art making? How is the relationship between spirituality and art making a factor in healing? Art therapists need to consider these central questions when approaching art making in a psychotherapeutic way with our clients. Why is this important? Spiritual development and psychological development are closely linked (Sperry, 2012). For art therapists who are interested in supporting clients in their individuation and healing process, understanding a holistic approach to their work is a key concept.

Art therapy can address all aspects of the psycho-social, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human experience. How do we nourish the soul? Art making as an aesthetic experience can be soul-making and primal (Maclagan, 2001). It can also provide a vehicle for an encounter with the divine. The possibilities of engaging in interfaith dialogue through the arts are just beginning in our field (Linesch, 2017), and the

need for more is great. Experiencing our profound inner and outer relatedness to nature and our environment is another form of spiritually informed art therapy, whereby eco-psychotherapy is an emergent branch of the same psychotherapy tree that seeks to honour the interrelationships of all living things in contact with the animated earth (Macy, 2016). In art therapy, the domains can coexist and even merge.

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, a Sufi and Jungian associated with the eco-psychology movement, described how necessary nourishment of the soul is in order to promote a healthy relationship between the sacred and psyche. He referred to Carl Jung as having been a Gnostic who held a deep respect for the role of the spiritual at the core of being. The shadow side of the evolution of consciousness, Vaughan-Lee (2012) argued, is the indulgence of ego and self-gratification—the toxic result we see in our society of material consumerism. In order to not bypass the necessary psychological work needed on the spiritual path (Masters, 2010), Vaughan-Lee testified to what all Jungians know: without the hard, personal work of depth psychotherapy, the spiritual can intoxicate and render one dangerously unbalanced and ungrounded (Vaughan-Lee, 2012).

Art therapy is well suited for the exploration of spiritual issues and existential conflicts when words are not yet available; of course, we include verbal expression and reflection alongside art making as well. Wherever barriers to communication exist, art therapy can be a catalyst for expression. A tacit understanding among art therapy students, art therapy teachers, clinical supervisors, and practitioners alike is that something sacred is involved in the process of making art that is reflexive and intentionally includes self-knowing and investigation, healing, and transformation.

Trauma is an area well served by non-verbal psychotherapeutic methods that address the spiritual needs of clients (Mate, 2009) and the expressive modalities (Malchiodi, 2008). In my experience, depression and anxiety are also greatly helped through the expressive therapies (including, of course, art therapy) and most of my personal client base has sought my support because of their experiences with these. At the root of these conditions and states often lies a spiritual emergency (psycho-spiritual crisis) or existential crisis, which depth psychologists have sought to find a larger framework than psychiatry to help attend to the crisis on a psychosomatic level of healing (Assiagioli, 1989; Grof, 1975; Wilber, 2000). Art therapy can help illuminate themes related to clients' internal spiritual conflicts in the safe, nurturing, and liminal space of play and discovery. The sacredness of creative expression holds the potential for resolution of these profound aspects of human well-being.

A spiritual crisis often accompanies and even underlies many diagnoses of psychiatric disorders and mental illness. Although the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*-4; American Psychiatric Press, 1994) created a new category for spiritual or religious problems and emergencies, one is left wondering about those who are atheists and suffer existential dilemmas. What can spirituality mean for the non-religious, and how can this crisis be addressed? The *DSM*-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) was expected to look into the nature of spiritual emergencies in order to gain further insight that would assist in diagnosing crises of a psycho-spiritual nature. MacIsaac (2014) wrote about this in her article for *The Epoch Times* stating, "Spiritual emergencies are spiritual emergence experiences that

have become crises. It is in the cases of emergency that people are most likely to be branded mentally ill" (para. 7).

> In terms of care, spirituality offers a sense of purpose and of hope. It encourages forgiveness and reconciliation as vehicles for moving a person from brokenness to wholeness. Spirituality broadens how we understand healing but thereby expands their experience of healing. It introduces the power of love … and helps people to understand suffering as paradoxically both a painful experience and a way to human growth. (Sheldrake, 2012, p. 87)

Whether a strong faith or religious tradition is or is not owned, I have witnessed art therapy students and clients explore and express their world views, inherited values, faith, beliefs, traditions, hopes, and experiences and reflect those accordingly. In the absence of a religious or spiritual framework (for those of us raised as atheists, agnostics or simply without a faith tradition), art therapy can help identify and discover the scaffolding of a spiritually informed, soul-making framework that can sustain and support such issues and their explorations. This was the case for me, and I used the opportunity of this doctorate to do arts-based, exploratory research to examine what spirituality looked like to me.

Abraham Maslow's contribution to transpersonal psychology supported the contention that "the spiritual life [is] a defining characteristic of human nature" (as cited in Horovitz, 2002, p. 21). I too have been sustained by the honing of the authentic self through the individuation process, as described in Jungian writings. This has primarily taken place for me in the art therapy studio as well as in the Jungian analysts' office. Catherine Moon described various spiritual aspects of art therapy and the art-making

experience with her clients (as cited in Farrelly-Hansen, 2001). Her faith statement predicates the work she does. She holds the belief that the client and herself as a therapist

> will be ultimately sustained by the act of creating out of the raw material of life as it presents itself…. In the sharing of our brokenness and in daring to imagine the hope within us we are a eucharistic community, open to encountering the living presence of God, of Mystery, or a power greater than ourselves within and among us. (Moon, 2001, p. 42)

The act of creating art from raw materials and transforming them in a kind of spiritual alchemy relates to this psychological model of transcendence. In itself, creating art provides an evocative metaphor. This form of art therapy allows for a therapeutic process of self-actualization that is of the baser materials (the issues and pain brought to sessions) while pointing beyond them to resolutions welded in the numinous mystery of the creative act. Philip Sheldrake, in speaking about art and spirituality, could just as easily have spoken about art therapy when he stated that "creating works of art embraces both a philosophy of life and a form of spiritual practice … exposure to the various arts rather than a formal religion is a particularly potent source of intense, transformative experience" (2012, p. 53). For many, art making is a spiritual practice. For art therapists, work with their clients can include ways to find explicit spiritual self-expression (and allow for reflection) as well as being inherently contemplative, enlightening, ecstatic, aesthetic, transcendental, and transformational.

Art therapists work with diverse populations and with various approaches and methods that range from assessments to interventions and treatment plans. These approaches can address behavioural, cognitive, psychological, emotional, spiritual, social,

and physical challenges. The idea of spiritually informed art therapy suggests a quality of engagement on the part of the therapist and client in their therapeutic relationship. It also applies to the ephemeral qualities and material aesthetic content of the art-based experience for transformative purposes. Bernie Marek explained that

> healing occurs when we are attentive, absorbed involved and in tune with our experience and the world inside and around us. We have to put healing into a transpersonal context, into the spiritual, knowing that all dis-ease is ultimately a spiritual concern. (as cited in Farrelly-Hansen, 2001, p. 58)

Art making as a soul-making enterprise has its roots in millennia-old sacred, primitive rituals and later religious expressions. Art's function in the secular world has moved away from a purpose connected to religiosity in at least the past century. In many ways, artists have endured their separation from spiritual content as a result of the polemical nature of the commercial art world, which so often defines their worth.

Healing has historically included ritual and embodied wisdom, in contrast with current western medicine practices informed by the Cartesian mind-body split.

> In cultures all over the world ... the body itself was seen as animated, ensouled. Thus it was never possible to treat the body in isolation from the soul—that is to say, separately from the sphere of meaning and value which the notion of psyche implies. (Levine, 2005, p. 17)

Art therapy is a profession that has grown from foundations rooted in the western medical model while being informed by therapeutic aesthetics and ancient, soul-embodied roots. Some healthcare practitioners sense a paradigm shift now underway in the medical and scientific fields that seeks to address the limitations on knowledge

generation through quantitative scientific methods toward a more holistic healthcare paradigm—one in which spirituality is increasingly understood to be an integral part of a "whole" view of what it is to be a healthy human. It can be argued that most, if not all, psychological problems are, at their root, spiritual problems—symptoms of disconnection from our deeper nature. Conventional psychotherapy rarely addresses this disconnect from our being that is the root of all emotional distress. Spiritual practices, on the other hand, often bypass, and thus fail to transform, the conditioned patterns and unconscious patterns and unconscious identities that arise from one's personal history (Welwood, n.d.).

Spiritually informed art therapists are well positioned to work in this holistic healthcare paradigm. Art therapists bring unique perspectives and competencies to the challenging work of mental health care by being rooted in symbol, meaning-making, risk-taking, play, aesthetics, reflection, imagination, and invention. Where spirituality is respected as a core determinant of health, healthcare that addresses this dimension is more comfortably supported. In such cases, art therapists whose practices are spiritually informed and view their work as not only rehabilitative but also transformational will find compatibility within interdisciplinary teams and be regarded with professional respect and recognition.

Art Therapy Spiritual Assessments

Art therapist Ellen Horovitz looked at clients' and art therapists' belief and faith systems and offered spiritual art therapy as "a route for exploration, ministry, and perhaps health" (2002, p. 8). Her "Belief Art Therapy Assessment" tool offers ways for art therapists to work with a theological perspective, thanks to knowing the clients' religious

and spiritual frameworks. However, the assessment did not look at ways to engage the client through spiritually informed therapeutic art making.

As part of my pilot project for my DMin studies and inspired by what I learned in my course "Spiritual Assessment in the Promotion of Health" (INTD577) with Drs. Margaret Clark and Joanne Olson, I tried my hand at creating a simple arts-based spiritual assessment tool that could be applied in hospitals during in-patient intake (see Appendix B). I wondered what would it mean for all patients and clients to be given an arts-based assessment that included inquiring not only about their faith and spiritual direction needs but also their likes and dislikes for music, poetry, literature, movement, drama, and art. What transformation of health provider systems and services might we see as a result of having this kind of information invited into the client file at intake? I considered doing research on the effectiveness of such a tool. I decided instead to engage with the larger contextual theory questions posed herein. But the drafting of this tool helped me understand better what links might be necessary in a practice to help open conversation and therapeutic relationships around spirituality and spiritually informed art therapy. I soon realized that I was compelled and deeply challenged to study and reflect upon spiritually informed art therapy education and professional formation as an evolving theory-based exploration in my studies. This inquiry could not be contained by one project but rather a series of investigations (research projects).

Spiritual Alchemy, Art, and the Transpersonal

"Your calling is your psyche's first nourishment."

—James Hillman (1997, p. 283)

The potential of transformative art making as a soul-making project is a key concept to this work. Without engaging the soul, healing cannot begin (McNiff, 2004). Art therapy is one path available for bringing soul-making and art-making together, and it can serve this profoundly sacred relationship for the larger population as well as for those who seek healing. The idea that art making, in a psychotherapeutic context, entails a kind of spiritual alchemy holds great potency. The process of making art is *trans-formative* and can provide aesthetic evidence that is congruently aligned with the individuation process itself.

The existence of a transcendent function of the psyche (central to Jung's core concept of psychological growth and individuation; Miller, 2004), implies that the role of transformation is necessary and there must be a means to it. Philosophers, psychologists, and theologians meet on this point. The issue of transcendence, the role of courage and hope in the face of anxiety, and the uncertainty of non-being have interdisciplinary intersectionality (Tillich, 1980). Ingerman explained on her blog, *Medicine for the Earth*:

> Alchemists did not actually change lead into gold. The practice of alchemy was about changing lead consciousness into gold light consciousness. As we begin to change our consciousness and get in touch with the illumination and divine light inside of us we can effect great changes in our outer world. It is who we become that changes the world not what we do. (2013, para. 25)

My autoethnographic, arts-based story of becoming an art therapist, an art therapy teacher, and an arts-based researcher led me to understand how central spiritual aspects have been to these experiences. "True spirituality … is a vast fire of liberation and

exquisitely fitting crucible and sanctuary providing both heat and light for the healing and awakening we need" (Masters, 2010, p. 3).

During my earlier training in art therapy, I was able to finally find a place to create, revelling in the primal energy of its inherent power to heal and reveal. My practicum placements allowed me entry into previously inaccessible, secured places like residential treatment programmes and psychiatric units, where I could see for myself the ravages of mental illness and offer support to the souls suffering therein. Many of those first clients expressed a receptivity to art therapy experiences that was stunning. Their stories were utterly compelling, moving and at times, even life-changing for us both. They provided the material for the narrative inquiry methodology of my master's thesis. I, like others before me, learned that clients (and students), like our children, are among our greatest teachers.

During my DMin studies, when I asked myself what my spirituality looked like through my art, I was surprised by the feminine aspects: the receptive outstretched arms; the cross-shaped, vessel tree branching out in embrace from a seed-like base; life-giving womb and breasts; nature's rhythms in lines; and the lunar head (see *My Spirituality Is Female*; Chapter 4). What is revealed in art making and created through art therapy is so often both profoundly personal and archetypal. In the universal realm is the sacredness of the particular and the eternal. I understand now that my hunger during much of my life was spiritual. This revelation also called and compelled me to work with others whose voices also needed to be heard and souls nurtured.

I began to identify and name the dark and light elements (animus and shadow) that have been at play in the discourse of my life: spiritual, psychological, and theological

in nature. What I had been missing growing up and in my young adulthood was a spiritual framework for my development and formation.

Compelled by a maternal drive to help children as well as nurturing my inner child, my mid-to-late 30s were a threshold for personal explorations through art therapy studies. In art therapy studies, I was promised a marriage of art and psychology; in turn, this amalgam was the psychic container for so much of this existential questioning that had plagued me. I was able to explore and express in a safe and nurtured way that honoured the sanctity of the creative experience.

This inner wedding (Woodman, 1990) found a way to be psychically supported. On the heels of my graduation (MA in Expressive Therapies at Lesley University in 1997) and the eve of turning 40, I opened myself to the idea of becoming a solo parent. I became pregnant and then gave birth (Parker, 2015a) and raised my daughter on my own. As I write, she is 20 and I am 20 years older too, having just turned 60. It is serendipitous and coincidental too that my doctoral work is culminating toward a new threshold of graduation ahead of me: I have entered menopause, my daughter is less dependent on me, and I am leaving St. Stephen's College to accept a full-time, core faculty position as assistant professor in Expressive Arts Therapy, in the Division of Expressive Therapies in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences at my alma mater, Lesley University.

Working as an art therapist and art therapy educator, supporting others in the discovery of this soul-making alchemy, is something to which I have been called. In both my professional work and my doctoral work, I have found meaning and the means to articulate the latent grace that has been present and operative all along.

Art Therapy and Spirituality

Culliford (2011) posited that spirituality, different from religion, points to a liberal theology based more on experience and practice, rather than beliefs. This aspect of a transcendental spirituality at play in art therapy practice is what enables a client to awaken to the potential dormant within. I have been privileged to witness over and over again the effects of this creative transformational experience. Spirituality can become an empowering and psychologically dynamic act of personal, interpersonal, and community liberation. At its core is the radical experience of authenticity.

Where in the body is spiritual reflection experienced? Pargament (2007) explained how the emotional experience of the sacred is what sustains spirituality. Art therapist Elinor Ulman (Rubin, 2010) asserted that art is the meeting ground for the inner and outer world, the locus of play and possibility where healing takes root. In reference to Ulman, Judith Rubin described the sensory and spiritual pleasures of art making underlying Ulman's statement that art is "a momentary sample of living at its best" (as cited in Rubin, 2010, p. 91). Art making for personal transcendence and as a sacrament can be as transformative as prayer (Moon, 2001).

In our professional and personal formation as art therapists, we learn of the relationship between our experience of a healing crisis and the choice to work as a healer. Pioneering psychologist William James (2002) and theologian Henri Nouwen (1992) both addressed spirituality in their philosophies, in ways that continue to have importance for those seeking spiritually informed art therapy practices. In order to do the inner work of healing, the healer is required to go through recovery from their wounds. This core principle of the Jungian archetype of the wounded healer is found in theology as well.

Henri Nouwen wrote that "nothing can be written about ministry without a deeper understanding of the ways in which the minister can make his own wounds available as a source of healing" (1979, p. xvi).

Jungian psychiatrist Lionel Corbett described how in primitive societies, future shamans would go through a period, alone or mentored, wherein they would develop insights into the meaning of their illnesses and the nature of spiritual reality. "His or her personality would be permanently transformed by the experience, which in retrospect was seen to be a prolonged spiritual crisis that acted as an initiation into a healing vocation" (Corbett, 2011, p. 5).

As art therapists, our calling to this work has much to do with our personal healing journey. Art is a spiritual practice (Allen, 2005) that supports this personal psychological and deep knowing work of soul-making. "We have barely scratched the surface of what is possible through art for our spiritual health, especially since society is going through such a painful period, hopefully, one of transition" (Rubin, 2010, p. 90).

Soul-based psychotherapy, popularized by Thomas Moore (1998), has its roots in the works of Jung (1933, 1964) and Hillman (1997). The hard work of making the unconscious conscious is well suited to the playful domain of art therapy. The transpersonal and transcendent aspects of our work align well with their concepts of spirituality and the engagement with the divine.

"Spirituality, then, is experiential, existential, and touches the inner core of each human being, where he or she most truly lives" (Barnum, 2011, p. 3). In teaching art therapy (art psychotherapy), it is important to guide art therapy students into this understanding of self (as with one's clients) through their experienced encounters with

conscious and reflective art making. This supports the deep nurturing of their need to know themselves better and thus prepares them, in their formation as therapists, to support others who seek to explore the experience of humanness. On transformative learning, Edmund O'Sullivan states:

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (2003, p. 326)

Jack Mezirow's work in the area of transformative learning theory has a place in the discussion of spiritually informed art therapy theory, practice, and education. His theory "emphasizes critical reflection on assumptions and changing behaviours as a result of a disorienting dilemma" (O'Sullivan, 2003, p. 327).

Expressive arts therapies pioneer and educator Paolo Knill included this disorientation in his de-centring method, referred to in detailing the architecture of a session (Knill et al., 2005). By engaging in art (often expressive arts therapist and client are full co-participants in creation) in such a way as to *de-centre* the client from the presenting problem, new insights are gained. Perspective, resulting from engagement in artistic creative play and reflection, allows for an experience of transformed awareness.

In many tribal cultures, a serious preceding health crisis (disorienting dilemma) is an essential requirement of becoming a healer or shaman.

When I studied with the Levines and Knill at the European Graduate School in my post-master's studies, I experienced the way that shifting from distinct physical areas (of creative space to talking space) in the room also contributed to a feeling of liminality. Much learning happens in these in-between spaces. Reflecting further on the theory of transformative learning, Elizabeth Tisdell stated that "the metaphor of 'in-between-ness' is an important spiritual metaphor … a glimpse of the wholeness and interconnectedness of all things … that seems to pull us into spirit" (2003, p. 260).

Art therapy, as I taught it at the college, was an opportunity for transformative learning through creative artistic engagement with deeply personal and spiritual issues related to the students' formational development. In these ways, we explored how we reconnected spirituality and learning through art making, which became the healing vehicle for *knowing.*

Toward a Theory of Spiritually Informed Art Therapy

Art psychotherapy is a profession that integrates arts-based practice with psychotherapy. Sessions involve both individual and group work, predicated on a relationship between the client(s)/patient(s) and the professional art therapist and mediated through art making.

My eclectic theoretical approach (Parker, as cited in Fehlner, 2002) to teaching and clinical work has been influenced by many of my expressive arts therapy instructors and my training at TATI in spontaneous art therapy methods and at Lesley University in Expressive Therapies. Spontaneous art therapy approach integrates psychoanalytic

traditions alongside an appreciation for the imagery of the unconscious psyche. In addition, courses in counselling and psychology theory, time in the studio, and of course, clinical supervision sessions related to practicum field placements were included. The influence of the expressive art training supported dialoguing with the image (McNiff, 1992, 1998, 2004), working with ritual, and the use of other expressive modalities. Journaling, writing, and reflecting on the experiences were always a part of these learning and clinical practices.

Much of the literature on spiritual aspects of art therapy work takes the form of a guide (Allen, 2005; McNiff, 1998; Paintner, 2011) or uses methods of narrative inquiry and case study work (Estrella & Forinash, 2007; Farelly-Hansen 2001; Malchiodi, 2008; Robbins, 2000; Wadeson, 2016). The formational influences of art therapy on the spiritual development of clients and practitioners have not been adequately explored. This subject could be an appropriate post-doctoral research project following this dissertation, although it is hinted at in the inclusion of students' writings about their experiences in class in chapter 6 of this research. Considerations from the literature that look at the development and promotion of spiritual competencies among clinical counselors (Vieten & Scammell, 2015) also need to be integrated into any theory of spiritually informed art therapy.

Contemporary theologian and artist Christine Paintner (2007) described three dimensions of spirituality as relevant to artistic expression. The search for meaning in life and the cultivation of a relationship with mystery and transformation are core aspects of transpersonal work. If these dimensions are at the root of creative expression, it follows that their role in art therapy must also be central and fundamental. Of these three

dimensions, I would suggest that an approach to a theory of spiritually informed art therapy would accommodate and include all three of these dimensions and that they would be practiced in different ways, depending on the client's and therapist's aesthetics, aptitudes, and presenting interests and challenges.

Search for Meaning in Life

I know from my training that it was through art therapy experiences in the training studio at TATI and Lesley University that my peers and I could explore and pursue questions and perspectives of an existential nature. Whether a client presents with a spiritual emergency, an existential concern, or possibly anxiety and depression related to these concerns, I have noticed over the years of varied clinical work with various populations that inevitably the client's thoughts, ideas, and explorations about the meaning of life do emerge for exploration, expression, and reflection. This has also borne itself to also be true as I have witnessed the formational development of art therapy students at St. Stephen's College.

Cultivation of a Relationship to Mystery

The art-making process itself has something of the magical in it; it is a shape-shifting experience. With every gesture and manipulation, the art object changes and is transformed. The artwork—inherently holding qualities of light, colour, texture, and form—points to associations beyond itself. This experience of creating involves a relationship with the unknown and an intrinsic and necessary faith that artistic resolution will happen. In the "spontaneous" art therapy approach in which I was trained, the unconscious is activated and at play, bringing material up for conscious recognition. This is how mystery is animated in an art therapy session.

Transformation

Both object and creator (and dare I say art therapist as well) are changed in the process of art therapy. The relationships are reciprocal. With the support of the art therapist, clients engage in various psycho-dynamic relationships simultaneously: with themselves, the therapist, the art materials, the art process, creativity, reflections, feelings, associations, in significant relationships with others, and with what they understand to be the divine.

The sacred and transcendental aspects of working with art materials have to do with the stuff of matter and psyche. Transpersonal psychotherapy, which includes the experience of handling and manipulating matter, can include an appreciation for the inherent power of aesthetics. In so doing, the artist/art therapy student/client brings conscious awareness to the creative expression where matter and spirit are connected, and soul-making is at work.

Further Reflections on the Connection between Spirituality and Creativity

"Spirituality is often central to clients' personal ontology,

meaning it may be the essence of their personhood."

—David Hodge & Crystal Holtrop (2018, p. 167)

Neuroscientists and psychologists like Gary Wenk, Ph.D. (2010) are exploring where and how religiosity is located in the brain. The degree to which spirituality is embraced in our lives, as art therapists, students, and clients is related to deeply personal world views and choices. Spirituality is a factor in the sacred work we do as art therapists, and it is at play in each of our respective formations as individuals. Making this explicit and evident is part of the pedagogical challenge and experience in the art

therapy programmes at St. Stephen's College. More can be done to point to the intersectionality in the literature between the disciplines of theology, psychology, education, counselling, spiritual care, and allied health care, and the expressive therapies at the college and in the field of art therapy itself.

Lionel Corbett argued that spiritual forces are at work in our psyches that are still unknown to Western psychology. "Once one realizes they are present," he says, "one practices psychotherapy with a spiritual sensibility" (2011, p. 292). Corbett explained:

> At least in the Jungian tradition, psychotherapy is thought to take place within the larger field of consciousness of the transpersonal Self, which affects the outcome of the work. In that tradition, our psychology cannot be radically separated from our spirituality, because the human personality has an archetypal or spiritual foundation as well as its developmental and human aspects. Accordingly, the therapist may simultaneously work psychologically and spiritually. (2011, p. 4)

Definitions of spirit and soul may also differ among theologians and practitioners. Not all art therapists or psychotherapists speak of their work as soul-making, spiritually informed, or sacred. For those who do, however, there is an invitation to attend to the process with a quality of presence, with attention to dimensions and movements of the psyche at work in a session. Thomas Moore described the difference between spirit and soul as follows:

> Spirit yearns for meaning, transcendence, and fullness. It asks for dedication to life and mystical connection with all that is above and beyond us. Soul, on the other hand, is our ordinary life of deep connections, emotions, thoughts, and

> important attachments. Both soul and spirit need our attention. We are at our best when they work closely together. (2013, p. 28)

In my work with clients, even among the most diverse of presentations, a common experience is felt, seen, supported, and reflected upon wherein something new is being birthed in creation. This experience is deeply personal and archetypal at the same time; the experience is of the client's making while also being universal. This is when, in an art therapy session, one senses a kind of alchemy of a spiritual nature occurring, through which a deeply felt awareness is beheld.

Alongside the strong, recent interest in arts-based research practice (Leavy, 2017), spiritually informed practice and art therapy are also contributing to a paradigm shift in approaches to human development in the fields of mental health and education.
I think this is why I saw more and more graduate students and faculty taking my "Introduction to Art Therapy" class from the departments of Education, Counselling Psychology and Physical Education (Leisure and Recreation).

When we, as art therapists and art psychotherapists, attend to the spiritual dimensions of being, we creatively and holistically support our students' and clients' learning, development, and growth. In so doing, they come to understand how creativity is transformational and central to experiencing our potential as humans. To become fully human is the greatest task of our lifetime (Maslow, 1965), facilitated by the creative healing methods of spiritually informed art therapy. This work, at its core, contains paradoxes of dis-ease and wholeness, sickness and health and is potentially deeply revolutionary and thus even political. We are all artists and authors of our work and lives, and in this realization, we come to embrace the power of our personal authority.

Art therapists must attend to their personal development spiritually and soulfully if we are to support others in a way that opens them to explore the mysteries and challenges of psyche and soul. The ability to be authentic and thereby serve others by fostering meaningful artistic expression is integral to transformative art therapy work. The ability to be truly present and provide authentic hospitality, safety, and nurturance within the liminal space of creation is what permits transformation and healing. Being authentic a fundamental, spiritually informed practice.

Working on art-making by one's self may also afford the artist/client art therapist/ art therapy student with moments of insight, clarity, awakening, liminal experiences, opportunities to reflect, and so forth. Art therapy is different from solitary (perhaps art therapy-informed), reflective art making because of the absence of the art therapist. Although it may indeed be therapeutic, the studio work art therapy students do in the classroom is a hybrid of studio art practice and art therapy because it involves learning about art therapy while not being in individual art therapy sessions. Students are engaging with art making for personal and professional growth and healing. However, these qualities of experience are the same as those the spiritually informed art therapist seeks to cultivate in spiritually informed art therapy students—experiences that they can become conscious of as part of their formation processes.

Cross-pollination with the Expressive Therapies

The schema of the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC) helps practitioners and art therapy students to understand aspects of expressive therapies work in relation to creativity and how art therapy supports the development of the client. The ETC (Hinz, 2009) includes three levels of dynamics along a continuum: kinesthetic/sensory,

perceptual/affective, and cognitive/symbolic. The major pioneers of art therapy, including Florence Cane, Margaret Naumberg, Edith Kramer, Janie Rhyne, Elinor Ullman, Mala Betensky, and Rita Simon, theorized about the ways in which art therapy functioned for the purposes of assessment and treatment, and this could be seen in reference to placements on the ETC schema (Lusebrink, Martinsone, & Dzilna-Silova, 2013). Each pioneer referred to how these certain aspects on the ETC might relate to spiritual development. For example, on the cognitive/symbolic level, “the creative transition area between the cognitive and symbolic poles encompasses intuitive problem solving, images of self-discovery and spiritual insight” (Lusebrink et al., 2013, p. 78).

While specific aspects of the ETC can be seen as intersecting with spiritual development and expression, art therapy itself works with all three areas on the ETC (movement, emotion, and thought) and has an integrative function. This integrative capability promotes optimal learning and offers potential into spiritual awakening (Cane, 1951; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970).

The ETC allows for diverse and eclectic theoretical approaches to art therapy—"art as therapy, psychodynamic concepts of symbolic expression of unconscious material and sublimation through the creative process; the phenomenological approach of phenomenological intuition in the choice of material used, expression, perception of the work created and its analysis” (Lusebrink et al., 2013, p. 84). The gestalt art therapy approach, for example, embraces the role of sensorimotor experience and perception as embodied aesthetic experiences and knowledge, which can “enhance a person’s full appreciation of the present moment” (Lusebrink et al., 2013, p. 79).

The advances in neuroscience demonstrate how sensory modalities of perception affect the development of neuropathways in the brain. These modalities are related closely to how "images in their input and output processes use the same pathways and areas in the brain" (Lusebrink et al., 2013, p. 81). This lays the groundwork for theorizing on the interconnectedness of artistic development, spiritual development, psychological development, and perceptual awareness.

When looking at art therapy, we are therefore looking at a creative modality that is developmentally integrative by nature. Spiritually oriented approaches to art therapy might, therefore, include considerations of all ETC aspects (sensorimotor, kinesthetic, perceptual, affective, cognitive, and symbolic). In so doing, spiritually informed art therapy practice is one that promotes spiritual development and spiritual integration. In order to do so, the art therapist herself is required to undergo a transformative process that develops these competencies in order to identify, assess, and supportively foster them in others for the purposes of holistic development and restorative healing.

The approach to art therapy journal writing that I introduce students to in my introductory course and use in every studio session is one that I developed further from the way I was taught. The four steps parallel Mala Betensky's (1995) phases of a phenomenological approach to the looking at their work. The formal artistic properties related to the phenomenological approach are also related to the perceptual level of ETC, while the kinesthetic/sensory aspects are engaged in free play with art materials explorations, serving to disinhibit and allow for pleasure, felt emotions, trust, and relationship. The later steps of meaning-making relate to the cognitive/symbolic aspects of the ETC.

I ask students to journal immediately after doing their art in class and reserve 10 minutes or so for it, before sharing with others. These notes can serve as the basis of their final integrative papers for the course as well as their reflections on their artwork and processes as related to the literature and their formation. The journaling format includes:

1. What did you do (formal use of the materials)? What do you see (phenomenological approach/artistic elements of form and composition)? Identify any symbols.
2. How did you feel as you were working (changes in bodily sensations, emotions, and somatic aspects of the work)? This may also include something about the aesthetic experience.
3. What were the associations you had as you worked? Where did your thoughts lead you?
4. What reflections do you have about the work and how it might relate to your presenting question, issue, or need? (This serves as an integrative process and sometimes comes later).

The ETC is a valuable framework for clinicians and students to refer to in their practice. In itself, the ETC is not about spirituality but the schema can be adapted for assessing how clients engage with art-making in ways that can tell us more about their spiritual development and even promote it. A post-doctoral project related to taking the ETC and applying it specifically to spiritual development would be an important contribution to an emerging theory of a spiritually informed art therapy (expressive therapies) as well.

Spiritually Sensitive Healthcare

The nursing profession (Stevens Barnum, 2011) and psychology (Pargament, 2007) have posited concrete examples of how those professions might integrate spiritual competencies into practice. Transpersonal psychology (Grof, 1975; Welwood, 2000) has been applied to engaging in the task of transformational development as it intersects with consciousness. Art therapy can certainly benefit from being informed by these contributions in the theoretical approach to this work, which has the potential to be experienced as sacred, transformational, consciousness awakening, imbued with spiritual meaning, and phenomenologically alchemical.

Ken Wilber's (2000) contributions to describing the interdisciplinary scope that informs transpersonal psychology are helpful to understanding its foundational theoretical mix drawing from psychology, art education, creativity, religion, consciousness studies, and spirituality. These same elements influence my theoretical approach to spiritually informed art therapy. However, in responding to Wilber's theories of transpersonal psychology and after decades of research into non-ordinary states of consciousness, transpersonal psychiatrist Stanislav Grof is convinced "of the limitations and relativity of all models and theoretical constructs … Reality is clearly much more complex than any of the theories that we make about it" (1996, p. 19).

As I engaged in my living inquiry into spiritually informed art therapy, I needed to make a project of this theoretical scope of interdisciplinary and intersecting literature. I realized this dissertation would not be comprehensive nor completely representational of that formative journey. However, I also discovered that in speaking about spiritually informed art therapy, we are also considering spiritual orientations and spiritual

frameworks of development and growth (Helminiak, 1987; Pargament, 2007) and spiritual integration on the part of the practitioner's, client's, or student's personal and professional formation. Sperry (2003, 2012) offered helpful multidimensional models of spirituality, as related to psychology, toward theories of moral and spiritual development.

We can do art therapy-related work in the art therapy training classroom even if the students will not become art therapy professionals but may be interested in integrating this approach to therapeutic art-making and creative expression in their lives and allied professions (such as education, healthcare, spiritual direction, counselling, social service, and community-building work). Recently, an interest has been shown in exploring the spiritual aspects of psychotherapy guided by a "tripartite model of multicultural competency—attitudes, knowledge, skills—to consider the theoretical, empirical, and practical foundation that supports existing spiritual competencies and work with clients' spirituality" (Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013, p. 315).

Spiritually Informed Art Therapy Education: Other Models

As a Buddhist-informed educational institution, Naropa University in Colorado is known for its studies in contemplation, mindfulness practice, meditation, and transpersonal psychologies. The university's emphasis on somatic knowing through the body invites students to use their bodies and ground themselves in inner knowing:

> Training future art therapists demands a thorough understanding of current social and professional trends and where they may be leading. A sincere educational balance must be struck between the investigation of art, psyche, and culture during the training process. However, before one can fully comprehend future

> trends, self-assessment and the awareness it fosters are of primary importance. (Franklin et al., 2000, p. 103)

At Naropa University, the emphasis is placed on the importance of spiritual discipline among the faculty and students, with spiritual practice being a required part of the curriculum.

St. Stephen's College, by contrast, does not ask its students to follow a spiritual practice. Rather, students are encouraged to explore and engage in spiritual inquiry and spiritual reflection, participate in their own and others' faith traditions, indigenous ritual ceremony, and self-care in a variety of diverse ways, which are explored and shared in classes. Multifaith and personal interpretations of faith, belief, and spirituality are emphasized, and students are encouraged to develop these in their own ways and through their studies throughout their training. St. Stephen's College shares with Naropa the following approach:

> [We] work to include the transpersonal in our definition of art therapy. It is our goal as faculty members to help students appreciate their inherent wisdom ... The subjects of God and/or Spirit often come up in this atmosphere and are appreciated for their numinous guidance … The practice of creating art can hold the same vast properties and experiences as the transpersonal perspective. Art materials and the studio teach us to let go to mix mind with space, to allow images to move, like the breath, without judgement. By attending to both the internal and external experiences of both therapist and client, while holding the awareness that there is something greater containing the therapeutic moment, students and faculty learn to accept the challenge of ambivalence, panic, and

> emptiness. This greater container is the transpersonal viewpoint that embraces the perspective of world wisdom traditions. (Franklin et al., 2000, p.108)

St. Stephen's College requires personal therapy to be undertaken for self-care and for modelling the therapeutic relationship. Alongside clinical supervision, personal therapy is also helpful for examining the psychodynamic issues of transference and counter-transference, and aspects of projection that surface and are at play during the practicum sessions with clients. In addition, students have many opportunities to explore and discuss different ways of exploring contemplative practice, meditation, mindfulness, and faith; these methods often involve the creative arts. Art therapy students are introduced to yoga breathing practices, *lecto divina*, poetry, music, movement, and nature-assisted ritual in their art therapy studio classes as well as in their theology and counselling coursework. Integrative papers serve to allow for reflection on theory, readings, discussion, creative expression, and lived experience wherein spirituality can be developed and developed.

Art therapy practicum work with varied populations requires an understanding of trauma-informed care. Socio-political contexts affecting oppression, diverse lived experiences, and different contexts of survival must also be included in the formation of therapists (i.e., generational trauma; refugee experiences; and racial, gender, and sexual bias). One cannot separate the goals of therapy (not only helping our clients to grow, develop, and even adapt but also supporting their empowerment) from the experiences of our clients who come to therapy seeking recovery from the realities and effects of oppression. In fact, the educational enterprise itself is one of emancipation, in which the art therapy student discovers the limits of an unchallenged world view and explores the

ways in which true knowing and human consciousness can be experienced. The aims of true higher education (*educarte*) are to inform, investigate, integrate, and synthesize (Freire, 2000). “Man’s ontological vocation ... is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively” (Schaull, as cited in Freire, 2000, p. 32).

It is not only spiritual practice that can foster and develop clinical art therapy competencies. It is the art itself, the attunement to its dynamics, forms, aesthetics, and principles that can foster spirituality through self-awareness and the intimacy of relational play. “By tuning into my sensory experience, I am actively engaging an embodied intelligence” (Kossak, 2015, p. 7).

Art therapy approaches that promote awareness, flow, attunement, self-discovery, and presence would be well suited for application and integration in mindfulness studies, which are increasing in popularity at educational institutions. “Educators and mental health professionals now teach contemplative practice in ‘non-religious forms’ that can be used as a resource for resilience by agnostics and atheists, as well as by people with a spiritual or religious worldview” (Kass, 2019, para. 3). Jared Kass, a professor of both undergraduate and graduate studies at Lesley University, has applied the principles of Carl Rogers’ person-centred, humanistic psychology to higher education. His findings show how “in the last three decades, the fields of psychology, medicine, and education have begun to recognize that an integrative psychospiritual approach to human development can contribute to well-being and maturation” (2019, para 3).

Expressive therapies courses at Lesley University have been teaching how to work through various artistic modalities (art therapy, music therapy, dance therapy, and

drama therapy) and inter-modally (expressive therapies) as a pioneer of the field for decades. Most of the major expressive therapies literature (Knill et al., 2005; Levine & Levine, 1999; Malchiodi, 2005; McNiff, 2004) springs from the educational philosophy of this transformational work being sacred and integrally tied to embodied, relational, and transcendent ways of knowing. "In many of the transpersonal theories, embodied intelligence is seen as the basis of creating a unified or balanced experience that contributes to overall health and is the mean to experience attunement to self, others and the larger environment" (Kossak, 2015, p. 42).

Recent articles have been published in the *Journal of American Art Therapy Association* on art therapy and spirituality (Bell, 2011), the spirituality of art making and religious art (Linesch, 2014), as well as the evidence of art therapy having an influence on spiritual emergencies in patients' lives (pediatrics and art therapy; Koepfer, 2011). Theology schools like Australia's University of Divinity are accepting doctoral work on the arts and healing from art therapy researchers such as Libby Byrnes (2016). Arts-based research is expanding its contribution to research methodology and enjoys transdisciplinarity as well (Leavy, 2018).

The time is ripe for the establishment of a field of spiritually informed art therapy practice that acknowledges the formational milestones and competencies that promote well-rounded ethical practice. This doctoral work is a move in that direction by acknowledging the work that St. Stephen's College as a theology school has played and is playing in the education of spiritually informed art therapists in Canada.

The focus of this dissertation has been on my formation as a spiritually informed art therapist through art therapy and theology studies, research, art, clinical practice, and

teaching. Throughout this dissertation, I have woven in reflection and discussion points, as this study has also been a reflexive practice. It is a generative process as well and invites further study in variously related inquiries. Another dissertation-worthy research inquiry that could be a helpful contribution to the field would be to study aspects of spiritually informed art therapy pedagogy across our other coursework at the college in the following subject areas: special topics in art therapy (loss and grief, children, and adolescents), theories, art therapy studio training groups, issues of professional practice and interventions in art therapy, theological reflection in professional practice, introduction to psychotherapy and spirituality, and spiritually informed developmental psychology, to name a few.

More art therapy research and published literature is needed on the spiritually informed aspects of our work for applied work in these environments (from clinical competencies to explorations of the ways to engage with art process and product, and human and community development) and on art making's potential as "a form of spiritual practice" (Moon, 2008, p. 33). The context in which art therapy practicum and educational training takes place (the art therapy training studio, private practice, K–12 classrooms, public clinics, churches, community centres, hospitals, social service and mental health service agencies, community-based agencies, diverse cultural milieus, etc.) were also all factors to consider when examining the depth, breadth, and potential applications for spiritually informed art therapy practice and theory.

With this spiritually informed art therapy training experience, art therapists can become curious and develop confidence regarding integrating spiritual practices into their work where appropriate. These approaches may include meditative and contemplative

practice, shamanic teachings, play, prayer, liturgical expressions, ritual, and ceremony, and other ways to contribute to soul-making, transpersonal development, and increased consciousness.

In addition, art therapists can ask themselves how research and literature from other professions and areas of scholarship (spiritual direction, theology, spiritually informed nursing, and psychotherapy) can contribute to the development of this field. A shift is occurring in some corners of western medicine, away from pathologizing to understanding the spiritual imperatives at the root of some illnesses and symptoms. This shift can also serve to complement our efforts in advocating for our work. Dr. Gabor Mate (2009) is one such Canadian physician, working in addiction, who understands soul loss (Moore, 1998) and spiritual hunger at the root of afflictions like an addiction. He positioned the experience of trauma at the core of addiction. A practice of art therapy that is spiritually informed in the ways explored in his paper would be able to serve this clinical population well in its ability to support healing at these various levels of loss and trauma. Spiritually informed art therapists can offer a particular quality of therapeutic presence, a special kind of listening and attending to, a rich and *thick* aesthetic and creative engagement, and a safe, nonjudgmental, non-reductive, therapeutic liminal holding space for creation, reflection, and transformation. These spaces can combine in such a way to be receptive to the meanings of psychological difficulties within a broad transcendent context (Shafranske & Sperry, 2005).

Cautionary Notes: Some Further Thoughts

The liberation of self is not for the faint of heart even under the most conducive of circumstances. Liberation involves hard work and personal transformation toward

individuation—a slow, lifelong process. Liberation also takes into consideration or requires reflection upon one's relationships with self and others on the level of particular circumstances (family and friends, society school, work, environment, government, and culture) as well as on the metaphysical level (divinity and universal). The spiritually informed art therapy student and practitioner should also become aware of (a) developmental theories and how Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Berk, 2018) can also be integrated into their clinical practice and formational development as a therapist and (b) an understanding of social justice criticism (Freire, 2000) that takes in to account the powers at play in a person's life affecting their freedom to create and express themselves authentically. When we work with an individual, we are also working with his or her family, and social, cultural, political, faith, economic, and educational systems.

Art therapy's and the expressive therapies' deep connections to social justice work and social action (Watkins & Shulman, 2008) require, as in personal therapy, both preparedness for this work as well as a readiness for change in the affected climate in order to be transformative. Not everyone is ready, and the work is not for everyone, as my first art theory teacher Gilda Grossman used to remind me. As Natalie Rogers (1993) contended in her person-centred creative therapy work, the therapist must gauge the needs of the client and not impose an agenda but trust that the process itself is transformative (McNiff, 1986, 1998).

Chapter 3

Assessing Spirituality as a Starting Point

"Spirituality is recognized as a factor that contributes to health
in many persons. The concept of spirituality is found in all
cultures and societies. It is expressed in an individual's search
for ultimate meaning through participation in religion and/or belief
in God, family, naturalism, rationalism, humanism, and the arts.
All of these factors can influence how patients and
health care professionals perceive health and illness
and how they interact with one another."
—Association of American Medical Colleges (1999, p. 25)

Spiritual Care and Art Therapy: More on Assessments

Spiritual care recognizes and responds to the spiritual needs of the client in a variety of ways that compare to definitions of ministry. "The HOPE concepts are H—sources of hope, strength, comfort, meaning, peace, love, and connection; O—the role of organized religion for the patient; P—personal spirituality and practices; E—effects of medical care and end-of-life decisions" (Anandarajah & Hight, 2001, p. 81).

Anandarajah and Hight (2001) wrote about the connection between spirituality and medicine using the HOPE tool to assess a patient's spirituality and its possible role in the medical encounter. The HOPE questions are intended as an assessment tool; however, they could provide an extremely helpful framework for identifying spiritual needs that art therapy clients bring to sessions, from which a course of treatment plans can be designed. In specialized spiritual care and medicine, those identified spiritual needs could be served

in a variety of ways by including adjunctive services for the client/patient through a spiritually informed art therapist.

Art therapy can borrow some of the means of spiritual pulse-taking offered by those in the medical care field, using spiritual assessment tools. LaRocca-Pitts (2012) outlined several tools that include a spiritual history. An interesting assessment tool using art therapy has been offered by Horovitz (2002), in which clients depict and explain their images of God and what those images mean to them.

By identifying a client's belief system (Horovitz, 2002), a spiritually informed art therapist can help guide the client in examining how one's beliefs may affect one's ability to cope and function with life's challenges and losses. The ability to bring the spiritual dimension of a client's life into relief, when appropriate in an art therapy treatment plan, can provide clinicians with information that affects both assessment and treatment.

Feen-Calligan's (1996) review of Horovitz's (now Horovitz-Darby) book concluded that a strong case can be made for supporting the spiritual care of a patient as a legitimate part of healthcare for art therapists. However, Feen-Calligan joined many art therapy practitioners in identifying a stumbling block with the word *assessment* itself. Feen-Calligan noted that the word assessment conjures up the words *reliability* and *validity* as well, asking how one can be assured that drawing "what God means to you" adequately reflects a belief system. In fact, the efficacy of assessments, in general, is hotly debated among art therapists as it relates to their work (Betts, 2006).

When a clinician asks questions that go beyond the definitions of religion and traditional belief systems, a dialogue about spiritual health can be opened and explored.

Art therapists are well suited to this because of the nature of the art therapeutic relationship and their ability to work with ambiguity in the creative process.

Common to art therapy in general is the welcoming of mystery and a high tolerance for chaos—both the destructive and constructive aspects of the creative act (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001). "The urge to create is understood as a bodily instinct, and the art process and product are respected as sources of truth and wisdom" (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001, p. 24). Art and spirituality go together. So too do art therapy, spirituality, and health. Pat B. Allen stated, "The goal of art as a spiritual path is to live a meaningful life, full of active participation with our own hands, minds, and hearts, and appreciation of the joy and pleasure and depth of soul that is possible" (2005, p. 59).

As a client/patient/art therapy student participates in intentional creation, restorative play, and art-making, he or she becomes empowered in a deeply personal and individual way. The results of this activity can be understood as an increase in the client's sense of purpose, self-esteem, self-confidence, and identity formation. I have witnessed throughout my teaching and clinical practice the ways in which a client begins to discover—through his or her arts-based research and exploration—his or her own ways to create, deconstruct, construct, conjoin, separate, explore, and provide narratives. Upon reflecting on the artwork and experiencing psychotherapeutic insights, the client is able to consciously identify content and metaphors in the artwork that have meaning and applicability to one's life. Allen shared from her personal process:

> Art making is my way of bringing soul back into my life. Soul is the place where the messiness of life is tolerated where feelings animate the narration of life,

> where story exists. Soul is the place where I am replenished and can experience both gardens and graveyards. Art is my way of knowing who I am. (1995, ix)

Gantt critiqued the application of art-based assessments, as used by psychologists, as antithetical to art and art making:

> The whole idea that there could be valuable diagnostic or psychological information in art came from the observations of spontaneous art done by residents of European mental hospitals. When projective drawings were first developed, they were severed from the art-making process. This led to imprecise concepts and, as I see it, resulted in a lack of attention to the actual drawings. (2004, p. 22)

However, what a spiritual assessment that is tailored for use by art therapists can do is of a different nature completely. Instead of attempting to serve as a diagnostic tool, it can assist in identifying themes and needs of a spiritual nature. By doing so, a conversation can be opened that an art therapist and client can explore verbally and through art making in the art therapy sessions.

The connection between an individual's developmental process toward individuation and their maturation as an artist (developing confidence in artistic practice) may also hold parallels to spiritual developmental stages. "Grounded in the understanding that spirituality is the essence of who we are as human beings, we believe that healing is essentially a spiritual process that attends to the wholeness of a person" (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 25). It is all sacred territory. Over-analysis and diagnosis through imagery can deaden the work (process and product) itself as well as its inherent benefits, removing the magic and mystery which are transcendental and transpersonal.

Assessing the spiritual health of our clients helps the art therapist identify areas that need development and encouragement, resulting in treatment plans that can also address issues of trust, hope, and coping skills as well as the resiliency factors required for healing. Cathy Malchiodi wrote of the powerful role art therapy can play in building resilience and addressing trauma. “The ability to create requires trust and flexibility. The act of creation itself counters the powerlessness caused by traumatic loss” (Malchiodi, 2008, p. 91). Coping and resilience are enhanced in the creative process through expression, exploration, and catharsis within the structure of a supportive therapeutic relationship and the structure of the media (Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2005). In this regard, art therapy is a conduit for spiritual healing. Spiritual care is arguably the domain not only of chaplains, nurses, and spiritual care directors but also of all who attend to psychic dis-ease.

Art therapists often find themselves working as mental health clinicians within the medical model. In psychiatry, clinicians are guided by the *DSM*. In the *DSM-4,* disorders that are religious and spiritual problems were addressed:

> This category can be used when the focus of clinical attention is a religious or spiritual problem. Examples include distressing experiences that involve loss or questioning of faith, problems associated with conversion to a new faith, or questioning of spiritual values which may not necessarily be related to an organized church or institution. (American Psychiatric Press, 1994, p. V62.89)

Yet, rarely is the discussion of spiritual care part of the assessment or treatment plan in psychiatric care. When art therapists are invited to work on psychiatric units with those

under the care of a psychiatrist, an opportunity exists to attend to the spiritual care of clients through art therapy and informal or formal spiritual assessments.

Maslow's theory of self-actualization incorporates the spiritual life as "a defining characteristic of human nature" (Horovitz, 2002, p. 21). Does it not follow that art therapists, indeed all psychotherapists, would benefit from attending to the spiritual aspects of their clients' lives? Ellen Horovitz's (1994) "Belief Art Therapy Assessment" aimed to do this. The directive invites the client to do a brief notation of one's spiritual/religious history and then to draw her or his image of God. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I created a template for a spiritual assessment that could be used by staff or art therapists (see Appendix B) as an effort to learn about a client's/patient's spiritual history, needs, themes, and concerns.

Therapeutic Presence

> "Often the things that are the most sacred are the most simple and ordinary.
> When this ordinariness is framed in subtle, time-honored ways,
> it becomes extraordinary and maintains its spiritual usefulness."
>
> —Martin Prechtel (2004, n.p.)

Cultivating therapeutic presence is key to successful transpersonal art psychotherapy work. For art therapists, self-knowledge and personal development are critically important for effective and ethical work with clients. Therapeutic presence has only recently been addressed in general psychology literature and indicates the importance of it for effective therapy (Haley, 2014). Art therapists can learn from spiritually informed therapists and spiritual care practitioners who offer a ministry of presence (Holm, 2009) and have considered these competencies.

In art therapy and expressive therapies literature, the word *witness* is often used for the role of the therapist, whose stance is neither interpretive nor judgmental as a therapeutic presence (Allen, 1995; Rogers, 1993). Expressive therapist Natalie Rogers's father Carl Rogers made a core contribution to the concept of therapeutic presence in psychology. It included basic conditions of empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard (Geller & Greenberg, 2012).

My colleague Norbert Krumins, in the theology department of St. Stephen's College, also worked on his doctorate (Krumins, 2018) during my time there. He adapted the concepts of arts-based inquiry and aspects of the newly emerged research methodology that is a/r/tography to his work in mindfulness. In a process paralleled with mine, he explored the intersectionality of arts and theology and found that multiple methods of inquiry were needed. Through the lens of theology, he also discovered how important the role of witness and presence are to supporting the phenomenon of liminal space that generates transformation. Krumins described his research as "an interdisciplinary, literature-based project, [that] employed a/r/tography (artist/researcher/teacher) as its overarching methodology" (Krumins, ii, 2018).

Invoking spirit and creating a safe space for it to work its magic in the studio and classroom can happen in many ways. Starting class sessions with prayer, meditation, or the lighting of a candle are often an introduction to the work, as well as a group check-in about mood, needs, and the processing of material as it pertains to the course, as well as addressing housekeeping considerations related to the physical space.

Students' art therapy experiences in the studio during my course have helped them explore aspects of character and competencies that contribute to fostering

therapeutic presence and are supported by arts-based work. These competencies include but are not limited to (a) explorations of the student's experiences of consciousness, awareness, and the mystical; (b) the ability to listen and pay attention; (c) sensory perceptions; (d) the ability to play; (e) the abilities to give and to receive, be empathetic, be reflective, and articulate; (f) developing authenticity, genuineness, and transparency; (g) being open to trusting the process; (h) the willingness to explore unconventional ways of knowing, including embodied wisdom and non-academic knowledge; (i) the discovery of ways of being and relationships to self, others, nature, and the divine; and (j) trusting their intuitive self.

> The power of great art to purge us—to release us, for a moment from the jungle-melancholy of hungering, frightened, or drearily bored humankind—is derived from its transcendence of the usual biological emotions. Released from fear and appetite and fascinated by a game, we lose our egocentric emphasis and discover—suddenly. With an emotion of joy, we can participate in a spirit of free and charming geniality with others—neither on their terms nor on our own—but in terms of a new and disinterested harmonization. Moreover, just as this delicious spirit of play is that is most human in the animals, so is it precisely what is most godlike in man. (Campbell, 2017, p. 43)

Chapter 4

Arts-based Projects and Writings

The doctoral enterprise at the college involved coursework, research projects, and a dissertation. It was important that my investigations around the research question be arts-based and related to art therapy theory and practice. As outlined in earlier chapters, I addressed the emerging development of my formation as a spiritually informed art therapist/teacher/researcher and wrote about those aspects of my life and work in a reflective way. The art therapy journaling was an equally important part of the development of a reflexive practice; the journaling related to both my artistry and the conceptualizing of a spiritually informed art therapy pedagogy. This chapter is illustrated by those arts-based explorations with journal excerpts. Over the extended period of time of this research, my art went from addressing my spiritual frameworks to understanding how my spiritual formation was affecting my artistic practice. Near the end of my writing, I experienced a concussion. I discovered how the art I needed to do to recover was inherently spiritual and reparative. In turn, more experiences and questions arose related to the dynamic relationships between spiritual experience, creativity, healing, and the brain.

Chapter 5 includes additional examples of autoethnographic journaling related to my life journey and doctoral explorations. Chapter 6 includes exemplars of students' writings and art from their first introductory course, alongside my commentary and reflections on their work. We were in a parallel process of formation as teacher and students. Through these three chapters, the reader will see how some of the earlier

reflections on literature and theory, coupled with the desire to synthesize transdisciplinary inquiry, were served and supported by arts-based experiences in the studio.

What does Spiritually Informed Art Therapy Look Like? What Does My Spirituality Look Like?

I needed a way to visualize the relationships and interconnections I was conceptualizing between these transdisciplinary orientations, methods, and practices. Each of these areas is covered in one or more chapters of this dissertation and was explored in one or more research projects in this doctoral study. Some examples of my creative work at the beginning of this inquiry are mentioned and/or included in this section.

Creative writing. The first integrative seminar for the doctorate asked us to look at encounters with the divine in our lives. I wrote a poem about the ecstatic moment of birthing my daughter. “Split Open,” written in 2012, was published afterward (Parker, 2015a). This poem was the first piece I ever wrote about my life in spiritual terms.

Digital imagery. Regarding *Emergence* (2012), I wrote in my journal: “So many years later, as I approach my crone years and my daughter becomes a woman, I shapeshift through the generations. Identities are intermingled: attachment and independence. Looking at my identity formation through arts-based work” (see Figure 3).

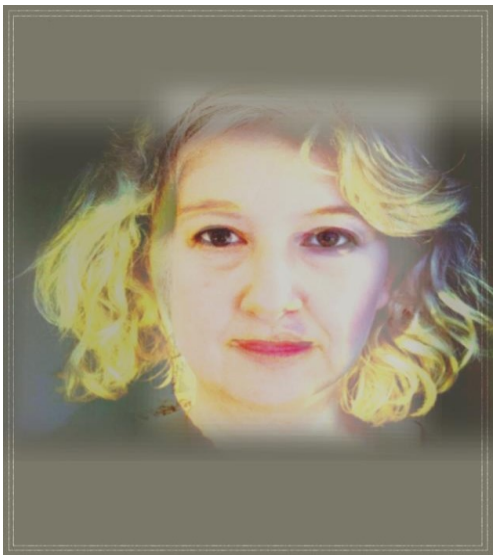

Figure 3. Emergence. Ara Parker, 2012, digital photograph.

Collage and mixed media. *Ancient Birth* (2012) was an early exploration of elements of aesthetics that invoke spirituality: the play between process and product and matter and spirit (see Figure 4).

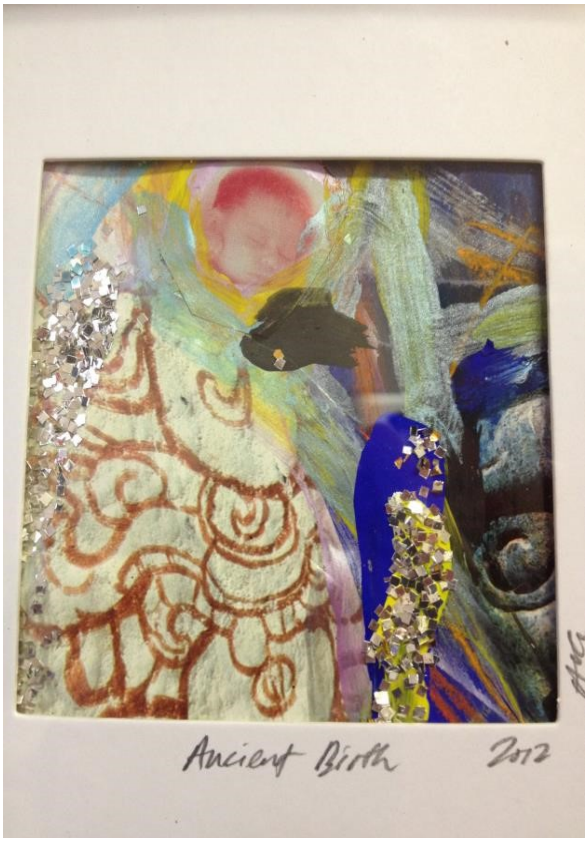

Figure 4. Ancient Birth. Ara Parker, 2012, collage, mixed media.

Icon writing. I was curious about the history of the arts and theology. I wanted to know more about religious art and what could be learned from it for this inquiry. The use of egg tempera and gold leaf of *Archangel with the Golden Hair* (2013) was employed in an exploration into the connections between religion and art. I discovered icon writing as an art practice intended to be contemplative as well as an encounter with the sacred. This understanding was influenced by an icon writing workshop with Marianna Savaryn (see Figure 5).

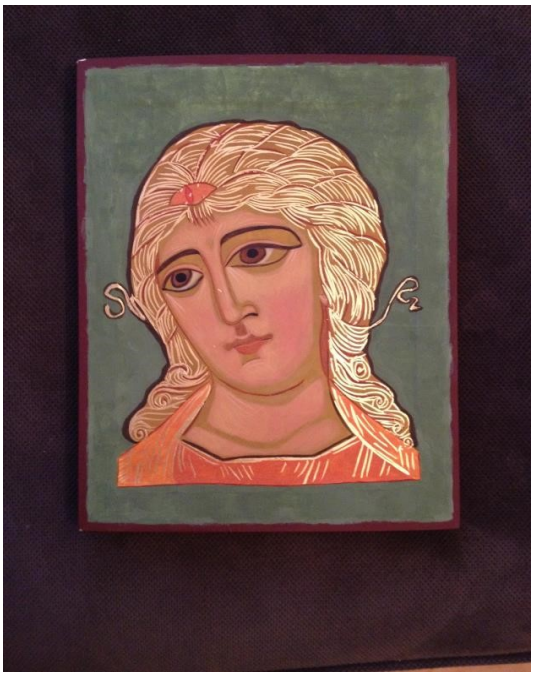

Figure 5. Archangel with the Golden Hair. Ara Parker, 2013, egg tempera paints.

Collage and mixed media. *Spiritual Life Map* (2013) includes Judaism, Christianity, an Indigenous medicine wheel, a mandala, alchemy—a bit of everything (see Figure 6). *The Star of David and the Egg* (2013, see Figure 7) is a close-up of *Spiritual Life Map*; their common elements can be seen. Mexican influences and the Black Madonna are incorporated in *Guadalupe* (2014; see Figure 8).

Figure 6. Spiritual Life Map. Ara Parker, 2013, collage, mixed media.

Figure 7. The Star of David and the Egg. Ara Parker, 2013, close-up, mixed media.

Figure 8. Guadalupe. Ara Parker, 2014, mixed media.

Acrylics and pastels. In *My Spirituality is Female* (2014), nature, goddess, and lunar elements emerged (see Figure 9).

Acrylics and collage. What would my (non-art therapy) art look like now? I wasn't thinking about how I would use art in therapy to express or investigate but rather, I wondered what would happen if I gave myself the freedom to discover what *my* art would look like as a result of these inquiries to date. *There Came a Great Freedom* (2015) was the result. It felt sophisticated, expressive, and surprisingly political—inspirited (see Figure 10).

Figure 9. My Spirituality Is Female. Ara Parker, 2014, acrylic paint and pastel.

Figure 10. There Came a Great Freedom. Ara Parker, 2015, collage, mixed media.

Research Project: Notes on the Art Therapy Journal for Students

The discovery of my approach to engaging students and would-be therapists in the reflective process in the art therapy studio over the course of my doctoral studies was exciting. I developed a process of art therapy journaling that moved from phenomenological observations about a process, art product, and aesthetics to writing about the somatic and emotional experiences of making the art through psychoanalytic associations and reflections. Spiritual themes, symbols, reflections, associations, and experiences were captured as well when possible. I became aware that reflecting on the teaching of this process of reviewing and reflecting on the artwork was, in itself, a significant aspect of my research.

This work evolved from the spontaneous art therapy approaches and theories of my training in 1994 with Gilda Grossman at the TATI. (Grossman had been a student of Dr. Martin Fischer, a Freudian Viennese psychiatrist who is credited with bringing art therapy to Canada and establishing TATI.) The art therapy journal is a reflective process in which I ask students to participate after each series of artworks and each directive in the studio unfolds. This process helps distance the student or client from the art-making's subjective experience. The process also prepares the participant for sharing with the larger group and can form content for their reflective assignments.

The first directive is to journal about the question, what did I *do* and what do I *see*? This phenomenological approach is non-interpretive and reports on the sequence of events and processes used. The journaling is a form of data collection. Second, the students write a response to the question, how did I *feel* when I was doing what I did? This reflection allows for a capturing of body-felt sensations, somatic and emotional

experiences, and embodied knowledge related to making and experiencing the artwork at each stage. Third, the students respond to the question, what *associations* did I have as I was working or reflecting on the work? The answers may include some dialoguing with the image (McNiff, 2004), artistic responses (Knill et al., 2005), thoughts, memories, and ideas associated with the imagery as it unfolded. Finally, if there is a readiness for it, the question is asked, what reflections or meanings might be related to the work at this time?

After sharing the work with another student or the group, the students may have more material to record their journals or a desire to make more art. The integrative process continues over time. Synthesis of the experience takes longer and is helped by the practice of writing the integrative paper two months after the course is finished. This part of the acquisition of clinical art therapy skills for students prepares them to more objectively share their work and look at others' works in a way that promotes a reflexive practice. As the instructor, I am modelling their future role as a clinical art therapist as well: holding the creative, physical, and therapeutic space for them to safely explore in confidence.

Students are asked to take five to fifteen minutes (it never seems enough, and students are delighted to discover how much is opened psychically by these processes) after each series of art-making sessions to do this journaling, photographic recording, documentation of the work, naming of each work with a spontaneous title, dating, signing, and the numbering of each work. In this way, the students/clients begin to create their case histories based on their work, preparing them with preliminary skills related to writing clinical progress notes and case conceptualization later in practice. They become aware of their formative evolution over the course of the classes. Students are encouraged

to review these notes daily during the course and have them to refer to when they are writing their papers. These final integrative papers (see Chapter 6) ask the students to reflect on and cite their readings and comment on the themes and processes of their artwork, their reflections, their art therapy journaling, and class exchanges in a way that incorporates the creative and artistic process alongside spiritual reflections (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Art therapy journaling. Students reflecting in the art therapy studio at St. Stephen's College. Photo by Ara Parker.

Tempera paint and chalk pastels

San Miguel (2016) and *Students at Work in Studio* (2016) demonstrate artwork done with tempera paint and chalk pastels. Bruce Moon (2008) wrote about the value of working alongside clients; I had rarely chosen to do so previously in my clinical or teaching practice. However, the group's spirit and the studio environment presented a

clear invitation to participate and play during the 2016 intensive in Mexico (see Figures 12 & 13).

Figure 12. San Miguel. Ara Parker, 2016, tempera paint and chalk pastel details.

Figure 13. Students at Work in Studio. Instituto Allende, Mexico. Photo by Ara Parker, 2016.

Research Project: Graphic Mapping

I spent a great deal of time thinking about the various literature I was reviewing on spiritually integrated and spiritually informed care from various allied professions—including occupational therapy, nursing, spiritual care, transpersonal psychology, Jungian psychology, spiritual wisdom traditions, and the arts and the expressive therapies—and how they might inform the development of a theory of spiritually informed art therapy education and clinical practice. I needed a way to visualize the relationships and interconnections I was conceptualizing between these transdisciplinary orientations, methods, and practices. Each of these areas is covered in one or more chapters of this dissertation and was explored in one or more research projects in this doctoral study. In order to help conceptualize these relationships, I decided to make a research project of mapping this out. *Toward the Development of a Theory of Spiritually Informed Art Therapy* (2017–2018) is my representation of this integration (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Toward the Development of a Theory of Spiritually Informed Art Therapy. Ara Parker, 2017–2018, graphic map.

Chapter 5

Research Project: The Art Therapist/ Researcher/Teacher Journals

"We are trying to create a world in the imagination from which to draw
the kinds of experiences we need in order to realize our possibilities."

— Deena Metzger (1992, p. 206)

More on Method, the Journals, and the Art

I taught art therapy journaling in the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course as a skill-building, reflective practice for the formation and development of clinical skills for use with clients. This distinct kind of journaling is described above.

Including my journaling work was important to these a/r/tographic reflections, which is different from the art therapy journaling, although it is informed by that practice. Reflective journaling's narrative form is well-suited to autoethnographic storytelling while reflecting on art therapy theory. This journaling related to and contributed to my formation as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher.

I used my journaling here as a form of reflexive, diaristic storytelling that would keep the process of writing about my formation and the formation of my students alive and dynamic, rather than a documentation of artifacts. That the form of this dissertation included an honouring of creative play, which is at the heart of the expressive therapies, was important to me. This dissertation is not entirely arts-based in its form. However, through creating and sharing journals as story, by including my art and reflections, by telling the story of my becoming a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/ teacher, I hoped to shape and shift the dissertation, where possible, to echo the kind of liminal creative experience suggested by a spiritually informed art therapy practice.

The Journals

> "Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged."
>
> —Jalal ad-Din Rumi (n.d.)

Journal, April 2017: Looking for a spiritual framework. In my twenties, after completing my bachelor of fine arts and bachelor of journalism degrees and working in the art world of Toronto, my trip to post-revolutionary Nicaragua, and my short employment at CTV National News, I was in an existential crisis. I decide not to pursue a career as a professional artist. The photo-based work I had done felt too private for the marketplace (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Portrait Series. Ara Parker, 1980.

I was anxious, depressed, angst-ridden, angry, confused, ambitious, under-challenged, afraid, vulnerable, conflicted—and 25. I sought a counselor who was the only

one who identified my personal struggles as stemming from a lack of a spiritual framework. She offered to take me to a Buddhist meeting, and I went, although I didn't feel at home in starting this practice as I witnessed it. I was not ready for the liturgical chanting, and it did not meet my spiritual hunger at that time. She was right, though—I became a seeker and had many profound experiences with various teachers (sacred and profane) as a result. For a time, I adopted certain explorations as scaffolding for my development through these passages.

However, for many years and throughout this doctoral work, I have sought the spiritual framework that I needed. This counselor was the first mental health professional I encountered who suspected that a spiritual matter was at the heart of my distress.

I had entered the profession of art therapy, starting my training in 1994 at the age of 36. Perhaps it was also my maternal drive (I had not yet become a mother) that called me to work more directly with children. Or perhaps it was because of that long-ago seeded impression.

When I was just four or five years old, my Sunday school (a socially progressive Yiddish school in Toronto) took my class to see a children's art exhibition at the Jewish Community Center. I remember looking at the beautiful art made by children my age on the exhibition walls. Some depicted beautiful flowers, drawn with coloured pencils. I wished I could draw as well. Other drawings depicted different scenes of children playing. One or two images stood out for the beauty that was there, and some simply looked like children's drawings from any time and place. But these drawings were not from just any time, place, or children. This art, I was told at the time, was made by children of the Holocaust, in the concentration camps.

The children who did these beautiful, life-affirming drawings did not survive the camps.

I could not stop thinking about these children, and what these death camps must have been like. At such a young age, I could not embrace the concept of a concentration camp, and why Jewish children would have been killed. I have carried this with me throughout my whole life. I suspect I experienced a kind of vicarious trauma in this encounter. I am now certain that this childhood introduction to art and death was deeply formational, both personally and professionally.

For most of my life, I did not outwardly identify as being Jewish. I was a child of a mixed marriage: a marriage that brought a Jewish man and a Catholic woman together in a post-World War II wedded ideal of humanism. Neither parent was religious, and both were affected by their views of the virtues of scientific reason, which doubted everything until proof was shown. My parents had a disdain for organized religion and the horrors it had historically inspired among peoples. They raised me to believe in the importance of fighting oppression and fascism everywhere and to value the ability to question. My father wanted me to have an appreciation for the dying Yiddish language and culture of his early home life.

I spent a great deal of my privileged youth watching nightly news broadcasts, alongside my parents, from the front lines of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam war, while going to bed with persistent, nightmarish thoughts about a possible Holocaust reoccurrence. I feared that if ever I could be at all identified as a Jew, it would be a death mark. Many people I encountered throughout my life guessed my background because of my mannerisms and perhaps the way I look. If your mother is not Jewish however, most

Jews will not identify you as such. The matter of my Jewishness, especially growing up in a predominately Jewish neighbourhood, certainly affected my identity formation and feelings of social inclusion and exclusion. My mother was from New York and although raised socialist from a Catholic background, she was also highly influenced by Jewish culture in her community. So long ago in the developing child-mind of this author, the concepts of art, innocent childhood, persecution, and annihilation because of religious identity all merged.

How ironic that so many years later, I would find myself employed by a theology college where I could actually tease out these elements, embrace spirituality and my personal identity in a safe environment, and begin to integrate them with my practice of art therapy and teaching art therapy. My path has been a long and rich journey through early childhood influences and university experiences, where I began to explore the arts for my personal development and then moved into professional arts management. What attracted me to art therapy was the desire to experience healing, loving, caring, and life-affirming relationships with myself and others through art making.

Looking back at some of that early art therapy artwork (*Body of Knowledge*; see Figure 16) I did alongside my training—sometimes in the art therapy studio among peers and with art therapy teachers, sometimes on my own (and taking them to Jungian analysis)—I can see the themes of spiritual identity coming through loud and clear. I was curious about the magical elements at play after reading McNiff (1992). Years later, I now see that I have been developing a creative framework to hold and contain my spiritual explorations and experiences through my art making. I have had a huge, compelling need and hunger for spiritual growth, and the art therapy studio nurtured it.

Figure 16. Body of Knowledge. Ara Parker, 1996.

So, what does it mean to do spiritually informed art therapy? What does it mean to teach spiritually informed art therapy? How do spiritually informed art therapy education and clinical practice serve spiritual development and integration?

The education at St. Stephens College prepares students, in their formation as art therapists, to be sensitive to the spiritual aspects of their clients' experiences as well as their own. I am a different art therapist than I was when I came to the college six years ago. I am not afraid of the conversations about spirituality and religion that my clients may want to have. I wait, listen, and look for the opening.

I am more comfortable now, as a result of these doctoral studies, in letting clients and students know and express how spirituality is important as a determinant of health alongside psycho-social-emotional-physical aspects of well-being.

When I first studied art therapy, it was because I felt called to go help children abroad; something about refugees and children in war-torn countries called to me. The war in Bosnia was happening, and I felt a kinship with the people through my mother's Yugoslav roots. To a certain degree, I was unconscious of that unprocessed, early childhood experience with the art of children who died in the Holocaust. Great trauma in the world causes the soul to ache. Although this dissertation is not about healing trauma through art therapy (and it can), the call to respond to those in need of healing due to trauma is inextricably linked to my work.

My entry into the field of art therapy certainly came from a place of calling. I did not have the language or framework to see it at the time as a spiritually inspired decision about a spiritually informed vocation but I now have that language to say it was and is so. The work of being an art therapist does not pay well, with few institutional or professional positions available in this country. The need is certainly great, but the profession still has a long way to go in terms of being integrated with healthcare and educational systems. One does the work because one is called to the work; the investment in the training is enormous.

I never did go overseas to work in Bosnia; the war, fortunately, ended around the time my training as an art therapist started. But the world has no dearth of trauma from war.

Ironically, the thing that had brought me into training as an art therapist in my 30s was the activity that awaited me upon my retirement from working at the college as I approached 60. I still wanted to have the experience of volunteering with a non-governmental organization to provide art therapy for children in need, such as Red Pencil International (RPI) was offering. Art therapy is very much my ministry and mission. As I finish this dissertation, I am working with Red Pencil in a three-step mission in Thailand, serving children of a Hmong tribal village. I learned the devastating story of their parents and grandparents being persecuted and chased through jungles, with horrific genocidal crimes being committed against them as they fled. Unfortunately, these people live in abject poverty, with little to no education, and experience high incidences of alcoholism, glue sniffing, and domestic and sexual abuse. In addition, severe parental neglect and abandonment exist, due to polygamy and step-parenting practices. Women and children suffer in this patriarchal culture.

One of the projects included in this dissertation is my involvement with this mission and my reflections on it as related to my formation as a spiritually oriented art therapist. Although Red Pencil is Christian-based and offers church services, they also attempt to be respectful of Hmong cultural and spiritual traditions. Hmong people practice a form of animism and shamanism.

What was remarkable to me upon my first visit with them in April 2017 was the evident beauty and resiliency shown through the art of the children. In fact, their art had so much in common with the art created by the children of the Holocaust that I had seen as a child. Their art included hopeful pictures and vibrant colours of flowers, butterflies,

dreams, and wishes. The Hmong children we served had reportedly experienced terrible neglect and sexual and physical abuse.

In many cases, these children exhibited healthy responses through their art and expressive play—perhaps a direct consequence of the care they were receiving in the shelter that provided safety, food, and care, alongside their resilience. Like children everywhere, these children expressed wishes and the desire for safety and love; their creative expressions of nature, goodwill, and friendships could be interpreted as reflections of the principles and values of a spiritually informed art therapy approach. Providing the safe container, therapeutically speaking, and nurturance and support contributed to the quality of presence that we seek to offer in spiritually informed art therapy.

By including imagery from their community's artistic traditions in art therapy directives, we endeavoured to be culturally and spiritually sensitive. Arguably, the spirit of resiliency, hope, and love in the children, as expressed through their art, is evidence of spiritually informed art therapy in practice.

When I returned to the college to teach the "Introduction to Art Therapy" course the following summer, my work was informed by this experience in Thailand. New questions and discussions arose as a result of this experience. I look forward to my next chapter of formation as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher at St. Stephen's College.

Journal, July 12, 2017: Third day of five-day intensive. (These journal entries represent my a/r/tographic reflective process during my final teaching session of PPSYC5841, "Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful-Spiritual Connection.")

Today is the third day of five-day intensive, my 10th session of "Introduction to Art Therapy" for St. Stephen's College and the last one during my dissertation. I wonder how these students will integrate the learning and inquiries of this week from the readings, discussions, and their time in the studio.

Seeing M. C. Richards in the documentary "The Fire Within" again yesterday as I screened it for the class, I am amazed at how I continue to draw such inspiration and deep pleasure from her presence on the screen: her celebration of living each moment, her explorations into the source through her art making, her theology of being and articulation of the crossing point, her life as art, her words for her students, her desire to be seen, touched, and held—and to do that for others in community.

I awake at 4:30 this morning, most rare for me. I feel the deadlines for dissertation looming closer and already begin to grieve that time is almost lost for the kind of the deep reading and engagement with others' writings on art, theology, spirituality, and psychology that I still want to do.

Oh, how perfect that one of my students in this class is a professor of arts-based research, curious about art therapy but more importantly, wanting time for his own process and creative nourishment. Who might have guessed this late registrant would be the one to fill out the enrolment of this intimate class of seven students, ranging in age from early 20s to 60s? What divine perfection that this student/scholar personally knows those who have written my methodology books: Rita Irwin, Patricia Leavy, and Carolyn Ellis. He defined himself half-jokingly to Rita Irwin as an a/r/tographer as he explained that for him "'A' stands for 'actor.'" I realize that we share a definition of self as a/r/tographer as I reflect on my formation throughout this doctoral journey, wherein my

"A" is for art therapist. Perhaps, he suggests, it makes sense to position the work of being an a/r/tographer within the methodology of autoethnography, and I suspect he is right after all. He describes the ravishing critique of scholars at the University of Alberta who tear into Rita Irwin's framework of a/r/tography and explains to me that she resists others' attempts to pin her into defined perimeters of methodology. Some of us in art therapy have felt defensive about defining the perimeters of research in our field for fear that might diminish the creative field at play, which is so central to our work.

M. C. Richard's (2003) reference to *la grande mystère* comes to mind, and I reflect on the importance of holding the unknown in balance with the quest to know. I am reminded of the art therapists/expressive arts therapists/arts-based researchers who stay true to ensuring that in order to be transformative, art must remain central to the work of art therapists and expressive therapists.

What do these students of mine have in common with each other, and how do they come together in the studio? This process is always creative and a joyous, playful revelation for me as a teacher. In this course, each of the students has spoken of a *zen* sense of experience—of the beginner mind: each curious about their purpose and being, their humanity and development, and their calling to realize self and help others. All of them want to know how creativity and art play might reveal, seduce, and nourish.

I too long to go in the studio before they arrive and put the luscious strokes of light through the paint to paper and pen to page: the dance through thresholds between word and image, imagination and calling, need and relief, destiny, and oneness. I think I will head into the studio and see what comes of this a/r/tographer's approach to the page today (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. In Gratitude to My Teachers. Ara Parker, 2017, painting/sketch.

Journal, July 13, 2017: Fourth day of five-day intensive "Introduction to Art Therapy" course (Edmonton). Awoke unusually early again because dream life and waking life are intermeshed; teaching, dissertation, mothering, and my job as chair are all intersecting at a crossing point today (Richards, 2003). My dream narrative was instructing me to make sure I referred to Max Van Manen (2014) in my dissertation's literature review related to methodology.

I was reflecting on my invited guest instructor, a recent graduate of our programme and gifted art therapist, what her offerings to the class might be, and how I could integrate them into the students' theoretical learning and studio experiences this week. Closing remarks yesterday from participants addressed synchronicity, the "witchy-ness" of the work and life, and for some, emotions were surfacing in ways that surprised and unsettled them.

It is not unusual at this point in the course for the psychodynamics of the work to bring up unconscious and conscious psychic material for students through their art, dreams, journaling, readings, and reflections. After all, their encounters with their creativity, personal feelings, and thoughts are the very substantive matter that they bring to the work, alongside media and art materials. They are their own best guides in working with others, and as such, many students undergo their own initiations in the studio. I try, in the opening circle, to assure them that the feelings of unsettlement and the tears are normal and that the work takes courage. One must remember to pace oneself in one's growth to ultimately feel safe to explore and be supported, to trust that the psyche (in reference to Carl Jung) will offer up to the conscious only what can be processed, and to trust the process and themselves. I remind them of the importance of doing no harm as an art therapist and to take the cues from the client.

I invite guest art therapists to guide art therapy sessions, provide exposure to different approaches in this course, and to mentor new teachers. This time, two of our Edmonton-based art therapy alumni are invited: Marie Muggeridge, who is gifted in working with altered books, and Marie Butler, who works with natural elements.

Butler references the theoretical, expressive arts-based approach to the work, which promotes low skill and high sensitivity (per Paolo Knill), as useful to her work with palliative care needs in the hospital environment. She shares her professional and personal stories of coming up against the tensions between alternative holistic healing practice and mainstream medical thinking. We had begun talking as a class about the revolutionary aspects of this kind of personal work that seeks to build self-esteem and

self-confidence, raise the voices of our clients and selves, engage in creative inquiry and ultimately, achieve liberation and empowerment.

We address, as models of art therapists, our own ways of embodied knowing. We acknowledge the challenges facing us in interacting with the paradigms of knowledge built on the existing systems and structures of academe and the challenges of working with the constraints of scholarship in areas where intuition and felt sense informs knowledge and wisdom.

The day unfolds as for me as an art therapist/researcher/teacher—intersecting roles. Leaving the classroom to the guest teacher, I meet with the dean for 20 minutes to discuss regulation of the profession and the accreditation of the department's programs [sic] with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association and Canadian Art Therapy Association. We discuss how to form a relationship with the faculty of education at the University of Alberta, which could allow for the development of courses and programs [sic], bringing the expressive arts therapies for applied practice into the K–12 classrooms with teacher training and teacher professional development certificates. The director of administration then finds me pouring coffee in the kitchen to ask a question about the newly introduced research development in the department—the Capstone project and its graduation protocols. An instructor's updated curriculum and syllabus needs signing off on as well as attending to thesis proposal documentation and practicum evaluations; a clinical supervision requirement needs to be addressed for a student and her supervisor; a prospective student needs to Skype from the other side of the world from a different time zone; and a weekend art therapy seminar needs preparation. It is only 11 a.m.

On this beautiful summer day, the class is discussing ways to work as eco-psychotherapists, bringing nature into their art and their art into nature—one form of worship and encountering divinity.

I come back to the Max Van Manen dream. I dip back into his research on phenomenological inquiry and lived experience and put a library book on hold for referencing in my dissertation. His work was situated for many years within the faculty of secondary education at the University of Alberta on whose campus my office at St. Stephen's College sits.

How did I get here—where the roads are converging as an art therapist, doctoral student, teacher, researcher, and chair *and* appear to be congruent? The spiral unfolds, the rose blooms open . . . *la grande mystère* (echoes of M. C. Richards). I look at the painting from yesterday's dream, watercolour ground of colour where liquid flowed organically into new territories with defined edges, and pastels articulate form on the surface as discursive words spell out names of teachers, influences, and acknowledgments. Yes, I am at the crossing point.

Journal, July 16, 2017. Reflecting on the week that was—the "Intro to Art Therapy" class—the last one before my project/ dissertation is complete. Such a great group of seven students who all demonstrated courage, heart, and vulnerability sharing their personal stories, questions, pain, curiosity, open hearts, love of play, compassion, and creativity.

A theme emerged for several in the class, interestingly—the theme of duality and polarity in their work that reflected the conflicts of being torn between self and other. For some, the conflict was related to their workplaces; for others, the conflict was on the home front. I felt a desire to work locally and a pull to work globally, to understand and

find my position in the global universal picture (climate change, poverty, and exploitation) while pursuing deeply personal (needs, healing, and growth).

It is no wonder, I think, that depression and anxiety are so pervasive in our society; that our young feel scared, hopeless, and helpless. This work (of becoming fully human) is not for the faint of heart. It takes great courage (from the word *coeur*, "heart") to look at the shadow, dive into one's power, and seek to integrate all the aspects of self and community for healing and health. Creativity is not only a path to wholeness and healing on the personal level but globally too. Much evidence now shows that depression and anxiety are well addressed through the expressive therapies and that so many of us suffer from depression and anxiety in spiritual distress (my master's thesis explored this). What image of our future can we create together?

On the last day of class, I suggest that we begin to breathe into the in-between places where infinite possibilities reside. Where the page is untouched, where the crossing point (a reference to the film on M. C. Richards) holds all possibilities. This seemed to be an expansive thought, and I could feel the class breathing into the idea of creating space from within the tension, to create a third space beyond duality. I wondered whether this was where I find my spirituality—in the possibilities and the in-between spaces, in the neither/nor and the both/and. I reflected on some of the first art pieces I created five years ago, such as *Spiritual Alchemy* (see Figure 18), the intention of which was to illustrate my spirituality artistically. In form and feel, *Spiritual Alchemy* has much in common with *In Gratitude to My Teachers* (See Figure 17).

Figure 18. Spiritual Alchemy. Ara Parker, 2013.

I have come full circle on this rung of my life spiral. Not quite back to the same space, as nothing is really linear. Certainly, I recognize my signature visual explorations, calligraphic strokes, edges, and fields of lay against the joy of colour—shimmering and dripping, expanding, and intuitive, pointing to the in-between places.

The personal work we do has ramifications for the global community; we are not separate from the whole. How perfect that today, Sunday, my sabbath of this week after six days of teaching, working, studying, and doing art (a/r/tographer indeed), I am reading my Facebook feed. I find a post by Joanna Macy. Her words on eco-Buddhism

relate profoundly to my a/r/tographic process, and what I am hoping to contribute through cultivating awareness and spiritual competencies through the expressive arts therapies at the college. Macy shared:

> I find a lot of what I am drawn to in the teaching I do, the experiential work, is to help people make friends with uncertainty, and reframe it as a way of coming alive. Because there are never any guarantees at any point in life. Perhaps it's more ingrained in the American citizen that we feel we ought to know, we ought to be certain, we ought to be in control, we ought to be upbeat, we ought to be smiling, we ought to be sociable. That cultural cast has tremendous power to keep us benumbed and becalmed. So, it's been central to my life and my work to make friends with our despair, to make friends with our pain for the world. And thereby to dignify it and honour it. That is very freeing for people. (Macy, 2016, para. 33)

Journal, October 2017: Edmonton. After making art inspired by imagery from my healing sessions (related to my recent concussion) and listening to Terence McKenna on YouTube speak about consciousness, I am thinking about the spiritual aspects and even pursuits of art therapy in terms of raising consciousness. "The major adventure is to claim your authentic true being which the culture will not give you" (McKenna, 2016, n.p.). Consciousness and spiritual awakening are related and can be nourished by the reflexivity of experiencing the creative (art therapy inspired) process. The aesthetics of the colour on paper, dye upon dye, colour fields, and play beckon beauty to emerge and be celebrated. Art can open the imagination too.

As I work on my sacred geometry and visions from massages and dream images, I feel the healing—I feel invigorated and vital again. This form of beauty vitalizes,

enlivens, and inspirits. This healing is magical. David Abram (2017) wrote about opening the senses and the shamanic implications of this potential. Beyond language, perceived boundaries dissolve, as they do in traditional tribal and indigenous cultures. Opening to wonder and the unknown is the potential of the arts. The resultant implications for human development are profound.

Alex Grey (2017) and his psychedelic art explored consciousness using imagination as its portal. I am grateful to the student who introduced me to Grey's work. I learn so much from my students. Are there rules for the workings of the imagination (McKenna, 2016)? Of course, art has some rules related to formal elements, but it is also about that which is beyond language—the formless. Kandinsky (1977) is considered the father of abstract art, which is historically important to understanding the roots of both art education and the context for the development of art therapy. I am allowing therapeutic art making and art therapy to be my spiritual practice. Science has difficulty with consciousness and the mind—vision, matter, and spirit, the role of play in transformation, the luminous, and liminality. The retreat of the art therapy studio can be a sanctuary where a creative journey unfolds as a pilgrimage of sorts—accompanied by self and other, thoughts and ideas, and visions and manifestations. It is where the holy and healing encounter each other in the mystical and magical unfolding of inner wisdom, felt experiences, sensations, moments of ecstasy, and secular sacred experience.

Journal, November 19, 2017: Edmonton. I begin crafting the dissertation in earnest this weekend. I am now aware of an enormous assumption I was blind to from the start—that my world view correlates completely to the paradigm of care, in which my work as an art therapist in this culture is situated. Advocating and arguing for the benefits of art therapy or a spiritually informed approach to expressive arts work that can be used in hospitals, clinics, and schools is

not enough. It is fundamentally important to recognize that all of these (institutions) operate within a world view and paradigm that do not understand, in holistic terms, the relationship between health, creativity, ecology, and spirituality.

Reading Martin Prechtel (1999) yesterday on the indigenous soul has affected me deeply and makes me think about the future direction of my work. Now that I am becoming spiritually informed, how will this affect my practice and teaching? I suspect it will pull me toward approaches that explore shamanic traditions of healing through art and ritual. Shaun McNiff wrote of this phenomenon in *Art as Medicine* (1992) as I was beginning my education as an expressive therapist at Lesley University, and it has come full circle for me now. I need to know more about how to work deeply with these healing potentialities of the expressive arts. My recognition then of my need for healing drew attention to my soul's hunger for medicine. Now that I know that art is medicine, the question moving forward becomes: What is the best way for me to grow and continue to learn and work as a healer, educator, artist, art therapist, and expressive therapist in this culture?

Journal, February 2018: Reflections on Doctoral Committee's questions (Edmonton). What does a spiritually informed art therapist need to know about recognizing and holding imagery as a portal to transformational, sacred work? What the sensitivities are present in the spiritually informed art therapist that enhance or develop the possibilities for imagery to embody spirit? How does direct knowing/ embodied knowing relate to the evocation of spiritual content?

In addition to the more formal ways of addressing the literature on these questions and the discussion of experiences in the art therapy classroom, I have been interested in

creating art as a way of researching these questions. I want to offer some reflective writing on these that might serve in the development of a theory of spiritually informed art therapy. I am realizing that art therapy is arts-based research in the same way I am understanding how research can also be ceremony (Wilson, 2008).

This creative approach to the research is not so much about the imagery itself (unless it is highly animated and charged with symbols) as it is about the way of being present with the client in a helpful way: being nurturing, providing safety, supporting and recognizing the cues—all the traditional art therapy training— *and* paying attention to the developmental material: dialoguing around image, paying attention to felt body experiences, and especially being curious about shifts of awareness, emotions, content, and perception (expressive therapies continuum). This approach includes having empathy and sympathy for spiritual crises, the rigours of life's passages, and the stages of development. Cultivating openness to diverse experience, appreciation for religious and multi-faith beliefs, and meaning-making systems are also important, as is allowing for different constructs of reality and divinity. This approach must hold respect and appreciation for spiritual development processes throughout life and the tasks of "becoming" at various developmental stages. This approach requires trusting the process (McNiff, 1998) as it relates to the unfolding of imagery flowing from the unconscious that is wanting to be brought into the light, into awareness, mindful of the client's readiness and ego strength.

To create artwork in which imagery is animated by metaphor and symbol, art therapists have a responsibility to continue learning about resources they can reference for the client and themselves from various and diverse religious and wisdom traditions of

the world. These traditions may also include animism, sacred geometry, and Jungian archetype.

Art therapy students soon come to realize, in their own arts-based formative work in the studio and throughout their careers alongside the work of their clients, that working creatively with art materials (think of collage making) offers unique opportunities to deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct. The use of and orientation to materials may influence significant spiritual connections the client brings to their work in the art therapy studio. Richard Rohr explained that each stage of life prepares us for the tasks of further spiritual development. He pointed to examples from Christian and Hebrew Scriptures to illustrate where to find support for the personal living transmutations of one's spiritual self. Rohr referred to this alchemical process of soul work as

> the classic pattern of spiritual transformation, 'order-disorder-reorder.' Paul calls it 'the foolishness of the cross' (see 1 Corinthians 1:18–25). There is no nonstop flight from order to reorder. We have to go through a period of disruption and disordering. (2018, para. 5)

One of my art pieces at this time included collage, paint, drawing, and words (as so many before this one). This piece was deliberately attempting, through the sensorial play of materials and use of words, to bridge diverse aspects of my own narrative chapters. Where previously these elements promoted the search for spirituality through the unconscious, conscious, and aesthetic matter, as this doctoral work concludes, I can see how my work is evidencing a spiritually integrative process in my formation as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Diverse Landscapes, Common Ground. Ara Parker, 2017. Journal notes: Finally, this piece, which I began a year ago, feels finished today as I integrate Thailand's landscape with the foothills of Alberta.

Rather than theorizing on a schema that might suggest a set linear progression in one's developmental formation as a spiritually informed art therapist, I see that—like story itself—my development winds back upon itself like a spiral, bringing me back in awareness, but never quite to the same place.

Journal, March 28, 2018: Bangkok, on eve of the second visit. A curve in the road leads to a greater understanding of the power of art to heal and new artistic expressions.

The second of three visits, as part of the Red Pencil International art therapy volunteer mission protocol, was to have happened five months ago in October. The concussion I suffered as a result of a fall headfirst down 15 stair steps in August prevented it. Instead, I focused on healing and turned to art making as my medicine. It

felt like, despite the damage (memory loss, cognitive processing gaps), an extra-sensory perceptual ability was freed up. The tremendous outpouring of psychic material and unleashing of sacred geometry imagery was the visual language of my brain repairing itself. This experience led to new research into the meaning of sacred symbols and esoteric wisdom teachings. A new hunger was uncovered, a thirsting for knowledge that my brain needed.

I read about shamanic teachings, esoteric wisdom traditions, and psychedelic explorations that spawns similar imagery. I became deeply curious about the new imagery needing to surface in my imagination and find its way into art making. Dreams became vivid. I began painting, differently than my usual mixed media abstract expressionism style. Instead, I worked with the icon writing I had learned earlier in my doctoral research projects, allowing each delicate, controlled, paintbrush stroke to secure new neuro-pathways. I consciously and meticulously recreated these unleashed images and entered a reflexive circuit through keenly observing and visually processing the painting on the page (see Figures 20 & 21).

Figure 20. Concussion Veils. Ara Parker, 2017.

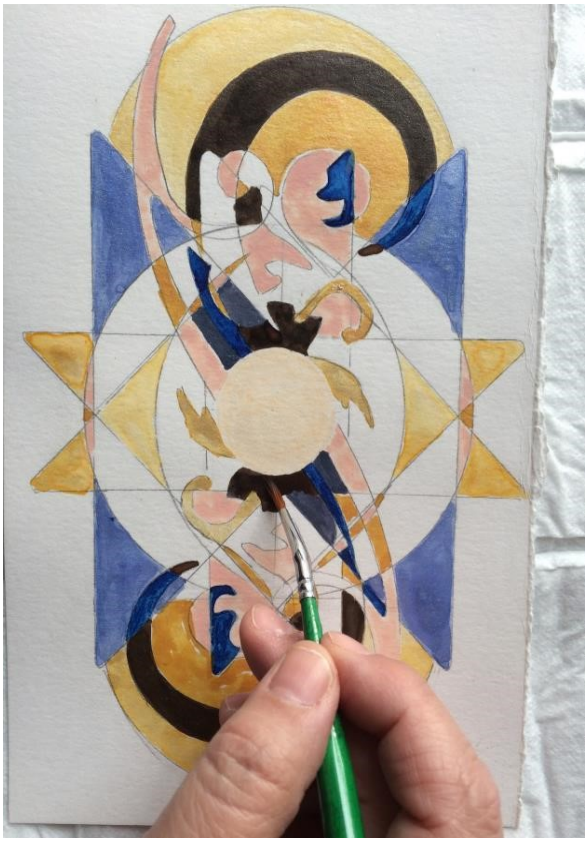

Figure 21. Sacred Geometry Coming Through. Ara Parker, 2017.

Cranial sacral massage sessions to help heal my brain trauma flooded my mind with imagery that I would go home to paint, trying to capture their essence and in turn, lead me into further study of their forms. One painting, a very simple sketch of what could become a large canvas and charcoal work someday, captured the simple, monolithic forms from one such body healing session. Body and image were deeply connected. Later by coincidence while reading some spiritual esoterica, I came across the same shape (resembling *shiva lingham* stones), amazed at its relevance to my new levels of healing, consciousness, and learning. Of course, I was not consciously aware of this connection when the imagery surfaced spontaneously from the unconscious (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. After the Fall: Regeneration. Ara Parker, 2017.

Finally, all I wanted to do was play with colour as a way of surrendering to a new state of consciousness and brain healing. I was no longer directing myself to address spiritual questions in my art making, to research the question. The question was manifesting through me, and I needed to obey its imperatives to create. Spirit moved through me. It was as if the usual ways of thinking could no longer serve the questions. Holding my thoughts together was challenging; not a matter of getting "out of my head" but rather letting the mind hold the reins of spirit coming through (see Figures 23 & 24).

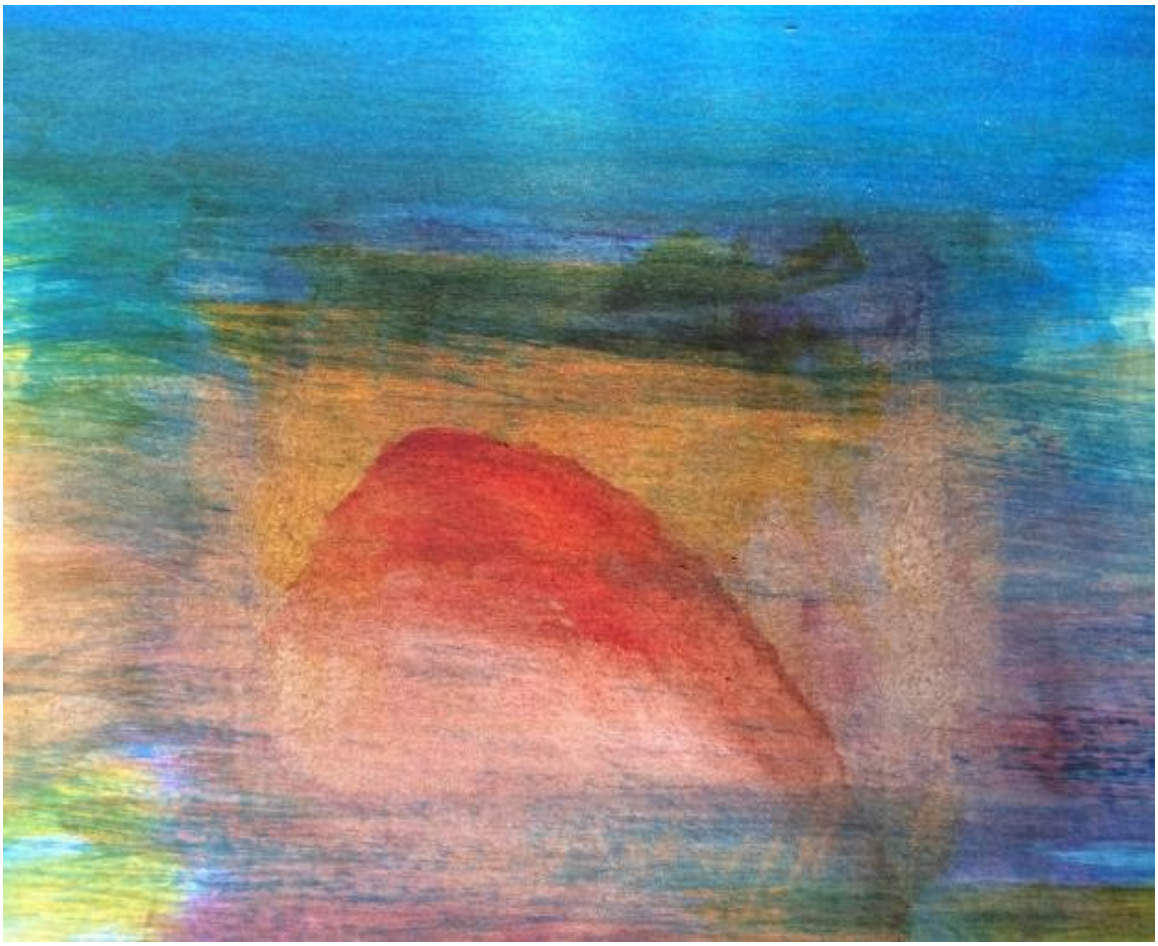

Figure 23. After the Fall: Restoration. Ara Parker, 2017.

Figure 24. After the Fall: Resurrection. Ara Parker, 2017.

Journal notes on The Red Pencil International Mission in Thailand, Step 2, April 2018: Bangkok. The approach of the next stage of this mission (a partnership between a global humanitarian art therapy agency and a church-based nonprofit organization on the ground in Thailand) has me thinking differently about participating in a "mission." Historically, missions have been well-intentioned; performing ministerial service where there is perceived to be a great humanitarian need. Too often though, they have been fraught with contradictions and guilty many times of inducing their own particular kind of trauma. In Canada, we are now painfully aware of the legacy of forced

residential schooling and the Sixties Scoop imposed on Indigenous children and their families over the last century.

Synchronicity has played an important role throughout this dissertation, as I sit crafting the final manuscript in a hotel room in Bangkok prior to the mission in the Phetchabun province with Red Pencil. A new colleague recommended a book about the Hmong people that coincidentally helps me connect my Jewish DNA of diaspora and survival defences with these tribal people I work with on this mission.

More than ever, I understand how important it is to know the cultural context of how illness and healing are understood within a culture. This knowledge can help shed light on assumptions about beneficiaries' (clients') resistance to change and progress (an expressed concern of our host partner). The resistance may be a learned response to their historic survival as a persecuted people, that has left their sovereign identity intact despite coercive and even well-intentioned efforts on their behalf (Fadiman, 2012).

> My story and theirs becomes meaningfully interrelated in new ways:
>
> The Hmong have a phrase, *hais cuaj txub kaum txub*, which means "to speak of all things." It is often used at the beginning of an oral narrative as a way of reminding the listeners that the world is full of things that may not seem to be connected but actually are; that no event occurs in isolation; that you can miss a lot by sticking to the point. (Fadiman, 2012, p. 13)

This observation is evidence of a strong, spiritually informed, story-based culture. I feel I am coming full circle.

Chapter 6

Excerpts from Students' Final Integrative Papers and Artwork

"Good theology is a kind of transgression, a kind of excess, a kind of gift. It is not a smooth systematics, a dogmatics, or a metaphysics; as a theopoetics it is a kind of writing. It is a kind of writing that invites more writing. Its narratives lead to other narratives, its metaphors encourage new metaphors, its confessions more confessions."

—Scott Holland (as cited in Keefe-Perry, 2014, p. 204)

When grading and reviewing the final integrative papers, I looked for ways in which the students articulated their learning during the course through readings, studio time, class discussion, and reflections on their personal themes as these surfaced during their art making and reflection processes. These reflections were also framed in the context of each student's emerging, expressed, or developing spirituality. In reviewing these papers from various sessions of this course (2012–2017), I was struck by the unique ways in which the students accomplished this integrative task designed to help them become spiritually informed in their transformational learning and healing.

The following excerpted exemplars are from a selection (approximately 10%) of over 150 students I have taught in sessions of this graduate course during this time period.

Student #1

This student took the course as an open studies student, intending to apply to the degree, when it was offered as a weeklong intensive at the Instituto Allende, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, in 2016. Reflecting on the work she did in the intensive, this student wrote about her developing awareness of her world view:

> I am now more aware of myself and the interaction of my beliefs in relation to others, and I am interested in looking beyond the surface appearances to the tougher spiritual truths. … In order to effectively nurture or help others, I have to be aware of what I need to unlearn within my own experience to reach a state of presence within the moment, of open unknowing. (Au, integrative paper, 2016, p. 20)

Student #2

At the beginning of the course, first-session anxiety, self-consciousness, client (or student) inhibitions, and relationship building are addressed through art activities such as scribble technique and co-created partnered drawings (Rubin, 2010). Reflecting on the work presents another opportunity for building competencies in the therapeutic presence and cultivating qualities of presence. One of these opportunities includes an introduction to the technique of deep listening skills, whereby the listener attempts (contrary to many verbal counselling skill approaches) to listen in a very disciplined way. They are encouraged to get their ego "out of the way," withholding affirmations or comments, mirroring, verbal or visual cues, and allowing for witnessing without psychological projection, identification, or transference. This student wrote:

> I could gently hold space for my partner's narrative, letting her speak as much as she needed to. My anxiety level, while still present in sharing words with someone who was still for me a stranger, was far lower … in the art studio ... While other classmates expressed having difficulty with deep listening as compared to active listening, I took relief and comfort in the practice. It took an enormous amount of emotional and spiritual output but without the confusion and

> anxiety of active listening, that output flowed freely. The new river had just begun its restorative work. (Thomas, integrative paper, 2016, p. 11)

Integration and reflection were helpful learning processes for this student. She expressed a strong relationship with her faith for her healing and learning. The articulation of her experience of the spiritual connections emerging in her art making in the art therapy studio had scriptural theological references:

> It was a powerful realization the moment I saw the redemption and renewal woven throughout my various pieces, even though I did not feel or sense those in the moment of creation. … I was able to see that all my work was already redeemed while in the process of being created. That is, in my own form of brokenness, a transformation was already happening. My realization and awareness [were] not needed quite yet. For all the water and light found in Jesus' baptism narrative, Jesus himself does not appear as a character of much depth yet or even self-aware. His character depends and interacts with the world more after the fact, out in the desert after all the other people have gone away. (Thomas, integrative paper, 2016, p. 22)

Student #3

A professional psychologist in oncology, interested in possible applications of art therapy to her work, took the course as an open studies student in fall/winter 2015. Thinking about her vocation in palliative care work and the grief she still held related to the loss of so many patients, this student discovered how the materials could move the grief through aesthetic play. In so doing, her view on the end of life was also transformed:

> An overwhelming cloak of sadness draped over me as the paint faded off the page, representing the end of a patient's life. At some point, it occurred to me that rather than having the colours fade away, it could be possible to have the colours flare out at the end. As I flared each color with my newly dipped paintbrush, my sadness gave way to feelings of hope. (Nekolaichuk, integrative paper, 2015, p. 9)

Student #4

Some students come to the program [sic] with a strong background in fine arts but have studied in formal ways that do not allow the art to function the same way it can in art therapy. Exploring art, the materials, processes, and content in ways that have a direct effect on their personal development and spiritual formation is a powerful discovery. This new student to the degree was one whose poetic title of her integrative paper, "The Wholeness of Experience and Interminable Development in Spirituality and its Relationship to Psychotherapy," gave an indication of the quality of her experience in the course.

This young adult graduate student (our students typically skew older and enter the field for a second or third career) was reflecting on stages of identity formation at the time she took the course. She articulated her thoughts on the spiritually connected aspects of this developmental stage as she reflected on the art she made and considered its clinical potential in this light. She wrote:

> I would also consider having hope to be a spiritual marker, due to the fact that envisioning possibilities for the future is a form of considering some purpose or meaning for one's life as it unfolds. In looking to grow with the future as new

> experiences and perspectives come, spirituality grows in turn. (Buchfink, integrative paper, 2014, p. 16)

Student #5

Post master's art therapy student Mandy Krahn wrote about the therapeutic presence in the language often used in spiritual care, in her integrative paper, "Art as an Act of Worship: Receptivity, Openness, Presence":

> Through the sharing of personal artwork, reflection, and stories, I hope to shed light on how "being with what is" is a way to navigate the world by letting spirit lead. … By embodying characteristics of receptivity, openness, and presence, I am able to not only talk about art and art therapy as an abstract form of worship but as a lived, concrete way to be in the world. (integrative paper, 2015, p. 3)

Joanna Macy (2016) came to mind upon re-reading Krahn's extrapolations from her experience about being of service to the wider community. It frames art therapy as a tool for the potential cultivation of deep democracy and the role of art therapist; in this light, as a model of ministry:

> Our world would benefit from learning how to speak, as well as listen to, the language of the heart and soul. By participating in artistic endeavours, whether educationally, recreationally, or therapeutically, this language is better able to be understood. (Krahn, Integrative paper, 2015, p. 3)

The materials themselves can move the student (or client) in ways that are felt before they are often understood. When writing the final paper, students in the course had the opportunity to understand, as they looked back at their art, their writings in their art

therapy journal notes. How the materials are used in a contemplative way can support spiritual development. On working with clay, Krahn stated,

> Working on this piece envisioned during a vivid guided meditation prior to the work with the clay was highly charged for me. It was a reflection of my own "beingness" in a way and portrayed a significant opening in my heart to re-birth in my life." (integrative paper, 2015, p. 5)

Another art directive in this course, one which has specific spiritual content, is to request students to consider their religious and spiritual history going back generations. I ask them to think about the values, morals, beliefs, and world views that they may have inherited and to think of the predominant aspects of these in the society in which they were raised. Then, they are asked to explore their relationships and expression of these in terms of their spiritual identity through art making. This work is a form of arts-based, spiritual life mapping. In some cases, the work is specific with references to spiritual symbols, such as the cross and the star of David. In other cases, the work is abstract and expressive to felt experiences of spirituality. Often, I will screen the film about M. C. Richards (2003) prior to this directive, which inspires an exploration of materials as a portal to spiritual engagement and relationship with the divine. Reflecting on her spiritual life map, Krahn wrote, "Through art, I am again beginning to feel nourishment that comes from the legacy of my ancestors. … This excites me, as I am able to see that our work, here and now, is spiritual, is living, is home" (integrative paper, 2015, p. 8)

Student #6

An open studies student who is a school counsellor was interested in how she might use art with her students from a spiritually informed perspective. Her questions in

her paper point to an important potential application of developing a spiritually informed art therapy assessment and the potential for a meaningful therapeutic relationship with her students on subjects usually not addressed: “Where do my students feel hope? Is it intrinsic or extrinsic? What impact do their spiritual practices and beliefs have on their well-being? What can I do to better foster the exploration of spirituality and hope?” (Bennett-Trefanenko, integrative paper, 2015, p. 14).

One of the roles of spiritual assessment is to reflect on relationships a client/patient (student) has with self/Self and other/Other (Pritchard, 2010). This framework places the personal experience in relation to the archetypal or universal, while the relationship with the divine comes through relationship with another (Buber, 2010): “Though it is difficult to put the feeling of spirituality into words, I felt a connection to my classmates, the art experience, and to something bigger than me” (Bennett-Trefanenko, integrative paper, 2015, p. 6).

The importance of creating a “safe container” in the sanctuary of the art therapy studio is key to developing a trusting environment for students, instructors, therapists, and clients as they work and learn. Something sacred emerges in the relationships and in the work produced and experienced when a safe space is created through the willing engagement of all participants. A safe space also contributes to building resiliency and coping skills:

> In this course . . . I was pleasantly surprised to see how important creating art was in the fostering of hope and maintenance of spirituality in not only myself, but also in my classmates. This was something some of my classmates explicitly stated; for me, I felt it, though it is hard to define. A spiritual-type presence was

> felt throughout the room in how we interacted with each other and through what we were creating with our eyes and hands. (Bennett-Trefanenko, integrative paper, 2015, p. 13)

The learning happens in the community. A sacred trust among peers develops, which later carries over to the therapeutic relationships they have with their clients. Students discover how relationships affect growth and awareness. They encounter wisdom in reciprocity:

> This experience was very empowering for me. I learned a lot from what my peers shared about how they embodied spirituality and creativity. I witnessed the exploration of participants' art as a beautiful and spiritual dialogue between my peers, our professor, and the art itself. It was absolutely fascinating to be a witness to the poetry of the reflection process (Bennett-Trefanenko, integrative paper 2015, p. 13; see Figure 25).

Student #7

Movements (emotional, physical) are also experienced through the body of the client (student) that are recognized and responded to in the expressive therapies (Kossak, 2015). As a visual arts modality that relies on various intermodal ways of responding, reflecting, and expressing, art therapy can effectively support and process somatic experiences. This movement can also benefit the development of respect, trust, and appreciation for the wisdom of the body:

> As the image continued to develop, I felt a growing pressure and tightness in my chest like the pressure one experiences before crying. I had tapped into something

very powerful, which made me feel like letting go, but there was also something holding me back. (Stock, integrative paper, 2017, p. 16)

Figure 25. Koreen Bennett-Trefanenko, 2015.

In referencing her experience to the course reading by Pat Allen (2005), this student reflected on how

> the time that I spent at St. Stephens this spring, immersed in the art therapy processes, will always stand out to me as a time of great inner awakening. Through the processes of art-making and bearing witness, I found healing and reconnection with my body, mind, and spirit and felt myself learning to dance

with the images arising from the "place of infinite possibility." (Stock, integrative paper, 2017, p. 20)

Student #8

As a student experiences being shaped by the art therapy experience in the classroom, she develops the awareness to see how she will benefit others in turn. This student's spiritual imagery was suggestive of universal truths.

The art therapist facilitates sessions for the client to accept and love herself in a holistic and caring way. She needs to learn to love all parts of her being—her mind, body, and spirit—to live more truthfully. The art therapist creates opportunities of reflection time for her to process the thoughts, emotions, and experiences that [prove to be] beneficial to her [in] developing a healthy relationship with herself (Kerekes, integrative paper, p. 7; see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Jessica Kerekes, 2014.

Student #9

The student (client) experiences creative energy that accompanies the art making and the discovery of new ways of perceiving wounds and healing. Memories and other psychological associations can surface in spontaneous ways that may bring back awarenesses that are meaningful. The integration of these can come later and writing the final paper is intended to help the student with that process. This integration is as akin to the significance of reflecting on and integrating the psychic matter and creative expression in what Paolo Knill calls the "harvesting" stage of therapeutic work in the architecture of an expressive therapies session (Knill et al., 2005, p. 156).

The art directive of the altered book (see Figure 27) was facilitated by Marie Muggeridge, guest instructor and my former student, during this course.

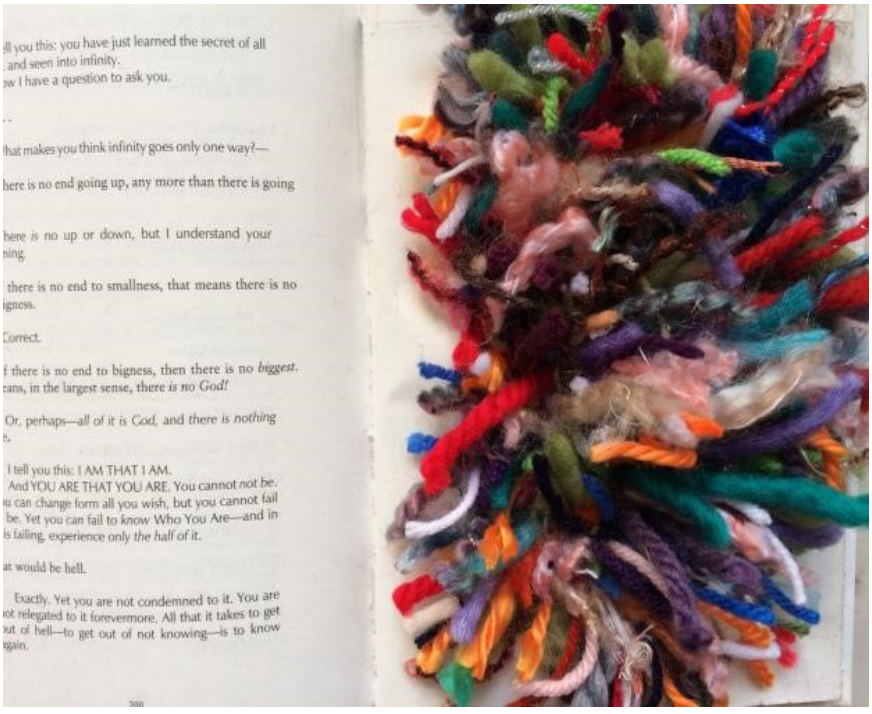

Figure 27. Raven Van Camp, 2015.

The deconstruction (even desecration) and reconstruction of the book, works powerfully on many levels of content, form, and process. It allowed one student to juxtapose memories of childhood along with religious associations. This student discovered the wounded healer archetype through this process. This directive also helped to initiate class discussions on the importance of doing one's own personal therapy work and the potential serious ethical consequences of not doing so; unprocessed psychic work can be projected onto others when responsibility is not taken for one's personal development work and healing. She wrote:

> I see that my woundedness has created and will continue to create opportunities for connecting to others in deeper ways, and if I did not do the hard work of integration, those opportunities might never have otherwise surfaced … [making] me more empathetic, effective, resilient and self-aware. (Van Camp, integrative paper, 2017, p. 16)

Student #10

Spirituality takes many forms and imagery arises spontaneously from the unconscious during sessions. In the process, students discover an inner source of strength, wisdom, peace, and healing:

> For the last art-making exercise, the instructor initiated the process with a deeply relaxing meditation in which I found myself guided to a particularly restful place in nature. At that point in the meditation, the instructor asked us to consider whether a word came to mind. The word *wholeness* immediately . . . captured the way I felt in the nurturing place, in nature where I found myself in the meditation. (Chapman, integrative paper, 2017, p. 18)

Student #11

For some students, as they consciously explore the role of spirituality in their lives, the imagery can become specifically religious. The arts give a new way to come into a relationship with those teachings and influences. The image below is an illustration of this (see Figure 28).

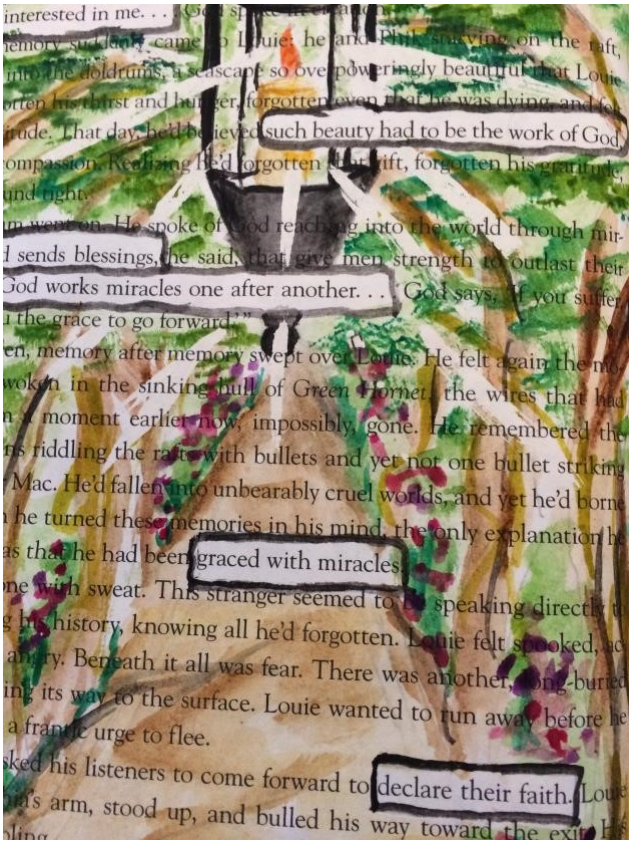

Figure 28. Crystal Stretch, 2016.

Student #12

Art therapy awakens the creator within. This awakening can be a deeply theological enterprise (Kaufman, 2004), a framework for becoming a spiritually informed art therapist. When the inner artist is honoured, art can be perceived as a way of life. This has the potential to fundamentally shift one's relationship with the divine. Inspired by the

film on M. C. Richards and seeking the links between creativity and life, this student wrote:

> Once we have faith in our imaginations and believe in this intangible aspect of our being, we can see and create art all around us, just as the master artists in the museums. … As someone working as an elementary school teacher, this insight may profoundly affect the way she engages her students in art practice as a result. For someone like me with limited art skills and knowledge, to see the aliveness in art and all its many forms through the eyes of M. C. Richards is to witness healing and living to its fullness. Creativity and life are linked. How we choose to create who we are begins with a single stroke of a brush. (Voss, integrative paper, 2016, p. 14)

Student #13

Another open studies student in the course felt the profound synergy of spiritual healing and creativity as she worked on one deeply meaningful piece:

> When art is able to facilitate the reparative work of self and the world, then it becomes more than a tool and rather a spiritual phenomenon. Following my drawing of myself/coffin in the hand of God, I was instructed in the afternoon to continue to explore materials and to see what comes from the continuation of the previous artwork. I was quite surprised with my comfort in getting messy, and I didn't think I had anything more to add from the previous art-making experience; however**,** I produced something that led to more revelations about myself and my connection with God. I wrote my insights in red pencil crayon that added more voice for me on the closure I received from the art.

I chose to journal in red because Christ's blood seemed to emanate from my art. I didn't believe I had any more art in me to express because the [earlier] piece was so powerful. Nevertheless, the sum of my spiritual experience is the cross … Royal colours and jewels spoke to me. My past is on the cross, splattered for me. I can let it go, all the lost dreams of an earthly father who cares are found in a heavenly Father who displayed his love on a cross. The earth turned black to echo the sorrow of this awesome sacrifice but now [God] gained me. And I gained him by dying daily to self. Hallelujah! (Forde, integrative paper, 2014, p. 14; see Figure 29)

Figure 29. Linda Forde, 2014.

Student #14

Cynthia Stratulet, a Ph.D. student in the faculty of secondary education at the University of Alberta, took this course as a way to address some self-care during her studies. The art therapy work and journaling she did during the course informed her dissertation further, and she spoke about it to our college senate upon my invitation:

> Every time we stepped into the studio at the college, there was unspoken intention of respecting each other's process. Never have I felt so cradled in visceral prayer. It was as if we were transformed to wonder: What is this magic that is happening to us? The magic was the "act of transcendence … I have fallen in love with the moment just after creation when I pick up my pen and reflect upon what the materials and I have created together. I very much appreciate the insistence to not objectify the artwork … Our fall term class had truly been my journey to sanctuary. It has given me back my own life, my real life, the one I misplaced while I was multi-doing and not being. (Stratulet, 2014, p. 3)

Chapter 7

Further Discussion, Reflections, and Summary

Summary

I have attempted to reflect on the research question, what is spiritually informed art therapy? and related questions about teaching it in the curriculum at a theology school, St. Stephen's College, throughout this dissertation. I have based explorations of this question on my lived experience as an art therapist/researcher/teacher. I have also included my personal story, artwork, and journal excerpts from my inquiry as well as those of my students from the introductory course in art therapy that I developed and taught. Other research projects have been referred to, as related to developing a theory to support the pedagogy of spiritually informed art therapy education and clinical practice from a formational point of view.

What surfaced for me throughout these inquiries was the discovery of the intersectionality between disciplines of psychotherapy, education, art therapy, expressive therapies, and theology as they addressed the spiritual aspects of therapeutic presence and personal transformation. During my doctoral studies and research, I was also surprised to discover how newly evolving fields of scholarship in arts-based research are situated in communities and faculties that are not the loci for art therapy per se, but rather apply those aspects of the work to their fields. Yet, the roots of those research and arts-based community practices (art hives, for example; Crompton, 2012) come from the therapeutic arts and expressive therapies.

Participatory, performative research in arts-based research is used as research methodology across disciplines; however, scholarship in the field of art therapy itself has

little of it. Shaun McNiff (2008) has certainly made the case for arts-based research to be used for scholarship in varied disciplines and especially in expressive therapies research.

Spiritually informed art therapy research and practice should also have a place in arts-based research practice. Throughout this paper, I have also reflected on additional research projects that could constitute post-doctoral work in the areas of spiritually informed art therapy theory, pedagogy, and clinical practice. Spiritually informed art therapy research may have related applications for clinical practice and research in other counselling and expressive therapies, arts-based practice, and research in allied fields of nursing, occupational therapy, recreation therapy, spiritual care and chaplaincy, education, and community development, to name a few.

Not only do we need to be mindful as art therapists of the distinctions between spirituality and religion, but we also need to understand the process of spiritual development in individuals and in ourselves. Many new questions have surfaced as a result of this research into spiritually informed art therapy. Some of these questions suggest approaches of inquiry to which various research methodologies could be applied.

Spiritual or religious practices (as seen in Naropa University's model of art therapy education) may indeed support a spiritually informed approach to the work. However, the spiritual can be *called* into play through engaging with art-making in the manners I have considered and in fostering the development of spiritually informed clinical art therapy competencies.

Art therapy and expressive therapies departments could benefit from integrating concepts of spiritual development and arts-based research across their curricular offerings. The consideration of spiritual development in developmental theory education

is important and could be integrated into various courses. The experiential aspects of art therapy coursework often embrace the sacred aspects of creativity and the benefits of mental and physical health to these elements. Considerations of spirituality are recognized as integral to theories and approaches to health care (Sperry & Miller, 2014). What is now required is a more explicitly intentional inclusion of spiritual development and its effects on transformation across expressive therapies, art therapy, and psychotherapy literature and pedagogy.

The enterprise of transformative education that St. Stephen's College embraces as its mandate is supported by transpersonal approaches to psychotherapy. Although not in the mainstream niche of higher education, psychotherapies taught and learned from this transpersonal paradigm of consciousness-raising could have far-reaching consequential benefits felt by the great community served by our students and alumni.

It is hoped this doctoral work has inspired further directions for curriculum development at the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality. Spiritually informed curricula throughout the department's offerings in counselling and art therapy courses, and college-wide for that matter, could be further to include discussions, readings, and exercises and incorporating some of the competencies, considerations, and directives included here. This work has been the foundation for introducing a new course in 2018 into the department for art therapy and counselling students alike called "Spiritually-informed [sic] Developmental Psychology" (PPSYC5896). Its curriculum will include spiritual development theory of James Fowler and others and the spiritually informed psychotherapy of Kenneth Pargament, Len Sperry, and David Helminiak.

The spiritually informed art therapy assessment tool I created (see Appendix B) was a rudimentary offering in the direction of considering spirituality in clinical practice and patient welfare. Further research projects could include the development of spiritually informed art therapy assessments to be used at intake in a variety of art therapy and expressive therapies practices.

In addition to assessment, a spiritually informed art therapy approach to clinical practice that results from a formational education on the part of the art therapist supports working in the areas of spiritual distress presented by clients. The creation of further guidelines for specific, spiritually informed art therapy directives related to these needs deserves future attention as well.

More and more, applications from the fields of art therapy and expressive therapies are making their way into other professional disciplines. During my tenure, I saw a remarkable interest in art therapy coming from K–12 educators and school counsellors in both public, secular, and religious education systems. In secular education, a spiritually informed, arts-based curriculum and approach to teaching that is considerate of the multifaith, interfaith, and multicultural considerations outlined in this dissertation could be a highly relevant, integrative approach for teachers in meeting learning goals as well as the developmental goals of their students.

Psychologists, community planners, and graduate students in other faculties at the University of Alberta (fine arts, secondary education, physical education and recreation, and human ecology) who took my course also became enthusiastic about the applications of spiritually informed art therapy for their research and professional practices. This interest suggests possibilities for further research into applied practice beyond the clinic.

Art therapists who teach and those who offer clinical supervision can also benefit from ongoing professional development in the area of cultivating spiritual competencies for clinical practice. Resources offered by organizations such as the National Center for Cultural Competency at Georgetown University provide significant research and guidelines significant to spiritually informed art therapy education, pedagogy, and practice. Further post-doctoral directions and research could include adapting these to art therapy education (attending to the formational needs of art therapists) and art therapy practice.

Spiritually informed art therapy is not just a theoretical approach to be fostered and applied within the domain of theology at a divinity college but deserves explicit recognition, integration, and application in art therapy education and clinical practice in general. In turn, art therapy and expressive therapies that explicitly acknowledge the spiritually formative aspects of holistic health will contribute to healing at the personal, communal, and institutional levels of our society.

Over the years of this doctoral work, I have experienced many changes that have affected the trajectory of the work. The impact of changing chairs and advisors is not to be underestimated. I have witnessed my own students experience health setbacks during their research, and my unexpected concussion taught me a great deal about humility and the opportunity for reflection, gratitude, and the new directions such an event can inspire. While I could not write academically for many months, I was able to journal about the art I knew on a tacit level that I could make to help in my recovery. I used everything I had learned until that point to explore imaginal recovery work and discovered spiritual dimensions of it that surprised me, as outlined in Chapter 4.

To summarize, the original intention of this doctoral work to explore and define what spiritually informed art therapy pedagogy could be for St. Stephen's College. I sincerely hope that this doctoral work might serve to inspire future direction for and the expansion of that mandate at the college in the future. Throughout these years of doctoral work, I have been asking questions in order to open the field of discourse about spiritually informed art therapy education and enriched practice. This work has also brought forward many areas of further inquiry for me, those I have worked with and taught, and I hope for the reader. It is a most rewarding journey of becoming.

This dissertation focused on spiritually informed art therapy formation education and practice. The implications of this orientation and approach also imply a need for ongoing development on the part of the art therapy practitioner. As I complete my doctoral studies, research, and writing, I am aware that my developmental and formational process as a spiritually informed art therapist has become integrated into my teaching, research, art making, clinical practice, and philosophical approach to the work. I have become not only spiritually informed, but I am now working from a *spiritually integrated* paradigm as an artist/art therapist, researcher, and teacher. The story of my individuation and evolving identity will continue to unfold as a spiritually informed art therapist/researcher/teacher.

Epilogue

These doctoral studies began in 2012 and continued alongside my professional tenure at St. Stephen's College. In May 2018, I left the college after six years. The question that began and served as a compass for this formative journey—what is spiritually informed art therapy?—formed the basis of my interview presentation to

Lesley University faculty on what I would be able to contribute through my teaching. I look forward to taking this work forward from Edmonton, Alberta, to Cambridge, Massachusetts, over the next years.

Post-Script Discussion: The Imaginal, Spirituality, Shamanism, and Expressive Therapies

After I submitted my dissertation draft to my committee, I moved to the United States for a core faculty position as an assistant professor of Expressive Arts Therapy at Lesley University (where I did my Master of Arts in Expressive Therapies over 20 years ago). I have returned full circle to where this personal and professional work of engaging through art with spirit for healing began as a graduate student. I was engaged then in clinical art therapy studies as well and Jungian analysis; my studio work was also deeply affected by reading about shamanism and the expressive therapies (McNiff, 1992). Now I have to prepare an updated syllabus on "The Imaginal and Expressive Arts Therapy" for an elective course at Lesley University.

As I prepare to send off this final draft of my dissertation for examination, I reflect again on the early and recent explorations in my ontological and epistemological journey. In the university's community, the term *expressive therapies* now refers to all the creative arts therapy specializations: dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, music therapy, and expressive arts therapy (which itself involves all the modalities and intermodal work including written word, story, digital media, and ritual).

My formation as a spiritually oriented art therapist (and an expressive arts therapist due to my new position) inspired this dissertation while I was employed at St. Stephen's College. The roots of this work, however, were found so much earlier in my

childhood, and arguably further back in the history of the generations of my family and communities—to whom I owe gratitude.

My current clients and students, as well as colleagues in my division of Expressive Therapies at Lesley University, are also wrestling with how to explore, learn from, and even integrate the teachings of various Indigenous wisdom traditions and cultures without appropriating them. We are exploring ways that we are in relationship with our spirituality and healing, learning, and growing processes, both individually and in terms of the larger communities to which we belong. This exploration is happening in dialogue, through art making, creative play, and scholarship. The wrestling is happening through exploring, reflecting on, witnessing, and sharing our dreams and creative expressions.

How can this personal and community development of engaging with the imaginal realms be mediated ethically and responsibly for our healing and in the service of others? Recently, as we dialogued on these issues as they are related to our own evolving pedagogy and related curriculum development at this university, my department coordinator, colleague, and former expressive therapies instructor Dr. Karen Estrella reminded me of the political and social justice issues underlining our very conversation about this, through our language choices and how we frame our experiences—how we employ even words like *shamanism*.

I included excerpts from my graduate students' first papers, from their first foundational course at St. Stephen's College taught by me, in this dissertation because I was interested in the ways they too were understanding and articulating the dynamics at play affecting their formation when art therapy approaches were explored from a spiritual

perspective. These dynamics were curated and facilitated (with clinical competencies in mind) to optimize learning about personal transformation, both individually and in the group experience of the class. I wondered if there were aspects that were intentionally designed to support these potentially transformative experiences, that they too would be identified as spiritual or sacred. What would those be? What did it look like? How did it feel? What language would the students find to speak of it? What happened when they simply explored their creative nature and spirit?

Occasionally, a person audits the course for personal or professional reasons. The final class of this course that I taught for St. Stephen's College included an arts-based scholar who was taking it for personal reasons; albeit, with the benefit of his experience in an arts and educational allied field. He wrote to me to say the course had generated a great deal for him, and he included an article about his experiences for me to read. Auditors do not need to submit written work, so it was very gratifying to see that he had written about the experience. Including a reference to his work feels important. Each student gives me so much when I teach; it is always such a privilege and honour to do this work. In this case, his article was a gift in so many ways. In addition, he introduced me to the word *currere* (Latin for "self-examination" or "self-study"; Norris, 2018). It referenced the work of William Pinar on the development of curriculum theory in education in the 1990s. These reflections on curriculum theory relate well to my earlier doctoral inquiries into (a) the goals of higher education and the educational enterprise itself, (b) theoretical explorations into pedagogy for art therapy, and (c) the curricular aims that enable human development in the service of healing and service to others (ministry). To come across these references through my student's writing about my

course is such a gift of validation and signaled an invitation to continue further. I am even more curious to pursue post-doctoral work exploring *currere* as it relates to theorizing curriculum development—for our field of expressive therapies and for its potential to evoke and support the exploration of the numinous aspects of creativity and the sacred, transformative, and healing potential of those experiences.

Art therapy and the expressive therapies are fields that clinically and in scholarship are well-positioned to hold up the educational imperative of becoming whole and fully human. We are engaged in seeking the language for it within frameworks that are authentic to each of us individually and in community with others.

For me, dreams have carried with them the opportunity to shift my waking consciousness, to engage with this extraordinary reality in ways that draw me into the magic, mystery, and even danger of the realm of transpersonal alchemy. In conclusion, I offer a painting from a dream in 2018. It felt like a milestone dream—one of graduation into elderhood and wisdom teachers. Embodied still in me is the lingering dis-ease of being at the cliff's edge of it all. I can still feel the hang-over of the dichotomy itself, pulling me up and onward while holding myself rooted and grounded. I am both seeker and finder, student and teacher, visible and invisible, young and old, mother and child, lover and beloved, healed and healer, chaotic and constructed, created and creator, certain and uncertain, separate and integrated, finite and infinite, empowered and powerless, and dreamed and dreamer.

This painting illustrates the dream in which the animated elements of my own becoming are at play and accompanies the journaling of this final dissertation dream (see Figure 30). The context for this dream includes the synchronistic completion of the final

editing of the dissertation while preparing for Dr. Shaun McNiff to visit my "Theories of Expressive Art Therapy" class, the foundational class in expressive arts therapy at Lesley University.

Figure 30. Imaginal Realm: Dream Spectre. Ara Parker (2018). Acrylic ink.

Journal, Dream Saturday, November 17, 2018: Encounter with the Imaginal

In a series of dream vignettes, I am ushered into new relationships with master teachers; I understand that I am unique in my own right. I am expected by some male masters in the field, and one of these lets me know that my arrival was preceded by cautionary remarks from a former male teacher whom I had questioned in the past.

In the dream, I spend time with a woman who emerges to accompany me (she is a hybrid of women elder teachers and slightly older than me). She stands beside me in the landscape. I feel connected to the powerful forces of mother nature. Suddenly, up from the edge of the cliff ahead arises a phantom of sorts, a larger-than-life spirit who is a

female specter. She feels potent, vigilant, and hovers waiting (like a cat who perches in a play of who will make the first move). And then she disappears.

I become aware that I do not need, as I would have needed before, to question her existence. I make a split-second decision to not ask my guide for reassurance by asking if she saw it. Instead, I ask, “Who is she?” My mentor simply answers, “She is checking on you.” She may have even mentioned the spirit’s unspoken name.

I knew there was nothing of which to be afraid. I realized and knew deeply at this moment that another realm of being—the imaginal realm—was indeed real and was present for me now. I no longer needed to question the existence of the mystical or my intimate and important relationship with it.

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Welwood, J. (2000). *Toward a psychology of awakening: Buddhism, psychotherapy, and the path of personal and spiritual transformation*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wenk, G. L. (2010, August 2). Religiosity and neuroscience: Does the absence of a serotonin receptor lead to spirituality? *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/your-brain-food/201008/religiosity-and-neuroscience

Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.

Wix, L., & Dicker, F. (2010). *Through a narrow window: Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and her Terezin students*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Woodman, M. (1990). *The ravaged bridegroom: Masculinity in women*. Toronto, ON: Inner City Books.

Appendix A

"Introduction to Art Therapy" Poster and Syllabus

PPSYC5841

Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful-Spiritual Connection

St. Stephen's College

University of Alberta Campus
8810-112 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2J6, Canada

Registration Contact
780-439-7311
Toll Free: 1-800-661-4956
st.stephens@ualberta.ca
www.ualberta.ca/ST.STEPHENS/

Registration Deadline
5 June 2015

Fees
Course: $755.00
Art fee: $35.00
3 Credit Course

Instructor: Ara Parker, DMin(Cand), MA, CCC, BCATR, RCAT
Chair, Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality

6-10 July 2015
9:00am - 5:00pm

Art Psychotherapy brings the areas of creativity, spirituality and healing together. This graduate-level course brings you into the Art Therapy studio for both experiential and theoretical learning around the traditions, theoretical approaches, ethics and history of Art Therapy.

Students will be introduced to the spontaneous art therapy approach and have the opportunity to explore directed clinical interventions pertaining to varied populations. The course is intended for self and professional development. This course will be of interest to those studying and working in mental health, spiritual care, counseling, nursing, fine arts and education.

Group and individual work, lecture format, readings and assignments integrate course materials in the area of spirituality, psychotherapy, art therapy theory and practice.

No art experience required.

Ara Parker, DMin(Cand), MA, CCC, RCAT, BCATR, is the Chair of the Department of Psychotherapy and Spirituality and Faculty Lecturer at St Stephen's College. Ara has been a practicing Art Therapist in Canada and abroad working in agencies, schools, hospitals and in private practice agencies and in the media.

Introduction to Art Therapy:
The Artful-Spiritual Connection PPSYC5841

July 10 – 14, 2017
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

St. Stephen's College
8810 112 Street Edmonton AB
Maximum 16

Art Material Fee: $35.00
Registration Deadline: June 20, 2017

Instructor

Ara Parker, DMin (Cand), MA, CCC, BCATR, RCAT
Phone: 780-439-7311 ext 24 or toll free: 1-800-661-4956
Email: Ara.Parker@ualberta.ca

The Intensive Course Model

All registrants in week-long intensive courses are reminded that these courses involve extensive preparation, definite pre-readings and the completion of specific pre-assignments. To maximize your learnings from these courses you are expected to arrive on the course dates well prepared as per the course outline specifications given to you at the time of registration. You are also expected to keep your day and evening schedule free during these courses in order to carry out the expected classroom work assigned as the course unfolds. Because of the extensive amount of preparation, all participants have to register one month in advance.

Non-credit Participants: Please note that those taking the course on a non-credit basis must have all the required reading done beforehand and be ready and able to contribute to all participatory elements of the course. No grades will be given to any participatory assignments.

Course Description

This course introduces future practitioners and related professionals to the foundations of art therapy, and builds skills for competent and ethical professional practice. Art therapy ethics, introduction to art therapy history processes and techniques, and an overview of theoretical approaches will be presented. Connections between art therapy, theological reflection, and spirituality will be explored and integrated in the learning. Students will be engaged in studio work, personal reflection, and discussion throughout the course.

Objectives

The main objective of this course is to introduce future practitioners and related professionals to the field and practice of Art Therapy, and to build foundational skills for ethical and competent professional practice. This course is required and a prerequisite for further training in the program.
After completion of the course, it is expected that students will:

- Be familiar with the CATA Code of Ethics for Professional Practice
- Have a working theoretical understanding of the art therapy process and how it differs from/is similar to verbal psychotherapy
- Begin to develop a tacit understanding of the art therapy process through one's own studio work and reflections
- Be able to describe a case study approach to client work
- Be able to summarize several influential theoretical approaches in the art therapy field
- Begin to develop a toolbox of art therapy techniques
- Begin to develop an awareness of one's own visual language and symbol system
- Begin to develop a framework to articulate the connections between art therapy practice and spirituality.

Required Texts

*Moon, Cathy (2009). *Studio Art Therapy, New York, NY: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.*
See options below

Farrelly-Hansen, M. (2001). *Spirituality and art therapy: living the connection.* New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Rubin, Judith A. (2010). *Introduction to art therapy: sources & resources.* New York: Routledge.

Highly Recommended Reading

* Moon, Cathy (2009). *Studio art therapy* can be substituted for one of the following:

Allen, Pat B. (1995). *Art is a way of knowing*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Allen, Pat B. (2005). *Art is a spiritual path*. Boston, MA: Shambhala

Horovitz, Ellen (2002). *Spiritual art therapy*. Springfield, Ill: Charles C Thomas.

Malchiodi, Cathy (2007). *The art therapy sourcebook*. New York: McGraw Hill.

McNiff, Shaun (1992). *Art as medicine*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

McNiff, Shaun (2004). *Art heals*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Moon, Bruce (2004). *Art and soul: Reflections on an artistic psychology*. Springfield, Ill: Charles C Thomas.

Levine, Stephen K. (1992). *Poiesis: The language of psychology and the speech of the soul.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Pre-course Assignments (15%)

Participants are required to read all of the required texts before the first day of class, July 10, 2017

1) Please maintain an art therapy process journal (blank paged sketchbook) throughout your readings, and bring it to class. Record your thoughts, questions and reflections as you integrate your readings. Include arts-based responses such as sketches, paintings, poems, collages, etc. You will be using this process journal throughout the course and as part of every studio experience. Though the journal will not be turned in for marking, it will inform the pre-course assignment, in-class assignments and the final integrative paper.
2) Prepare a one paragraph Abstract (APA style) on each of the required readings. You may substitute a recommended reading for one required reading. *To be handed in on the of the first class See: Purdue Online Writing Lab sample for guidelines and Abstract https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008_560.pdf
3) Read through the Canadian Art Therapy Association website: http://www.catainfo.ca. Please download and carefully review: a) the Canadian Art Therapy Association Code of Ethics for Professional Practice and b) Membership and registration guidelines. * Bring both of these documents to class. Be prepared to consider and reflect upon questions regarding art therapy practice ethics that are presented in your readings, and move beyond the scope of the association guidelines. The questions will provide the basis for an extensive discussion about ethics as they relate specifically to the use of the arts in therapy.

In-class assignments (40%)

Participants are expected to engage in art making, reflection, journaling and discussion throughout the week. At the end of the week each participant will put together a presentation of their works created in class, with an opportunity to summarize and reflect on the emerging themes. Students will work in small groups, individually and as a class group. Confidentiality will be discussed, and students may contribute their own work to training and presenting on art therapy case study, in addition to those presented in the readings. This will be done in the service of learning about the art therapy process. Structure, format and criteria of evaluation will be articulated by the instructor on the second day of class.

Post-course assignment (45%)

Participants are to develop themes from the course in an integrative paper of 16-20 pages (not including References, photos of artwork, and Appendices).
When using your own artwork in the paper, please present it as you would a case study.

Paper is to be APA style. This means that citations, references, headings, spacing, margins are all APA style. APA style guidelines are available online (Purdue OWL) and from the U of A bookstore.

Please cite at least 5 scholarly sources, of which *a minimum of 3* are texts (required texts for course are fine, though you may choose to include more or different sources), and *a minimum of two* are journal articles, one from any issue of Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal and one from an American or International journal of creative arts therapies (i.e., American Journal of Art Therapy, Poeisis, Arts in Psychotherapy, etc.). It is recommended you join the AATA as a student member to gain access to past journal articles.

Please develop your theme using both theory and personal reflections/ artwork from the course. It is up to you how you choose to do this, though the theme(s) should be clear and supported by readings and developed further via the reflective/artistic component.

The final product should be e-mailed to the instructor and will be returned to the student with comments with the final grade.

DUE DATE: September 14, 2017

Please note the Assignment Completion Policy at the end of this course outline.

Additional Reading Resources of interest

Arnheim, R. (1969). *Visual thinking*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Betensky, M. G. (1995). *What do you see? Phenomenology of therapeutic art expression.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Burt, Helene, Ed. (2012). *Art Therapy and postmodernism: creative healing through a prism.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Cane, Florence (1951). *The artist in each of us.* Vermont: Art Therapy Publications.

Carpendale, Monica. (2009). *Essence and praaxis in the art therapy studio*. Vicoria, BC: Trafford Publishing.

Craighead, Meinrad. (1986). *The mother's songs: images of God the mother.* New York: Paulist Press.

Deco, S. (1998). "Return to the open studio group: Art therapy groups in acute psychiatry." In S. Skaife and V. Huet (Eds.). *Art psychology groups: between pictures and words*. London: Routledge.

Dosamantes-Beaudry, I. (2003). *The arts in contemporary healing*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Edwards, Michael (2001). "Jungian Analytic Art Therapy". In Rubin, Linda. (Ed.). *Approaches to Art therapy* (2nd ed.) (pp. 81-94). London: Brunner- Routledge.

Farrelly- Hansen, Mimi. (Ed.) (2001). *Spirituality and art therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Gablik, Suzie. (1991). *The reenchantment of art.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Halprin, Daria. (2003). *The expressive body in life, art, and therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Horovitz-Darby, E. (1994). *Spiritual art therapy: an alternative path.* Springfield, Il: Charles C. Thomas.

Huizinga, Johan (1949). *Homo ludens*. London: Paladin.

Julliard, Kell. & Van Den Heuvel (1999*).* "Suzanne K. Langer and the foundations of art therapy". *Art Therapy*, 16 (3), pp. 112- 120.

Knill, Barbra, & Fuchs (2004). *Minstrels of soul: intermodal expressive therapy* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Ontario: EGS Press.

Knill, Levine, & Levine (2004). *Principles and practice of expressive arts therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kramer, E. (1963). "The problem of quality in art". *Bulletin of Art Therapy 6*, 4, 151-71.

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Student Handbook
Students are required to be aware of information found in the Student Handbook. The handbook contains information on acquiring texts, library and research services, academic policies, and guidelines for writing papers. The Student Handbook is available on the College website: http://ststephenscollege.ca/student-log-in/student-handbook.

Audio or Video Recording
Recording is permitted only with the prior written consent of the instructor or if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan. If an instructor grants permission, the recording should be solely for the personal use of the student to enhance their understanding of the lecture material. If a lecture is to be recorded, the instructor must notify the class that this is taking place. If the recorded lecture is intended for usage beyond individual study, the person making the recording must obtain the permission of all other individuals that appear in the recording.

Evaluation Procedures and Grading System
Instructors are expected to submit final course grades to the Registrar's Office one month after the final assignment due date. Students submit an Assignment Form http://ststephenscollege.ca/student-log-in/forms to the instructor with the final assignment and the instructor returns it to the student indicating their final grade. If a transcript is desired, submit the request to the Registrar's Office using the Transcript Request Form: http://stephen.srv.ualberta.ca/students/forms

Following are evaluation standards followed by faculty at St. Stephen's College:

A+	90 - 100%	Exceptional	Superior performance. Displays great originality and depth. Comprehensive understanding of subject matter, with original insights.
A	85 - 89%	Excellent	Above normal expectations. Occasionally surprises the reader with insights or deft presentation. Strong evidence of maturity, independence and control of the subject. Any lapses in logic and style are few and minor.
A-	80 - 84%		
B+	77 - 79%	Good	Meets normal expectations. Solid, accurate and integrative, convincing. Lapses in logic or style are uncommon and not serious.
B	73 - 76%		
B-	70 - 72%		
C+	67 - 69%	Adequate	Barely meets normal expectations. Covers the ground, but rarely adds anything new or personal. Heavily dependent on sources and authorities, with accurate but awkward handling of concepts. *[Course Pass for Graduate students: 66%]*
C	63 - 66%		
C-	60 - 62%		
D+	57 - 59%	Poor	Below normal expectations. Disorganized, frequent lapses in logic and style, superficial with no evidence of personal involvement. Inability to use theory. *[Course Pass for Undergraduate students: 50%]*
D	53 - 56%		
D-	50 - 52%		
F	0 - 49%	Failure	Far below normal expectations. Massive structural or other academic defects, evidence of dependence on sources and authorities bordering on plagiarism. [Clear Failure for all students] *[Grade of 0% calculated in grade average for credit courses]*
S		Satisfactory	Course requirements completed satisfactorily. [Pass for work not graded numerically] *[Not calculated in overall grade average.]*
W		Withdrawal	Withdrawal from course with permission within established deadlines. [*Not calculated in overall grade average.*]
WF		Withdrawal-Failure	Withdrawal from course after established deadline for withdrawing without academic penalty but before final assignment due. *[Grade of 0% calculated in overall grade average for credit courses]*
INF		Incomplete-Failure	Course work not completed within established academic deadlines: ie final assignment due date. *[Grade of 0% calculated in overall grade average for credit courses]*
IP		In Progress	Extension or rewrite of final assignment granted by Instructor or Dean
AU		Audit	Registered as an Auditor
AW		Withdrawal-Audit	Registered as an Auditor and withdrew

Exceptions to course completion and extension policies will be allowed for extenuating circumstances only, and must be approved by the Department Chair of the student's program as outlined in the Petitions and Academic Appeals policy in the Academic Calendar. To request an extension for a final course assignment beyond the two-month extension granted by the instructor, students must (1) receive instructor's agreement, and (2) petition the Department Chair (email), citing in detail the grounds for their request. The petition approval and extension date will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office, and a copy kept in the student's file.

Academic Policies
St Stephen's College is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the academic policies, specifically the Code of Student Behavior (Academic Calendar, p.11: http://ststephenscollege.ca/publications/academic-calendar) and avoid any behavior which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension from the College.

Library and Research Services

Online Database Service: EBSCO "Academic Search Complete"
St Stephen's College students and faculty are able to access an online database subscription service through EBSCO Publishing. *"Academic Search Complete"* is the world's most valuable and comprehensive scholarly, multi-disciplinary full-text database. It comprises more than 7,000 full-text periodicals, including nearly 6,000 peer-reviewed journals. In addition to full text documents, this database offers indexing and abstracts for more than 11,000 journals and a total of more than 11,600 publications including monographs, reports, conference proceedings, and the like. The database features PDF content dating back to 1887, with the majority of full text titles in native (searchable) PDF format. Searchable cited references are provided for more than 1,000 journals.
For access to *"Academic Search Complete"*, go to http://search.ebscohost.com. When you are prompted to enter a User ID and Password, use the following:

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Effective July 2017, EBSCO will not support using browsers Internet Explorer 8.0 or 9.0. If you would like help learning how to perform a search, tutorials can be found on the site at: http://support.ebsco.com/. This subscription is for the use of St Stephen's College students and faculty only. Please keep this User ID and Password strictly confidential. We hope this service will provide support for your class assignments and thesis or dissertation research.

Open Access Publications
The directories below can be used to help discover databases that are free of copyright issues/concerns:

- Directory of Open Access Journals www.doaj.org
  Over 1,600 open access, peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Includes the 'For Authors' service to look up where to publish your research as Open Access
- Directory of academic Open Access repositories: http://opendoar.org/
- OAIster search engine http: www.oclc.org/oaister/: collection of academically-oriented digital resources searchable by anyone
- Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations www.ndltd.org/: An international organization dedicated to promoting the creation, dissemination and preservation of electronic theses and dissertations

Searching for Articles or Publications not available on EBSCO
Try Google Advanced Search (type in full name of article), or Google Scholar http://scholar.google.ca/
Sometimes the full text of an article is available by using this method.

Remote access to University of Alberta Libraries' proxying service
St Stephen's College students and faculty are not covered by the University of Alberta Libraries' Licenses, and do not have remote access to U Alberta electronic resources (e.g. e-journals, e-books or databases). Access for St Stephen's College students and faculty will be limited to onsite access at the Library. St Stephen's students who wish to access the U Alberta library electronic resources need a CCID (Campus Computing Identification) to use the computers in the library, and will need to apply, in person at the library with photo ID, for a 'guest' CCID. Library staff will issue a temporary CCID just for the day. This service is available only to students who are able to be in attendance at the library. http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/ststephensborrowing

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Textbooks will now be shelved alphabetical, by author's last name and not by course number at the Bookstore.

If a coursepack is required for this course, and has been sold out, you can order a reprint from the Information Desk at the Bookstore. You may also order reprints by calling the Bookstore at 492-4215. Reprints will be at the Bookstore within 48 hours.

Alternately you can order from any online Bookstore such as Chapters.ca or Amazon.ca (check out Amazon Student- http://goo.gl/hFjx5b) or the publisher. As well, most texts are available in a Kindle version.

Appendix B

Spiritual Assessment in the Promotion of Healthcare

INTD 577, St. Stephen's College

Dr. Margaret Clark & Dr. Joanne Olson

Interviewer/Questionnaire provided by Ara Parker, MA RCAT

Client_____

Date _____

1. The following questions are intended to provide you and your art therapist with some information that might prove helpful in assessing, treating, and reflecting on your healing process. These questions are framed in terms of the role your spirituality might play in your life and in your sessions, as a means to further address emotional, psychological and physical health. If your sessions are individual or partnered in a group, please feel free to expand on any differences you may notice between various kinds of sessions as you answer these questions. Please allow 10 minutes or longer for your answers. Thank you.
2. How many sessions have you already had with the art therapist before answering this questionnaire?

3. How would you describe the role that religion or spirituality plays in your life?

4. Have you noticed any changes in the way you may practice your spirituality at different periods in your life or prior to beginning these sessions?

5. Do you share your spirituality with others? (i.e., in a congregation/community, as a parent, with a teacher)

6. Were there challenges that you faced that might be described as having a spiritual dimension? If so, do you think working with creativity and art making may have been helpful then?

7. Are there aspects of your life that give you a sense of spirituality or increase your sense of spirituality that you would like to include in your art therapy sessions? (i.e., a particular style of music, poetry, or forms of expression)

8. Do you think that expressing yourself creatively could be understood as a part of your spiritual practice? If so, have you noticed any changes since you began?

9. Is there anything you would like to work on that you have not identified yet in your sessions?

Any other comments, thoughts, or reflections:

Appendix C

Invitation to Participate in Study

(e-mailed on St. Stephen's College letterhead, December 3, 2017)

Dear former art therapy student (from the "Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful Spiritual Connection" course at St. Stephen's College),

I hope that this email finds you well and looking forward to this holiday season.

I am writing you to ask if you would agree to participate in my final research project by consenting to my possible inclusion of a citation from your previously submitted (graded) paper in my final Doctor of Ministry dissertation. The attached consent form explains my dissertation and research.

Over the next month, I am reviewing some of my previous students' papers and reflecting on how they explored and articulated the spiritual aspects of art therapy in their learning in this introductory course. I plan on crediting you for the citation in the dissertation but if you prefer to participate anonymously that is fine too. If you also agree to my including an excerpt from your paper in the form of a copy of your artwork, this would also be appreciated.

If you agree, please print the attached consent, and fill in your name at the top and bottom, and sign and date (dd/mm/yy). You may keep a copy, or I can send you one back to you if you require it. It can be scanned and e-mailed or mailed to me at the college at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions or wish to offer any comments, please do not hesitate to e-mail me or call me. If you could reply as soon as possible, this would be greatly appreciated.

Best wishes to you as we enter this holiday season.

Sincerely,
Ara Parker

Ara Parker, DMin (Cand), MA, CCC, RCAT, RP
Chair, Department of Psychotherapy & Spirituality
Phone: (780) 439-7311 ext. 24 Toll free: 1.800.661.4956

https://www.ualberta.ca/St.Stephens

Appendix D

Consent and Permission Request Form—Sample Draft

Date _____

Addressee _____

I am writing to request permission to reprint the following material from your final Integrative Paper submitted for my course, "Introduction to Art Therapy: The Artful-Spiritual Connection," PPSCY5841, at St. Stephen's College.

Title:
Author, date of submission:
Pages on which material appears or other identifying information:

This material is to appear as originally submitted with due citation to your work [or with changes or deletions noted] in my Doctoral of Ministry dissertation entitled "Spiritually Informed Art Therapy" for St. Stephen's College. The dissertation is expected to be submitted for examination in February of 2018 for graduation November 2018.

It is possible that excerpts from the dissertation may be submitted for publication with the Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA), American Art Therapy Association (AATA) Journal, and/or presented at one of their annual conferences.

I am requesting non-exclusive world rights to use this material as part of my work in all languages, formats, media, and editions.

May I have your permission to reprint the material described above in my dissertation? Unless you request otherwise, I shall use the conventional scholarly form of acknowledgement, including author, title, and date.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. A duplicate copy of this letter is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Ara Parker
DMin Cand., MA, CCC, RCAT, RP

Doctor of Ministry student, St. Stephen's College

The above request is approved on the conditions specified and with the understanding that full credit will be given to the source.

Approved by Dissertation Faculty Advisor _____

Date _____

Adapted from: http://www.ache.org/pubs/authors/permissions.cfm