EPIPHANIES OF SOUL:
"WHEN THE BOLTS OF THE UNIVERSE FLY OPEN."
A DEPTH PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEMPLATION OF WONDER

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ABSTRACT

Epiphanies of Soul:
"When the Bolts of the Universe fly Open."
A Depth Psychological Contemplation of Wonder

by

Lindsey Beaven

Over the centuries, the meaning of wonder has decayed substantially. An immense distance and complex history lie between Socrates's declaration that wisdom begins in wonder and the commercialism of today's Wonder Bread, Wonderbra, and Wonderful World of Disney. Because few have considered wonder to be a psychologically significant experience, scholarship in this area has been negligible. Yet, amidst the travails of living, experiences of wonder can constitute transformational epiphanies and unlatch the flow of life through deepening subjectivity; magnifying perceptions; amplifying sensitivity to beauty; expanding horizons; recognizing the extraordinary in the ordinary; intuiting the sacred in the secular; and promoting possibility, delight, reverence, and gratefulness for the gift of life.

This dissertation contemplates the dimensions of the experience of wonder, wonder's connection to soul, and how we might attune to wonder. Because wonder is both the condition and the primary principle of the phenomenological reduction (van Manen, 1990, p. 185), several scholars concur that no adequate method exists for researching wonder, for it entails a recursive paradox of wondering in wonderment about the wondrousness of wonder, with wonder having the first and last word. Therefore, this work adopts a mixed method, combining depth psychological and phenomenological

approaches with hermeneutically amplified heuristic inquiry. The researcher's experience of wonder provides the primary data, and multidisciplinary texts serve to unfold this data.

The findings identify wonder's key themes, characteristics, valences, and nuances, and ways to attune and attend to wonder's presence, both inside and outside the consulting room. Ultimately, the study personifies wonder as a feminine voice of soul, and advocates her inclusion in depth psychotherapy as integral to its honoring of tending the soul, the etymological root of psychotherapy itself. Wonder reveals herself as an ineffable encounter with existence and the world, an epiphany of embodied, archetypal resonance between the individual's soul and the soul of the world, when "the universe shivers in the depths of the human" (Swimme, 1985, p. 32). This study, embracing knowledge as beginning and ending in wonder, grants her the final word.

Key words: Wonder, soul, resonance, epiphany, ineffability, attunement, attentiveness, unknowing, *aesthesis,* intuition.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Dr. Mary Schmitt, who loved and revered the infinite wonder of life and the ultimate mystery of existence. She touched my soul and the souls of many as she shared that deep love and wonderment through her teaching. Having entered the eternal beyond, she continues her miraculous adventure.

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The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2013-2014).

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Chapter 1
Introduction

> *Five mysteries hold the key to the unseen: the act of love, and the birth of a baby, and the contemplation of great art, and being in the presence of death or disaster, and hearing the human voice lifted in song. These are the occasions when the bolts of the universe fly open and we are given a glimpse of what is hidden; an eff of the ineffable.*
>
> —Novelist Salman Rushdie (2000, p. 20)

From the dawn of time, confrontations with the mysteries of our inner and outer worlds have arrested our attention and rendered us speechless. Words escape us. We can respond only with an open-mouthed gasp and wide-eyed gaze when the familiar and the mundane startle us by revealing their depths, and when we come face to face with the unknown, the unusual, the novel, the mysterious, the sublime, and the ineffable. These are the times when it seems "the bolts of the universe fly open" (Rushdie, 2000, p. 20). Such potent moments of wonder can expand our consciousness, change our worldview, and be nothing less than transformative. What in the world is this thing called wonder that moves us so?

Here we are. This is, perhaps, the most profound, miraculous, and wonder-filled statement in existence. Centuries after Socrates (469-399 BCE) declared in Plato's (trans. 1961) *Theatetus* dialogues that wonder was the beginning of all philosophy and wisdom, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1714/1989) maintained that the most pressing philosophical question was "Why is there something rather than nothing?" (p. 210), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1820/1983) wrote, "To my wonderment, I am here" (pp. 154-155). This fact of existence is the primary, ontological wonder; it cannot be explained away, and it spawns many other forms of wonder.

Our experiences of wonder seem to incorporate both universal and personal aspects, and the sources of our wonder are infinite. This suggests an archetypal component of wonder and a place for its discussion in depth psychology. Using heuristic inquiry, this dissertation contemplates the dimensions of the experience of wonder, wonder's connection to soul, and how we might attune to wonder. The researcher's experience provides the primary data, which are amplified and clarified by multidisciplinary texts through the heuristic phases.

Wonder (2014) has meant different things to different people at different times. It is complex, highly nuanced, and challenging to describe in a definitive way. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines wonder as "an emotion triggered by the perception of something novel, unexpected, or inexplicable; astonishment mingled with perplexity or bewildered curiosity" (Wonder, II.7.a.). To this, psychology of religion scholars Kelly Bulkeley (2005) and Robert Fuller (2006) add that wonder is also a response to something intensely powerful, real, or beautiful.

From a depth psychology perspective, something seems to be lacking in these descriptions—soul. René Descartes (1649/1989) views wonder as "the sudden surprise of the soul" (p. 56) but imagined soul as located in the pineal gland (p. 36). Philosopher Sophia Vasalou (2012) describes wonder as "a response to invisible realities perceived with the eyes of the soul" (p. 11), which seems to hold more promise. It embraces several depth psychological themes: that realities exist undetected by beyond our senses and sophisticated scopes, that we respond with wonder when such realities reveal themselves, and that we engage our more intuitive organs of inner perception when we glimpse these realities.

Encounters with wonder traverse all human endeavors. Perhaps the idea that the soul does not specialize (Slattery, Selig, & Aizenstat, 2012) accounts for this. Over the centuries, wonder has been deliberated in philosophy, theology, and the psychology of religion; expressed through poetry and the arts; and experienced on a regular basis by naturalists, scientists, and the entire human race. Yet, in psychology, the discipline etymologically rooted in *psyche*/soul, the experience of wonder *per se* has been virtually *Terra Incognita*, unexplored territory, even though it permeates the therapeutic field. Wonder may be inherent in depth and transpersonal psychologies yet scholarly study of wonder in these areas has been minimal. This study's literature review demonstrates this.

Where studies of wonder do exist, primarily in philosophy and in the psychology of religion, they are associated most closely with perception, existence, being, God, the brain, and evolution. This study introduces to this scholarship of wonder the language of soul, broadly construed as "the central guiding aspect of the unconscious . . . the connecting ribbon of a road between a man as he knows himself, and the vast unknown and unknowable" (Singer, 1972, p. 33).

Depth psychology has not forgotten that *psyche* is rooted in soul. Originating from the Latin *anima* and Greek *psyche* (both feminine), soul can be known and felt, but like wonder, it resists definition and slithers through conceptual systems. As humanistic-existential psychologist David Elkins (1995) notes:

> We meet the soul when we are stirred by a person or music, moved by a poem, struck by a painting, or touched by a ceremony or symbol. Soul is the empathic resonance that vibrates within us at such moments. She is the catch of the breath, the awe in the heart, the lump in the throat, the tear in the eye. These are signs of the soul, the markers of her presence that let us know we have touched her or she has touched us. (p. 83)

Here, and in the many languages of soul heard throughout the universe, wonder never seems far away. Both wonder and soul are seeded with invisible realities that live and breathe below the surface of things and behind and beyond our waking consciousness. Both can be heard throughout the humanities and the sciences, as well as in nature, relationships, dreams, visions, images, intuitions, synchronicities, uncanny events, miracles, psychological and somatic symptoms, and more.

Jung's (1946/1969) world, like that of generations before him, was animated by psyche, "the greatest of all cosmic wonders and the *sine qua non* of the world as an object" (p. 169); psyche, or soul, was the indispensable essence of that world. This study acknowledges this reality of the world soul, *anima mundi*, as the wonder of all wonders, asserting with Plato (trans. 2000) in his *Timaeus* that "this world is indeed a living being endowed with a soul and intelligence…a single visible living entity containing all other living entities, which by their nature are all related" (p. 16). Depth psychotherapies in the analytical and archetypal traditions consider psyche/soul to extend beyond the individual "far beyond the confines of the conscious mind. . . . for the greater part outside the body" (Jung, 1942/1954, p. 256). With the words *psyche* and *anima* both rooted in the word *soul*, hereafter we refer to this extended psyche as Soul, Soul of the world, or *anima mundi.*

Western Mythic Origins of Wonder

It is not possible to wander very far into the study of wonder without encountering the ancient Greek myth of Thaumas, the Titan god of wonder, who personified the wonders of the sea, a metaphor for the unconscious in depth psychology. Hesiod describes Thaumas in his 7th-8th century BCE epic *Theogony* (Most, 2006). Thaumas was son of Pontus (the sea) and Gaia (the earth) and married the goddess Electra (amber-tinged clouds originating the word electricity). With her, Thaumas fathered Iris, goddess

of the rainbow and messenger of light, and her siblings the Harpies, fearsome, clawed soul snatchers, messengers of darkness.

The name Thaumas derives from *thaumatos*, meaning “miracle” or “wonder” in Greek. Until the Renaissance in Europe, *thaumatology* was the term used for the science of wonders and miracles (Fisher, 1998, p. 11), and a thaumaturge was a producer of wonders (p. 14). In philosophy, wonder is equated with *thaumazein,* and over the centuries, it has been the subject of extensive philosophical discussion.

Iris, daughter of wonder and goddess of the rainbow, often appears in the literature as a synonym for wonder, and book titles include Richard Dawkins’s (2000) *Unweaving the Rainbow*: *Science, Delusion and the Appetite for Wonder*, Philip Fisher’s (1998) *Wonder, the Rainbow and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, and Desmond Quinn’s (2002) *Iris Exiled: A Synoptic History of Wonder*. Each writer uses Iris and her rainbow to symbolize wonder, and traces modernity’s perceived loss of wonder to the rainbow’s reduction to prismatic colors by the workings of science. As John Keats (1884) wrote, lamenting philosophy, the precursor of modern science, “Philosophy will clip an Angel’s wings,/ Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,/ Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—/ Unweave a rainbow” (lines 234-237).

Although not part of wonder’s origins, philosophy and psychology of religion scholar Sam Keen (1969/1973, pp. 151-199) links the gods Dionysus and Apollo to wonder. He defines the authentic life as oscillating between Apollonian and Dionysian dimensions with neither too much nor too little wonder. The Apollonian element is concerned with control, action, decision, regularity, and necessity; it minimizes wonder, spontaneity, and celebration in order, Keen says, to protect the ego. The Dionysian

element, concerned with mystery and possibility is opposed to structure, boundaries, and permanency; it represents wonder, openness, novelty, and possibility. Keen explains that "an adequate philosophy must preserve the adventure of standing in wonder before mystery of the given as well as the security of explanations, boundaries, and limits which domesticate chaos" (p. 192). So he proposes a both/and proposition between contemplation and the pursuit of knowledge in the face of wonder. Keen regards the healthy personality as balancing Dionysian and Apollonian energies, and pathology as the denial of either spirit. He says:

> Health lies in the both/and (not the either/or): in granting proper reverence to both Dionysus and Apollo. In the mature personality, the pendulum is constantly swinging between wonder and action, and the further it swings in one direction, the further it may go in the opposite direction. The more the self is at home in the world it has created by accepting and defining its gifts and limits, the freer it is to wonder and appreciate strangeness. (p. 195)

This conceptualization provides the psychological insight that the more secure we are, the more we can wonder and wander.

A Brief History of Wonder

It appears that the earliest written record of wonder belongs to Homer (c. 850 BCE), for whom wonder was the response to the appearance of a divinity (Arendt, 1978). Later, it is written that Laotzu (c. 600-300 BCE) regarded wonder as the very center of our existence. In the third century BCE, the ancient Hindu *Natyashastra* text on the performing arts described wonder as one of the basic emotional responses to the arts and as the divine pulsating in life and consciousness through creation (Fuller, 2006, pp. 10-11). For Socrates (469-399 BCE), who spoke through the work of Plato (427-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE), wonder was the beginning of philosophy and sustaining principle of the love of wisdom (Quinn, 2002, p. 6).

In the Common Era, the status of wonder and its relationship to curiosity has oscillated greatly in the life and thought of Western civilization (Deane-Drummond, 2006a, p. 18). Saint Augustine (354-430 CE), identified wonder with religious awe and, thereafter, it was common to consider natural wonders to be a source of divine inspiration. On the other hand, Augustine branded curiosity as full of lust and pride. However, by the 12th and 13th centuries, as the sacred and miraculous began blurring into the secular and marvelous, wonder could include fear, reverence, pleasure, and bewilderment as well as vacuity and novelty rooted in ignorance. At this time, curiosity could connote a negative desire to know the secrets of nature.

By the 16th and 17th centuries, and under the influence of scientist Francis Bacon, wonder became distanced from awe as it became more closely linked with curiosity and scientific inquiry (Deane-Drummond, 2006a, pp. 18-19). During this time, we see wonder tied to curiosity through the private collections of Europe's most affluent citizens, known as *Wunderkammern* (chambers of wonders), wonder cabinets, or cabinets of curiosities (Daston & Park, 1998/2001, pp. 255-301). These were eclectic, sometimes bizarre agglomerations of natural specimens, artworks, and oddities that conjoined the wonders of art and nature and also showcased nature's fantastical and monstrous aberrations. These assemblages were housed either in an entire room or in a cabinet for traveling displays and were the precursors of both museums and circus sideshows. Whereas art previously had appeared only in religious contexts, *Wunderkammern* demonstrated that art could be continuous with science and that wonder was the connecting thread. However, this was a short-lived union, and by the end of the 17th century, science and art had parted company and museums came into being that separated the arts from the

sciences. Museums continued to host wondrous things to behold, but deformed fetuses no longer had a place next to fine sculptures.

In the 18th century, as the role of curiosity became increasingly elevated in society, wonder lost its ties toward reverence and became associated more with states of stupor and the unschooled. According to Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park (1998/2001), by 1750 wonder had become the hallmark of the ignorant and the vulgar as it “sunk among the learned to the level of a gawk” (p. 326). Thus, as time went by, in Western culture curiosity became elevated over wonder, the latter being associated with childishness, the uneducated, and the lunatic fringe. By the mid-18th century, wonder was “no longer reverential, tinged with awe and fear, but rather a low, bumptious form of pleasure” (p. 328).

However, the Romantic movement (Romanticism, 2013), originating in Europe in the second half of the 18th century, continued to carry the banner for wonder. In reaction to the Enlightenment’s scientific rationalization of nature, it spawned much literature and poetry embodying wonder. The Romantics characterized wonder by a rapturous love of nature and a sense of the supernatural. They viewed strong emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, and it became embodied in the literature, music, and visual arts of the period. The literature placed new emphasis on emotions such as wonder, awe, and trepidation, especially in the face of untamed nature. Romantic literature included the works of Europeans such as William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, John Keats, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Schiller, William Wordsworth, and many others, as well as the American transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.

Philosophical and Cultural Splits Around Wonder

In philosophy, wonder is equated with the Greek word *thaumazein* and, over the centuries, it has been the subject of extensive philosophical discussion. Both Plato (trans. 1961) in his *Theaetetus* and then Aristotle (trans. 1941) in his *Metaphysics* declared that philosophy, the love of wisdom, begins in wonder/*thaumazein*. However, each meant something different by the term *thaumazein*, and this gave rise to distinctive Aristotelian and Platonic approaches to wonder. Aristotle's wonder lay in sensing the natural phenomena outside himself; he saw it as the beginning of inquiry, which disappeared following explanation. In contrast, Plato's wonder resided inside himself in conceptual phenomena, which were initiated by wonder and perpetuated beyond inquiry (Vasalou, 2012, pp. 49-52).

This split persisted though history: Aristotelianism foreshadowed the disenchantment and loss of wonder often associated with the Enlightenment and so-called objective, scientific knowledge. Later, advocates such as Descartes and Bacon warned against excesses of wonder, believing that its capacity to stun in astonishment was a dangerous vice that inhibited attentive scientific inquiry by "dousing rather than fanning curiosity" (Daston & Park, 2001, pp. 317-321). On the other hand, Platonism prefigured the preservation of the subjective experience of mystery and wonder exemplified by the Neoplatonism of the Renaissance and Romantic movements. Tracing this forward, we might consider that cognitive, behavioral, and evidence-based models of psychotherapy emerged from the Aristotelian school, whereas the phenomenological and transpersonal psychotherapies, including depth psychology, followed the Platonic and Neoplatonic paths. This split is integral to many of the issues surrounding wonder and is referenced elsewhere in this work.

Biologist Scott Gilbert (2013), drawing from the wisdom of Jewish scholar Abraham Joshua Heschel (1951/1992, 1955, 2010), points out that glimpses of wonder from "the mind encountering the universe" (p. 8) are short-lived and rapidly transform and divide into curiosity and awe (Figure 1). Curiosity, he says, motivates the quest for truth and knowledge found in philosophy and science, which we might see as paralleling the Aristotelian tradition. Awe, he maintains, begets the reverence and gratitude that characterize the religious attitude that is more reflective of Platonic descent.

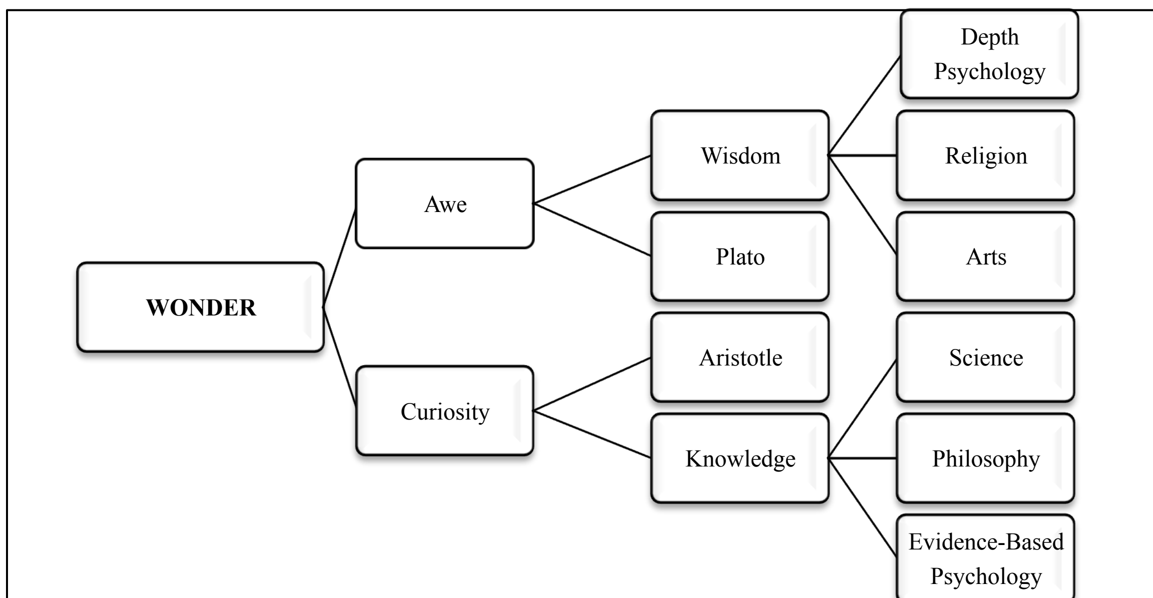

Figure 1. Genealogy of wonder and its potential splits. Source: Author.

As the primary experience and parent of both awe and curiosity, Gilbert (2013) views wonder as the precursor and unifier of both religion and science. He sees no reason for these siblings of wonder to be at odds with one another, and this allows him to view the wonder of the universe with both curiosity and awe. Indeed, the greatest scientists of all time, as cited by Bersanelli and Gargantini (2009), have managed to allow curiosity and wonder to live side by side quite happily.

The Nature of Wonder

The most fundamental wonder haunting mankind has been the fact that anything exists at all. Heschel (1951/1992) explains:

> We are struck with an awareness of the immense preciousness of being; a preciousness which is not an object of analysis but a cause of wonder; it is inexplicable, nameless and cannot be specified or put in one of our categories. Yet we have a certainty without knowledge: it is real without being expressible. (p. 22)

Yet, in the attempt to put words to wonder, categorizations have proliferated. We see wonder described as broken knowledge (Bacon, 1842), an appetite (Dawkins, 2000), a passion (Descartes, 1649/1989), an emotion (Frijda, 1986), a character strength and virtue (Haidt & Keltner, 2004), a faculty (Heschel, 1951/1992), higher incomprehension (Heschel, 1955/1997), an elemental emotion (Keen, 2010), the sixth sense (Lawrence, 1928/1969), a mental state (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994), an addiction (Magida, 2011), a peak experience (Maslow, 1962/1968, 1964/1970, 1976), a hinge between ignorance and knowlege (Miller, 1989, 1992), and a disposition (Verhoeven, 1967/1972). And, in the vernacular, we distinguish between a state of wonder and a sense of wonder.

Keen (1969/1973) in his *Apology for Wonder* sums up wonder like this:

> Wonder breaks into consciousness with a dramatic suddenness that produces amazement or astonishment. We can no more create a state of wonderment than we can plan a surprise for ourselves. . . . wonder reduces us momentarily to silence. We associate gaping, breathlessness, bewilderment, and even stupor with wonder, because it jolts us out of the world of common sense in which our language is at home. . . . We are silent before some new dimension of meaning which is being revealed. (pp. 27-28)

Not only does this description capture many of the salient features of wonder, it also captures the dynamic of Soul, including the dimension of it being unbidden and beyond our ability to summon at will. Some scholars (Bulkeley, 2005; Doron, 2012; Hove, 1999), however, do allow for the fact that certain rituals and practices can be hospitable to

wonder and, again, the same can be said of contact with Soul. And, as a passion, wonder is said to hold us in its grip (Desmond, 2010, p. 313, Quinn, 2002, p. 9), a description strongly suggesting its archetypal dimension and connection to Soul.

Generally, we associate wonder with grandeur, the extraordinary, and the unfamiliar, but ordinary encounters with everyday life also can strikes us as wondrous when we suddenly see with new eyes and deeper meaning. Heschel (1951/1992) pointed out, “The ineffable inhabits the magnificent and the common, the grandiose and the tiny facts of reality alike” (p. 5). So, in addition to our being wonderstruck by the power of an earthquake, the beauty of a symphony, the majesty of a mountain, or the miracle of childbirth, we also might encounter it upon hearing birdsong, seeing a stranger’s smile, feeling skin-to-skin touch, or awakening from sleep.

We can be wonderstruck also by events such as dreams, visions, synchronicities, rituals, and contemplative practices, which occur in waking, dreaming, imaginal, contemplative, and mystical states. Through our perceptual systems, almost anything we encounter can strike us with wonder, which manifests according to the unique perspective of each beholder (Bulkeley, 2005, pp. 198-200). Not everyone finds snakes, visions, or thunderstorms to be wondrous, and the line between wonder and fear, the wonderful and the awful, can be thin.

The multiple valences of wonder.

Wondrous experiences are not always pleasant and thrilling. Wonder can momentarily stop our world and call into question everything we thought we knew about it; it can be the grist that expands our categories of knowledge and our very conceptions of reality. It can remind us we are embedded in mystery. These are not always positive experiences; for some, they can be quite frightening.

Wonder, it seems, can be both a “wow!” and a “whoa!” phenomenon. Rather than being simply a peak experience (Maslow, 1962/1968, 1964/1970, 1976), which focuses on the heights and positive aspects of emotions at the expense of their more challenging and threatening facets, wonder seems more aptly described as an instance of expanded awareness, which can have positive, negative, or neutral valences. Positively valenced aspects of wonder can include marvel, admiration, beauty, grandeur, reverence, gratitude, delight, and enchantment; potentially negatively valenced aspects can include surprise, startle, astonishment, amazement, mystery, ineffability, bewilderment, curiosity, and fear.

In Mona Simpson’s account of the death of her brother Apple Computer’s Steve Jobs, after noting his capacity for wonderment, she relates that his famous last words were “OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW” (Simpson, 2011, para. 79). Jobs’s response to whatever he was experiencing was perhaps a blend of these wondrous reactions. Death, as well as life, it seems, can hold wonder. The same can be said perhaps of war (Bulkeley, 2005, pp. 185-193) pain, grief, and catastrophe. The harbingers of wonder are many and diverse.

Wonder often interweaves with other closely related affects such as awe and numinosity, in which fear and holy terror can play a major role. Not everyone can accept wonder with an open heart; some feel a need to resist or reject it. Wonder may expand the perceptions of some or shut down those of others who need to defend themselves from experiential openness, live in fear of change, and are necessarily intolerant of anything new, mysterious, or unknown, let alone unknowable (Desmond, 2010; McCrae, 1996; McCrae & Sutin, 2009). Still others feel the need to explain it and get to the bottom of its secrets, perhaps another defense against mystery and uncertainty.

The etymology of wonder.

> *Every term that becomes an empty slogan is born at some time from a definite concept, and its significance must be interpreted from that point of view.*
>
> —Renaissance scholar Paul Oscar Kristeller (1943, p. 286)

To deepen our understanding of the nuances of wonder, we must look at its rich etymological roots in Latin, Greek, and the Germanic languages, including English. According to philosopher Desmond Quinn (2002), early lexicographers believed the word *wonder* originated from the Old English *wendan*, meaning to wend or to turn, as in turning every which way to seek an explanation. Wonder also is connected to the Old English *wundian*, meaning to wound, because wonder can feel like a sudden forcible intrusion and shock. "Wondering at" and "wondering why" both imply a disturbance of some intensity. "Wonder excites, disturbs, agitates; it seizes the attention and stimulates the effort to find an answer" (p. 2). Thus, wonder also carries a sense of bewilderment, puzzlement, and bafflement, the mode of wonder that resonated with philosophers Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Mulhall, 2012, pp. 121-143).

In Latin, *wonder* derives from *admirare,* which pertains to *marvel* as well as *admiration* and *miracle*. The root *mir* refers to seeing, as in *mirror* and *mirage*. It also gives us the name *Miranda,* meaning "she who is to be wondered at" as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Fisher, 1998, p. 14).

The act of seeing something either externally or else with the mind's eye often engenders wonder, and seeing often represents sensing or knowing as with insight. Thus, seers are those who develop the faculty of observing and with it a sense of wonder. A paradox of wonder is that what we "see for ourselves," we take to be true. However, with wonder, that which we think we know is decimated, or else we surmise that it must be

governed by some hidden law. Therefore, with wonder, we both see and do not see. For Plato, all knowing began with seeing with the senses and ended in seeing with the intellect (Quinn, 2002, p. 5). In summary, the Latin derivation of wonder incorporates the senses, passions, and intellect and carries with it a sense of both seeing and knowing (pp. 4-6).

Thau is the Greek root of *thaomai,* meaning to wonder or to gaze upon with wonder, and the Greek word for wonder is *thaumazein.* It stems from the god Thaumas (discussed earlier) and derives from the word *thaumatos* meaning "miracle." Also, *thauma* is related to *thea* and the word *theory,* which is the contemplative act of the philosopher, as well as *theoria*, which are philosophical concepts. Thus, Plato and Aristotle pronounced wonder to be the beginning of philosophy, the *arché,* the beginning and sustaining principle of the love of wisdom (Quinn, 2002, p. 6).

According to Quinn (2002), Homer (c. 850 BCE) used the words *thambos* and *tethepa* to mean extreme wonder, amazement, or stupefaction. This fear-filled kind of wonder can include bewilderment, helplessness, confusion, and stupor. These words derive from the idea of being struck, similar to the Latin *attonitus*, which means thunderstruck. We now speak of being wonderstruck, awestruck, and struck dumb. There is an arresting of attention, a sudden intake of breath, an open mouth, and a passive immobility when faced with such wonder (pp. 7-8). In addition, the Greek words *ekplexis* and *kataplexis* also derive from the idea of being struck, and we may suffer from *apoplexy* when we are astonished by wonder (p. 9). Another Greek word *aporia,* meaning a blocked pathway, signifies the wonder that causes loss of bearings when the wonderer

stops dead in his tracks. Not knowing what to think and being at a loss for words, this wonder shines a light on our ignorance and unknowing (p. 8).

The Greek word *paradox* is related to *admiratio,* admiration, which has close ties to wonder. *Paradox* means something contrary to or beyond *doxa,* opinion, as opposed to real knowledge. *Paradoxon* means something wonderful. The Greek Christian writers used paradox as a synonym for *miracle* and *sacrament,* which also have ties to wonder. Common phrases such as "it is no wonder that" and "no wonder" convey the existence of an explanation and yet are embedded in the essential meaning of wonder as a response to something that has no obvious explanation (Quinn, 2002, p. 9).

According to theologian and plant physiologist Celia Deane-Drummond (2006a, p. 17), *wonder* derives from the Indo-European word for "smile." She notes that natural philosophers of the ancient world interpreted *wonder* both as the response to something rare and unfamiliar and also as that with an unknown cause. So, by presenting to the human mind something previously unknown, wonder reveals the limits of human knowing. One reason wonder is associated so often with childhood is because a child constantly has new experiences, and thus has a renewed capacity to wonder.

In summary, wonder's etymology reveals a complex human experience containing elements of intrusion, startle, astonishment, amazement, mystery, insight, marvel, miracle, curiosity, paradox, bewilderment, stupor, enchantment, epiphany, admiration, appreciation, and more.

Deterioration of wonder's meaning.

The meaning of the word *wonder* has changed considerably over the course of history (Quinn, 2002). In modern times, the words *wonder* and *wonderful* have been so overused, abused, and misapplied that they have become quite stigmatized, and little of

their root meaning and significance remains. Modern-day depictions of wonder can range from being "a neural reaction at the threshold between complete correspondence to an expected pattern (relaxation) and an extreme lack of correspondence to pattern (stress) when neural circuits remain continuously stimulated" (Bychkov, 2013) to an apt descriptor of the World of Disney. Many today view wonder as little more than frivolous thrill seeking, and advertisers have spun the word beyond recognition, from Wonder Bread to Wonder Woman to the Wonderbra. Little wonder novelist Anne Lamott (1995) finds it necessary to apologize for using the term *wonder* (presumably because she finds it to be hackneyed) in what otherwise appears to be a rich description of the phenomenon. She writes:

> Think of those times when you've read prose or poetry that is presented in such a way that you have a fleeting sense of being startled by beauty or insight, by a glimpse into someone's soul. All of a sudden everything seems to fit together or at least to have some meaning for a moment. This is our goal as writers, I think; to help others have this sense of—please forgive me—wonder, of seeing things anew, things that can catch us off guard, that break in on our small, bordered worlds. When this happens, everything feels more spacious. (pp. 99-100)

The ideas of fleeting, startle, glimpses of Soul, fitting together, seeing things anew, catching one off guard, insight, breaking through borders, and becoming more spacious address many of the key attributes that link wonder to the voice of Soul. Perhaps Keen's (1969/1973) words would provide Lamott with some solace as he notes:

> A mature sense of wonder does not need the constant titillation of the sensational to keep it alive. It is most often called forth by a confrontation with the mysterious depth of meaning at the heart of the familiar and the quotidian. (p. 23)

Keen's unapologetic acknowledgment of the wonder and mystery in everyday life is not inconsistent with Lamott's words and is mirrored by a depth psychological worldview that recognizes the sacred in the secular.

Wonder apparently has succumbed to that which C. S. Lewis (1960/1990) calls *verbicide*, the murder of a word (p. 7). Quinn (2002) elaborates on the consequences of verbicide saying, “When words decay, the things they signify may decay with them” (p. 10). So, we might well wonder if the deterioration of wonder in our language parallels a loss of connection to Soul and wonderment in the culture and in the individual.

Jungian scholar Marie-Louise von Franz (1999) adds to this understanding of the deterioration of wonder from a depth perspective. She describes the cultural erosion of some archetypes, which once may have played a great role but recede when they are no longer active enough to constellate in the collective unconscious. She maintains that this happens when the “shattering numinous quality” (p. 24) of the archetype no longer has the capacity to move enough people deeply enough so that they are psychologically held by it. Many explanations account for this—for example, life changes, life requirements, and inventions. Von Franz says, “Your whole universe has changed and with it you have to answer with a new truth” (p. 25). Thus, in our modern culture, wonder may have lost its capacity to move people deeply because of its common association with shallowness.

J. H. van den Berg’s concept of metabletic phenomenology (as cited in Denney, 2008, and Romanyshyn, 2010a) also dovetails with this in that he proposes that the psychology of individuals cannot be separated from the changing psychology of culture.

The Family of Wonder

Awe, numinosity, and oceanic feeling are states of wonder that often are confused and used interchangeably. Each reflects, in varying degrees, our response to being confronted by the unknown, the novel, the mysterious, and the ineffable, and each necessitates some degree of shift in ego boundaries. There is a variety of emotional shading in these wondrous states, with wonder being more energizing and less fear-laden

than its relatives. At the same time, wonder can morph into the other states, depending on the sensibility of the wonderer.

The emotional shading in numinosity and awe tend toward power, fear, overwhelm, submission, humility, and, in the case of numinosity, exaltation, and fascination. On the other hand, wonder inclines toward surprise, amazement, delight, admiration, reverence, aesthetic beauty, gratitude, curiosity, and questioning. So, wonder tends to energize whereas numinosity and awe can immobilize.

Oceanic feeling.

Freud (1930/1961) described the limitless and unbounded oceanic feeling as "an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole" (p. 12). This resembles Jung's (1923/1971) definition of the *participation mystique* (p. 456). Freud, admittedly, had not experienced oceanic feeling, but he agreed to write what he understood to be the experience of others at the urging of French poet Romain Rolland (a devotee of the Indian sage Ramakrishna). In this experience, Freud imagined that one aspect of the ego penetrated deeply into the unconscious and another faced the exterior world, so that there was a disturbance of ego boundaries and a defensive desire for "restoration of limitless narcissism" (p. 20). He saw it as an undesirable regression to infancy, a state experienced before the child has learned that others exist.

The sense of merging and connecting with the larger world is not absent from some accounts of wonderment. However, unlike oceanic feeling, it is not its central characteristic. Psychoanalyst Irving Harrison (1989), in comparing awe and oceanic experience, notes that wonder is a component of the oceanic experience and, likely, is a universal feeling.

Awe.

Turning to awe, the *Oxford English Dictionary's* earliest definition (c. 950 CE) is "dread mingled with veneration, reverential or respectful fear; the attitude of a mind subdued to profound reverence in the presence of supreme authority, moral greatness or sublimity, or mysterious sacredness" (Awe, 2014, n.1, I.2). In a later definition (c. 1757 CE), awe is "the feeling of solemn and reverential wonder, tinged with latent fear, inspired by what is terribly sublime and majestic in nature" (Awe, 2014, n.1, I.3). Here, awe can be seen as a fear-laden subtype of wonder that proceeds from nature. According to this definition, awe hails from the earth rather than the heavens. Harrison (1989) concurs with this second definition, arguing that whereas awe is a response to the outer world, oceanic feeling assumes an unwarranted source of a mystical extension beyond one's psyche. Presumably, whether or not awe points to something beyond the earth depends on the perceptions and sensemaking of the one experiencing it.

Positive psychologists Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt (2003) conclude from their research that awe can be characterized by perceived vastness (size, authority, prestige, fame); a sense of submitting to something powerful; an inability to assimilate the experience into current mental structures; and the need for accommodation. Assimilation and accommodation appear to be key challenges for all ego-transcending experiences, including wonder (Bulkeley, 2005; Fuller, 2006), numinosity (Jung, 1938/1969), and oceanic feeling (Freud 1930/1961). Another positive psychologist, Paul Pearsall (2007), defines awe as an "overwhelming and bewildering sense of connection with a startling universe that is usually far beyond the narrow band of our consciousness" (p. 9). Laura Weissblatt (2011) contributes also to the scholarship on awe through her dissertation exploring the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspectives of awe.

Perhaps most pertinent is existential-humanistic psychologist Kirk Schneider's (2004, 2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2013) proposal of an awe-based psychology (Schneider, 2005, p. 167) and a "consciousness that requires not only a positive outlook, but also a full and intensive encounter with life—in all its variegated shades" (Schneider, 2009a, para. 5). He notes that awe, a combination of "dread, veneration and wonder" (Schneider 2004, p. xv), should be foundational for psychology. This reflects the essential daunting nature of awe that is not always present in wonder. But Schneider (2004) also describes the awesomeness of life with the words mystery, incomprehensibility, magnificence, and bedazzlement, emphasizing this is not sentiment but "the brute awareness that we exist at all" (p. xiii). He seems to equate awe with the ontological wonder most often associated with Leibnitz (1714/1989) and mentioned earlier in this work. From this, we see how easy it is to conflate wonder and awe. Elsewhere, Schneider (2004, p. 182) links Heschel's (1955/1997) notion of "radical amazement" to awe when this actually is Heschel's signature description of wonder (pp. 44-48). This causes one to wonder if Schneider privileges the word *awe* over *wonder*. Attention to this is not intended to decry Schneider's major contribution to the field, but serves to show that prying wonder apart from awe is difficult and that he may not have been immune to wonder's less-than-serious reputation of shallowness and frivolity that often precedes it.

Heschel (1955/1997) and Gilbert (2013) suggest a genealogy that derives from wonder that this study finds helpful. Heschel noted that "the beginning of awe is wonder, and the beginning of wisdom is awe. . . . Knowledge is fostered by curiosity; wisdom is fostered by awe" (pp. 74-75). Building on Heschel's work, Gilbert views wonder as spawning two offspring, awe and curiosity. In turn, awe generates wisdom the foundation

of the religious attitude, and curiosity generates knowledge the foundation of philosophy and science. So, as Gilbert concludes, "science and religion are the estranged children of wonder" (p. 24).

This model seems to be consistent with the majority of the scholarship on this topic. However, it is important to note that, in a groundbreaking research study looking at the transformational experiences of astronauts (Science, Space and Spirituality, n.d.), the relationship between wonder and awe is reversed in which awe is said to precede and motivate wonder (para. 4). Here, this study defines awe as "a direct and initial feeling when faced with something incomprehensible or sublime" (para. 3) yet, more often, this is how the literature describes wonder. And this study goes on to define wonder as "a more reflective feeling one has when unable to put things back into a familiar conceptual framework" (para. 3). But more often, wonder is known for bursting through conceptual frameworks and, clearly, this type of wonder referred to in the study refers to the more cognitive form of wondering.

In conclusion and in broad strokes, awe lacks wonder's thrust toward curiosity and delight. Also, awe's essential daunting nature is not always present in wonder. Richard Hycner (1976) sums this up by saying, "Awe suggests an immobilizing effect. Wonder, on the contrary, seems to suggest an energizing effect" (p. 4).

Numinosity.

Turning now to numinosity, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the numinous as "relating to the experience of the divine as awesome or terrifying; designating that which governs the subject outside his or her own will" (Numinous, 2014, 2). Here, the ultimate source of the numinous experience is identified clearly as the divine. This comports with Rudolph Otto's (1917/1992) understanding of the numinous as *mysterium*

tremendum, a tremendous, nonrational mystery, “quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar” (p. 26). It is an objective experience of the divine as wholly other (pp. 25-30), which in its *tremendum* evokes the special feeling of “creature consciousness” (p. 10) as well as “awfulness,” and “overpoweringness,” which inspires humility, “urgency,” and vigor (pp. 13-24). Absent from the definition above, Otto also notes that the numinous “allures with a potent charm” (pp. 31) and includes a blissful fascination or *fascinans* (pp. 31-40). This also might be said of wonder, the progenitor of curiosity (Gilbert, 2013), but not necessarily of awe. As a tremendous, fascinating, and daunting mystery, numinosity can be seen as an intense form of both wonder and awe, expressed through feelings of terror, submission, reverence, dependence, fascination, rapture, and exaltation.

Jung (1938/1969) draws heavily on Otto’s (1917/1992) ideas and also adds that the numinous is “a quality belonging to a visible object or the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness” (p. 7). This appears less “wholly other” than Otto’s depiction and more closely aligned with wonder. Jungian scholar Roderick Main (2006, pp. 158-159) believes that Jung concurred in large part with Otto’s views of the potent, compelling, ambiguous, and objective nature of the numinous, and also diverged from him in appropriating the term to characterize the unconscious, and especially its archetypal patterns. In doing so, Main believes that Jung connected the numinous more closely to the human psyche and to the empirical, epitomizing his dual sacred and secular approach.

In conclusion, wonder, oceanic feeling, awe, and numinosity seem to lie on a continuum in which fear, power, and reverence become more intense as wonder moves

toward awe and numinosity. A gesture of awe and numinosity might be the submissive posture of a crouched body with hands and arms covering a bowed head. On the other hand, an erect body with head thrown back, chest open and arms outstretched might represent wonder. Each could turn into the other. It is no wonder that the members of the family of wonder are confused so frequently.

Autobiographical Calling to the Topic

Early engagement with wonder.

My initial, conscious engagement with wonder began at around age 10 when a profound recognition of simply being in the world startled me. While soaking in the bathtub, I was seized by the realization, "I am here. How very strange!" as if existence itself said "hello" for the first time. I was befuddled for at least 10 minutes, until the bath water turned cold. Philosophers might call this existential or ontological wonder, but at age 10, I called it weird. In retrospect, it was quite daunting.

Since then, I have continued to experience moments when the eternal seems to burst into the temporal as the sacred slips into the mundane, bringing with it a sense of touching the ground of all that is. I consider these to be experiences of wonder, but they are not always sweetness and light and can tend toward fear, awe, and obliteration in an instant. Many other instances of wonder I experience are less dramatic, when they accompany me like a trusted friend in the delightful, beautiful, touching, and grateful moments in everyday life and relationships.

Wonder has tended to come to me from three primary realms: biology/nature, classical music, and the imaginal. In high school, I was so entranced with biological drawings that I saved my pocket money to buy *Faber's Anatomical Atlas* (Burdon, MacDonald, & McKenzie, 1962). How amazing it was to see that the branching of blood

vessels so closely resembled that of trees; that two cells, through their own internal programming, miraculously could become a baby; and that yards and yards of gut could fit perfectly into a small human torso. To realize that so much complexity and organization went on continuously in our bodies out of our awareness, out of sight, and out of our control amazed and humbled me.

It was microscope work in my teenage years that introduced me to the wonder of the secret life of living organisms. Hidden from my naked eyes, yet mere inches from my nose, I would lose myself in an unexpected world of miniscule, organic structures dazzling with intricacy and beauty, and the space between myself and the marvelous objects of my attention seemed to thin. It was as if the essence of the universe was revealing itself to me and, somehow, we were kin. Phenomenologist Max van Manen (2011b) captures the sense of this experience, writing: "Wonder is that moment of being when . . . our gaze has been captured by the gaze of something staring back at us" (para. 3). My breath would catch, my chest would expand, and a deep exhale would release itself. Sometimes it felt as if I were dissolving. The experience would leave me somewhat disoriented, grateful, curious, reverent, and warm. It began my urgent quest into the nonvisible essence of things, and I resonated strongly with the description of Fox's secret in *The Little Prince*: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; What is essential is invisible to the eye" (Saint-Exupéry, 1943/1971, p. 87).

For me creation was, and is, wondrous and stunning in its beauty, symmetry, diversity, interconnectedness, and in the magnificently creative ways it adapts, reproduces, and maintains equilibrium. "How do they do all this on their own—and together?" I wondered, not realizing until decades later that self-organization and

homeostasis was part of the mystery of the psyche in which we are embedded. How profound it was to discover that most plants and animals have male and female organs and energies. And what an astonishing feat that a chrysalis could turn into a butterfly and a tadpole into a frog. Who thought that up? Perhaps these were my first clues to nature's archetypal patterning, psyche's capacity for self-regulation, the miracle of metamorphosis and transformation, and a foreshadowing of the world as animated.

As a teen, I also heard the voice of wonder clearly through classical music. That it could imperceptibly connect to what felt like my center and move me to tears in a heartbeat still astounds me. It continues to shake me up in an instant and can transport me to some place that is beyond words, a realm I have come to recognize as Soul, both my soul and an all-encompassing Soul of the world. I listened voraciously to classical music, sang in choirs, and played the French Horn in youth orchestras. The unseen power behind biology and music ignited my spirit and fed my soul, deepening and intensifying my sense of the mystery and energy of life.

Losing and retrieving wonder.

Ultimately, I studied theology in university and imagined that, underlying these unfathomable mysteries, must lie the secret of the divine. Sadly, the deep wonder, awe, and sense of intimate connection with the universe I felt while gazing through the microscope and listening to music was missing there. Biblical exegesis, church doctrine, and parsing Greek verbs only dampened my sense of wonder. I graduated allergic to all forms of religion and spirituality, presumably an unconscious defensive maneuver to protect myself from further pain, loss, and disappointment. I spent the next 10 years playing professional tennis, and 20 years more building a successful career in the world

of marketing. My passions for music and nature took a back seat, and my sense of wonder waned.

By age 50, I had succeeded in business but had become thoroughly disenchanted with life. I whimpered in my journal, “Bit by bit, slowly, slowly, I feel as if my soul has been buried. It was bright, shining, enthusiastic, energetic. Now, it’s dull, listless, tired, boring, flat” (Personal Journal, June 26, 2000). In the throe of this midlife descent, an uninvited, quite terrifying *déjà vu* sense of the divine took hold of me. Unable to accommodate these feelings, I began working with the Bonny Method (Bonny & Savary, 1973; Bonny, 2002; Ward, 2002), a psychotherapeutic process and form of active imagination in which personal and archetypal imagery arises spontaneously through listening to classical music in a waking dream state. The process utterly transformed my sense of reality and myself.

Jungian analysis complemented with the Bonny Method introduced me to the colossally wondrous surprises of the reality of the unconscious and the power of the imaginal. They were the perfect response to my inner plea, “Please tell me there is more to life than this.” The process evoked an intense range of emotion of a personal and transpersonal nature and, to my astonishment, I discovered my inner world was replete with enchanting nature figures—fairies, water sprites, pixies, elves, a green giant, Pegasus, a swan, a magician, animated trees, and more. Although initially I resented the intrusion of these entities, ultimately I accept them as my allies. They were the perfect complement for one who felt burdened by a seemingly irrational heaviness of heart and who had had lost her senses of both wonder and humor.

The discovery of this unseen realm ultimately awakened me to an appreciation of the world as a radically wondrous place. I reconnected with my passion for the natural sciences through some cosmology classes and, at the intersection of music, imagery, and nature, my wonder at life returned. Slowly, I became resituated within the much larger, deeper, and more mysterious universe that I had glimpsed with holy wonder decades earlier. Along with this came a renewed sense of vitality I had not felt in years and an eagerness to step into the ambiguity of the second half of my life, even if in fear and trembling. Depth psychologist Robert Romanyshyn's (1999) description of how wonder helped transform his deep personal grief resonates strongly with my own experience:

> A completely unexpected sense of wonder and delight gradually began to take a hold of me. . . . How can I tell you that out of the depths of grief and mourning I began to come to my senses through the rich sensuous ripeness of the world, that I began to feel in the presence of the simplest things of the world a naive, fresh, and innocent sense of delight, that life began to touch me like a lover, that from grief there was blossoming a completely unexpected sensual, erotic, and even sexual hunger for the world? (p. 16)

Like Romanyshyn, I emerged from the shadows experiencing surprise, delight, and re-connection with the very pulse of life and the heart and Soul of the world. This wonder was healing, life giving, and transformative.

Transference to the topic.

Philosopher Mark Kingwell (2000) said, "Wonder invites not only the investigation of the world but also reflection on the subject who experiences it" (p. 89). The discovery, loss, and retrieval of wonder in my life not only have influenced my topic selection, but also have transference implications to the work.

Profound experiences of wonder can be the spark that initiates the psychologist's theories, the philosopher's concepts, the theologian's doctrines, the scientist's proofs, and the artist's art. Tragically, with the possible exception of the latter, the attempt to explain

mysteries can asphyxiate the originating wonderment. Theology, religion, and I, in endeavoring to make sense of and manage wonder and mystery, actually stifled them. My efforts to codify mystery had been soul-destroying, and the possibility of repeating this travesty, of losing my sense of wonder in the exploration of it, has haunted this undertaking. I am aware both of my inclination to want to explain or pin down the mysterious and also my strong desire to avoid doing exactly that. So, this study has been exercise in living and navigating this tension.

The influence of my personal history on this topic also includes the fact that I consider the shadow of wonder to be some combination of fear, objectivism, reductionism, closed-mindedness, materialism, cynicism, and banality. I view a world devoid of wonder as a disenchanted hellhole, one in which the ego reigns supreme, control is paramount, depression and narcissism thrive, and a sense of entitlement justifies almost anything, including the plundering of our planet. Because these attributes are anathema to me, they likely populate my own shadow, too.

My experiences have shown me that the gift of wonder can be life giving and redemptive. It seems to facilitate or point to a connection with Soul. Whether arising from aesthetic beauty, personal relationship, the marvels and catastrophes of nature, mysterious intrapsychic phenomena, or the hidden depths of daily life, each can magnify the precariousness and preciousness of life (Halstead, 2006), our kinship with nature (Keen, 1969/1973), and consciousness of ourselves as creatures (Otto, 1917/1992).

Relevance of the Topic to Depth Psychotherapy

Writer and fine artist Bruno Schulz (1988) said:

> When we pursue an inquiry beyond a certain depth, we step out of the field of psychological categories and enter the sphere of the ultimate mysteries of life.

> The floorboards of the soul, which we try to penetrate, fan open and reveal the starry firmament. (p. lxxvii)

That well may be true for many psychotherapeutic approaches, but not for depth psychotherapy, where the "floorboards of the soul" are its home and the ultimate mysteries of life are the air it breathes. For the analytical and archetypal schools of depth psychotherapy are concerned not only with the conscious ego but also with the personal and collective unconscious, and they espouse a psychic structure to all that exists, namely, anima mundi, the Soul of the world. They accept and embrace that "wondrous things are in the air" (James, 1902/2008, p. 505). Also, according to archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1961), "Depth psychology begins where reason gives up, where the mind is at the end of its tether and the irrational field cannot be held at bay regardless how tight the theory" (p. xvi). Wonder might be described similarly; like depth psychology it is a portal to the fathomless depths of existence, to realities that lie below the surface of this world, and to infinite realms beyond reason and sense.

Hallmarks of depth psychotherapy include acceptance of the unknown, nonrational thinking, the unseen, mystery, the unbidden, paradox, and surprise. Wonder straddles this same terrain. Psychoanalyst Peter Lomas (2004) states that the key to psychotherapy is that "the world around us is accepted as mysterious and unavailable to an omnipotent desire to control it" (p. 105). He notes that those entering therapy, to a greater or lesser extent, have lost their sense of wonder and that "one way of conceiving the therapist's task is to say that the aim should be to restore, as far as possible, this sense of wonder" (p. 111).

The apparent archetypal dimensions of wonder also make it relevant to depth psychology. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (2000) words point to this when he states:

> It is my thesis that the spirit of wonder which led Blake to Christian mysticism, Keats to Arcadian myth, and Yeats to Fenians and fairies is the very same spirit that moves great scientists, a spirit which, if fed back to poets in scientific guise, might inspire still greater poetry. (p. 27)

The universal quality of wonder suggests an archetypal motif underlying a pattern of energy common to all human experience since the beginning of time. Heschel (1951/1992) points further to wonder's archetypal depths. He describes wonder as "radical amazement" (pp. 11-17) and says:

> Under the running sea of our theories and scientific explanations lies the aboriginal abyss of radical amazement. Radical amazement has a wider scope than any other act of man. While any act of perception or cognition has as its object a selected segment of reality, radical amazement refers to all of reality; not only what we see, but also to the very act of seeing as well as to our own selves, to the selves that see and are amazed at their ability to see. (p. 13)

And, beyond humankind, primatologist Jane Goodall went as far as to conclude that her chimpanzees in Gombe possessed a sense of wonder after she witnessed how they would perch on a rock and gape at a waterfall transfixed for ten or more minutes at a time (as cited in Prinz, 2013, para 20). Such is the breadth and depth of wonder that becomes increasingly apparent as this study proceeds.

The transformative process of depth psychotherapy involves encounters with multiple levels of reality and deep dialogue with Soul. How well we can tolerate and embrace the ineffable mystery of the unseen and the ambiguity of not knowing is an important factor for patient and therapist alike. Encounters with wonder also create a similar tension between mystery and our apparent need to unlock life's riddles. So, wonder, depth psychotherapy, and Soul seem to be intertwined, and a more

comprehensive understanding of wonder, presumably, would benefit depth psychotherapy. Heschel (1951/1992) notes:

> We realize that we are able to look at the world with two faculties—with reason and with wonder. Through the first we try to explain or to adapt the world to our concepts, through the second we seek to adapt our minds to the world. (p. 11)

Adapting our minds to the world rather than the world to our concepts strongly reflects the depth psychological view of man as being embedded in Soul rather than vice versa.

Similarly, Fuller (2006) writes:

> Wonder entices us to consider the reality of the unseen, the existence of a more than general order of existence from which this world derives meaning and purpose. It is thus to be expected that wonder also entices us to believe that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting thereto. (p. 15)

Again, acknowledging that it is our job to adapt to the world, this theologian's words sound as if they might have been written with a depth psychotherapist's pen. He also demonstrates that, as an ubiquitous human experience, wonder belongs to humankind's psychology.

> Almost every human culture possesses rituals specifically designed to induce emotional states that include elements of awe and wonder . . . forces and powers whose existence had never before been suspected are thereafter believed to be crucial variables affecting the persons' quests for wholeness and fulfillment. (pp. 66-67)

Here, Fuller connects the universal human experience of wonder and awe to mankind's path toward wholeness, which lies at the very heart of depth psychotherapy.

Halstead (2006), writing about the awe and wonder of children, says:

> The two terms capture something important about their curiosity and fascination with things, their extraordinary capacity to enter into fantasy and exercise their imagination, their intense awareness of immediate experiences and emotions, and their innocent raising of profound questions about the meaning of life. (p. 26)

In depth psychotherapy, these are qualities and capacities we nurture in our patients of all ages—curiosity about their experiences, capacity for entering the imaginal, emotional

presence, and quest for meaning. If wonder indeed catalyzes all this, then it would seem to warrant a hospitable sensibility and respected place in depth psychotherapy.

Central to depth psychotherapy is the "assimilation of the ego to a wider personality" (Jung, 1945/1969, p. 292). The effects of wondrous encounters suggest a similar shift, which Edward Edinger (1972/1992) described as "relativization of the ego as it experiences and relates to the Self" (p. 5). And Louis Stewart's (1987a) archetypal affect theory identifies surprise/startle (a characteristic of wonder) as having a centering and reorienting function, writing: "The stimulus to startle is the 'unexpected', and the dimension it characterizes is that of orientation, that is the place of the ego and the organism in the world and with relation to the self" (para. 18).

The fear pole of wonder mentioned earlier, which generates awe and reverence, may relate to this radical shift in personal identity and power. As Jung (1956/1989) said, "The experience of the self is always a defeat for the ego" (p. 546). Such a defeat, at the core of depth psychotherapy, can be terrifying. If integrated, it can effect a positive transformation, sometimes known as a spiritual emergence (Grof & Grof, 1989). Alternatively, this shift can overwhelm the ego and lead to psychosis and spiritual emergency (Grof & Grof, 1989; Perry, 1999).

More recently, Bulkeley (2002) echoes this in his neuroscientific study of wonder, in which he views wonder as a centering and re-centering process. He maintains that when "facing something surprisingly new and unexpectedly powerful, one's ordinary sense of personal identity (the psychoanalytic ego) is dramatically altered, leading to a new knowledge and understanding that ultimately re-centers the self" (para. 12).

If encounters with wonder contribute to the relativization of the ego, then wonder may radically deepen and expand our sense of reality and, providing we can accommodate this, wonder may transform the view we have of ourselves and of our relationship to the cosmos.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Imagine my surprise when I consulted the indexes of every psychology book in my personal library and couldn't find a single reference to wonder.

—Psychology of religion scholar Robert Fuller (2006, p. viii)

Overview

The voice of wonder rings through the literature of philosophy, theology, science, nature, literature, the arts, history, social science, and more. Yet, although wonderment is not a rare human experience, the psychology literature on wonder *per se* is small. A database search for psychology dissertations and peer-reviewed articles on wonder demonstrates this dearth. In a search conduced on December 16, 2012 among dissertation abstracts in the Proquest database, 291 contained the words *nature* and *wonder*, 245 *literature* and *wonder*, 182 *arts* and *wonder,* 142 *science* and *wonder*, 111 *philosophy* and *wonder*, 63 *theology* and *wonder, and* 33 *psychology* and *wonder*. Of the latter, only two originated from actual psychology programs (Hycner, 1976; Solow, 2000). Also, a search on the same date of peer-reviewed entries in the psychology listings of PEP and PSYCH INFO in the EBSCO database (including articles, books, chapters and theses) generated 156 sources with *wonder* in the title, 12 with *wondrous*, and 5 with *wonderment.*

When it comes to books, with the exception of three from the adjoining field of the psychology of religion (Bulkeley, 2005; Fuller, 2006; and Keen, 1969/1973), it appears that no books have been written on wonder in psychology. Yet, since around the 1990s, a burst of scholarly books have been published on wonder from outside psychology (Bersanelli & Gargantini, 2009; Cox & Cohen, 2013; Dawkins, 2000, 2013; Daston & Park, 1998/2001; Deane-Drummond, 2006b; Deckard & Losonczi, 2010; Fisher, 1998; Heschel, 2010; Holmes, 2010; Lewis, 1998; Midgley, 1989; Miller, 1992;

Quinn, 2002; Pruett, 2012; Rubenstein, 2008; Spalding, 2005; and Vasalou, 2012). We draw upon many of these, as well as on other texts in the fields of philosophy, the psychology of religion, sciences, and the arts in subsequent chapters of this work to amplify the data of the researcher's personal experience of wonder.

Wonder's Entry into Psychology

It was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1799/1893) and William James (1902/2008) who, through their studies of religious experience, opened the way for expanded states of consciousness, such as wonder, to be considered within the purview of psychology. In some psychologies, awe, numinosity, and oceanic feeling are discussed in the literature, and we consider them to be related states of wonder. Each reflects, in varying degrees, our response to being confronted by the unknown, the novel, the mysterious, and the ineffable, and each necessitates some degree of shift in ego boundaries. A variety of emotional shading exists in these wondrous states, with wonder being more energizing and less fear-laden than its relatives. At the same time, wonder can morph into the other states depending on the sensibility of the wonderer. This review, however, focuses on wonder *per se* in the literature of psychology, to which it has been more alluded than stated.

The few studies on wonder *per se* that have taken place in psychology have originated primarily in the fields of humanistic-existential and transpersonal psychologies. The research of Abraham Maslow (1962/1968, 1964/1970, 1976) on peak experiences and Being-cognition prepared the ground for the emergence of what appears to be the first psychological study of wonder in Richard Hycner's (1976) dissertation *The Experience of Wonder*: *A phenomenological sketching and its implications for therapy.* The only other major study this researcher could find on wonder in psychology hailed

from Jamie Solow's (2000) dissertation, *Living with Wonder.* In addition to these, transpersonal psychologist William Braud (2001) completed a minor study significant to this topic. This review will begin with these studies followed by the literature from other schools of psychology that mention, allude to, or are tangential to wonder.

Wonder in Humanistic-Existential and Transpersonal Psychologies

Abraham Maslow.

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), research psychologist and a founder of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, studied peak experiences (Maslow, 1962/1968, 1964/1970, 1976), which he believed described moments of self-actualization. He regards wonder as one possible response to a peak experience. "The emotional reaction in the peak experience," he said, "has a special flavor of wonder, of awe, of reverence, of humility and surrender" (Maslow, 1962/1968, p. 81).

Maslow (1962/1968) also introduced the term "Being-cognition" (or "B-cognition") to describe the holistic and accepting aspect of the peak experience. He wrote, "In B-cognition the experience or the object tends to be seen as a whole, as a complete unit, detached from relations, from possible usefulness, from expediency, and from purpose" (p. 74). So, B-cognition is passive and involves a yielding without judgment or categorization, very much the way wonder appears to be perceived.

Although some of the characteristics of B-cognition have been challenged (Blanchard, 1969), many of its attributes do seem to describe wonder. These include loss of ego; self-forgetfulness; disorientation in time and space; fusion of polarities; compassion toward the world; perception of the world's unity independent of the individual's personal needs; complete, though momentary, loss of fear, anxiety,

inhibition, defense and control; and isomorphism between the inner and outer worlds (pp. 69-91).

Maslow's work has not escaped criticism from depth psychologists. As psychoanalyst William Blanchard (1969) notes, one of the major limitations of Maslow's (1962/1968) work is his proposition that peak experiences are always pleasant, good, and beautiful and are never experienced as evil or undesirable. In fact, many of the peak experience characteristics described above, especially loss of ego and disorientation in space and time, can be both unpleasant and frightening. Blanchard points out that Maslow offered his subjects these research instructions:

> I would like you to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences in your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moment, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly "being hit" by a book or a painting, or from some great creative moment. (p. 67)

Maslow asked for positive experiences, so it is little wonder that his subjects delivered them, and clearly his findings reflected this. Blanchard concludes that Maslow described only one side of the multisided phenomenon of the peak experience, and presumably this also would apply also to wonder.

Hillman (1975/1992) lambasts Maslow, noting that "highs and peaks say nothing about the worth of person undergoing them, for they can occur also in psychopaths and criminals, having nothing to do either with creativity or maturity" (p. 66). In grand Hillmanian style he goes on to cite the peak experiences of kleptomaniac stealing, pyromanic barn burning, sadism, grave desecrations, bombing, and bayonetting. He continues, "Whenever the importance of experience is determined only by intensity, by absoluteness, by ecstatic Godlikeness of God-nearness and is self-validating, there is risk of possession by an archetypal person and a manic inflation" (p. 66). He also warns that

transcendence by means of a “high” can be a manic way of denying depression a “psychopathological state in disguise” (p. 66).

Analytical psychologist Nathan Field (1992), in his article “The Therapeutic Function of Altered States” notes that both Jung and Maslow regarded peak experiences as having healing potential. However he qualifies this by adding:

> But everything depends on the person to whom the experience comes. One individual may be marvelously changed by it, the next merely inflated; a third may get addicted to states of bliss or intense rapport and keep trying to re-create it, a fourth can become totally disorientated and convert the experience into a psychological catastrophe. (p. 11)

We certainly could say the same for the altered state of wonder; it has much room for individual interpretation and response. In spite of the criticism, it is important to acknowledge that Maslow played a monumental role in helping to expand the boundaries of psychology and psychotherapy, and in rendering nonordinary states of consciousness acceptable within the normal parameters of human experience.

Richard Hycner and Jamie Solow.

Richard Hycner’s (1976) and Jamie Solow’s (2000) dissertations, both dedicated to wonder in psychology, are phenomenological studies that emerged from of the humanistic-existential school. Some key findings from these dissertations follow.

Wonder as an irruption.

Hycner (1976) and Solow (2000) discovered that experiences of wonder come as sudden and unexpected irruptions into daily life; they pull us out of the ordinary world and thrust us into a new world, ultimately changing our entire being-in-the-world. Solow notes that the surprise commands our full engagement and cites phenomenologist Seen Halling, who wrote, “Surprise means that our attention is fully engaged; one cannot be surprised out of the corner of one’s eye” (Halling as cited in Solow, p. 177).

Our response to being confronted by the wondrous object, even if it is familiar, is as if we are seeing it for the first time. Hycner (1976) describes this as a “shattering of conceptual categories, which had previously encapsulated the object” (p. 154). Solow (2000) says, “a new version of knowing takes place” (p. 166), and “freshness becomes intrinsic to the manner in which we behold the world”(p. 176).

Being taken by wonder.

Wonder is an experience beyond our will and beyond our ken. Solow (2000) likens it to “being seized” (p. 194) by a momentous experience of meaning, and Hycner (1976) to “being taken” (p. 155), shaken out of the everyday world and into a different world where time and place often are distorted and words fail us (p. 157). Likewise, Vasalou (2012) emphasizes being struck by wonder, which explains why, prior to modern-day affect theory, it was considered one of the passions. Indeed, Descartes (1649/1989) named wonder the first of six passions (p. 56), along with love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness. Another philosopher, Tim Freke (2012), in his book *The Mystery Experience*, writes of the deponent verb form of wonder, and the phrase “it wonders me” (p. 38), which is used colloquially in some areas of Pennsylvania and also suggest being taken by wonder.

One of Hycner’s (1976) participants, speaking of the onset of wonder, said, “It reached out and grabbed me” (p. 156). Another realized, “I’m not as much in control as I thought I was . . . I can’t say that I did it but rather that it happened to me” (p. 155). And, another remarked, “It wouldn’t allow me to ignore it.” There is a definite sense of an autonomous other expressed here. Could it be that these unbidden experiences are expressions of Soul? Wonder’s connection to Soul seems to be implicit in several places in Hycner’s research, although he does not state or seem to recognize this.

Wonder as merging.

Although merging more often is associated with mystical and oceanic experience (Freud, 1930/1961), Hycner (1976) and Solow (2000) discovered that it also can be present in wonder. According to Hycner, wonder transforms objects into subjects and results in the unifying experience of an I-Thou relationship (Buber, as cited in Hycner, 1976, p. 154). Wonder can be mesmerizing, and everything else becomes peripheral to this one perception. There is a sense of both internal and external expansion approaching a merging with the object of wonder. One of Hycner's participants, describing being deeply touched, said:

> I kind of felt like it was one of the few times that there had been such a thing as a soul—that I had touched it—it was like my core—everything that I am sort of all wrapped up there but I really touched it. (p. 160)

Another participant, describing being united with some internal or external force, said, "I guess the wonder of it for me was that I was really connected with I guess what you call basic nature, you know, something very universal" (p. 161). One more reported, "really a feeling of totalness—a real merging kind of with nature" (p. 161). Were these, perhaps, experiences of being part of the Soul of the world, anima mundi?

Solow (2000, pp. 168-172) writes that, in a state of wonder, we are entirely engaged, and "our involvement with the world is at its utmost" (p. 169). That which is inside us connects with that which is outside us leading to merging and attachment. We surrender passively to wonder's lead. Solow recognized that, for some of his participants, there was no boundary between the object of their wonder and themselves, and he relates this to philosopher and developmental theorist Ken Wilber's concept of unity consciousness (as cited in Solow, p. 174). This results, he says, in our becoming viscerally in tune with our perceptions and more deeply attuned with our world. From a

depth psychology perspective, we might express this experience as being in attunement with the Soul of the world.

As perceptions, previous thoughts, emotions, and speculation fall away, Solow (2000) says, we encounter freedom “in response to the utter connection with the object” (p. 168). We get to know our world from the inside, with a sense of interiority. A sense of appreciation and respect emerges, and Solow concludes that, “care and connection appear to have an exponentially developing relationship with wonder” (p. 175).

Hints of wonder’s archetypal nature.

One participant in Hycner’s (1976) study reported this experience of wonder:

> I felt really—that primitive feeling of being a man—and something that is—is historical. . . . Yah, especially when I was looking at her—like there was a man in me looking at her it wasn’t just a person—something very primitive—and something that seems sort of—well at the time it didn’t seem scary but I felt that at some point I just sort of have to break myself out of it because it was sort of overwhelming—but I didn’t feel overwhelmed while it was happening—it was like again touching the root—the primitive. (p. 159)

Hycner notes that this resembles Zen and yoga experiences but, with the frequent mentions of the primitive, we have to ponder if this experience reflects deep archetypal patterning, and if wonder could be an archetypal affect (Stewart, 1987a, 1987b, 1996).

Some of Hycner’s (1976) participants also reported that, seemingly, “someone” beyond themselves was responding to the wondrous object, “like watching myself—like realizing what was going on and at the same time—taking part in it” (p. 158). Hycner calls this “non-attached being” but might this not reflect an awareness of Soul’s participation in the wondrous and to wonder’s archetypal dimension?

Wonder as nonpurposive vs. adaptive.

Like Maslow (1962/1968, p. 74), both Hycner (1976) and Solow (2000), recognize the nonpurposive, nontask orientation of wonder. Hycner notes that “the very

attempt to achieve it as a goal paradoxically seems to make it impossible to achieve" (p. 171) and suggests rather that the purpose of wonder seems to be intrinsic, and the experience an end in itself. Similarly, Solow says, "As soon as we have a goal, wonder disappears" (p. 170) but that "we go to an object with no thought of its utility, and come from it with a greater understanding of its quality" (p. 173). So, both Hycner and Solow agree that we cannot exactly cultivate a sense of wonder, given that surprise is one of its essential qualities. However, Solow suggests that we can nourish a sense of wonder in our lives by cultivating an attitude of appreciation for the extraordinary within the ordinary (p. 189), and Hycner says, "you cannot aim at it, yet you can prepare the ground for it to happen" (p. 171). We examine this in more detail in subsequent chapters.

It is the nonpurposive aspect of wonder that has proven to be an enigmatic challenge for affect theorists for it renders wonder incapable of conforming to the standard evolutionary-adaptive model of emotions (Fuller, 2006; Haidt, 2003; Vasalou, 2012). Startle-induced emotions are expected to motivate action, but wonder appears to be neither goal- nor action-oriented (Fuller, 2006, pp. 24-26). Rather, wonder arrests movement and suspends breathing according to emotion theorist Nico Frijda (1986), so there is no action tendency or apparent adaptive value.

Others have shed some light on the nonpurposive aspect of wonder. Charles Darwin (1872/1965), in his *Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, observes that some emotional responses like surprise and astonishment (attributes of wonder) may not lead immediately to action. He further asserts that "if no exertion follows, and we still remain astonished, then our attention continues long and earnestly absorbed" (p. 284).

This comports with several accounts (Bulkeley, 2005; Hycner, 1976; Solow, 2000) that one hallmark of wonder is a strong sense of the fullness of the present.

Positive psychologist Jonathan Haidt (2003) proposes the existence of a category of moral emotions, including wonder and awe, that does not serve immediate safety and survival needs but does contribute to the formation, maintenance, and occasional restructuring of social groups (pp. 852-870). Resembling Darwin's observations, Haidt notes that wonder and awe, rather than mobilizing defenses, "make people stop, admire, and open up their hearts and minds" (p. 863). Frijda (1986), too, maintains that wonder enlarges our peripheral vision and widens our field of attention (p. 18). In this context, Fuller (2006) views wonder's purpose as adaptive to the wider interpersonal, moral, and cultural environments (p. 41).

Behavioral scientist Winifred Gallagher (2011) has researched neophilia, the attraction to the new and the different. Maintaining that humans are hard-wired for novelty and change and that neophilia has adaptive advantages, she proposes that its underpinnings are three affects—surprise, curiosity, and interest. These also are key attributes of wonder, so this suggests not only a tie between wonder and neophilia but also a possible adaptive purpose of wonder.

Although we might expect to find wonder explicated in the burgeoning, modern-day field of affect theory, wonder has managed to escape its grasp by defying the standard criteria for scientific study. A small number of theorists (Frijda, 1986; Haidt & Keltner, 2004; Izard & Ackerman, 2000; Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; Nussbaum, 2001) have attempted to understand wonder but have been apt to conflate it with related emotional states including surprise, amazement, interest, curiosity, awe, admiration, and

elevation. Richard Lazarus and Bernice Lazarus (1994) include wonder and awe among our emotional responses to aesthetic experiences (pp. 135-136) but admit, “we are not quite sure how to deal with them” (p. 135). They note that “these emotional reactions remain at the frontier of our understanding of the human mind” (p. 136) and point out that “given their importance and emotional power, it is remarkable that so little scientific attention has been paid to aesthetic experience as a source of emotion in our lives” (p. 136). It is important to note at this juncture that no affect theorist considers that wonder might be an archetypal expression of Soul. Jungian Louis Stewart’s (1987a, 1987b, 1996) work points to this possibility and is discussed later in this review. Philosopher Jerome Miller (1992) asserts that wonder is not so much a subjective emotion as a disclosure from the objective world (p. xii). Similarly, cosmologists Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker (2011) maintain, “Wonder is not just another emotion; it is rather an opening into the heart of the universe” (p. 114).

William Braud.

Transpersonal psychologist William Braud (2001) adds an important element to this depth exploration of wonder. In a small study, he explores the meaning of “wonder-joy tears” (p. 100) often shed, he claims, during experiences of wonder. He describes his own such tears as “my body’s way of letting me know I am having an unplanned unavoidable encounter with the real” (p. 100) and concludes that the tears indicate moments of profound insight, of being open to the true the good and the beautiful. Elkins (1995, p. 83), too, also associates tears with the empathic resonance of Soul.

Many of Braud’s (2001) findings about the experience of wonder closely resemble those of Hycner (1976) and Solow (2000), and he also adds some details: the phenomenon of the tears; shivering, shuddering, quivering, and tingling feelings; a sense

of density or thickness; a sense of being accompanied; and a sense of façade-cracking. But it is his interpretation of the wonder-joy tears as suggesting a special way of seeing "with the eye of the heart, the soul and spirit" (p. 99) that seems most significant to the depth psychological focus of this study.

Braud (2001) speaks of wonder-joy tears as pointers, affirmations, or confirmations that "the windows of perception have been cleansed so that we can see more clearly, more lucidly. Wonder-joy tears may provide clues that the real me, the real person, real reality . . . is being confronted, appreciated, experienced" (p. 106). Could the elusive purpose of wonder be to alert us to the presence of Soul? Braud does not state his conclusions in this way, but he does say that the wonder-joy tears provide a way of knowing, a way of listening to the heart and that, attending to what these tears reveal, can trigger transformation.

Braud (2001) tells us that "the eye of the heart, soul, and spirit is a metaphor (or is it more than a metaphor?) for a special form of knowing. It figures prominently in a number of rich spiritual and wisdom traditions" (p. 110, footnote 4) and can be traced through Plato, the Neoplatonists, and numerous Eastern and Western thinkers and mystics, especially in the Sufi tradition. Could it be that a special kind of perception is part of wonder's secret? We will explore this more fully in the chapters that follow.

Wonder in Positive Psychology

Although wonder has been discussed in positive psychology in connection to awe, it has been relatively absent from its research and literature. Positive psychology, a 1990s outgrowth of humanistic psychology, considers wonder to be among the universal virtues in its compendium *Character Strengths and Virtues* (Haidt & Keltner, 2004, pp. 537-551) and has attempted to study these positive virtues scientifically with a view to a better

understanding of human flourishing. The authors conflate wonder, admiration, and elevation within a family of "awe-related states," which they describe as self-transcendent, emotional responses of appreciation for beauty and excellence, also known as the appreciation factor. They used a variety of measures and scales hoping to identify correlations between appreciation and openness to experience, extroversion, gratitude, transcendence, materialism, epiphany, and more, but they judged their findings inconclusive due to the lack of a scale that assesses individual differences in the appreciation factor. Of pertinence to this study, Haidt and Keltner (2004) also link awe and wonder to the trait of "Openness to Experience" (McCrae, 1996), hereafter referred to as Openness, as identified in the Five Factor Model (FFM) model of personality, discussed later in this chapter.

Wonder Inherent in Analytical and Archetypal Psychology

There is little direct mention of wonder in depth psychology but, nevertheless, the depth field is permeated by wonder. Jung (1946/1969) himself wrote, "The psyche is the greatest of all cosmic wonders" (p. 357), and a cursory glance at his *Red Book* (Jung, 1945/2009), with its stunning artwork of his internal imagery, is an immediate indicator of the wondrousness of psyche. In the *Red Book*, Jung links wonder to Soul when, addressing his soul, he says, "Let me persist in divine astonishment, so I am ready to behold your wonders" (p. 238). And depth psychology's signature characteristics of the personal and collective unconscious, the numinous, the imaginal, archetypal patterning, dreams, visions, synchronicities, and the transcendent function are bathed in mystery and wonder.

William James.

William James, a pioneer of depth psychology, did, however, write a little about wonder. Through his studies on emotions (James, 1884/1983), religious experiences (James, 1902/2008), and other works, he situated experiences of wonder and expanded awareness within a psychological frame. In his essay *The Sentiment of Rationality* (James, 1905/2006*)* he states:

> Existence then will be a brute fact to which as a whole the emotion of ontologic wonder shall rightfully cleave, but remains eternally unsatisfied. Then wonderfulness or mysteriousness will be an essential attribute of the nature of things, and the exhibition and emphasizing of it will continue to be an ingredient in the philosophic industry of the race. (p. 75)

Here, James refers to the wonder that we exist at all. By saying it remains "eternally unsatisfied" (p. 75), he alludes to the fact that human knowledge never can dissolve this kind of wonder. Speaking of existence and ontologic wonder suggests that James was familiar with the emerging vocabulary of phenomenology, perhaps not surprising given that Husserl (1859-1938), the movement's founder, was a near contemporary of James (1842-1910).

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James (1902/2008) examines the phenomena of religious impulses and experience, and wonder is never far away. He describes a faith-state as "a feeling that great and wondrous things are in the air" (p. 505), and his accounts of others' mystical experiences have wondrous aspects to them (pp. 53-77). These states of expanded awareness he calls the "more," and he connects them with subconscious activity stating that, "the 'more' with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its hither side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life" (p. 512).

Ultimately, James (1902/2008) regards the subconscious as merging into the supernatural (pp. 515-516) so that "we can experience union with something larger than ourselves" (p. 525). This description preceded and very much resembled Freud's (1930/1961) account of oceanic feeling as merging with "the more" and its blurring of ego boundaries. James's several accounts of surrender of the will, foreshadow Jung's (1956/1989, p. 546) idea of defeat of the ego, and James's description of religious conversion as the shifting of the "habitual centre of energy" (p. 196) also speaks to this. Sounding very much as if he is describing wonder, he writes:

> A new perception, a sudden emotional shock or an occasion which lays bare the organic alteration, will make the whole fabric fall together; and then the centre of gravity sinks into an attitude more stable, for the new ideas that reach the centre of the re-arrangement seem now to be locked there, and the new structure remains permanent. (p. 197)

Similarly, psychology of religion scholar Kelly Bulkeley (2002) maintains that when one feels wonder, "facing something surprisingly new and unexpectedly powerful, one's ordinary sense of personal identity (the psychoanalytic ego) is dramatically altered, leading to a new knowledge and understanding that ultimately recenters the self" (p. 3). This also resembles the startle mechanism, a component of wonder, described by Jungian Louis Stewart (1987a, 1987b, 1996) in his archetypal affect theory.

Louis Stewart's archetypal affect theory.

In *A brief report: Affect and Archetype*, Louis Stewart (1987a) develops the contributions of Jung (1923/1971), Hillman (1961), and Sylvan Tomkins (1962, 1963) to the topic of affect, and also acknowledges the findings of emotion researchers Paul Ekman, Carroll Izard, and R. J. Trotter that confirm the universal nature of emotional expression in adults, children, and infants of all cultures. Although Stewart does not address wonder directly, his ideas about the emotions of interest-excitement combined

with the startle mechanism contribute to our understanding of the possible psychological action of wonder.

Stewart's (1987a) work relates the nature and function of affect to other functions of the psyche. For Jung (1923/1971), an affect is characterized by a state of feeling, which includes "marked physical innervation" and "a peculiar disturbance of the ideational processes" (pp. 411-412). Like Jung, Stewart maintains that the archetype appears as a behavior pattern, has a specific charge, and develops numinous effects, which express themselves as affects. So, where there is an archetype, there is affect; the reverse, however, is not always true.

Stewart (1987a) proposed a dynamic system of seven archetypal affects comprising an innate, regulatory system of the psyche. Two are the archetypal affects of the libido. They are joy-ecstasy and interest-excitement, which comprise the energic aspects of the archetypes of play and curiosity (para. 15), which could relate to wonder. These emotions ensure that newborns enter the world with the *joie de vivre* and curiosity about the new and novel to actively engage with the world.

The remaining five affects are archetypal affects of the primal self (terror, anguish, rage, and disgust/ humiliation, startle), which might be seen as the opposite pole of the wonder archetype. The fifth archetypal affect of the primal self, startle (also related to wonder), serves the functions of centering and reorientation (Stewart, 1987a, Hypothesis, para. 1). Stewart notes that affect theorist Sylvan Tomkins terms this a "resetting affect" (Tomkins as cited in Stewart, 1987a, para. 10).

Based on Stewart's (1987a) concepts, we can view wonder both as an archetypal affect of the libido, promoting a sense of curiosity, engagement, and vitality and also

related to the startle affect of the primal self. In the following passage, Stewart (1987a) provides both a phenomenological description of startle and a sense of its therapeutic action.

> Startle serves to centre consciousness and leads to reorientation, but it accomplishes more than that; it leads to a centring of the total organism which imposes an immediate and total cessation of any movement or sound; breathing ceases, and even the beat of the heart may be momentarily interrupted. At that moment all of the other affects are…functioning as its opposite. That is, their energy is totally in abeyance, although in a state of readiness to be sure. . . . The stimulus to startle is the 'unexpected', and the dimension it characterises is that of orientation, that is the place of the ego and the organism in the world and with relation to the self. (para. 18)

It is not hard to imagine that this also could describe the psychological action of wonder, and it is possible that wonder acts as a reset switch that restores the balance of the ego-self axis. Stewart's suggestion that the seeds of these psychic events are found in the behavior patterns of the archetypal affects of the primal self (terror, anguish, rage and disgust/humiliation) suggest that we should not be surprised to find more negative affects alongside wonder, and helps to explain how awe can be connected to terror.

Wonder in the Psychoanalytic Encounter

Several psychoanalysts (Adams, 1995; Cooper 2002; Fordham, 1993; Gordon, 2004; Lomas, 2004; Margulies, 1984; Stern, 1990) connect wonder to the desired open stance of repeated surprise and unknowing which Freud (1912/1960) proposed for psychoanalysts in his *Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis*. Successful cases, Freud maintained, are those "in which one proceeds, as it were, without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them [patients] with an open mind, free from any presuppositions" (p. 114). We might also view these recommendations as the requirements for maintaining openness to wonder.

These analysts also regard Freud's (1912/1960) basic rule of evenly suspended attention (p. 111), along with Wilfred Bion's (1970) notion of freedom from memory, desire, and understanding, as necessary for receptivity toward surprise and wonder in the therapeutic *temenos*. Combined with the patient's process of free association, these approaches create a field in which both analyst and patient can suspend judgment, put aside the usual biases of observation, and make important discoveries. As noted by Hycner (1976), Solow (2000), and others, goals and preconceptions are the death of surprise, wonder, and the emergence of novel solutions.

To avoid the considerable overlap of material among these psychoanalysts, this study highlights the contributions of Lomas (2004), Cooper (2002), and Margulies (1984), whose work is most closely tied to wonder. Peter Lomas (2004), in a short book chapter "Wonder and the Loss of Wonder" (pp. 103-111), relates wonder to love and maintains, along with other wonder scholars, that we become more fully enmeshed within life when we are aware of its wonder. He describes wonder as a glimpse of a world without labels, a moment of seeing clearly, and an impression preceding words. Like love, he recognizes that poets do a better job of describing wonder than philosophers. Lomas views the capacity for wonder in everyday life as "part and parcel of a healthy and realistic attitude to living" (p. 105) and maintains that acceptance of the world as a mystery outside our complete control is key to psychotherapy. Lomas clearly recognizes the significance of wonder both inside and outside the therapeutic dyad, and he joins several psychoanalysts (Cooper, 2002; Margulies, 1984) in his conviction that a sense of wonder and acceptance of mystery are important both for the patient and for the therapist,

the latter needing to "try to ensure that we do not ourselves adopt the stance that enables wonder to slip out of the room. (p. 111).

Psychoanalyst Paul Cooper (2002), in his article "Between wonder and doubt: Psychoanalysis in the goal-free zone" (pp. 95-118), juxtaposes wonder and knowledge (which he terms doubt), contrasting them as mystical and medical models that stand in symmetrical relation to one another. We surmise that this corresponds to the Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to wonder, also present in the religion-science debate, in which one pole of wonder points to mystery and the other to knowledge. For Cooper, the medical model emphasizes the acquisition of sensory knowledge whereas the mystical model focuses on nonsensory, intuitive truths, which defy definition. These poles also resemble the perceptual opposites of intuition and sensation in Jung's (1923/1971, p. 482) typology theory.

Of therapeutic consequence, Cooper (2002) highlights the importance of resolving the tension between wonder and doubt/knowledge, imagining it as a gap containing the unknown. He describes this as a creative space which, when faced, can engender lived truth and allow something new to metabolize. So, both wonder and doubt are important in analysis as they act dynamically upon each other and resemble Jung's (1923/1971) tension of the opposites, which creates a third through the transcendent function (pp. 479-480).

In the medical model, knowledge sooner or later fills in the gap, sealing the opening with words. As a result, too much explanation and interpretation can saturate the psychic space necessary for the patient's truth to emerge. Cooper (2002) believes that Freud accessed both models: wonder in his descriptions of unconscious processes and method of evenly hovering attention, and doubt in his favoring of the medical model, which aims to

close gaps by unearthing repressed memories, rendering the unconscious conscious, searching for latent meanings behind the manifest, and making the unknown known (p. 99).

The mystical model, in stark contrast, searches actively for gaps and considers them to be sources of truth and wisdom, and "if the medical model is continuous, linear, reductionist, and lexical, the mystical model is discontinuous, multidirectional expansive, and cosmic" (Cooper, 2002, p. 100). Thus, he sees wonder as representing an experiential and emotional expression of the mystical perspective.

Cooper (2002) concludes, "Wonder derives from and fuels the capacity to identify, enter, and tolerate gaps, leaving room for the infinite unknowable to evolve" (p. 105). The value in the not-knowing quality of wonder is the opportunity for the revelation of truth. Rather than "grasping after facts, sensory perceptions, desires to elicit change, or preoccupations with past events" (p. 112), the analyst's attitude of wonder, devoid of preconceptions that occlude direct experiencing, nurtures the surfacing of unknown truths. Thus, from Cooper we learn that, in analysis, an openness to wonder helps keep the psychic space open so that the depth of meaning can emerge without being foreclosed by hasty explanation, interpretation or premature words.

In his article "Toward Empathy: The Uses of Wonder," Alfred Margulies (1984, pp. 1025-1033) makes a convincing case for the importance of openness and receptivity to surprise and wonder in the therapeutic endeavor. Weaving together strands from Husserl's existential phenomenology, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, and John Keats's (1817/2001) concept of negative capability and tolerance of uncertainty, Margulies describes how both clinician and patient must clear their perceptual fields in order to freshly experience and see the world anew. He notes that the existential encounter with a

patient is filled with wonder and cites existential psychoanalyst Rollo May's description of it as an "instantaneous encounter with another person who comes alive to us on a very different level from what we know *about* him" (May, as cited in Margulies, p. 1029) and as "a sudden, sometimes powerful, experience of the here-is-a-new person, an experience that normally carries with it an element of surprise" (p. 1029).

In conclusion, the psychoanalytic literature tends to view wonder as a pragmatically desirable attitude for analyst and analysand to hold within the confines of the analytic dyad. Its interest is inclined more toward achieving a field of openness to surprise and the unknown through the desirable act of wondering than toward the actual experience and meaning of wonder at the world. In doing so, wonder's utility seems to dispel some of its mystery.

Richard Hycner's Wonder-Attuned Psychotherapy

Hycner (1976), a humanistic-existential psychotherapist, believes that greater attunement to wonder might help us bring balance to modern, technocratic, life-alienating consciousness (p. 168). Like psychoanalyst Lomas (2004), he notes that those presenting for therapy often suffer from lives devoid of fullness and meaning, correlating with a lack of a sense of reverence, attunement, and acceptance of the wondrous dimension of life.

Hycner (1976) emphasizes that wonder can be neither a means-to-an-end nor a technique in therapy but could be "a significant dimension which threads its way through the therapy" (p. 170). He sheds light on this by citing Gabriel Marcel's distinction between a problem and a mystery: "A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise in which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique" (Marcel, as cited in Hycner, 1976, p. 171). So, although wonder cannot be manipulated into existence, Hycner proposes that we can

prepare the ground for it by sensitizing patients to the mystery and radical otherness that surrounds them, a movement he sees as towards Maslow's Being-cognition (p. 171), which asserts that there can be unique value in the experience itself without needing to have a purpose.

Hycner (1976) discovers that people seem to feel refreshed and more whole through experiencing wonder, and suggests that it is innately life affirming and energizing (p. 172). But, echoing the psychoanalysts discussed earlier, he believes it is important to relinquish preconceptions, fantasies, projections, and conceptual systems to make room for the surprise of wonder and be open to new possibilities (p. 172). (Hycner seems to relate this primarily to the patient, and it is not clear if he thought it applied also to the therapist.) It requires developing an attunement to that which philosopher Alan Watts called the wisdom of insecurity (Watts, as cited in Hycner, 1976, p. 175). So a wonder-based therapy would de-emphasize the need for control and security and emphasize that not knowing what will happen next in our lives is our greatest certainty. It means releasing attempts to control what will happen next, or what we will perceive next. Keen (as cited in Hycner) suggests an "education for serendipity," saying:

> This obsession with controlling which characterizes technological culture blinds us to the necessity for alternative styles of perception and life. If we are unable to surrender control, to appreciate, to welcome, to wonder, to allow things and persons to speak with our own voice, to listen, we are condemned to perpetual aggression, to an unrelaxing Promethean effort to master the environment. No doubt there is a time for speaking, for dialectic, for control. But there is also a time for silence, for wonder, for surrender. (p. 175)

So, concurring with the psychoanalytic approach, a wonder-attuned therapy would emphasize being present to the emergence of the unexpected instead of anticipating what might occur. Exploring the unknown is paramount, with such therapy being "a wholistic

exploration of that which personally addresses this unique individual" (p. 175). In depth psychotherapy we might go further and identify Soul as the one who addresses us.

Hycner (1976) connects this approach of openness to the outlook of Hasidism, an 18th- and 19th-century Jewish mystical movement, which puts wonder at the center of a comprehensive view of life by not separating the sacred from the profane. Martin Buber describes Hasidism as "hallowing the everyday" (Buber, as cited in Hycner, p. 176), and Maurice Friedman (as cited in Hycner) explains:

> Revelation, to the Hasidim, did not mean the incursion of the supernatural, but openness to the wonder of the everyday—"the enormous lights and miracles" with which the world is filled. . . . "Miracle" is simply the wonder of the unique that points us back to the wonder of the every day. . . . The true opposite of "the habitual" is not the extraordinary or the unusual but the fresh, the open, the ever-new of the man who hallows the everyday. (p. 177)

We allow habit, preconception, and closed-mindedness to obscure wonder and, as the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, said "Alas! The world is full of enormous lights and mysteries, and man shuts them from himself with one small hand" (as cited in Hycner, p. 176). For the sake of security and stability, many people find that it is simply easier and safer to ward off the wonder of enormous lights and mysteries than to be open to the emergence of new and unpredictable possibilities. Wonder is about meeting and responding to the undisclosed, and Hycner maintains a therapy of wonder could help the patient be "not so easily threatened by being more attuned to the kaleidoscopic nature of things" (p. 177).

A wonder-attuned therapy would recognize that each person and event is significantly unique, continuously unfolding and set apart from our previous experiences. The attempt to possess any experience deadens us to new possibilities. "It is not that we 'have' an experience which can be conceptually encapsulated" Hycner said, "but rather

that there is a constant openness to being surprised, to being taken, to being amazed at what simply is" (Hycner, 1976, p. 178).

Hycner (1976) concludes that a therapy consonant with wonder would recognize that our experiences and perceptions are never final or complete, and that there are no final answers. Rather "we must be amazed at what previously concealed itself to us, now grants to reveal itself to us in a greater fullness" (p. 178). A glimpse of Soul appears to be hidden in Hycner's words once again.

Kirk Schneider's Awe-Based Psychotherapy

Humanistic existentialist psychotherapist Kirk Schneider (2013) was indebted to his mentor existential psychologist Rollo May, who said, "The blocking of one's capacity for wonder and the loss of the capacity to appreciate mystery can have serious effects on our…health, not to mention the health of our whole planet" (May, as cited in Schneider, 2013, p. 27). Schneider, however, takes up the mantle of awe, sometimes conflating it with wonder with comments often applying to both. He is concerned that, in modern-day psychology, the depth and richness of experience is being calculated, formulated, and operationalized rather than felt, sensed, and delicately evoked (Schneider, 2005, p. 169). He asks, "Will psychology make room for the terror and the wonder, magnificence and mystery, or, in short, awesomeness, that marks the human journey" (p. 168)?

His answer lies in proposing an "awe-based psychology" (2005, p. 170), which seeks to return both the heights and the depths of human experience to psychology, one that embraces the paradox "we are both angelic visionaries and food for worms" (p. 170). Schneider (2009a, 2009b) applies his precepts to psychotherapy suggesting that "to tap into awe-based consciousness, one must cultivate it at every opportunity and continually

challenge the marrow-sapping forces, such as consumerism and dogmatism, that distract and divert it" (2009a, para. 7).

Schneider (2009a, 2009b) suggests that we and our patients can access awe-based consciousness by developing certain sensibilities or lenses on life. These include transience to nurture life's preciousness; unknowing to nurture its fascination; surprise to nurture its possibilities; vastness to nurture its fathomless mystery; intricacy to nurture its subtleness and beauty; sentiment to nurture the capacity to be moved by both its heights and depths; and solitude to nurture aliveness, attentiveness, and absorption in what matters in life. It seems likely that sensitizing ourselves to these lenses might also help our patients cultivate a sense of wonder and, along with it, newfound appreciation for the world and their place in it.

Additional Psychological Dimensions of Wonder

Wonder and idealization.

Fuller (2006) and Lomas (2004) have suggested that the ongoing need for idealization among children and adults is related wonder. Psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) recognized idealization as the infant's basic need to be able to count on a powerful, calm, and confident presence in the face of a complex and seemingly chaotic inner and outer world. He believed that having such an idealizable source of strength and calmness, not just in childhood but also throughout adulthood, was crucial for one's ability to self-soothe and for the full development of the self. In Kohut's terms, we might say that wonder helps make the world become idealizable.

Fuller (2006, p. 91) regards wonder as imbuing the world with a luring quality, which helps us feel intimately connected with it and supports our ongoing need for idealization. Lomas (2004) goes further, suggesting that wonder thrives among children

when idealization dominates development, and it tends to diminish when belief in a benign world gradually erodes it, in Freudian terms, when the reality principle replaces the pleasure principle. Thus, as young as age 6, Lomas laments, the glow in the child's eyes may begin to fade as she learns caution, skepticism, pretense, and manipulation.

If, from childhood, we encounter a benevolent world, one that is a good self-idealizing selfobject, we are likely to be open enough to the new and the unknown to be able to experience the world as wondrous. However, if we have not developed early trust in our world, we may be averse to the new and the unknown, develop defenses for coping and survival and close the door to wonder's approach. Even so, wonder may irrupt into our lives and, in so doing, grant us a glimpse of something more that is redemptive.

Wonder and accommodation.

Another psychological dimension of wonder discussed in the literature is the accommodation of wonder. Developmental psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget (1964) writes about how we accommodate new experiences of the world that disrupt our psychological equilibrium and challenge us to make room for novel experiences and perceptions. This is particularly true of children, but also applies to adults. Piaget maintains that alternating tendencies exist in the form assimilation (incorporating new experiences into our existing ideas and categories) and accommodation (modifying our established cognitive structures to assimilate new, unclassifiable, and incomprehensible realities) that irrupt into consciousness. He explains:

> Sometimes the child builds up new general schemas, tries to connect everything and tries to incorporate the new and unexpected elements into the old, accustomed framework. At other times the discovery of the sudden emergence of unclassifiable and incomprehensible phenomena will burst these frameworks and dissolve the schemas until new systems are formed, only to be destroyed in turn. (pp. 59-60)

In other words, when wonder ruptures our existing frameworks and dissolves our familiar schemas, we are challenged to adapt to accommodate to increasingly expanding realities.

Fuller (2006, pp. 87-88) believes we can consider Piaget's own wondrous experience to be a template for wonder's disruption of narrower cognitive schemas as it points to an order beyond the visible and prompts us to accommodate a more inclusive sense of reality. As Fuller tells it, Piaget broadened his cognitive view after his godfather introduced him to the writings of French philosopher Henri Bergson, who had a mystical sense of nature and "the *élan vital*" (p. 87). Piaget, "seized by the demon of reflection," recounted "a moment of enthusiasm close to ecstatic joy" (p. 87) as he began to perceive the divine in nature and recognize that the observable universe might take part in a grander metaphysical order of things. After this, Fuller maintains, "The personal meaning or purpose of his life work flowed from the wonder inspired by his perception that something ideal was manifesting itself in the developmental processes of life" (p. 88).

From a depth psychology perspective, we might interpret this "something ideal" as an archetypal blueprint that impels the direction of human development. Fuller (2006) concludes that wonder "elicits sustained accommodation to the widest possible range of human experience even as it triggers the construction of cognitive categories" (p. 88). He also posits that, when children make contact with the world through wonder, they tend to infer a reality that lies beyond or behind observed reality, and that something invisible unites the parts into a meaningful whole. This, he believes, supports the idea that wonder invites us to entertain belief in an order of reality that lies beyond or behind sensory appearances. Others agree but are more circumspect. Goethe (as cited in Eckerman, 1929/1998) maintained:

> The highest a man can attain . . . is wonder, and when the primordial phenomenon makes him wonder he should be content; it can give him nothing higher, and he should not look for anything beyond it; here is the boundary. But the sight of a primordial phenomenon is not generally enough for men; they think there must be more in the back of it, like children who, having looked into a mirror, turn it around to see what is on the other side. (p. 296)

Here, Goethe recognizes that the experience of wonder flags contact with the primordial, archetypal realm and, in this, he comports with Fuller's notions that an order of reality lies beyond the sensory. However, Goethe sees this as the zenith of man's capability and that striving to go beyond this is a childish undertaking. Environment-behavior researcher David Seamon (1998) notes that Goethe pronounced the primordial *ur*-phenomenon as "an ultimate which can not be explained, which is in fact not in need of explanation, but from which all that we observe can be made intelligible" (Goethe as cited in Seamon, p. 4).

Similarly, biologist Ursula Goodenough (1998, 2001, 2007), who addresses wonder and awe in her best seller *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (1998), takes up the work of comparative religion scholar Michael Kalton (2000) on vertical and horizontal transcendence. In an interview with philosopher and theologian Philip Clayton, Goodenough (2007, pp. 100-102), describes vertical transcendence as being overlaid with meanings beyond the experience itself, up to and including theistic notions. In contradistinction, horizontal transcendence refers to reality as we know and see it, without overarching interpretation. So, unlike Fuller (2006), she sees children's wonder as the epitome of horizontal transcendence, saying that, when in the woods, "they're having transcendent experiences all over the place—horizontal ones. They are not attempting to look beyond or behind nature; they're with it and living in full relationship

to it" (p. 101). Children appear to be natural phenomenologists and, for Goodenough, too, wonder can be found front and center in the world.

Wonder and the openness to experience factor.

Some people seem more predisposed toward encounters with wonder than others. Haidt and Keltner (2004) link awe and wonder to the trait of "openness to experience" (hereafter Openness) as identified in the Five Factor Model of personality (FFM). After three decades of research, the FFM has become widely accepted as a cross-cultural, universal model for integrating most of the research findings on heritable human personality (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). Each of the factors (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness) lies on a high-to-low continuum; the closer we fall to the high end on the Openness pole, the more likely we are to be open to experience and to the unknown, and vice versa.

Those on the high end of the Openness pole favor novelty, variety, complexity and open-endedness; presumably, they are more susceptible to wonder. They have a high need to avoid closure, may linger in uncertainty, be reluctant to commit to a definite opinion, be willing to suspend judgment, and find alternatives. Those on the low end lean toward familiarity, simplicity, and closure accompanied by order, authoritarianism, certainty, and cognitive structure. They tend to "seize" on readily available information to inform their decisions and then "freeze" these opinions (McCrae, 1996, p. 328). Jung (1973), in a 1915 letter to Hans Schmid, foreshadowed this notion saying:

> Understanding is a fearfully binding power, at times a veritable murder of the soul as soon as it flattens out vitally important differences. The core of the individual is a mystery of life, which is snuffed out when it is "grasped." (p. 31)

Thus, we may think of those who place lower on the Openness scale to be more resistant to the new and unknown and less open to wonder. Keats's (1817/2001) notion of negative

capability "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (p. 492) likely would stretch the capacity of those less open, yet it could be quite appealing to those lying higher on the Openness scale.

Openness manifests in "the breadth, depth, and permeability of consciousness, and in the recurrent need to enlarge and examine experience" (McCrae & Costa, as cited in McCrae, 1996, p. 323). It is said to be present in vivid fantasy, artistic sensitivity, depth of feeling, behavioral flexibility, intellectual curiosity, absorption, affection for the unknown or foreign, lack of dogmatism, and unconventional attitudes (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Openness also is associated with intuition, thin mental boundaries, and intellectual engagement (McCrae 1996). So, a propensity for wonderment seems to have a high correlation with Openness.

FFM researchers also link Openness to the psychological construct of absorption. This is characterized by episodes of total attention to perceptions and imaginings that result in "a heightened sense of the reality of the attentional object, imperviousness to distracting events, and an altered sense of reality in general, including an empathically altered sense of self" (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974, p. 268). Clearly, this could well describe the qualities of wonder itself.

Wonderlessness as a therapeutic issue.

> *A world without wonder is bereft of possibility. . . . In a world without wonder there is nothing to enter into relations with; because the world is mute, colourless and inanimate, we lack the means for really living in it. We are implicated in—stuck and pressed into—a deepening wonderlessness and, so we say, become depressed.*
>
> —Phenomenologist Philo Hove, (2011, para. 26)

Psychologically, the phenomenon of wonder's perceived absence is significant. When our sense of wonder wanes, life can feel dead. Lomas (2004) maintains:

> Those who to come to a psychotherapist for help have become, to a greater or lesser extent, disenchanted with life; they have lost their sense of wonder. One way of conceiving the therapist's task is to say that the aim should be to restore, as far as possible, this sense of wonder (p. 111).

Lomas goes on to point out that, although the waning of wonder can occur with illness, depression or separation from a loved one, even in good health, wonder in adults can be "worn down by routine demands, disappointments and inner constraints" (p. 105). He also attributes loss of wonder and rise of disenchantment with life to cultural factors: the modern-day over-compartmentalization of our perceptions, which compromises our sense of wholeness and wonder; the progressive dominance of scientific and objective modes of functioning that emphasize specialization, efficiency, and productivity; and the pervading climate of suspicion to which we are subjected as we are increasingly watched, assessed, monitored, and examined.

When we lose our sense of wonder in the world we can suffer the signs of depression or perhaps an *abaissement du niveau mental* (Jung, 1950/2014) when we may feel a loss of connection to Soul. Jung describes it as

> a slackening of the tensity of consciousness, which might be compared to a low barometric reading, presaging bad weather. The tonus has given way, and this is felt subjectively as listlessness, moroseness, and depression. One no longer has any wish or courage to face the tasks of the day. One feels like lead, because no part of one's body seems willing to move, and this is due to the fact that one no longer has any disposable energy. (p. 119)

This portrays the malaise of many suffering souls today, both in and outside our practices; it also conveys the experience of living in a lack-luster world, perceived as devoid of wonder, mystery, and the miraculous. Depth psychologists John Haule (1988) and Walter Odanjnyk (1987) also recognize the link between loss of connection to Soul

and depression, and Jungian analyst Esther Harding (1981) likens this state to an archetypal Wilderness experience (p. 121). This also could be a fitting representation for a life devoid of wonder. She writes that experience of Wilderness appears in many world myths and religions, noting that:

> Life energy and interest disappear into the unconscious, and conscious life is left high and dry, sterile, arid, miserable and *isolated*. One feels oneself to be in a barren place, a wilderness or desert, where nothing grows and no life can flourish. (p. 116)

Wonderlessness, too, could be reflected by this archetypal Wilderness motif in which a person feels lost and isolated while biding their time in an inhospitable region, detached from Soul, with no life-giving water. Boredom and the drying up of feeling accompany this state and "One may *see* that the world is beautiful, but one cannot *feel* it (p. 120).

In Jung's (1933/1955) collection of lectures titled *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* he bewails "the spirit of the age" (p. 174) and "psychologies without psyche" (p. 178), which represented a world no longer imbued with Soul. Psyche had been reduced to an "expression of physical processes" (p. 178), the external world had become objectified as dead matter and, essentially, its wonder and enchantment had been driven out. Mankind had begun to lose its vitality because its soul no longer resonated with the Soul of the world. This concerned Jung (1939/1954) greatly, as he lamented, "Man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and eidolon [image, double] of the cosmos, and his 'anima' is no longer the consubstantial *scintilla*, or spark of the Anima Mundi, the World Soul" (p. 476).

Along with this developing perception of an unanimated, soulless world came growth in man's sense of wonderlessness and disenchantment. In *A Secular Age,* philosopher and social scientist Charles Taylor (2007) traces the transformation that took

place in the Western world between about 1500 CE and 2000 CE. It is the story of how, ultimately, the secular perspective largely replaced an enchanted and sacred worldview.

Jung might well have been counterbalancing the views of his contemporary Max Weber (1864-1920), the philosopher, sociologist, and political economist who popularized the notion of the "disenchantment of the world" (*die Entzauberung der Welt*). Weber (1918/1946) believed that, as natural philosophy evolved into science, there was an inevitable and beneficial loss of the illusion that supernatural and magical beings operated the world. In his lecture "Science as a Vocation" he maintains that science and technology brought about

> the knowledge or belief that, if only one wanted to, one *could* find out any time; that there are in principle no mysterious, incalculable powers at work, but rather that one could in principle master everything through calculation. But that means the disenchantment of the world. One need no longer have recourse to magic in order to control or implore the spirits, as did the savage for whom such powers existed. Technology and calculation achieve, and this more than anything else means intellectualization as such. (p. 139)

For Weber disenchantment was an inevitable path to knowledge and freedom as it removed incalculable forces and made us masters of our destiny.

Weber appropriated the term *Entzauberung* from poet, philosopher, historian, and playwright Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), who had referred to *entzaubern* as something approaching losing its magic (Sherry, 2009, p. 369). Schiller, in his poem *The Gods of Greece* (as cited in Sherry, 2009, p. 378), also describes nature as "God-shorn" (*entgötterte*), which was translated by Hillman (1985), Morris Berman (1981), and others as the "disgodding of nature." In addition, psychoanalyst Joel Whitebook notes that *Entzauberung* literally means "de-magnification" (Whitebook, 2002, footnote 1).

In addition to Jung's (1933/1955) and Hillman's (1982) quests to regain contact with anima mundi and re-animate the world, others (Barta, 2007; Berman, 1981; Moore,

1996) have sought to re-enchant the world, everyday life, and the therapeutic temenos. Moore connects Soul with an enchanting voice in nature and culture to which we need to pay attention (p. xix), and he suggests that we need to take imagination seriously, with the first step towards re-enchantment of the world being "to recover a beginner's mind and a child's wonder" (p. xx), themes that permeate this work.

The word *enchantment* originates from the Latin *cantare "to sing*" and from the French *enchanter* "to bewitch, charm or cast a spell upon." The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2014) describes enchantment as "the action or process of enchanting, or of employing magic or sorcery" (Enchantment, 1, 2.) and "alluring or overpowering charm; enraptured condition; (delusive) appearance of beauty." Author Ted Andrews (1993) encapsulates well the sense wonder and enchantment:

> There was a time when the distances between our world and those we consider "imaginary" were no further than a bend in the road. Each cavern and hollow tree was doorway to another world. Humans recognized life in all things. The streams sang and the winds whispered ancient words into the ears of whoever would listen. Every blade of grass and flower had a tale to tell. In the blink of an eye one could explore worlds and seek out knowledge that enlightened life. Shadows were not just shadows and woods were not just trees and clouds were not just pretty. There was life and purpose in all things and there was loving interaction between the worlds. (p. 3)

Certainly, Andrews paints a picture of a charming and animated world, one "tinged with play and eros" (Moore, 1996, p. xi). Aaron Kramer's (1991) poem *They've Lost It,* expresses the loss of wonder inherent in disenchantment, when he writes: "I am afraid/that the whole tribe's in trouble,/the whole tribe is lost—/because the sun keeps rising/and these days/nobody sings" (p. 68). In this, he lets us know in no uncertain terms that we have lost the ability to be enchanted by the wonder of miraculous sunrises. In fact, loss of wonder might very well be equated to the loss of the sense of the miraculous in life.

So regarding the world as inanimate can result in depressive states symptomatic of disconnection from our own soul and the Soul of the world; this contributes greatly to a person's lack or loss of wonder in the world. Numerous other factors may contribute to this wonderless state and should be noted, including a predisposition for being less open to experience, to the new, to mystery, and to the unknown; a fundamental lack of trust in the world; distancing ourselves from nature and our senses; intractable cynicism and skepticism; overfamiliarity with an apparently predictable world; the disappearance of time to ponder and reflect; and societal and cultural shifts toward secularism and materialism. Writer, poet, and philosopher G. K. Chesterton (1909/1955), who revered wonder, captures this loss, saying, "The world will never starve for want of wonders but only for want of wonder" (p. 77).

Wonder and neuroscience.

Gaining increasing traction in psychology is cognitive and affective neuroscience, but a detailed study of the neural mechanisms of wonder is beyond the scope of this topic. It is possible that affective neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp's (2005) concept of "seeking" (pp. 144-163) characterized by curiosity, interest, foraging, anticipation, craving, and expectancy, has connections to wonder, but that will be reserved for another researcher to pursue.

Bulkeley (2005) researched brain activity during experiences of wonder and concluded that they are psycho-physiological phenomena involving distinctive, unusually intensified modes of brain-mind activation. There is increased activation of the limbic system, hypothalamus, autonomic nervous system, and various regions of association cortex, together with greater contribution of the right hemisphere and diminished activity

in the prefrontal cortex. This de-activates the areas responsible for goal-directed cognition, which is why wonder renders people speechless.

Bulkeley (2005) notes that wondrous encounters with the novel and unexpected exceed the normal boundaries of understanding, pushing the association cortex beyond its normal range of functioning and forcing us to make sense of unusual input. So, wonder compels the creation of new, more expansive categories and more subtly integrated modes of understanding. Bulkeley concludes that no two experiences of wonder are exactly the same because of the highly complex neural interactions in each individual's brain. This means that wonder, *per se*, cannot be located in the vast neural complexity of the human brain.

Again, this is a direction that must be taken up by another researcher. Identifying the neurological mechanisms of wonder can feel reductionist, yet the elaborate complexity of such mechanisms can fill us with wonder. As neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994) suggests:

> Neither anguish nor the elation that love or art can bring about are devalued by understanding some of the myriad biological processes that make them what they are. . . . Our sense of wonder should increase before the intricate mechanisms that make such magic possible. (p. xvi)

Like many scientists in other fields, Damasio recognizes that understanding can begin in wonder and open into even more wonder.

Need for Research on the Topic

We live in a world perceived by many as wonderless. As individuals struggle to feel alive in a world increasingly regarded as dead, we should not be surprised that depressive symptoms have reached epidemic proportions, even in the world's wealthiest

of countries. Simply stated, loss or lack of wonder can drive patients to psychotherapy, yet it is topic rarely considered in psychological circles.

As the foregoing chapters have demonstrated, whether we perceive the object of wonder as lying within us, without us, or both, it appears that experiences of wonder can be both ubiquitous and transformative. They can create unusual receptivity and radical openness—to the seen, the unseen and, perhaps, to Soul. When our perceptions of the world are enlarged and deepened by wonder, we are challenged to accommodate and integrate new, more expansive categories and increasingly subtle modes of understanding. As wonder expands the range of our subjectivity, new possibilities reveal themselves. It can promote prolonged engagement with and reverence for life, deep humility and gratitude, and a yearning to understand and learn. And wonder can make everyday life meaningful as well as foster empathy and compassion for our world. In short, amidst the travails of living, experiences of wonder can constitute transformational epiphanies and unlatch the flow of life through deepening subjectivity; magnifying perceptions; amplifying sensitivity to beauty; expanding horizons; recognizing the extraordinary in the ordinary; intuiting the sacred in the secular; and promoting possibility, delight, reverence, and gratefulness for the gift of life.

As such, wonder seems to deserve a more prominent place in psychology in general. Insofar as it is a universal if not archetypal phenomenon, it is worthy of serious consideration and research, particularly in depth psychology and depth psychotherapy.

Statement of the Research Problem and Questions

The research problem.

Scholarship in the area of wonder in psychology has been negligible. Philosophers attempt to make rational sense of wonder, scientists abide in it, children delight in it,

artists express it, the spiritual defer to it, and naturalists make it their home. Yet, as the literature review has shown, although wonder is inherent in psychologies inclusive of the transpersonal dimension, wonder, *per se,* rarely has been identified as a component of psychological or emotional experience, let alone an important one. Furthermore, in the minimal, extant literature on wonder in psychology, Soul barely has entered the picture or been connected with wonder.

Psyche and *soul* are etymologically yoked and, in depth psychology, they are the ubiquitous starting substance, the *prima materia* of the transformation process. This researcher surmises that the experience of wonder suggests a connection to the Soul of the world. If wonder and Soul are connected, perhaps we should be more attentive to and put more stock in the experience of wonder—wondrous moments that occur both inside and outside the consulting room. As such, this study hopes to contribute to increased awareness of and appreciation for the wondrous so that greater attention will be paid to its effects. With increased awareness of wonder's gifts, initial and ongoing assessments of a patient's wonder might be meaningful in the depth psychotherapeutic process.

The research questions.

The primary question addressed in this dissertation is: What are the dimensions of the experience of wonder? The auxiliary questions are: What is the relationship between wonder and Soul? How might we attune to wonder?

Chapter 3
Research Approach, Methodology, and Procedures

Some come at it
with weights and measures,
some waving a sieve.
Some sing to it,
ballads and carols,
hoping to coax forth
its hidden center,
unwind the sheath
of who it is.
Some tap on it
or deal heavy blows
with hammers,
trying to smash
its thick shield
force it to bow down.
Some seek ways to clamber in,
explore its hidden vaults
and chambers.

Some lie down beside it,
breathe its cool scent,
become its own self.

—Mystic Dorothy Walters, *The Mystery* (2012, p. 15)

As a highly complex, multileveled, variable, personal phenomenon, entangled in diverse genres of thinking, wonder cannot be managed, measured, dissected, or subjected to the scientific, quantitative method. Nor can it be contained in the laboratory, in a single discipline, or even in words. Rather, wonder's mystery is its beauty and, through a certain grace, may reveal some of itself through a receptive, qualitative inquiry.

Beneath mountains of words and all we claim to know about the nature of reality, the mystery of life remains. Mystery and the unknown are the domains of wonder. The ineffable, that which is beyond words and beyond measure, abides in the fabric of life.

Even so, tantalized by the puzzles of the universe, mankind is intent on uncovering her secrets, aspiring to harness true, certain, and evidence-based knowledge. Often, as the poem above suggests, we attempt "to smash/its thick shield/force it to bow down" or "come at it/with weights and measures/waving a sieve" (Walters, 2012, p. 15).

Yet, a kinder, gentler, receptive approach might lead to a more intimate form of understanding if we "lie down beside it,/breathe its cool scent,/become its own self" (Walters, 2012, p. 15). This is the way a mystery such as wonder might be loved into revealing itself, and allowing wonder to "become its own self" is a crucial consideration in selecting a method for its study. As poet-philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1937/1967) said, "By plucking her petals, you do not gather the beauty of the flower" (p. 245).

Research Approach

This dissertation is a qualitative, subjective study rather than an objective, quantitative work. As such, it adheres to a particular worldview associated with a set of beliefs and assumptions that guide this inquiry. According to John Creswell (1998, pp. 73-91), these are the multiple nature of reality (ontology), the close relationship of the researcher to that being researched (epistemology), the value-laden aspect of the inquiry (axiology), the personal approach to writing the narrative (rhetorical dimension), and the emerging inductive methodology of the process of research (methodological dimension). This study embraces these presuppositions essential to a qualitative study and discusses them throughout the material that follows.

The research approach of this work straddles phenomenology and depth psychology. In doing so, it explores the lived experience of wonder and also acknowledges that the unconscious is real, influences individual thoughts, actions, and

cultural phenomena, and is meaningful and deserves attention (Coppin & Nelson, 2005). As such it expects the unconscious to exert significant impact both on the work and on the researcher. It also embraces the psyche as extending beyond the individual and the world as animated by Soul, as discussed in Chapter 1.

The study of wonder is a complex affair, because it is caught in a recursive paradox involving wondering in wonderment about the wondrousness of wonder. This chapter demonstrates that the act of wondering and being wondered (Freke, 2012, p. 38) must be an integral part of the inquiry involving the subjectivity of the researcher, and that the chosen method must have the capacity to begin and end in wonder. Thus, the research utilizes heuristic inquiry to arrive at the themes and essences of the experience of wonder. Through this method, it is possible to approach the experiential and written material with an attunement to wonder conceived by this work as listening with a "wondering ear."

Wonder and the phenomenological approach.

Father of phenomenology Edmund Husserl (1913/1982) was concerned about the theorizing and hypothesizing that occur as we attempt to make sense of our lived experience, and he advocated going "back to the things themselves" (p. 35). The goal of phenomenology is to perceive the essence of the world through the move of phenomenological reduction and to view it free of presuppositions and conceptual frameworks (Cogan, 2006; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962; van Manen, 1990).

According to phenomenologist Max van Manen (2011b), it is through wonder and astonishment, which strip away all conceptual categories, that the things of the world present themselves in their own terms and allow us to return to the world as it is, the world before inquiry contaminated it. Approaching the world in this unbiased and

unlabeled way can yield a rich, pretheoretical form of knowing, which is the goal of phenomenology. Likewise, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) spoke of the phenomenological approach as a "peculiar attitude and attentiveness to the things of the world" (p. xiii), which bears a close resemblance to wonder. And, he wholeheartedly endorsed his assistant Eugene Fink's declaration that wonder in the face of the world lies at the heart of the phenomenological reduction. Fink (as cited in Merleau-Ponty) wrote:

> Reflection does not withdraw from the world toward the unity of consciousness as the world's basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence flap like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and this brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world because it reveals the world as strange and paradoxical. (p. xiii)

Here, like sparks detaching from a fire, in wonder we momentarily disengage from the world as we know it, to see the world as it is. It is no wonder that philosopher Cornelis Verhoeven (1967/1972) calls wonder "An exercise in free fall" (p. 28).

Van Manen (2011b) speaks of the wonder in phenomenological research as occurring in a moment when we are "overcome by awe or perplexity—such as when something familiar has turned profoundly unfamiliar, when our gaze has been captured by the gaze of something staring back at us" (para. 3). So, in wonder, we catch a glimpse of an autonomous other irrupting into our consciousness. We are seized by and at the mercy of wonder, not vice versa. This is, perhaps, the central challenge of studying wonder: We cannot beckon it at will.

Wonder and the depth psychological approach.

Romanyshyn (2010b) declares, "After Freud, the reality of the unconscious cannot be left out of the equation between a knower and what is know . . . the full complexity of the knower has to be taken into account" (p. 283). Further, he asserts that ultimately, true objectivity is gained only through deep subjectivity (p. 277).

This dissertation acknowledges the dynamic relationship between the researcher and her topic and makes a place for her complex subjectivity and unconscious influences on the work. This study's reality is inclusive of the personal and collective unconscious; it acknowledges that a transference field permeates life, including between the researcher and her work. This view of reality must, and will, be taken into account in the writing and interpretation of this work.

Romanyshyn (2010b) situates the depth approach to research within Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodied perceptual life (p. 280). He recognizes that we are actually embodied knowers with complex psychological roots, and it is this that informs our approach to knowing and being in the world. As such, our perspective cannot ignore that we are "always in some fantasy, dream or complex about the nature and meaning of the 'other'" (p. 280) for "within the thought, there is a fantasy; within the reason, a dream; within the concept, a complex; within the idea, an image; within the meaning, a myth; within the observation, a story" (p. 279).

The worldview influencing any claims about knowledge this dissertation might make in relation to wonder is largely nonconstructivist, that is, it centers more on perceiving than on construing. Constructivism asserts that humans construct their knowledge by building on existing knowledge developed by experience (Raskin, 2002). Ashworth (2008) contrasts the person as perceiver with the person as conceiver, saying, "perception is not a construction or representation but provides direct experience to the experienced object" (p. 15) and this, he says, accounts for qualitative psychology perhaps being more concerned with attempting to reveal the lifeworld (p. 18).

How we discover knowledge is the task of epistemology, which is significantly colored by our beliefs about the nature of the world, its ontology. Furthermore, our epistemological and ontological positions have direct bearing on our research methods. In the case of wonder, we need to make some subtle but radical shifts in the epistemological question from “How might we uncover knowledge about the mystery of wonder?” to “How might we receive wonder?” to “How might wonder reveal its essence?” This shift cannot take place without the subject and object changing places or even merging in some way. Heschel (1951/1992) echoes a similar necessary turnabout saying:

> The greatest hindrance to knowledge is our adjustment to conventional notions, to mental clichés. Wonder, or radical amazement, the state of maladjustment to words and notions, is, therefore, a prerequisite for an authentic awareness of that which is. Standing eye to eye with being, we realize that we are able to look at the world with two faculties—with reason and with wonder. Through the first we try to explain or to adapt to the world to our concepts, through the second we seek to adapt our minds to the world. (p. 11)

Thus, Heschel recognizes that wonder precedes words, detonates our previously held concepts, and requires us to enlarge our perception of reality. He views wonder as an awakening awareness of the basis of all our knowledge.

Wonder is bound up with mystery and unknowing and, difficult as it may be to accept, some things in life may not be entirely knowable. As previously noted, there are times when “the bolts of the universe fly open and we are given a glimpse of what is hidden; an eff of the ineffable” (Rushdie, 2000, p. 20). On these occasions, we are, as Heschel (1951/1992) says, “standing eye to eye with being” (p. 11), and mere glimpses of wonder might be the most we can hope for. So, perhaps the goal of this work is not actually adding to the stockpile of knowledge but rather an insightful appreciation and greater understanding of wonder’s fathomless complexity and richness—deeper rather than more knowledge.

William Dilthey (1833-1911), as cited in Coppin and Nelson (2005, pp. 28-30), provides an important theoretical underpinning to a depth understanding of knowledge. Standing at the intersection of phenomenology and hermeneutics, where the lived experience is the primary datum of inquiry, he distinguishes between two kinds of knowing: *Naturwissenschaften*, with its causal explanations and general laws, and *Geisteswissenschaften,* with its sense of deeper knowing (*verstehen)* through lived experience *(Erlebnis).* The latter is the kind of knowing sought in this study. Dilthey also asserts that, apart from human consciousness, nature is unknowable through the scientific approach and method, and only material from the human sciences is truly knowable. And, as Coppin and Nelson point out, a key element in depth psychological inquiry is to hold knowledge claims in a "mutable and conditional way" (p. 36), stating, "From the depth psychological perspective, knowledge is always partial . . . and the unfolding of knowledge is a thing of wonder, not contempt" (p. 36).

Braud (1998) imagines a satisfying research outcome for a topic such as wonder to be a "detailed map of some new territory or the revelation of some previously unknown trails and pathways in an old territory" (p. 54). In this study, the unknown trail in the territory of wonder is a barely trodden track in the field of psychology. The work's intention is to weave a more complex fabric in which the mostly invisible yarn of wonder in psychology becomes visible. In such a study, Braud maintains, like Dilthey before him, there is no need for certainty or causal explanations (p. 55).

Heschel (1955/1997) said, "Knowledge is fostered by curiosity; wisdom is fostered by awe" (p. 75). Perhaps we may consider wisdom to be the deeper understanding to which this dissertation aspires. Perhaps, as Cox and Cohen (2013)

suggest, deeper understanding can lead to more wonder. Thus, we aspire to begin and end in wonder.

The tension between wonder and method.

Before describing this study's method, first we must embark on a not-insignificant detour to loosen the Gordian knot that threatens to choke the exploration of wonder by virtue of a method.

We begin with Verhoeven (1967/1972) who, in his landmark *The Philosophy of Wonder,* articulates the tension between wonder and method. Echoing Heschel (1951/1992, p. 11), Verhoeven explains, "There is a constant dialectic in progress between pure wonder and its assimilation in reasoning and systems" (1967/1972, p. 39), and he explicates Plato's and Aristotle's proclamation that philosophy begins in wonder by saying:

> Wonder is the foundation of the whole of philosophy. It is not the beginning of thought in the sense that it might lead on to something better founded, something like philosophical principles, which could be cheerfully manipulated without any ambiguity. Nor does the philosopher begin by wondering, proceed to an examination, and thus rid himself of the tiresome guest. It is not the beginning but the principle, the basic structure. It is not only the beginning but also the end; it guides and accompanies thought. *It has not only the first but also the last word.* The philosopher does not get over it, like a childish disease, but ascends to it with difficulty as *the only adequate attitude toward the mystery of things*. It is the principle that determines the infinity of contemplation. It does not, therefore, precede all knowledge as a power-motivating curiosity, but may just as well be a product of knowledge. (p. 32, emphasis added)

Furthermore, Verhoeven notes that Plato spoke of there being no other *arché* of philosophy than the pathos of wonder (as cited in Verhoeven, p. 32). *Arché* derives from a verb meaning, "to lead," inferring that, ideally, philosophy allows itself to be led by wonder. Yet Verhoeven notes:

> The fact remains that there is not a single philosopher who demonstrably allows himself to be guided by the pathos of wonder. He is guided by logic, by methods,

> by principles, but not by wonder. In some way or another wonder still seems to be something the philosopher must surmount. (p. 32)

Can this dissertation be "guided by the pathos of wonder" as noted above? We find Verhoeven wishing that scientists and philosophers "gave clearer evidence of their wonder and fascination which remain the source and origin of their craft, no matter how exactly and methodically they may attempt to carry it out" (p. 39). He also asks ruefully, "Is there any philosopher at all whose thoughts and writings proceed directly and honestly from wonder without the detour or method and without sophistry" (p. 31)? This poses two key questions: Is method a detour or an obstruction in the study of wonder, and how we might let wonder lead the research and speak for itself?

Because wonder tends to make mayhem out of our preconceptions, systems, and ordered thinking, Verhoeven (1967/972) acknowledges that wonder is dangerous to those "who try to bring order into this chaos, not for those who can accept it as it is, or leave the ordering for others" (p. 39). For some, the chaos that lies behind a closed, regulated world can be fascinating and, for others, it is menacing. There is "fear of losing one's sense of reality" (p. 29) he says, and proposes that "fear is the greatest enemy of wonder, which may explain why it is also the greatest and most fanatical champion of clear-cut method in life and thought" (pp. 39-40). This leads him to view method as a "means to averting chaos, fear of a direct experience of reality" (p. 40).

Can we accept wonder as it is, find a way to tolerate the chaos, fear, and unknowing inherent in wonder and preserve its life rather than asphyxiate it though harboring it in the safe haven of method? Wonder wants to run free; harnessing it would mean certain death. And, is it possible to commit wonder to words without extracting the

life out of it? Poet and playwright Maurice Maeterlinck (as cited in Musil, 1906/2001) said:

> As soon as we put something into words, we devalue it in a strange way. We think we have plunged into the depths of the abyss, and when we return to the surface the drop of water on our pale fingertips no longer resembles the sea from which it comes. We delude ourselves that we have discovered a wonderful treasure trove, and when we return to the light of day we find that we have brought back only false stones and shards of glass; and yet the treasure goes on glimmering in the dark, unaltered. (p. 1)

It is not hard to imagine that this could be the fate of wonder when we attempt to squeeze it into the straightjackets of words and method. We might think we have captured it, but all we have is "false stones and shards of glass" no longer resembling the treasure that remains in the depths. We have to find a way to study and write about wonder in a way that allows it to breathe and live.

After clarifying that wonder is both the condition and the primary principle of the phenomenological reduction, van Manen (2011a) wonders how wonder can be a method. Sounding like Verhoeven (1967/1972), he answers himself by affirming that a researcher's writing must "lead" the way to human understanding and, at the same time, lead the reader to wonder. He says, "The researcher/writer must 'pull' the reader into the question in such a way that the reader cannot but help wonder about the nature of the phenomenon" (p. 44). Following van Manen, this dissertation must draw its readers into the wonderment of wonder (the phenomenon) in a process that must be both initiated by wonder and induce wonderment and wondering. Thus, we find ourselves caught in a recursive paradox with no end in sight to our wondering in wonderment about the wondrousness of wonder, confirming Laotzu's insight that "from wonder into wonder/ existence opens" (Laotzu, 1986, p. 31).

Phenomenologist Philo Hove (1999), in his dissertation about wonder's link to the insight of vipassanã meditation, notices several paradoxical perplexities inherent in wonder and asks:

> Does wonder stop our thinking or incite it? Is its occurrence a mark of naïveté or maturity? Do we experience wonder towards the familiar or the strange? Is our ignorance dispelled or revealed in wonder? Are questions answered or raised in it? Does wonder preclude language or provide the very conditions on which it is founded? The ambiguity to which we lose ourselves in the face of wonder makes of it a pivot where the "either/or" is a simultaneous, living possibility, which equally confounds and provokes understanding, language and identity. (p. 85)

So, it seems that wonder defies a rationally coherent method. In fact, Hove (whose dissertation chair was van Manen) admits that, for his own study, "No 'method' or technique is being proposed for wonder, *thaumazein*, itself, which lies outside of—is logically prior to—the intentional or ardent reach of will" (p. 98). Further, he remarks that "whatever method or *techne* wonder elicits will be profoundly unmethodical" (p. 99).

Miller (1992, pp. 5-6) writes about our tendency to "colonize" wonder, that is, "bring the unknown into the parameters of the known" (p. 5). We attempt to escape the inferior position under which wonder places us by imposing the familiar upon it; we disarm the unfamiliar in the name of mastering the unknown. So, Miller believes, inquiry into wonder must take place without the paved highway of a fixed method that sets up our maps in advance and protects us from wandering into the unknown and getting lost in uncontrolled territory.

It seems meaningful to report that, at this point in the writing of this chapter and highly concerned I might force wonder in to a straightjacket, I received a vivid hypnopompic image: "Wonder is being carried off on a stretcher, not dead, but on its last legs. The sheets are way too tightly bound around the pallet. Tears fall, and I am anxious to release wonder from its restraints" (Beaven, 6/17/13). I understood the dream to tell

me that identifying a method to keep wonder unharnessed was paramount. This spontaneous image itself is a wonder, and the structure of this study needed to make room for it.

So, what method can preserve the wonderment of wonder without explaining it away? We turn to the wisdom of an angel who, in actual World War II dialogues between four Hungarian Jews and several angelic beings, said, “For those who can wonder, wonders appear” (Mallasz, 1976/1988, p. 56). It is clear. Wondering and being wondered are inherent to studying wonder.

Research Methodology: Submitting to Wonder to Study Wonder

Coppin and Nelson (2005) state:

> Psychological inquiry has a commitment to find ways to inquire that retains complexity and richness while still requiring devotion to rigorous scholarship and participation in the larger world of the academy. It is clear that work of this kind will require the holding of a tension between the power of tradition and the need for innovation—between the need for a formal method, understood and valued by our colleagues, and the need to move beyond the method to recall the things that method forgets. (p. 37)

With this challenge in mind, this dissertation contemplates the lived experience of wonder through a method that applies humanistic psychologist Clark Moustakas’s (1990) seven-phase, heuristic method to a text-based hermeneutic inquiry. It begins with the researcher’s initial engagement, immersion, and incubation of her experience of wonder (Chapter 4). This comprises the material for the illumination and explication phases (Chapters 5 and 6), which was amplified by selected texts. The study coalesces in a creative synthesis and validation of findings in Chapter 7.

Heuristic inquiry, characterized by the centrality of the researcher’s subjectivity, is “a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience” (Moustakas, 1990 p. 9). And, simply put, hermeneutics is the study of

interpreting and understanding texts (Palmer, 1969, pp. 3-11). This study regards the combination of these methods as a way to submit to wonder and retain a sense of wonder in the study of itself. Not unlike philosopher Gaston Bachelard's (1960/1971) writing of "Reveries on Reverie" (pp. 29-95), this can be construed as a wondering about wonder, wonderment, and the wondrous. Listening to the texts with a wondering ear allowed wonder to find expression and be heard through the texts. It comprised a lingering with the texts, a radical openness to surprises concealed in the texts, and an ear tilted toward wonder and Soul.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1986/1992) describes hermeneutics as "the skill to let things speak which come to us in a fixed, petrified form, that of the text" (p. 65). Similarly, Richard Palmer (1969) regards literary works as "humanly created texts which speak" (p. 7) and considers a text to be "not an object we understand by conceptualizing or analyzing it; it is a voice we must hear, and through 'hearing' (rather than seeing), understand" (p. 9). So, this method was permeated with the ever-present, wondering ear of the researcher, listening for the voice of wonder as it spoke through, beyond and between the lines and words of the text.

Bachelard's (1960/1971) account of falling into a reverie while reading and being drawn elsewhere provides an excellent depiction of listening to a text with a wondering ear, that this study practiced. He says:

> I think I am reading; a word stops me. I leave the page. The syllables of the word begin to move around. Stressed accents begin to invert. The word abandons its meaning like an overload which is too heavy and prevents dreaming. Then the words take on other meanings as if they had the right to be young. (p. 17)

Bachelard's sense of the strange in the familiar and seeing things anew shrieks of a sense of wonder. His reference to words having "the right to be young" points directly to this.

Wondering about wonder did play tricks on the texts and took unexpected, astonishing and even wondrous turns. And, reading with a wondering ear caused the researcher, like Bachelard, to wander away from the text while being drawn away by associations, images, sounds, memories, and the depths.

Building on polymath Mihály Polányi's (1966) work on the tacit dimension of deeply embedded knowledge, Moustakas (1990) pioneered an organized and systematic form for investigating human experience known as heuristic inquiry. Discovery is at the heart of heuristic research: the word *heuristic* originates from the Greek word *heuriskein*, meaning to discover or to find. Archimedes's *eureka*, meaning "I found it," is a close relation.

Heuristic inquiry explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher. Moustakas (1990) describes it as:

> A process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. (p. 9)

This suggests that it is the researcher's inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration that initiate the research question and methodology.

Research Procedures: Processes and Phases Guiding Heuristic Inquiry

The processes characterizing heuristic research include the researcher's long-term abiding in the research question; making explicit the tacit, implicit, and untapped dimensions of knowledge and meaning embedded in the experience; trusting and using intuition to see the topic a whole; deliberately turning inward (indwelling) and gazing unwaveringly at the topic to glean a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of it; sustained contact with the felt sense (Gendlin, 1978/1982, 1996) of the central meanings

of the experience; and placing the outcome of the process in the researcher's own internal frame of reference (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 15-27). Each of these processes is incorporated into this study of wonder, and discussed more fully in subsequent chapters.

The internal frame of reference is perhaps the most distinguishable and important facet of heuristic research. Moustakas (1990) explains, "Whether the knowledge derived is attained through tacit, intuitive, or observed phenomena—whether the knowledge is deepened and extended through indwelling, focusing, self-searching, or dialogue with others—its medium or base is the internal frame of reference" (p. 26). As such, heuristic research characteristically employs first-person terminology, which I have adopted in much of the writing that follows.

Moustakas (1990) identifies seven discrete phases that guide the unfolding of heuristic inquiry. An outline of the phases is offered here and discussed more fully in subsequent chapters. My experience was that Phases 2 through 4, rather than occurring sequentially and only once, occurred cyclically and many times throughout the process.

1. Initial engagement requires the direct and vital encounter with the topic that becomes a question of passionate concern (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

2. Immersion requires that "the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even dream states. Everything in his or her life becomes crystallized around the question" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28).

3. Incubation requires retreating from concentrated focus on the question to allow for tacit knowledge and intuition to clarify and extend understanding (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 29-30).

4. Illumination marks the phase of new awareness, synthesis, and discovery of essences, which Moustakas (1990) describes as the "clarifying and extending of understanding on levels outside immediate awareness" (p. 29).

5. Explication involves a comprehensive organization and depiction of the core themes, with a full examination of what has become conscious in the understanding of various layers of meaning (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31).

6. Creative synthesis is the final phase of heuristic research when core themes are knit together into a composite depiction of the essence of the experience and expressed through any number of creative means.

7. Validation, the final phase of heuristic research, asks if findings about the experience studied reflects "comprehensively, vividly and accurately, the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32). Because this is a hermeneutic study, validation of findings through checking with research subjects was not possible. Instead, I used my own internal frame of reference, checking the material throughout for resonance with my own sense of wonder. Thus, it included returning repeatedly to the hermeneutic data, verification of the accuracy and sufficiency of the depictions, the adding, deleting, and re-slanting of material, and inclusion of additional material along with frequent review.

The aim of approaching the study in this way was to make a place for what Jung (1952/1976) has described as "two kinds of thinking" (pp. 7-33). They are the passive, nonrational, intuitive thinking that is conducive to wonder, as well as the more directed, rational form of thinking associated with a scholarly work. The approach also aspires to

realize van Manen's (1990 p. 44) goal of leading the reader to wonder about and to understand the nature of the phenomenon in question, in this case wonder itself.

Research data.

The research data comprised my own experiences of wonder along with resonant texts that amplified wonder's nature. Moustakas (1990) cites organizational sociologist Michael Quinn Patton, who said, "A heuristic quest enables the investigator to collect 'excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories'" (p. 38). Because little has been written on wonder in the field of psychology, cross-disciplinary texts became my sources for gleanings of wonder's essence. The authors, wonderers in all the humanities and sciences, became agents of wonder's revelation and my honorable co-researchers. They provided the material to help amplify and distill the essence of wonder and provide clues to my research questions.

Criteria for the selection of hermeneutic material.

The multidisciplinary texts used in the study were selected for their ability to resonate with the researcher's experience of wonder as well as to assist in unfolding this data.

Chapter 4
Heuristic Discovery Begins

The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me.

—Psychologist C. G. Jung (1961/1965, p. 318)

How nice and manageable it would be if wonder would just behave itself and conform to standard scientific research guidelines, fit into an evidence-based methodology, yield some tight conclusions, and reach a logical end. But this is man's way, not wonder's. She slips through the avenues of knowledge as does water under a door. My only response to her can be to stand in the darkness of unknowing, while inhaling and exhaling her presence.

Fortunately, I can come to know wonder more intimately through the exploratory, open-ended inquiry and self-directed search that characterize heuristic research. For Moustakas (1990) asserts that "the deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one's senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments" (p. 15). So, my first-person accounts and insights on wonder play a critical part in finding ways inside the question "What are the dimensions of the experience of wonder?" and comprise an essential part of the research data, particularly in the first three phases contained in this chapter: Initial Engagement, Immersion, and Incubation. In addition, I personify wonder to reflect both my experience of wonder as a personal relationship and to acknowledge the world as ensouled, that is, animated with psychic energy. Also, I begin to refer to wonder in the feminine because of her identification with Iris, goddess of the rainbow and daughter of Thaumas, the god of wonder (Quinn, 2002), and because my perception of her close relationship to Soul, anima, which is feminine.

Initial Engagement Phase: Called by Wonder

My engagement with wonder began with "the internal search to discover with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, devotion and commitment to pursue a question that is connected to one's own identity and selfhood" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 40). Psychologically, it felt as if the topic of wonder called me as part of an unfolding discovery rather than any willful pursuit on my part. She made as much sense of me as I made sense of her (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 113). So, it goes without saying that my topic is intimately connected to my being and personal history.

Although vivid experiences of wonder have informed and transformed my relationships to the world and to myself since childhood, it is only more recently that I have wondered about her role in my life, her meaning in the world, and her possible place within depth psychology and psychotherapy. As described in Chapter 1, my initial engagement with wonder began during my childhood and teen years, in the 1950s and 1960s. She blossomed for me in three primary realms: the beauty, complexity, and mystery of the self-organizing natural world; the stunning revelation of hidden worlds made visible under the microscope; and the heart-stopping experiences of listening to classical music and singing in choirs. In each of these, wonder jolted my awareness as I glimpsed, heard, or touched into a sliver of what felt like the pulsating fabric of the universe.

Sadly, the weighty intellectual gymnastics of theological college in my twenties depressed rather than enlivened my sense of wonder. Three decades later, in the midst of a long, dark, dank period, life's wonder mysteriously began to return to me. She shook me to the core through injecting herself into the vibrant imagery held in classical music

and choral singing, and reignited my appreciation for the miracle of the natural world. Thus, in 2001, my path in depth psychology began.

In May, 2010, while reflecting upon recent deaths of three dear, long-time mentor-crones, I realized that each had nurtured or helped revive in me a profound and precious relationship with wonder, deeply rooted in the most vibrant time in my life. In a flash, I knew from my core that wonder was inviting me to get to know her better through this work. It was as if hundreds of puzzle pieces instantaneously fit together and, from that point, there was no turning back. “Finally” I thought, as I entered my sixties. Jung (1961/1965) said, “The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me” (p. 318) and, in that moment, I knew that my question was all about wonder. She had been calling me forever; I just did not know her name. Now she had opened the door for us to enjoy greater intimacy.

A week or two after wonder announced herself in this way, I found myself alone on an open road, driving south through the flatlands of central California on the way to a weekend of coursework at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara. The unimpeded sky was enormous, and there was not another car in sight. Several miles ahead, there appeared a large, dark, curious-looking, moving cloud. Approaching more closely, it appeared to be swooping. Because it was hot and sunny, I wondered if it might be some kind of mirage in the sky. As the apparition grew rapidly, it became mesmerizing, disorienting, and somewhat frightening. Pulling over to catch my breath, it became clear that this cloud was a flock of birds numbering in the hundreds if not thousands. They were carving up the sky with a breathtaking aerial ballet, and mine were the only eyes around to observe them; they seemed to be performing just for me. The synchronization

of the flock was uncanny and stunningly beautiful as it wove itself into a seamless unity (IslandsAndRivers, 2011). This display, which I came to learn was the murmuration of starlings, continued for ten minutes or more and rendered me drop-jawed, amazed, bewildered, and motionless. It felt as if wonder had taken me aside in the middle of nowhere to claim me for her work; I was to be one of her emissaries, and this vision was her way of initiating me into her mystery school.

The question "What are the dimensions of the experience of wonder?" has occupied me literally and figuratively since that day in 2010. The almost obsessive nature of the quest feels reminiscent of Jung's (1961/1965) reflection that all his writings "may be considered tasks imposed from within; their source was a fateful compulsion. What I wrote were things that assailed me from within myself. I permitted the spirit that moved me to speak out" (p. 222). This statement exemplifies Moustakas's (1990) requirement that the heuristic researcher must have had a direct, and vital encounter with the topic of investigation, and that the central question must be a matter of passionate concern (p. 14).

I had neither read a thing about wonder nor heard it discussed in my many psychotherapy trainings. I had few words to describe wonder and knew it only from direct experience; perhaps that was ideal from a phenomenological perspective. Wonder had been essential to my sense of aliveness, and had seemed critically connected to my deepest connection to Soul. Its revival in my life had been nothing less than redemptive. Was wonder "an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27)? Most definitely, yes. She had claimed me anonymously years before. Now I knew her name as she invited me into a closer, more visible relationship, one that both delighted and awed me. The joy of being given a second chance to immerse

myself in wonder was palpable; it made me feel excited, light, grateful, and young. Yet, the fear of deadening wonder by subjecting her to scrutiny was an immediate and soul-chilling concern. I wondered how wonder might be nurtured and sustained both for myself and others.

Immersion Phase: Wonder Begins to Unveil

Always be on the watch for the coming of wonders.

—E. B. White (1952/1980, p. 85)

The heuristic phases, in my experience, occurred recurrently rather than chronologically. I was gripped throughout the study, wondering about the nature and meaning of wonder and, from start to finish, an ever-expanding quantity of material underwent cycles of immersion, incubation, and illumination in the alchemical vas. Resonating with Moustakas (1990), I lived with wonder in waking, sleeping, and even dream states (p. 28). Everything in my life became crystallized around wonder. This was not difficult; my abduction by wonder in the spring of 2010, if not years before, was palpable and complete.

A full-immersion baptism into wonder.

While immersing myself in the warm waters of my inquiry, wonder consistently hovered nearby, as if creating opportunities to be noticed, both in my own and others' experiences. She heralded the birth of a joy-filled grandniece; infiltrated the deaths and chronic illnesses of several dear friends, relatives, and patients; and accompanied my witnessing of the body's miraculous ability to heal in my work at a local hospital. And patients' wondrous life stories, both positive and negative, surprised me time and time again. Wonder met me in music, nature, and photography; in poetry and the movies; in

scholarly writings and on advertising billboards; in dreams, visions, and synchronicities; and in the Higgs Boson and the faerie realm.

My baptism into wonder as a research topic was one of full-immersion. Wonder seemed both ubiquitous and insatiable. Her tentacles sucked me into phenomenology, poetry, biology, music, theology, physics, philosophy, technology, anatomy, art, nature, literature, and popular culture—all in the quest of becoming more intimate with her essence. My early reading revealed that wonder had received negligible attention from any school or field of psychology, including in affect theory, which I had anticipated would be ripe for the picking. Presumably this is because psychology is a new field compared to wonder, which has existed in mankind's experience since time immemorial. I wondered what it meant that wonder seemed to underlie so many areas of experience and fields of knowledge, including the fact of existence itself. All of this was grist for the mill of incubation.

Wonder led me, often synchronously, to web sites, e-letters, magazines, and organizations, where she lingered, especially *National Geographic's* photography collections (http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/); depth psychologist Larry Robinson's daily poetry posting (https://lists.sonic.net/mailman/listinfo/poetrylovers); The Science Photo Library weekly photos and videos (http://www.sciencephoto.com/images); *Aeon* (http://aeon.co/magazine/); *Anima Mundi* (http://www.animamundimag.com); *Edge Science* (http://www.scientificexploration.org/edgescience/); *Euresis* (http://www.euresisjournal.org); *Nautilus* (http://nautil.us); *Parabola* (http://www.parabola.org); the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences

(http://www.ctns.org);the Faraday Institute (http://www.faraday.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk); the Institute for Noetic Sciences (http://noetic.org); Zygon Center for Religion and Science (http://zygoncenter.org); and many more. These helped submerge me deeper and deeper into the fathomless sea of wonder on a daily basis.

Wonder often tarried in the blog *Brain Pickings* (http://www.brainpickings.org) and in TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) webcast talks (https://www.ted.com), both of which seamlessly weave together an eclectic mix of phenomena underpinned by wonder herself. At the close of cosmologist Janna Levin's (2011) TED presentation on "The Sound the Universe Makes," she said, "In the spirit of rising to TED's challenge to reignite wonder, we can ask questions . . . that honestly might evade us forever" (16:25). How marvelous it was to know that others also recognized a need to revive wonder in the world, and to hear wonder linked with the possibility of the unknowable and inexhaustible mystery. In 2006, TED's first year of webcasting, my "hit" was one of its total of about a million; by 2012, it was one of a billion ("History of TED," n.d.). It seems that TED has begun to feed a world hungry for wonder. This eclectic mix of online material dramatically expanded my ideas about wonder and also fed into the incubator. To provide a sense of how wonder disclosed herself to me in the immersion phase, some selected highlights follow.

Wonder unveils herself in the ordinary.

> *People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child—our own two eyes. All is a miracle.*
>
> —Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh (1975/1999, p. 12)

The more attuned I became to wonder, the more miraculous daily life and existence appeared to be, from waking up to discover a new day, to noticing the rhythm and personality of the seasons, to the very act of breathing in and out. The recognition of our bodies' many inter-related activities and mechanisms felt nothing short of wondrous, particularly because most occur largely outside our awareness. In particular, while recognizing that all our senses play a role in attuning to wonder, seeing and hearing especially intrigued me, and the eyes and ears are miracles in themselves. Also, I was delighted to learn that the Jewish faith celebrates the wonder of metabolism and the opening and closing of our valves through the *Asher Yatzer* prayer*,* created for recital after successful urination and defecation (Gilbert, 2013, p. 9, footnote). It is a regular way to keep wonder in our lives and to acknowledge the sacred squarely in the midst of the mundane. As Einstein (2011) purportedly said, "There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle" (p. 483).

Soon I discovered just how true this was. Upon chatting about wonder with family, friends, and colleagues, I was surprised to learn that not everyone had experienced wonder (or perhaps realized they had) or recognized the miraculous in life. Several indicated they could not recall an experience of wonder, unsure if they ever had had one. Some associated wonder with childhood and *naiveté* but were perplexed about its possibility in adulthood. Even a seasoned Jungian analyst presented me with a blank response. One long-time friend asked for an example of wonder and, when I suggested the miracle of childbirth, she replied "But it happens all the time." She was right, but sadly, was unable to perceive anything extraordinary either in childbirth itself or the fact that such a miracle does happen every day.

This is hard to fathom when one learns about embryologists' deep-seated connection to wonder. Jean Rostand's job as an embryologist is to discover ways ordinary matter forms itself into an organized embryo. He describes it as a "daily inhalation of wonder" (Rostand, as cited in Gilbert, 2013, p. 8). Birth is, indeed, a common occurrence, and yet it is utterly wondrous. For me, the wonder lies in the words "forms itself." It seems stunning that ordinary matter knows how to do that. Biologist and poet Miroslav Holub describes the feat thusly:

> Between the fifth and tenth day the lump of stem cells differentiates into the overall building plan of the embryo and its organs. It is like a lump of iron turning into the space shuttle. In fact, it is the profoundest wonder we can imagine and accept, and at the same time so usual that we have to force ourselves to wonder about the wondrousness of this wonder. (Holub, as cited in Gilbert, 2013, p. 9)

Gilbert notes that even knowing how this wonder takes place, diminishes the wonderfulness of it not a jot.

The conversation with my wonderless friend led me to consider whether some people are more prone to wonder than others. I imagined how empty and pointless life might feel if nothing more lay beyond familiar and surface appearances. Heschel (1955/1997) went as far as to say, "Life without wonder is not worth living" (p. 46). I wondered if gaining or reviving a sense of wonder might help lower the sobering rates of clinical depression in the Western world, and if acquisition of wonder even was possible. I was curious whether wonder was a gift, an inborn trait, or if it could be cultivated. I also wondered what it was about the perceptions of children that seemed to make them natural wonderers.

Increasingly I began to appreciate wonder as a form of epiphany, that is, "a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something; an intuitive grasp of reality through something . . . usually simple and

striking; an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure” (Epiphany, n.d.). Many of my wonder-full experiences arose from the manifestation of something new in the familiar. For example, I gazed into a commonplace flower and suddenly recognized that it was a perfect and beautiful natural *mandala* form. Looking into several other types of flowers, I discovered that they, too, had a similar structure (Figure 2). There it was in flower morphology, the striking suggestion of an archetypal blueprint that underpins the natural order. The discovery felt like an epiphany, an eye-opening encounter with and from the depths when the sacred pierces the veil of the mundane, and the universe exposes a wondrous secret.

Figure 2. Mandala form in flowers. Photography: Author

Thus, my fascination with mandala forms in nature began and, with each discovery, wonder multiplied: from philosopher-biologist Ernst Haeckel’s (1904/1974) astonishing illustrations of Radiolaria and other mandala forms in nature (Haeckel Radiolaria, n.d.); to physician and natural scientist Hans Jenny’s (2001) cymatic mandalas created by the vibration of sound on liquids and matter (Water Sound Images,

2011); to mandalas of snowflakes and ice crystals (Snow Crystals, 1999); to the mandala forms of crop circles (Temporary Temples, n.d.); to spider webs, wood rings, orbiting planets, and so on *ad infinitum.* All of these examples pointed to an interiority of the natural world that seemed unmistakable and were subject to months of incubation.

Geneticist Ruth Bancewicz (2014), writing about symmetry in nature and the six-fold or hexagonal rotational symmetry of snowflakes, says, "This symmetry at a (relatively) large scale reflects symmetry at an atomic scale, which is determined in turn by symmetry in the basic laws of physics" (para. 6). Jung (1961/1965) takes this a step further when, writing of mandalas, he says, "This circular image represents the wholeness of the psychic ground. . . . Since this process takes place in the collective unconscious, it manifests itself everywhere" (p. 335). This seemed evident in my own discovery.

Wonder unveils herself in the extraordinary.

Wonder also presented herself by introducing me to the extraordinary existence of the tardigrade, a micro-animal known as the waterbear or moss piglet (Brennand, 2011). Its appearance is unearthly and its profile quite alien, resembling a cross between a suede-covered caterpillar and a mechanically snouted Michelin Man (Jones, n.d.). I could not quite get over this anomaly of nature. What are they here for? Where do they come from? What do they tell us about the world we share? And, of course, we could ask the same question of ourselves and of all living things.

Living in mosses and lichens and feeding on plant cells, algae, and small invertebrates, these half-millimeter creatures have a water-inflated body and four pairs of legs bearing four to eight claws per leg. During one period of their life cycle they can be tufted and, in another, they can be so dried out as to resemble a deflated balloon. They can live comprising less than three percent water, rehydrate when conditions improve and

then go on to forage and reproduce. Thriving in extreme conditions lethal to most life on earth, they can survive without food or water for more than ten years and withstand temperatures from just above absolute zero (−459.67° Fahrenheit or −273.15° Celsius) to well above the boiling point of water (212° Fahrenheit or 99.98° Celsius), pressures up to six times stronger than those in the deepest ocean trenches, and ionizing radiation hundreds of times higher than the lethal dose for humans. They are the only animal known to have survived the vacuum of outer space (VICE, 2012), which has led some to think that they actually may have originated there (Brennand, 2011).

Breaking every so-called law of nature, here was a creature—baffling, marvelous, brilliant, and oddly beautiful in its strangeness—that lay entirely outside any category of being I had ever encountered. Could it be impervious to death, as we know it? It shocked me into taking stock of its place and my place in the universe. The fact of the tardigrade's very existence, like my own, was an amazing mystery destined for incomprehensibility. And I faced again the reality that legions of living mysteries exist entirely outside our awareness. At only half a millimeter long, here was a creature infinitely better adapted to survival than the human race ever would be, and yet, our largely anthropocentric culture still contains members who regard man as the pinnacle of existence. This kind of discovery, even if not directly experienced, can radically shift one's sense of place in the universe.

Wonder unveils herself in visual imagery.

Internal imagery related to earlier times frolicked through this study. A decade or more ago, during a bleak time, wonder-reviving imagery came to me in the form of vivid, persistent, and active inner figures of enchantment. Fairies, gnomes, water nymphs, dryads, and more played relentlessly in my inner world for several years, and, quite

wonderfully, they re-emerged in the course of this research. They would show up right when my research process began to feel heavy, as if to remind me to play, lighten up, and re-connect with the magical feeling of wonder.

Emphasizing this message, several synchronicities regarding fairies occurred during these heavier times, most notably at the hospital where I work in imagery, music, and arts with medical-surgical patients. One showed me photographs, quite unsolicited, of beautiful fairies she had crafted and placed in natural surroundings. She allowed me to photograph them, and they became my new computer screensaver. Two weeks later, the patient died, but her fairies lived on with me. She reminded me that not only were imagery and synchronicity filled with wonder, but death was also—the wonder of impermanence.

Images of lightning also drew my attention. They represented the kind of wonder that stuns one as it irrupts into consciousness, and images of lightning bolts then joined the fairies in my screensaver. In being wonder struck, worlds seem to crack open, offering a stunning glimpse or sense of Soul. An instant of contact seems to reveal a splinter of truth about ultimate reality. Depth psychotherapist Sophia Reinders suggested that this state also can be thought of as “a response to contact with absolute Being” (Reinders, personal communication, November 12, 2013). It brought to mind Vasalou’s (2012) description of wonder as “a response to invisible realities perceived with the eyes of the soul” (p. 11). Realities exist beyond the limits of our human senses and, when they reveal themselves, we are taken aback.

One day, when the screensaver lightning images popped up in front of me, I recalled the well-known engraving (Figure 3) found in Camille Flammarion’s

(1888) *L'atmosphère météorologie popular* (p. 163*)* of the pilgrim peering through a hole in the boundary of the world to see the hidden workings of the universe beyond its borders.

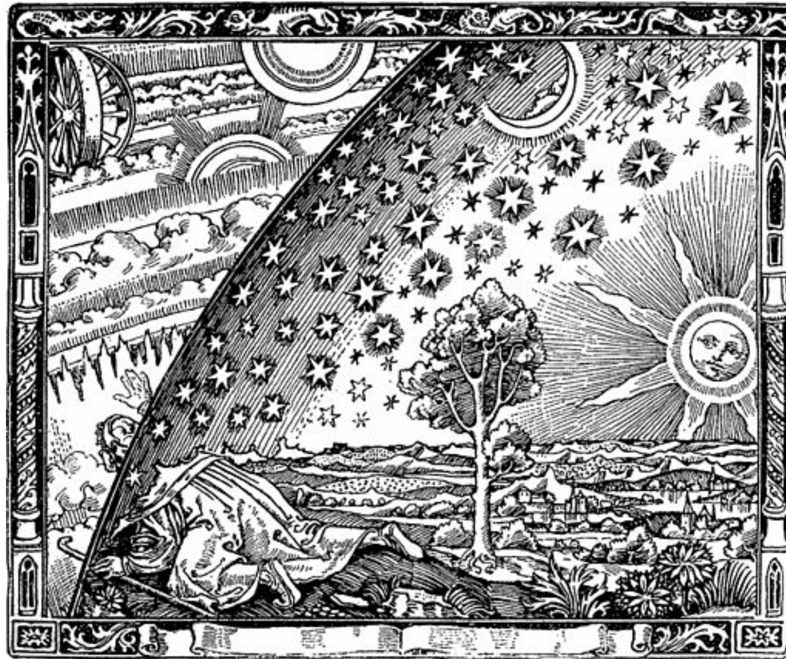

Figure 3. "*Un missionnaire du moyen âge raconte qu'il avait trouvé le point ou le ciel et la terre se touchent."* Unknown artist, http://hathitrust.org, public domain

At the time, it seemed to depict the pilgrim's active seeking of the wondrous that lay beyond the boundary of the earth. This ran counter to my experience of being a passive recipient of wonder, which broke in to my consciousness like lightning and was not attainable by conscious effort. This view, however, expanded somewhat during the incubation process. Nevertheless, it prompted me to wonder if it was possible to find wonder, or if wonder had to find us. Were there ways to be more hospitable to wonder and be more receptive of her grace?

Wonder unveils herself in aural imagery.

Wonder abounds in aural imagery and permeates the experience of singing in a choir. There are no words adequate to describe this, but this study would be remiss to

avoid an attempt. I have sung with symphony choruses for many years and find the first dress rehearsal to be among the most wondrous of all experiences. After months of rehearsal, the choir comes together with the full orchestra and, for the first time, hears the piece in its entirety from what feels like the inside of the music. Being on stage, in the midst of 200 or more instrumentalists and choristers, is to be enveloped in a cacophony of sound, each musician having a unique place, sandwiched between multiple layers of melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and words. There is a sense not only of connection to each and every participant but also to an underlying reality that transcends both the music and the musicians. Being absorbed in the music feels like an enfoldment in a powerful, shared, archetypal field, wondrous to say the least. There is a sense of merging as time seems to stop, and spontaneous tears can literally take one's breath away and make singing next to impossible.

Never was this truer than at the 2012 dress rehearsal for the world premiere of *Chrysopylae,* the creation of composer Rob Kaplilow and NPR's sound effects artist Fred Newman (Kapilow & Newman, 2012) to celebrate the 75thth anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge. Their task was to capture the sound imagery of the bridge, and ours was to help express it. Because it was a commissioned piece, the dress rehearsal was the first opportunity to hear the ambitious orchestration and sound effects. They included the voice of the bridge's late chief engineer Joseph Strauss; recorded sounds of birds and water; intimations of the primitive music of the Ohlone and Miwok tribes who first inhabited the region; orchestral depictions of protests, alarm bells, explosions, pile drivers, and spinning cables; the desperate renditions of suicide and grief; and the joyous, official, celebratory song of the opening of the bridge.

The final musical depiction was of gazing in wonder and awe at the improbable new bridge. This is precisely where the music took me as I felt the miracle of the meeting of earth, water, and sky. And I gained new appreciation both for the history, complexity, and deeper meaning of the bridge and for the marvelous and complex soundscapes that unconsciously accompany our lives. It was stunning to experience what one's ears could hear and one's heart and soul could feel in the midst of pulling together all the musical threads to create a living story. It left me realizing how wonderful and powerful aural imagery can be and also how neglected it is in psychology and psychotherapy.

Wonder unveils herself in the macroscopic.

Wonder also unveiled herself to me in the cosmological, macro-level of space while attending a memorial gathering of friends to celebrate the life of astronaut Sally Ride (1951-2012), the first American woman in space. She had spoken often and publicly of her shock at the fragility of the earth's atmosphere upon seeing it for the first time from space, hearkening, perhaps, to Heschel's (1951/1992) notion of wonder as "radical amazement" (p. 13). In Ride's biography, Lynn Sherr (2014) describes the American space program of the 1960s as "energized by the wonder of the unknown" (p. 65), and she cites a portrayal of Ride by one of her students as conveying "the way and wonder of the world around us" (p. xxi). At her memorial, it seemed Ride spent her whole life in the presence of wonder.

This event coincided with my discovery of a concept called "The Overview Effect" (White, 1987), which describes the wondrous aesthetic impact astronauts spoke about upon seeing our planet from orbit and the moon. Apollo 8 astronaut Frank White was so changed by this wondrous experience that he interviewed 22 astronauts, wrote a book, founded the Overview Institute (http://www.overviewinstitute.org) to study this

experience, and oversaw the production of a stunning, wonder-filled documentary "Overview" (Planetary Collective, 2012). In it, astronauts describe their experiences of seeing the earth from a cosmic perspective, recognizing our planet as part of an interconnected whole, a beautiful, living, breathing, and fragile organism, of which human beings are a part.

At the memorial gathering, Ride's sisters-in-exploration-and-discovery gave first-hand accounts of space (Ride Celebration, 2012), and my discovery of the overview effect had primed me to experience a vicarious form of wonder that was quite palpable. Imagining into the stories of these pioneering space investigators filled me with amazement and gratitude. Astronaut Cady Coleman had logged 180 days in space as lead robotics officer at the International Space Station, and played her flute while abiding in the heavens; oceanographer Kathryn Sullivan had helped launch the Hubble telescope and was the first woman to walk in space; and geophysicist Maria Zuber had been principal investigator for NASA conducting moon-mapping missions of Mars and Mercury. Ride and each of these women had lived on the very edge of wonder and the unknown, and I wondered if they identified their experience as wonder. Their humility and tone of reverence suggested they did, and my own projections insisted on it.

Wonder unveils herself in the microscopic.

Microscopic phenomena lying beyond our limited vision can be wondrous in their intricacy, variety, and complexity. During this study, wonder directed my attention to exquisite micrographs (digital images taken through a microscope) of pollens (Love is in the air, 2009), viruses (These 12 viruses, 2014), and bacteria (Microbial art, 2014). Their uniqueness and unseen beauty is particularly striking for organisms often considered abhorrent.

The fact that our bodies are actually microbial menageries also is a wondrous thing to realize. According to science writer Michael Tennesen (2011), two hundred trillion microscopic organisms swarm inside us comprising bacteria, viruses, and fungi that are essential to our wellbeing. We host at least a thousand different species, our skin is home to more than a million microbes per square centimeter, and there are twenty times as many microbes in our bodies as human cells. So, each of us is a super-organism of microbial colonies comprising a diverse ecosystem that thrives only when all the interdependent species are healthy and balanced. We can no longer think of ourselves as individual bodies but rather as part of a much more complex, self-organizing, interconnected whole. And is not this cosmos of inter-related complexity a matter of immense wonder?

Wonder obliged me further by pointing to anthropologist Claude-Olivier Doron's (2012) writing on *The Microscopic Glance* (pp. 179-200). He chronicles the use of the microscope at the end of the sixteenth century as a "means for discovering a plethora of wonders" (p. 191) and as a spiritual exercise. The ordinary, the despised, and the minute became extraordinary and revered under the microscopic glance; familiar nature became strange, and the canny became uncanny.

Doron (2012) characterizes this effect as "microcosmic vision" (p. 181), which could take scientists beyond knowledge to wisdom and even to radical self-transformation. Early microscopist Louis Joblot (1645-1723) said, "The microscope . . . gave us the opportunity to see in every single thing an infinity of beings no less wonderful than any we have hitherto known" (Joblot as cited in Doron, p. 192). The

microscope was “a means of applying oneself to the pure sense of wonder . . . a way of grasping the unity of the entire creation beyond time and space” (p. 194).

So microscopic vision can lead from perception beyond the concrete to a sense of the patterning of the whole. This account resonated both with my experience of peering wonderstruck through the microscope in high school and with my more recent fascination with micrographs, which make these hidden worlds visible to all who have access to computers. Today numerous “scopes” exist, from scanning and transmission electron microscopes, to multiple scanning probes, to scanning acoustic microscopes, and more. They remind us that there is so much more to existence than meets the eye and ear, both at the micro and macro levels. Our sense organs are the vehicles of epiphanies.

Wonder unveils herself in the profound and dreadful.

It became clear to me that wonder could be an eminently profound phenomenon and redeem the direst of days. She led me to Romanyshyn’s (1999) description, noted in Chapter 1, of how she helped transform his deep and lengthy period of grief following the tragic and unexpected death of his first wife. He writes:

> A completely unexpected sense of wonder and delight gradually began to take a hold of me. . . . How can I tell you that out of the depths of grief and mourning I began to come to my senses through the rich sensuous ripeness of the world, that I began to feel in the presence of the simplest things of the world a naive, fresh and innocent sense of delight, that life began to touch me like a lover, that from grief there was a blossoming. (p. 16)

This account holds many of the qualities inherent in wonder: surprise, delight, being taken hold of, coming to one’s senses, the world’s vitality (ripeness), naiveté, freshness, innocence, and the simplicity of the mundane. It tells of the transformational power of wonder that, by any measure, lacks neither substance nor depth.

Wonder also guided me back to existential psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's (1946/1963) classic *Man's Search for Meaning*, which I had not picked up since 1970. In it, he tells of an experience of wonder in the bleakest of circumstances during the Holocaust. It was this:

> If someone had seen our faces on the journey from Auschwitz to a Bavarian camp as we beheld the mountains of Salzburg with their summits glowing in the sunset, through the little barred windows of the prison carriage, he would never have believed that those were the faces of men who had given up all hope of life and liberty. Despite that factor—or maybe because of it—we were carried away by nature's beauty, which we had missed for so long. (pp. 38-39)

Frankl and his train companions likely were facing death, yet wonder remained with them in the beauty of nature. What a wonder that they could experience wonderment under these circumstances.

Frankl (1946/1963) also mentions that, in camp, comrades might draw attention to a "nice view of the setting sun through the tall tress of the Bavarian woods" (p. 39) and once "a fellow prisoner rushed in and asked us to run out to the assembly grounds and see the wonderful sunset" (p. 39). These experiences bear the marks of wonder at the sublime, otherwise known as aesthetic shock (Coomaraswamy, 1943, p. 176), which we explore later in this work. From these Holocaust accounts, we see that wonder can be present in the most inhumane situations imaginable; she is neither superficial nor lightweight.

On reflecting upon the profound nature of wonder, the opera *Doctor Atomic* by John Adams and Peter Sellars (2005) came to mind, although I had given it little thought since attending its premiere in 2005. The production dramatically portrays the horrified wonder that took over the atomic scientists in Los Alamos at the end of World War II as they discovered and created the means to decimate Hiroshima, the first city in history to

be the target of a nuclear attack. Interestingly, a documentary was made afterwards about the creation of the opera, titled *Wonders Are Many (*Else & Cohen, 2007).

Vicariously, I began to appreciate this most dreadful side of wonder via recollections of *Doctor Atomic* and then from immersing myself in historian Mark Fiege's (2007) article "The Atomic Scientists, the Sense of Wonder, and the Bomb." I imagined the exhilarating, yet terrifying, wonder that struck the scientists as they pieced together a vision of the cosmos of unprecedented magnitude and mystery; touched the very nerve of the universe while encountering the interior beauty and strangeness of the atom; and discovered that splitting the atom would set off a chain reaction, convert mass into energy, and culminate in an explosion of eschatological proportions. It was to be a spectacle of wondrous, brilliant luminescence 20,000-30,000 feet high—and deadly. The capacity to ignite the atmosphere and potentially engulf the entire earth in flames lay squarely with those scientists. Their "awareness of the bomb's terrible power opened them to another form of wonder, a dark mixture of awe and fear called dread" (p. 600). So, wonder can be a matter of profound gravitas, present in the direst of circumstances and lodged in the grip of archetypal darkness. It can be dreadful, awesome, bewildering, meaningful, and redemptive, as well as simply astonishing, fascinating, and delightful.

Wonder unveils her mystery in the news.

As my wonder quotient grew, its radar also picked up news headlines that pointed to wonder and mystery being inexhaustibly conjoined. For example, "Hidden Depths: Brain Science is Drowning in Uncertainty" (Chen, 2013); "The Particle at the End of the Universe: The Difficulty of Trying to Explain the Hunt for the Higgs Boson Shows that Nature will not be so Easily Defined" (McKie, 2013); "A Basic Rule of Chemistry Can be Broken, Calculations Show" (Moskowitz, 2013); "Genomes of Giant Viruses Hint at

'4th Domain' of Life" (Yong, 2013); "Astronomers Discover Planet that Shouldn't be There" (Bailey & Stolte, 2013); "Human Intelligence Isn't Superior to that of Other Animals, Researchers Say" (Mosbergen, 2013); and "Stellar Trio Could Put Einstein's Theory of Gravity to the Test" (Cho, 2014).

This handful of headlines demonstrates how little we really know about our world and how one level of discovery is met with another layer of questions—and wonder. For some, these uncertainty-generating headlines can be frustrating or even frightening; for myself, their message speaks to the fathomless depths of the universe and the unceasing mystery and wonder of existence. I concur with Skitol's (2003) reference to wonder as "pathos for the unknown" (p. 3); the unknowable as well as unknown are seductive magnetizers of my attention and generators of wonderment.

Incubation Phase: Glimmerings of Wonder Gestate

> *Everything is gestation and then bringing forth. To let each impression and each germ of feeling come to completion wholly in itself, in the dark, in the inexpressible, the unconscious, beyond the reach of one's own intelligence, and await with deep humility and patience the birth-hour of a new clarity. . . . Being an artist means not reckoning and counting, but ripening like the tree which does not force its sap and stands confident in the storms of spring without the fear that after them may come no summer.*
>
> —Poet and novelist Rainer Maria Rilke (1934/1993, pp. 29-30)

My ongoing immersion in the waters of wonder generated the seeds for discovery and epiphany, and they needed time to germinate to fruition. While in incubation, I left alone the largely unformed material and question, without interference. There, the dance between conscious and unconscious took place and, in that place of darkness, clarified and extended my tacit understandings. Polymath Michael Polanyi (1891-1976) said that discovery does not usually occur through deliberate and calculated efforts, "but more often comes in a flash after a period of rest or distraction. . . . by a process of spontaneous

mental re-organization uncontrolled by conscious effort" (Polanyi as cited by Moustakas, 1990, p. 29). This happened in the several incubation cycles that took place in this work.

Although it was not easy to set aside conscious effort, I did incorporate both short and extended fallow times into focused periods of study, and learned that incubation could occur in quite natural ways. Typically, stopping when my brain felt full was imperative; it was futile to soldier on. Short incubation periods occurred while making and drinking numerous cups of tea during study periods. The act of simply stepping away from my desk could work wonders, often spontaneously helping words emerge from their hiding places. Sections that resisted articulation I would set aside, sometimes for months. Upon returning, the material had shifted, and it seemed almost effortless to re-work challenging ideas, fill in gaps, and identify new threads and openings.

Composer Brian Eno, a student of ebb and flow in the creative process, cautions against undervaluing times doing nothing, saying, "It's the equivalent of the dream time, in your daily life, times when things get sorted out and reshuffled" (Eno, as cited in Tamm, 1988, p. 64). And, perhaps the most natural form of incubation actually takes place during sleep. Although I am not a prolific nighttime dreamer, I did have frequent "sorting dreams" in which I witnessed columns and files re-arranging themselves. Several times this led me to re-organize both my physical and electronic wonder libraries, as themes formed new clusters and meanings. I regard these actions as concretizing shifts in my awareness and understanding of wonder that occurred during incubation in the mystery of dreamtime.

Material also incubated while walking my golden retriever, Gracie, along the San Francisco bay. By my holding a soft gaze and taking in the sights and sounds of nature,

there often arose feelings, images, intuitions, words and insights related to the work. Taking showers was similarly revelatory. It was as if showering and dog walking induced a type of relaxed, waking dream effect resembling the creative state of reverie that was hospitable to the epiphanic nature of wonder.

Approximately twice monthly, I extended this dream-like state through weekends away at our “cabin in the woods.” Perched on a forested hill at the foot of the Sierras, it is a quiet haven with marginal telephone and Internet connection. The change of pace and place there often would lead to effortless shifts in perspective. Sitting on the deck, amidst massive oaks, cedars, and pines, simply taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of nature, I often would enter a state of reverie or daydreaming. In this sanctuary of quiet where apparently nothing was going on, nature actually buzzed with activity and sound. Wind, falling leaves, squirrels, blue-jays, grosbeaks, woodpeckers, cicadas, bees, mice, frogs, lizards, quail, wild turkeys, deer, rabbits, and even visits from a pair of coyotes, a snowy owl, and a red fox—all would absorbed me in their sense of aliveness. At some point I would transition from being an observer to feeling kinship with these fellow creatures, breathing in and out the very same air, participating with them in the miracle of life. At times like these, my thinking mind could not have been further away from my dissertation, and yet my sensate being would be immersed in wonder.

This hideaway is a place for leisurely meandering, especially in its labyrinth, which I built over time with river rocks in an unused horse corral. Rather than approaching the circumambulation with an intention, as some aficionados advise, I would dawdle around it somewhat aimlessly, curious about what might arrive out of the blue. Labyrinth walking can be helpfully disorienting. Often I would lose track of my spatial

orientation, which then would tend to turn my habitual thinking upside down. Often I would leave the labyrinth regarding wonder differently from when I entered it.

During my period of research, some marvelously distracting travel in locations worlds away from home not only presented countless wonders but also provided the distance and time for deep incubation of existing material. Many of these blossomed upon my return or several months later. Indeed, incubation helped illuminate the unconscious threads in the work, deepened my connection to the material, spawned ideas, shifted my perspective, and catalyzed discovery making.

The *prima materia* for this alchemical brew arose from my immersion in the topic and comprised my ongoing experiences of wonder and their autobiographical origins, visual and aural images, dreams that manifested in waking and sleeping states, informal reactions of others upon learning of my topic, the writings of scholars in cross-disciplinary fields, and material from multiple online sources. These were the seeds that attracted my attention and curiosity while being immersed in wonder's deep waters.

In summary, wonderings that underwent ripening and transformation included wonder's omnipresent epiphanies, wonder's relationship to beauty and mystery, wonder's multiple qualities, wonder's connection to seeing and hearing, and the fact that not everyone experiences wonder. These were the seeds that, with time and darkness, would transform into themes and ideas representing essential features of wonder. And, as Rilke (1934/1993) wrote to his fledgling poet, this would come not by "reckoning and counting, but ripening" (p. 30) and "patience is everything" (p. 30).

Chapter 5
Illumination Phase:
Wonder Whispers

Having undergone a long incubation, though [sic.] we do not know until the shell breaks what kind of egg we have been sitting on.

—Playright and essayist T. S. Eliot (1986, p. 137)

The glimmerings of wonder discerned in the immersion phase underwent incubation. Out of sight and mind, wonder began to develop some form. These germs of discovery, which were quietly ripening in the womb of the unconscious, became ready to hatch into the light of day. Tacit knowledge and intuition completed their gestation, and wonder became poised to communicate. In this chapter, wonder's whispers gain some clarity, her messages are illuminated, and her secrets begin to cluster into themes for further reflection and unfolding in the next phase.

Wonder's Whisper: I am Perceptible Through Unknowing

There is almost universal feeling that some of the patterns of perception which are characteristic of childhood must be recaptured if a man is to live in authentic life.

—Philosophy and psychology of religion scholar Sam Keen (1969/1973, p. 43)

Most children seem to be natural wonderers. Their naiveté and unknowing render their openness to the world and its wonder almost constitutionally privileged—providing they are healthy and the parenting they receive is "good enough" (Winnicott, 1971/1982, p. 191) to instill a basic level of trust in the universe. So, children may serve as guides as we explore patterns of perception conducive to wonder.

Most cultures and many of the world's religions recognize the special capacities and gifts of the child. Jesus said to his disciples, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3, Revised Standard

Version Bible), suggesting that there is something essential about retaining some sense of one's inner child into adulthood. Jewish mysticism taught that, in our fetal existence, we are exposed to the secrets of the universe (Hoffman, 1992, p. 3), and Chinese philosopher Chauang Tsu *(*369-286 BCE) said, "It is the Child that sees the primordial secret in Nature" (as cited in Abrams, 1990, p. 1). Perhaps perceiving the primordial in nature lies at the core of the experiencing of wonder.

Keen (1969/1973), in his *Apology for Wonder,* captures the sense of children as instinctive wonderers in this passage:

> The association of wonder with childhood is so automatic it has become a cliché. The innocent freshness with which children approach the world has long been held up as an ideal state from which the adult is exiled by the relentless tyranny of passing time. Christianity has suggested that salvation involves becoming like a little child; educators and artists have sought means to awaken in adult spontaneity, curiosity, and sensory delights that seem to be the rule of childish existence. There is almost universal feeling that some of the patterns of perception which are characteristic of childhood must be recaptured if a man is to live in authentic life. Such is the conviction that lives in the back of the association we automatically make between childhood and the state of wonder. (p. 43)

From this we gather that wonder thrives where a certain unknowing and a freshness of sensory perception is present. Keen, among many others, recognizes that such childlike (not to be confused with childish) qualities can do wonders for the adult soul.

The references noted by Keen (1969/1973) to "universal feeling," by Chauang Tsu to the "primordial secret," and by Hoffman to the "secrets of the universe" bespeak an archetypal energy at play, which throws some light on the cosmic nature of wonder. And Jung (1940/1968, pp. 151-181), in *The Psychology of the Child Archetype*, identifies the Divine Child as an archetypal figure representing a "wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature" (p. 171).

So, a state of unknowing, openness to nature, and fresh sensory perception seem to be key qualities necessary for receiving wonder. We explore this further in the explication phase.

Wonder's Whisper: I Abide in Liminal Space and Playspace

In the liminal space there is a roar in the ears,
and the consciousness races too loud, too fast
—maybe to drown out the unconscious.
It is as if one sees it all but knows it is fleeting—
too fast to grasp; it will be gone too soon,
And what one has seized from it will fade and dim
and haunt the soul
One comes back too infrequently.
The moments are more precious each time as their
transience is known:
Lost in the very act of freezing the moment,
The moment of being alive.
Meeting the self that has been here before
—The moment of choice
when the heartbeat is felt in the arms and toes and gut—
The selves that chose without knowing they chose:
They are me again
united in the moment
between the gates.
I glimpse the truth
—the one we forget to live but must remember to be alive—
One huge heartbeat, shaking, alive.

—Anonymous, *In Liminal Space* (n.d)

This poem, *In Liminal Space* (Anonymous, n.d) artfully captures some nuances of wonder's presence: She freezes "the moment of being alive" (line 12); conveys a momentary, yet deafening, glimpse of things as they are; and facilitates brief contact with something outside ordinary consciousness that we attempt to grasp, perhaps make sense of, before she disappears. In that precious moment, we see with fresh eyes, feel naked aliveness pulsating throughout our bodies, "one huge heartbeat, shaking, alive" (line 22), and come home to our self. There is a fleeting confrontation with pure truth, but our

attempt to capture this moment of wonder practically guarantees its disappearance, "lost in the very act of freezing the moment" (line 11). This experience, like wonder, haunts the soul (line 7) and allows us to see freshly.

Wonder, like play, resides in liminal space, "a place where boundaries dissolve and we get ready to move across the limits of what we were into what we are to be" (Collier, 2001, para. 3). She lives in this transitional space, in the land between the known and the unknown, where the limits of consciousness and order are breached, and where new insights and expanded awareness flower. After entering wonder's liminal abode, we are never quite the same again.

According to cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1964/1987), who furthered the work of anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1909/1960), liminal space, from the Latin *limen*, meaning threshold, is unstructured, vulnerable, and unprotected—and also enormously potent. It is a place of ambiguity and marginality and serves as a transition between stasis and the world of becoming, the place of creativity. Crossing this threshold involves letting go of conscious limits because, in a liminal state, we are neither this nor that, neither here nor there, not yet what we want to be, and no longer what we were. In the liminal state there is dissolution of order, and this creates a fluid, malleable situation that enables the new to arise. And, this is where we meet wonder.

The liminal space in which wonder abides includes the field of play, accessible to children and adults alike, although often considered to be the primary domain of children. Playspace suspends disbelief and is open to possibility and, as such, is likely to be open to wonder and enchantment also. So, in the liminal space of play, the world becomes

alive, enchanted, magical, and can be replete with fairies, angels, and other wondrous figures who animate the world (Fuller, 2006, pp. 90-92).

Like wonder, play is a "non-purposive state" (Winnicott, 1971/1982, p. 55), and it occurs neither strictly in our imagination nor in the truly external world. Play also is the liminal home of reverie, active imagination, fantasy, and imagery, which have a solid home in depth and arts-based psychotherapies. Playspace is a safe, formless, and undefended space, essential both to free association and to "a creative reaching-out" (p. 55). In fact, Winnicott expresses the importance of playspace in psychotherapy, saying:

> Psychotherapy is done in the overlap of the two play areas, that of the patient and that of the therapist. If the therapist cannot play, he is not suitable for the work. If the patient cannot play, then something needs to be done to enable the patient to be able to play, after which the psychotherapy may begin. (p. 54)

Not only is play a requirement of the therapist, but so, too, is wonder. As we saw in Chapter 2, Lomas (2004) exhorts therapists to "ensure that we do not ourselves adopt the stance that enables wonder to slip out of the room (p. 111). It seems that with play can come wonder, and both are integral to allowing something new to arise, both in and out of the therapeutic dyad.

Quinn (2002) maintains that imitative play, because it extends sensory experience, is the "most conspicuous and characteristic manifestation of wonder" (pp. 34-35). It brings to mind the psychological expansion that can be brought about through some forms of drama and movement therapy. He explains that, when children honk like a pig or gallop like a horse, they are enlarging their sensory experience by feeling what it is like to be the animal and, in so doing, develop participatory knowledge. "Human play is a profound kind of knowing," says Quinn "and it is a knowing undertaken for its own sake,

for the mere pleasure of it, simply because it is good to know things as they are" (p. 35). And, it is in knowing things as they are, that we can come to experience wonder.

Wonder's Whisper: I Wear a Coat of Many Colors

At the start of this study, wonder revealed herself primarily through images of lightning bolts. But, as an ever-expanding quantity of material entered the alchemical vas, she emerged in a coat of many colors, of various shades and intensities spanning from delightful to fascinating to dreadful. As Vasalou (2012) notes, "wonder has jagged boundaries" (p. 35), and we need to be careful not to assume we have discerned wonder's timeless essence. But let us begin by illuminating the lightning bolt type of wonder.

Wonder can, indeed, be intense; she can break in or irrupt into consciousness and strike us into momentary stupor and bewilderment. Philosopher and metaphysician William Desmond (2010), in writing about wonder, asserts, "We cannot 'project' ourselves into 'being struck'" (p. 317) and suggests it is beyond our capacity to self-determine that. When wonder strikes in this way, she comes unbidden; she can break in to the consciousness of any body at any time, regardless of predisposition toward wonderment. Desmond maintains that it is the experience of wonder striking us that opens us up and enables us to be more receptive to her. Similarly, Miller (1992) notes, "It is not we who break through to the unknown. It is the unknown that breaks through to us" (p. 4).

We might well wonder what it is that holds the power to stun us so. Finding words to express the moment of being opened is difficult, but Franz Josef Haydn does an excellent job musically depicting the power of encountering the wondrous in his choral masterpiece *The Creation* (c. 1797), when the miracle of light breaks into the first day of creation. It can be heard here, starting "In the beginning" (Haydn (2010).

Previously, as described in the Immersion phase, the Flammarion (1888) image (Figure 3) had suggested to me a pilgrim's active seeking of the wondrous beyond the boundary of the earth and, at that time, this ran counter to both my personal experience and Desmond's (2010) description of wonder being unattainable by conscious effort. However, after incubation, the pilgrim's gesture appeared to be an unintentional stumbling upon, and tentative peering through, an opening in his world. The pilgrim seemed amazed to discover the worlds that lay on the other side. This kind of wonder still involves surprise but is not that sudden or out of the blue; the stunned shock of being wonderstruck is missing. So, this image revealed that wonder manifests in this less intense way also, as if the cracks in the universe, which are open enough to perceive the extraordinary in the ordinary, are ever-present if only we can notice them. How we might do that is another question.

The idea of a hole in the sky, connoting a space through which ours and other realms may pass, can be traced back to the most ancient of civilizations. Pi, the Chinese holed disk of jade (Gammon, 1973) is one example. Another is the giant, donut-holed stone, Men-an-Tol; it is located, aptly, in Land's End, England and was created during the Bronze Age around 3000 BCE (Men-an-Tol, 2007). Later it found expression in the alchemical term *fenestra aeternitatis* (von Franz, 1980 p. 114), Latin for window of eternity.

Jungian Marie-Louise von Franz (1974) wrote about the existence of certain times when "a 'hole' is introduced into the field of consciousness through which the autonomous dynamism of the collective unconscious can break in" (p. 227). We might take this to mean that, when wonder strikes, an aspect or archetype of the collective

unconscious breaks in to consciousness through a "hole" in the fabric of the universe. Von Franz's (1977) account of the breakthrough to the *unus mundus* (pp. 235-252), the unified world where spirit and matter are undivided, also is fitting. She describes it as a thinning of the veil between spirit and matter, and an interface between a timeless order and our temporal world, when "everything happening in time is experienced as if gathered up into a timeless objective oneness" (p. 252). Perhaps it is a glimpse of the *unus mundus* that stuns us in wonder. The atomic scientists, described in Chapter 4, well might have experienced this when they came face to face with the deep structure of the universe.

On May 8, 2012, while this material was incubating during sleep, the following words broke into my dreaming consciousness: "Wonder—when the eternal irrupts into the present moment." Wonder had spoken. The refrain of singer-songwriter, poet, and novelist Leonard Cohen's song *Anthem* (Cantshaketheseblues, 2009) says it all: Ring the bells/ that still can ring./ Forget your perfect offering./ There is a crack, a crack in everything./ That's how the light gets in.

So, wonder comes to us in at least two ways: One is by stunning us into submission, and another is by surprising us through discovery. Another emerged out of the incubation process. Wonder also can appear more gently with little or no surprise and give us an abiding sense of her presence in the world, a deep feeling of appreciation for the miracle and miracles of life, and a sense of warm kinship with all living things. Rebecca Baggett's (2001) poem, *Testimony*, can be imagined as conveying wonder's voice about the sense of wonder in this excerpt:

I want you to know that spring
is no small thing, that

the tender grasses curling
like a baby's fine hairs around
your fingers are a recurring
miracle. I want to tell you
that the river rocks shine
like God, that the crisp
voices of the orange and gold
October leaves are laughing at death
(p. 22, lines 12-21)

So, the sense of wonder is more like an ongoing mood or attitude toward the world. When wonder invigorates the world around us in this way, we tend to feel deep reverence, appreciation, and gratitude for the mystery of life, the beauty of the cosmos, and the miracle of existence.

Marine biologist and conservationist Rachel Carson's (1956/1984) lifelong love of wonder's presence in nature is legendary. In *The Sense of Wonder*, she describes the child's inborn sense of wonder as a "gift from the fairies" (p. 45) and recognizes the need to help children stay alive to this wonder through meaningful contact with nature. Quite famously, she said:

> If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and dis-enchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. (pp. 42-43)

So a sense of wonder seems to be psychologically worthwhile cultivating. If we could perceive our world with a sense of wonder, we might both enhance our relationship to ourselves and ameliorate our objectifying attitude toward the cosmos. For, a sense of wonder would seem to engender a respect for our planet and promote its protection rather than further its abuse or neglect.

Wonder's Whisper: I Sound in the Universe

If an inaudible whistle
blown between our lips
can send him home to us,
then silence is perhaps
the sound of spiders breathing
and roots mining the earth;
it may be asparagus heaving,
headfirst, into the light
and the long brown sound
of cracked cups, when it happens.
We would like to ask the dog
if there is a continuous whir
because the child in the house
keeps growing, if the snake
really stretches full length
without a click and the sun
breaks through clouds without
a decibel of effort,
whether in autumn, when the trees
dry up their wells, there isn't a shudder
too high for us to hear.

What is it like up there
above the shut-off level
of our simple ears?
For us there was no birth cry,
the newborn bird is suddenly here,
the egg broken, the nest alive,
and we heard nothing when the world changed.

—Poet Lisel Mueller, *What The Dog Perhaps Hears* (1996, p. 89)

Through the wonders of modern science, we now have technologies at our disposal that can enhance and evoke our experience of wonder substantially, as we discover new and surprising facets of our world that have existed since the beginning of time. Advanced scopes can probe the cosmos far beyond the capacity of our senses, extending our perceptions of the world almost beyond imagination. In recent years, we have become privy to an increasing number of cosmological secrets and, yet, with each

discovery, wonder continues to unfold. In this section we explore the unfathomable depths of sound and our ability to perceive it.

The cosmos sounds. NASA has informed us that the bedrock of our universe is acoustic and that, in the Perseus galaxy cluster, 250 million light years away, there is a tone that sounds in a series, which "appear as pressure waves roiling and spreading as a result of outbursts from a supermassive black hole" (Rockwell, 2004, para. 2). The tone is imagined to have been playing for 2.5 billion years and is a B flat 57 octaves lower than middle C, that is, a million billion times deeper than the limits of human hearing. More recently sound was heard outside the solar system in interstellar space eleven billion miles from earth, where it was detected by the Voyager 1 spacecraft, which left the solar system in August 2013 after 35 years of spaceflight (Kramer, 2013). How can we not be wondered by the mystery and immensity of all that lies beyond the capacity of our human senses. We have only to listen to the news with open ears to appreciate such wonders on a regular basis.

Bio-acoustician Bernie Krause (2013) has spent his life being wonderstruck by sound. He was a violin prodigy at the age of three but, ultimately, it was the sounds of nature that enchanted his aural attention. As a groundbreaking bio-acoustician, he has recorded soundscapes of habitats all over the planet and helped define the structure of soundscape ecology. "I had no idea that ants, insect larvae, sea anemones and viruses created a sound signature. But they do" (para. 1), is how he began his TED talk titled "The Voice of the Natural World."

Unless we listened deeply to the world we would not realize that the soundscape of any habitat comprises three parts (Krause, 2013): a geophony with sounds for example

from wind and waves; a biophony with sounds for example from wolves and whales; and an anthrophony with sounds for example from human voices and machinery. Examples of these can be found on Krause's web site (www.wildsanctuary.com).

Wonder resides in the sounds of our universe and its inhabitants, which are markers of the health of a habitat across the entire spectrum of life. Krause (2013) comments, "Where environmental sciences have typically tried to understand the world from what we see, a much fuller understanding can be got from what we hear" (para. 17). Because of factors such as global warming, resource extraction, and human noise, Krause laments that half of his archive comes from such radically altered habitats that "they're either altogether silent or can no longer be heard in any of their original form" (para. 5). Perhaps if we tuned in deeply to the wonder of nature's sounds, we would be less apt to neglect her.

We perceive sound not just through our ears but also throughout our bodies. Dame Evelyn Glennie is the world's first full-time solo percussionist. She also is profoundly deaf. What does it mean for a deaf person to hear? For Glennie, it means that sound pictures come to her through muffles, crackles, vibration, and sight. In her *Hearing Essay* (Glennie, 1993), she explains that deaf people do not live in a world of silence and that hearing is actually a specialized form of touch. Glennie learned to associate where in her body she feels the sound with the sense of perfect pitch she had before losing her hearing; low sounds vibrate in her legs and feet and high sounds on her face, neck, and chest. And, sometimes, she describes an acoustic in terms of how thick the air feels.

"Sound" Glennie (1993) writes, "is simply vibrating air which the ear picks up and converts to electrical signals, which are then interpreted by the brain" (para. 3).

Touch does this, too. When our ears struggle to hear low frequencies, our whole body's sense of touch takes over. Hearing higher frequencies is easier for the ear and, when that happens, the body's attunement to vibration is untapped, and we tend to underuse this capacity. We distinguish between hearing a sound and feeling a vibration but, actually, they are the same. So, even someone totally deaf can hear/feel sounds.

Glennie (1993) also notes that sight is involved in hearing, for when we see things move and vibrate, we unconsciously hear a corresponding sound. She herself does this upon seeing a cymbal vibrating or tree leaves moving in the wind. She asks, "Who can say that when two normally hearing people hear a sound they hear the same sound?" (para. 7) and suggests that, even though everyone's hearing might be different, the sound picture built up by their brain is the same, so that outwardly they are not dissimilar. "Some of the processes or original information may be different but to hear sound all I do is to listen" (para. 6), she affirms. Is that not wonderful?

Wonder's Whisper: I am Betrothed to Mystery

Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous
to be understood.

How grass can be nourishing in the
mouths of the lambs.
How rivers and stones are forever
in allegiance with gravity
while we ourselves dream of rising.
How two hands touch and the bonds
will never be broken.
How people come, from delight or the
scars of damage,
to the comfort of a poem.

Let me keep my distance, always, from those
who think they have the answers.

Let me keep company always with those who say
"Look!" and laugh in astonishment,

and bow their heads.

—Poet Mary Oliver, *Mysteries, Yes* (2009, p. 62)

The experience of wonder necessitates lingering in mystery and uncertainty, which lie beyond a closed, empirically known world. In this technological age, we might imagine that science can or will solve every mystery. But mechanisms, measurements, causes, taxonomies, response times, chemicals, neurons, explanations, and acronyms do not contribute to a deeper appreciation and understanding of wonder. In fact, as soon as we attempt to make sense of a mystery such as wonder, we explain her quite away.

Our ineffectual efforts to resolve uncertainty and explain mystery countervail the life of wonder. These futile attempts are visible not only in the equations of science, but also in the concepts of philosophy, the doctrines of theology, and the theories of psychology. The arts, however, seem immune to the fear of not knowing, embracing mystery and delighting in the depths of the unfathomable.

Poetry speaks so eloquently about wonder, and we might wonder what gives poets such an acute sense of the wondrous. Depth psychologist and poet Larry Robinson (2014) closes his *Articles of Faith* with, "At the heart of all things is an ineffable mystery worthy of awe and wonder" (article 25). This sentiment appears to be the currency of so many poets, with mystery being their ongoing focus of attention along with its everlasting marriage to wonder. Poets immerse themselves in the mysteries, nuances and secrets of life providing glimpses of the worlds to which our world points. Rather than attempting to explain mystery, "poetry becomes the finger *relating* us to what is beyond the image" (Quibell, 2014, para. 8), that is, to the deep, universal layer of reality from which they

craft their work. Poetry appears to form a bridge between collective archetypal patterns and the reader and, along with its mystery, wonder lingers nearby.

It appears we must defer to mystery if we are to experience wonder. Again, we return to Rushdie's (2000) words:

> Five mysteries hold the key to the unseen: the act of love, and the birth of a baby, and the contemplation of great art, and being in the presence of death or disaster, and hearing the human voice lifted in song. These are the occasions when the bolts of the universe fly open and we are given a glimpse of what is hidden; an eff of the ineffable. (p. 20)

Here Rushdie brings to light a few of the most self-evident, archetypal, and wondrous experiences that exist in life: love, birth, art, death or disaster, and song. This is when the universe seems to crack open, and we encounter that which usually is concealed and beyond words.

Although wonder and mystery have been yoked for eternity, there seems to be a human compulsion to seek clarification, definition, and explanation of both, at which point the lives of mystery and wonder evaporate. Francis Bacon's (1842) designation of wonder as "incomplete knowledge" (p. 163) bears witness to this. By reducing reality to that which our limited senses can comprehend and name, we convince ourselves that we are in control of the ineffable. We attempt to solve the mystery of life by duping ourselves that there is no mystery.

However, we would be misguided if we regarded all scientists as objectifiers of nature, bent on solving mysteries and responsible for the disenchantment of the Western world and its associated loss of wonder. In fact, numerous mystery- and wonder-loving scientists participated indirectly in this study, demonstrating that scientific knowledge can intensify rather than destroy the mystery of life, and even can serve to enchant it.

To begin with, Albert Einstein (1946/2006) was visionary enough to see that mystery "stands at the cradle of true art and true science. He who knows it not and can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle (p. 7). Carl Sagan (1994) said, in his famous reflection on the *Pale Blue Dot* (the 1990 photograph of the earth taken by the Voyager 1 spacecraft) that everyone who ever lived has done so "on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam" (p. 6). This is not only a true fact but also a wondrous, mysterious, and enchanting perspective of our planet. And evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (2000), known for his staunch materialism, nevertheless recognizes the universal human "natural and laudable appetite for wonder" (p. 158) when he asserts:

> It is my thesis that the spirit of wonder which led Blake to Christian mysticism, Keats to Arcadian myth, and Yeats to Fenians and fairies is the very same spirit that moves great scientists, a spirit which, if fed back to poets in scientific guise, might inspire still greater poetry. (p. 27)

Scientists, at heart, can be as gripped by wonder as any poet or artist seems to be (Bersanelli & Gargantini, 2009).

D. H. Lawrence's (1928/1969) passage about wonder, mystery, and knowledge, is particularly relevant:

> Somebody says that mystery is nothing, because mystery is something you don't know, and what you don't know is nothing to you. But, there is more than one way of knowing. Even the real scientist works in the sense of wonder. The pity is, when he comes out of the laboratory he puts aside his wonder along with his apparatus, and tries to make it perfectly didactic. Science in its true condition of wonder is as religious as any religion. (p. 382)

Yes, we lose wonder as soon as we try to explain or make sense of her, for she will not be parted from her beloved—mystery. Many world-renowned scientists know this intimately, as shown by the following statements: "To me it suffices to wonder at these secrets and to attempt humbly to grasp with my mind a mere image of the lofty structure

of all that is there" (Einstein, 1932, para. 9); "The purpose of knowledge is to appreciate wonders even more. . . . A scientist is never certain" (Feynman, 1999, p. 111). Neurobiologist Robert Sapolsky (1998) almost echoes Feynman with, "The purpose of science is not to cure us of our sense of mystery and wonder, but to constantly reinvent and reinvigorate it" (p. 286). The following depiction is his testimony to wonder's indestructible love affair with mystery:

> An impala sprinting across the Savannah can be reduced to biomechanics, and Bach can be reduced to counterpoint, yet that does not decrease one iota our ability to shiver as we experience impalas leaping or Bach thundering. We can only gain and grow with each discovery that there is structure underlying the most accessible levels of things that fill [sic.] us with awe. (pp. 285-286)

As Sapolsky points out, beneath our common perceptions lies a design that can make us quiver in wonder and awe.

Depth psychologists likely would identify this design as the archetypal patterning that structures universal consciousness. As such, we would expect wonder to manifest wherever there is mystery, in the humanities and the sciences, in the natural order, in everyday life, and in the overlap of outer and inner worlds. We might never find an adequate explanation for the wonder found in nature or inspirational music because some things simply are not entirely knowable, and these can be the very mysteries that inject vitality and meaning into our lives. So, experiencing wonder seems contingent upon a tolerance for uncertainty and a reverence for mystery, and the attempt to solve mystery is likely to result in the sacrifice wonder.

This discovery concurs with psychoanalyst Peter Lomas's (2004) assertion in his writing on wonder that a key tenet of depth psychotherapy is that "the world around us is accepted as mysterious and unavailable to an omnipotent desire to control it" (p. 105). He also urges therapists, as noted previously, to "try to ensure that we do not ourselves adopt

the stance that enables wonder to slip out of the room" (p. 111). So, a sense of wonder and an acceptance of mystery are important for therapist and patient alike, and attention to these capacities, outside as well as inside the depth psychotherapy *temenos*, is essential for both parties.

The experience of wonder necessitates lingering in the uncertainty that lies beyond a closed, empirically known world. As wonder continues to mystify, we have to concede that her secrets simply might be beyond science, explanation, and clean extraction. Does this mean we should not research wonder and get to know her better, or is this precisely why we should? That she demonstrates our apparent need to know things definitively perhaps makes her an even more important phenomenon to study. And, perhaps, if we can tolerate the tension between knowing and not knowing, a transcendent third of unimaginable light will emerge from the wondering. Indeed, insight often comes about like this in the therapeutic process. Let us never forget that mystery is wedded to wonder, and it underlies everything studied in depth.

Wonder's Whisper: I am Wedded to Beauty

Wonder loves the company of beauty. The twosome frequent all corners of creation, from the length and breadth of the natural world, to humankind's artistic and scientific endeavors, to the mysteries of space and true love. The couple also can be found lingering in the least expected places on earth, such as in the concentration camp that Victor Frankl (1946/1963) described in Chapter 4. Literary critic and aesthetician Elaine Scarry (1999), sounding as if she is describing the Flammarion (1888) image from Chapter 4, writes, "When we come upon beautiful things . . . they act like small tears in the surface of the world that pull us through to some vaster space" (p. 112). Or perhaps

we might think of these tears as the crack, the *fenestra aeternitatis,* through which the wonder or beauty irrupts into consciousness.

Quantum physicist Werner Heisenberg (1970/1972) appears to have glimpsed the beauty in that vaster space when he looked deeply into the fabric of the universe during his work on nuclear fission. In realizing the implications of his calculations, he said:

> In the first moment I was deeply alarmed. I had the feeling that, through the surface of atomic phenomena, I was looking at a strangely beautiful interior, and felt almost giddy at the thought that I had now to probe this wealth of mathematical structures nature had so generously spread before me. (p. 61)

Such is the wonder and awe this scientist experienced as he penetrated the surface of the atom and was confronted by what must have seemed to be the very bottom of the universe. Upon looking deeply, he encountered beauty as well as fear and disorientation. The enormity and intensity of his discovery were wonderful, awful, and overwhelming.

James Hillman (1982) describes the Neoplatonic understanding of beauty as "manifestation, the display of phenomena, the *appearance* of the *anima mundi.* . . . the nudity of things as they show themselves to the sensuous imagination" (p. 84). Perhaps it was this nudity of the world that met Heisenberg's gaze in the lab that day. Hillman connects our response to beauty with the aesthetic response of the heart, *aesthesis,* the Greek word for perception and sensation. Its root meaning is a breathing in of the ensouled world with "the gasp, 'aha,' the 'uh' of breath in wonder, shock amazement" (p. 80), which also is the quintessential experience of wonder. The notion of taking in the world by awakening the aesthetic response of the heart through sensuous intuition resonates strongly with this researcher; it unifies the inner and outer sensing that seems to takes place in the apprehension of wonder. We will unfold this further in the explication phase.

When we are wonderstruck, we can be stunned, and philosopher and metaphysician Ananda Coomaraswamy (1943) describes the astonished response to beauty as “aesthetic shock” (pp. 174-179). He relates it to the word *Samvega* that, in the ancient Theravada Buddhist language of Pali, denotes “a state of shock, agitation, fear, wonder or delight induced by some physically or mentally poignant experience” (p. 176). Aesthetic shock can result from encounters with “natural objects (such as the dewdrop) or events (such as death) but also in connection with works of art, and in fact whenever or wherever perception (*aisthesis*) leads to a serious experience, that we are really shaken” (p. 176). He likens the aesthetic shock of beauty to being struck, like a horse, by a horsewhip (p. 178).

So, aesthetic shock speaks to the surprise inherent in wonder when we are stunned by the power of contact with the sublime, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as “a feature of nature or art: that fills the mind with a sense of overwhelming grandeur or irresistible power; that inspires awe, great reverence, or other high emotion, by reason of its beauty, vastness, or grandeur” (Sublime, 2014, A9). Given this, we would expect greater exposure to the arts and nature to be conducive to making us more receptive to beauty and wonder.

Donald Kuspit (2006), a philosopher, poet, and art historian, likens aesthetic shock to a conversion-type experience in which appearances become sensuously new and radically changed, and things are “more seriously experienced than they ever were before” (para. 6). This response to seeing anew also bears the marks of being struck. Kuspit notes that art, which this study contends encompasses all art forms, can make the normally invisible world of pure visual sensations “ecstatically visible” (para. 5). From

this, we might conclude that wonder manifests when the world makes itself ecstatically visible through some kind of epiphany.

Aesthetic shock occurs, according to Kuspit (2006), when the observer passes from "the world of practical perception into a world of seemingly purposeless perception" (para. 5), which, again, closely parallels the effect of being wonderstruck. As discussed in Chapter 2, wonderment is considered to be an unusual emotion (if it is an emotion at all) because it is noneudaimonistic, that is, lacking any apparent self-interest or purpose. Like aesthetics, wonder is a form of disinterested attention, meaning not that the observer is uninterested, but rather that she is unconcerned with any advantage or use that the object of attention might hold. Both in wonderment and aesthetics, the awareness and contemplation of the object of attention override any motivation to possess or manipulate it. This contrasts with curiosity, which generally seeks more pragmatic answers in the service of a eudaimonistic purpose.

So, Kuspit (2006) maintains that when we perceive art purely sensuously, we vest the object of attention with no interest and see it simply for what it is. "Without the dialectic of projection and introjection there is only the radically perceived" (para. 7), he says, and this comprises ontological insight, a glimpse of ultimate Being. Again, as if talking about wonder, Kuspit contends that aesthetic shock can be an emotionally transformative experience that gives us the capacity and license to perceive the very truth of being.

Kuspit (2006) also associates aesthetic shock with therapeutic insight. He imagines that psychoanalysis is an aesthetic process, the analyst treats the patient as a work of art in aesthetic process, and the patient may eventually regard her life as a work

of art in the making. This brings to mind Heschel's (2010) televised message to young people shortly before he died in 1972: "Above all, remember that you must build your life as it were a work of art" (p. 9). Citing filmmaker Stan Brakhage, Kuspit advocates therapists seeing the way the modern artist sees, "with no preconceived perspectives, with awareness of the infinite gradations of psychic movements and emotional colors, and with the radical innocence and acceptance that makes radical intellection possible" (para. 25). For this kind of seeing we must be open to wonder and to the experience of the other, whether in or outside the consulting room. It is nothing less than the ideal of pure phenomenological perception.

During analysis "small emotional details are apprehended, and tremendous psychic distances surveyed. Sensations of time and space are radically altered," and the psyche "becomes a fantastic cosmos with a logic of its own" (Kuspit, 2006, para. 23). Certainly then, psychotherapy and the psyche can be perceived as wondrous. If the therapist can help the patient perceive his psyche aesthetically, and take aesthetic pleasure simply in existing, then, according to Kuspit, change will come about through the shock and insight of this discovery, which, we contend, might well include the impact of wonder. As the patient comes to experience and know himself as a unique part of a wondrous cosmos, he changes, both in relationship to himself and to the larger world around him.

Louis Stewart's (1987a) archetypal affect theory, discussed in the literature review, also throws light on the effects of startle that, presumably, are present both with aesthetic shock and with wonder. He writes:

> Startle serves to centre consciousness and leads to reorientation, but it accomplishes more than that; it leads to a centring of the total organism which

> imposes an immediate and total cessation of any movement or sound; breathing ceases, and even the beat of the heart may be momentarily interrupted. At that moment all of the other affects are . . . functioning as its opposite. That is, their energy is totally in abeyance, although in a state of readiness to be sure. . . . The stimulus to startle is the 'unexpected', and the dimension it characterises is that of orientation, that is the place of the ego and the organism in the world and with relation to the self. (para. 18)

Here, Stewart provides a phenomenological description of startle and a sense of its therapeutic action. It also could describe the psychological operation of wonder and aesthetic shock—to act as a reset switch for restoring psychological balance. Bulkeley (2002, para. 12), too, as noted in Chapter 1, highlights the de-centering and re-centering effects of being surprised by wonder.

Wonder's Whisper: I Manifest as Embodied Resonance with the Depths

> *The universe shivers with wonder in the depths of the human*
>
> —Cosmologist Brian Swimme (1985, p. 32)

There is, perhaps, no better description of the universe shivering with wonder as the account that follows. Written by writer and political activist Barbara Ehrenreich (2014), she recounts an experience she had at age 17, when she was a self-proclaimed rationalist, headed for a career in cellular immunology:

> I stepped out alone, walked into the streets of Lone Pine, Calif., and saw the world—the mountains, the sky, the low scattered buildings—suddenly flame into life.
>
> There were no visions, no prophetic voices or visits by totemic animals, just this blazing everywhere. *Something poured into me and I poured out into it.* This was not the passive beatific merger with "the All," as promised by the Eastern mystics. It was a furious encounter with a living substance that was coming at me through all things at once, too vast and violent to hold on to, too heartbreakingly beautiful to let go of. It seemed to me that whether you start as a twig or a gorgeous tapestry, you will be recruited into the flame and made indistinguishable from the rest of the blaze. I felt ecstatic and somehow completed, but also shattered. (paras. 3-4, emphasis added)

This experience led her to believe that she had had a mental breakdown, and it took her many years to discover that countless others had received similar disclosures from the universe. Eventually, she considered these to be mystical experiences; perhaps they were, and they also resemble wonder's signature—embodied resonance with the depths.

As we have seen elsewhere in this work, the ancient Hindu *Natyashatra* describes wonder as the pulsation of life and consciousness through creation (Fuller, 2006, p. 10). And Hycner (1976) notes in his study of the experience of wonder that there is a sense of internal and external expansion approaching a merging with the object of wonder, and one of his research participants commented:

> I kind of felt like it was one of the few times that there had been such a thing as a soul—that I had touched it—it was like my core—everything that I am sort of all wrapped up there but I really touched it. (p. 160)

Another participant, describing being united with some internal or external force, said, "I guess the wonder of it for me was that I was really connected with I guess what you call basic nature, you know, something very universal" (p. 161). And, one more reported, "really a feeling of totalness—a real merging kind of with nature" (p. 161). We have to wonder if these are not experiences of being part of the Soul of the world, anima mundi.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines resonance as "a corresponding or sympathetic response" (Resonance, 2014, OED, 2), which immediately brings to mind self psychologist Heinz Kohut's (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) notions of empathy, mirroring and twinship, as well as attunement, affinity, and calibration—key qualities ideally embodied in the psychotherapeutic dyad. In the field of music, composer and pianist William Allaudin Mathieu (1991) states, "When two strings are tuned to the same pitch their vibrations are synchronized one for one. They are in step, in tune, and each

reinforces the other's energy" (p. 44). This metaphor also could describe resonance with wonder, as well as the stance of that psychotherapist who is well attuned to her patient.

Resonance is the key characteristic of Gendlin's (1996) psychological Focusing construct of "felt sense" (pp. 59-63). It describes the embodied attunement to an entire intricacy of meaning beyond categorization. It also is integral to the heuristic process and its discovery of the qualities of an experience such as wonder. In Focusing, there is a process of inner searching to find words and images that express the wholeness of a given bodily feeling, which results in a resonating sensation of a perfect match and a shift in bodily response (Gendlin, 1978/1982, pp. 56-57).

Similarly, this study has involved using myself as a tuning fork to feel into texts in a holistic way, and to resonate with words through an implicit bodily sense of fit with the complexity of the experience. The felt sense of wonder arising from resonance with certain texts has comprised "a maze of meanings, the whole texture of facets, a Persian rug of patterning—more than could be said or thought" (Gendlin, 1996, p. 58). An embodied resonance with an author's sense of wonder has amplified my own sense of wonder and has produced a resounding inner affirmation of "Yes! We are on the same wavelength." These resonating authors have resided in almost every conceivable field of study and life.

The question that emerged was, "Is wonder herself a form of resonance, and if so, with what?" My personal experience intimates that, perhaps, wonder is a form of tuning-in to the wavelength of an underlying structure or pattern of the cosmos, a momentary matching of common frequencies, a feeling of connection between personal soul and anima mundi, the Soul of the world. "The soul of the thing corresponds or coalesces with

ours" (Hillman, 1982, p. 78) is how Hillman describes the animate world coming alive, arresting our attention and drawing us to it. Depth psychologist Jennifer Selig (2010) uses the term "archetypal resonance" (p. 6) to depict her experience of looking deeply into some wildflowers. These words resonated strongly with my experience of wonder, inducing the just-right fit of words to experience that Gendlin (1996, p. 56-57) speaks of, as if hundreds of loose ends had found each other and magnetically united. It felt like another epiphany.

The term *archetypal resonance* conveys something of wonder's ineffability, as a pulsating affinity between the deepest energies and patterns of one's being and those of the universe; a dynamic uniting of the universal with the personal psyche, presumably through the activation of our shared, archetypal dynamics. This seems consistent with Jung's (1929/1969) view of the collective unconscious as being both encrypted in the archetypal patterning of the universe and present in the "matrix of all conscious psychic occurrences" (p. 112). Archetypal patterns exist throughout the cosmos and in us; we share certain energies, and they seem to constellate and unite in the experience of wonder.

One way of conveying this is through an interpretation of Michelangelo's (c. 1512) familiar Sistine chapel fresco *The Creation of Adam* (Figure 4), which shows God's and Adam's hands stretched out toward each other, with their forefingers mere centimeters apart.

Figure 4. Detail from *The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo (c. 1512). Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

This image may have several meanings, including that it depicts the approaching animation of mankind, when God breathed into man and made him into a living soul. In addition, it could be telling the story of souls attuning to each other in sympathetic resonance.

The slim space between the forefingers could represent the liminal threshold between our soul and the Soul of the world. It is an energetic field of extraordinary potency, and wonder is poised there, ever ready to ignite the space with a sympathetic resonance, which reverberates throughout our entire being. Wonder becomes activated when the utter beauty, mystery, and miracle at the heart and Soul of the cosmos draw ever closer to our own heart and soul. For, as the depths of the cosmos meet our depths and vice versa, an attunement of frequencies occurs. This sets off an energetic resonance not unlike the kindling of the spark of an electrical shock, when electrons jump across a gap between two charged objects. Critical closeness in both examples creates a burst of energy. It was the loss of this closeness that Jung (1939/1954) lamented when he said,

"Man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and eidolon [image, double] of the cosmos, and his 'anima' is no longer the consubstantial scintilla, or spark of the Anima Mundi, the World Soul" (p. 476).

Relating to the idea of archetypal resonance is biologist Rupert Sheldrake's (1981) proposition of morphic resonance. Although a full analysis of this hypothesis is beyond the scope of this work, we note here that he describes morphic resonance as present when "the form of a system, including its characteristic internal structure and vibrational frequencies, becomes *present* to a subsequent system with a similar form; the spatio-temporal pattern of the former *superimposes* itself on the latter" (p. 96). This holds the potential for describing wonder as an archetypal energy of the collective unconscious (form of a system), which irrupts into consciousness (superimposing itself on a subsequent system) with a similar form (the shared collective archetypal dynamics between the cosmos and the experiencing individual). No wonder we are stunned in the presence of archetypal wonder. As "the universe shivers with wonder in the depths of the human" (Swimme, 1985, p. 32), so we quiver in correspondence with the depths of the world.

In this heuristic phase of the research, "Wonder and I took a vow;/ we exchanged rings./ I fell in love,/ and she accepted all my desires" (Jalal al-Din Rumi, 2010, p. 70). Wonder helped me hear her whispers and illuminate her glimmerings, which clustered her qualities into themed discoveries resulting from this study's primary question, "What are the dimensions of the experience of wonder?" These spawned further inquiry, unfolded in Chapter 6, into how we might deepen our capacities for perception and receptivity and attune to the world and its wonder.

Chapter 6
Explication Phase:
Attuning to the World's Resonating Wonder

> *We cannot willfully or consciously control the emergence of the depth dimensions. The actual revelation of the depths is spontaneous, contingent on mystery. Nonetheless, we may foster the possibility of experiencing the depths of self and world by creating conditions favorable for their manifestation.*
>
> —Psychoanalyst Will Adams (1995, para. 11)

This chapter unfolds further the material that arose in the illumination phase. It explores the conditions that are conducive to opening to and being opened by wonder. It addresses how we might deepen our capacities for perception and receptivity and attune to the world and tend its resonating voice of wonder, both outside and inside the consulting room. As we consider attunement, correspondences to psychotherapy become evident.

Attunement involves bringing about harmonious, sympathetic accord (Attune a., 2010) and responsive relationship (Attune b., 2014). It is a form of listening to the depths of the world with an ear toward its connection to our own depths. This study contends that as we attune to the world, the Soul of the world resonates sympathetically with the dynamism of our souls, and this is when we experience wonder. In order to open to the world like this and respond aesthetically to it in wonder, we need to "reawaken the heart" (Hillman, 1982, p. 80) through paying attention to our sensing and intuiting of the world. This chapter unfolds this through exploring themes of porosity of the self, beginner's mind, patience of the soul, attentiveness to the world, and awakening our inner and outer senses. It is important to note that, regardless of our receptivity to wonder, still she can irrupt into our lives unbidden and open us up to the Soul of the world.

Attuning to Wonder Through Retaining Porosity of Self

> *The universe's energies penetrate us and awaken us. Through each moment of wonder, no matter how small, we participate in the entrance of primal energies into our lives.*
>
> —Cosmologists Brain Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker (2011, p. 114)

In his tome *A Secular Age,* philosopher and social scientist Charles Taylor (2007) examines several transformations that took place in the Western world between about 1500 CE and 2000 CE. In particular, he sees a shift away from what he calls the "porous" self toward the more "buffered" self (pp. 27, 35-41). This suggests a movement in modern times toward the low end of the Openness scale (McCrae, 1996) discussed in Chapter 1.

The porous self, maintaining a thin or permeable boundary between the mind and the world, is susceptible, or open, to cosmic forces, including archetypal energies. The buffered self shields itself from these intrusions to retain a sense of self-control and self-direction. Taylor (2007) believes this characterizes the transformation of the pre-modern world of sacred enchantment into the secular age of disenchantment (pp. 25-61). So, the more porous we are, the more open and receptive we will be to the world, to the unknown, to the unconscious, and to wonder. The more buffered we are, the less open and more defended we will be toward possibility, the new, the more, and the attributes of wonder. We no longer have an undifferentiated view of mind and matter, for we have drawn a sharp boundary between mind and the world as well as mind and the body. And, as we have become increasingly buffered and less open to all that is, wonder has slipped out of life along with its enchantment.

Philosopher and metaphysician William Desmond (2010, pp. 310-348) contributes greatly to our understanding of the connection between wonder and porosity.

He views the wonder that precedes reflection to be a primal form of astonishment, which has an "ontological bite" (p. 313). It opens us up to Being itself, and thinking occurs only following this experience. An abundance of objects of wonder can precipitate astonishment, which may be seen as miraculous, extraordinary, and even supernatural. We are stricken with wonder by the "blow of otherness" (p. 314), and this marks a discontinuity in consciousness. We are amazed and wonderstruck to see both the spectacular and also the extraordinary in the ordinary. When something happens beyond our expectation, it is emphatic; it can stun, dumbfound, and stupefy us. All this happens before we reflect or take deliberate action. "If this idiocy of astonishment sounds negative," Desmond says, "in fact, the rupture of surprise, in striking into us, takes us beyond ourselves" (p. 314).

Desmond (2010) is adamant that wonder is not "a power over which we exercise self-determination" (p. 313) and that "we do not have a capacity for wonder; rather we are capacitated by wonder to a wise mindfulness" (pp. 312-313). He describes the astonishment of wonder as a "primal opening" pointing to "a porosity of being" (p. 314). Something is initiated, but we are not the initiators. "We do not open ourselves; being opened, we are as an opening" (p. 314), he says. In a reversal of usual thinking, communication takes place first from the other to us, and then from ourselves toward the other. Desmond notes that *thaumazein* (wonder), the *pathos* of the philosopher, is a primal receptivity, a "patience of the soul before any self-activity" (p. 317). Therefore, we cannot make ourselves wonder because wonder comes from beyond ourselves. When it does come, it is in the form of an "intimate strangeness that makes us porous to what before us is enigmatic and mysterious" (p. 317).

Yet, in order to retain a sense of wonder, Desmond (2010) believes, we have to come "home again to this porosity—and its capacitating of our powers" (p. 313). A key ingredient, he says, is the capacity to know incapacitation, to know the limits of our abilities and knowledge. "The porosity is not the knowing of this or that," he says, "but is the awakened opening than enables the further knowing of this or that" (p. 316). We must be aware that many things are beyond our ability to know and that, to remain porous to the world, we must be able to make peace with and embrace the state of unknowing. For, when we think we know it all, this misguided sense of certainty clogs "the deeper ontological and epistemic springs from which wonder flows" (p. 310) and results in a "darkness that thinks it is enlightened" (p. 310). Desmond contends that this can lead to a voracious form of curiosity, a knowing devoid of reverence and wisdom, corruption of the soul, and an opening up of the will to power.

Attuning to Wonder Through Adopting Beginner's Mind

From true emptiness, the wondrous being appears.

—Zen master Shunryu Suzuki (1970/2000, p. 109)

If knowing is the death of wonder, then unknowing is its life. It resembles beginner's mind and bare attention, the Buddhist practices associated with openness and emptiness. In his classic book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,* Shunryu Suzuki (1970/2000) says, "from true emptiness, the wondrous being appears" (p. 109) and "If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few" (pp. 21-22). So beginner's mind would seem to be the ideal state for the alighting of wonder.

Beginner's mind also resembles bare attention (Epstein, 1995; Goldstein, 1976), which means "observing things as they are, without choosing, without comparing,

without evaluating, without laying our projections and expectations on to what is happening; cultivating instead a choiceless and non-interfering awareness" (Goldstein, 1976, p. 20). This is the stance also of beginner's mind and phenomenology as well as the innate predisposition that seems to allow wonder to flourish. In addition, it captures both the analytic ideal of "evenly suspended attention" (Freud, 1912/1960, p. 111), which helps enable unconscious material to arise in the analytic hour, as well as Bion's (1970) recommendation to meet patients without memory, desire, or understanding.

Adults, unlike children, do not live in a naturally naive state, but even so, they can be open to existence and to wonder's presence. They may adopt a stance of receptivity that approximates taking in the world without preconception, expectation, judgment, or prejudice—ideal also for the wonder-attuned therapist as well as her patient. Master photographer Minor White (1952/1966) thought of this kind of openness to the world as seeing with an innocent eye, and he encouraged photographers to hold such an attitude akin to beginner's mind, if they wished to capture the wonder of their subject's essence. He explains:

> Innocence of eye has a quality of its own. It means to see as a child sees, with freshness and acknowledgment of the wonder; it also means to see as an adult sees who has gone full circle and once again sees as a child with freshness and an even deeper sense of wonder. (p. 163)

White re-affirms that it is possible for adults to perceive freshly and, here, we see wonder emerging at the intersection of beginner's mind, bare attention and phenomenology. Again, we can imagine the wonder-attuned therapist working at this very intersection.

White (1952/1966) also regards the ideal inner state of the photographer as resembling the emptiness of beginner's mind. He explains:

> For those who would equate "blank" with a kind of static emptiness, I must explain that this is a special kind of blank. It is a very active state of mind really, a

> very receptive state of mind, ready at an instant to grasp an image, yet with no image pre-formed in it at any time. We should note that the lack of a pre-formed pattern or preconceived idea of how anything ought to look is essential to this blank condition. Such a state of mind is not unlike a sheet of film itself—seemingly inert, yet so sensitive that a fraction of a second's exposure conceives a life in it. (Not just life, but a life). (p. 165)

This describes not only the kind of unknowing and receptivity helpful for the world to reveal itself and, along with it, its wonder, but also the desired state for the depth psychotherapist.

Psychoanalyst Peter Lomas (2004), in wondering if knowing and loss of naiveté deaden wonder, cites novelist David Grossman, who writes in *Be My Knife:*

> You probably remember the wonder of a child first naming things. Although every time he learned a new word, one that is a little 'theirs', everybody's, even the first word, a beautiful word like 'light' my heart curdles about the edges, because I thought, who knows what he is losing in this moment, how many infinite kinds of glamour he left and saw, tasted and smelt, before he pressurized them into his little box, 'light' with a *t* at the end like a switch clicking off. (p. 107)

The closer we get to labeling our experiences and squeezing them into box-tight categories and theories, the further away we move from phenomenological perception and wonder. In psychotherapy, we see this when patients explain their experience rather than accessing their innate wisdom through intuition and paying attention to their senses. Psychoanalyst Alfred Margulies (1989) acknowledges phenomenology's concern that "our very perceptual apparatus becomes forever enslaved through experiences and 'knowing'" (p. 7) and that "once we have learned how a thing is supposed to be, we experience it differently—and never again as directly" (p. 7). Thus, we conclude that states of naiveté and unknowing are conducive to being opened by wonder.

Attuning to Wonder Through Patience of the Soul

> *The peculiar vividness of the world becomes clear when we slow down and attend, learning to see all things anew.*

—Literary critic Sven Birkerts (2013)

Wonder is a response to the world, not an action. And, to respond to anything, we need to slow down, pause, and perhaps, even stop. As we have noted, Desmond (2010) recognizes that wonder is a primal receptivity, a "patience of the soul before any self-activity" (p. 317). Nowadays, patience has little currency in a world that regards speed and self-determination to be of paramount value in achieving success. Philosopher Juan De Pasquale (2003) states this dilemma thusly:

> Wonder also needs time to come into being. But the marriage of capitalism and technology is racing us through time into oblivion. Speed is our god. We go to sleep fast, make love fast, wake up fast, travel fast, eat fast, work fast, read fast—and all this so that we can keep on going fast. Fast for what? When things go too fast, reality blurs and wonder has nothing to latch onto. (p. 5)

Our world reveres speed, and we move so fast through all facets of life that we give wonder no clearing to land. Our culture, business, and education seduce us by values of productivity and efficiency and the supposed rewards of making things happen in the shortest time possible. Hillman (1982) suggests that if we meet the Soul of the world by paying attention and aesthetically responding to its particulars, this would "radically slow us down" (p. 85). And he wonders, "perhaps events speed up in proportion to their not being appreciated" (p. 85). So, if we valued the world more, we might invest the time to be more attentive to it and, in so doing, open ourselves up to its living wonder.

Verhoeven (1967/1972) makes an important distinction between pure passivity and suspension of activity, saying:

> Slowness, a slackening of pace, is the adoption of an expectant and wondering attitude toward things. It is not pure passiveness but a suspension of activity. This is why we are said to "pause" in wonder. Wonder necessitates a *ritardando* in which the new can be digested. During this *ritardando* the mover becomes filled, as it were, by the world through which he moves, and his eyes are open to it. (p. 193)

We need time and patience of the soul to be receptive and permeable to the world so that our response to it—wonderment—can enter and be integrated into our body's awareness. Verhoeven also contrasts haste with suspension of activity:

> Haste is a total lack of interest, for interest means precisely to dwell in between. Haste is the pathos of active, arbitrary people and, as such, is in contrast with wonder, which halts and looks. Haste does not look but, like rage, is blind. This blindness is the closed nature of an arbitrary existence desiring to impose its constructions immediately upon reality. (p. 184)

Here, we see that our rush to explain our experience and fix on certain knowledge prevents us from seeing anything new or wondrous. It reflects the "freeze and seize" (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996) tendency of those less open who need to seal existence into manageable categories that pre-empt surprise, and to curtail the openness favorable to wonder's appearance. Haste, busyness, and the desire for control can confine our reality to a tiny box in an infinite field of possibility. So, pausing may help us crack open the lid and adopt a sliver of receptivity toward wonder and its place in a deeper and more expanded reality.

Twentieth-century philosopher Ronald Hepburn (1984, pp. 131-154), in *Wonder and Other Essays,* contrasts the receptive nature of wonderment with the active quality of curiosity. He notes that phenomenologist Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) spoke of curiosity as "leaping from novelty to novelty . . . not tarrying," and that when curiosity "obtains sight of anything, it already looks away to what is coming next." It "never dwells anywhere" (Heidegger, as cited in Hepburn, p. 134). This harkens to Rilke's (1922/2005) words, "Only when we tarry do we touch the holy" (p. 99).

Hepburn (1984) asserts that wonder is not possessive like curiosity, and its objects remain unmastered and other. Wonder, he believes, has a contemplative-appreciative aspect to it, a dwelling or indwelling, whereas curiosity is more like interrogation. Thus,

we might think of patience of the soul as the tarrying that is propitious to taking in the world, and to receiving the wonder embedded therein. White (1978) said, “Be still with yourself until the object of your attention affirms your presence” (p. 122), and it is to attentiveness that we now turn.

Attuning to Wonder Through Attentiveness to the World

I want to remind you to look
beneath the grass, to note
the fragile hieroglyphs
of ant, snail, beetle. I want
you to understand that you
are no more and no less necessary
than the brown recluse, the ruby-
throated hummingbird, the humpback
whale, the profligate mimosa.
I want to say, like Neruda,
that I am waiting for
“a great and common tenderness”,
that I still believe
we are capable of attention,
that anyone who notices the world
must want to save it.

Poet Rebecca Baggett, *Testimony (2001, lines 22-37)*

We already have observed in this chapter the wonder-friendly dimensions of “bare attention” (Epstein, 1995; Goldstein, 1976) and “evenly suspended attention” (Freud, 1912/1960, p. 111). And, in Chapter 3, we saw that Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) regarded the phenomenological approach itself as being a “peculiar attitude and attentiveness to the things of the world” (p. xiii) and how his assistant, Eugene Fink, declared that wonder in the face of the world lies at the heart of the phenomenological reduction. And, in Chapter 5, we noted how Hillman (1982) advocated taking in the world by aesthetically responding to and attending to the many sensate qualities of the

world. He related this attentiveness to the idea of *notitia,* “the capacity to form true notions of things from attentive noticing” (p. 85) and, elsewhere, Hillman (1968) describes attention as “the cardinal psychological virtue” (p. 119).

The word *attention,* from the Latin *attendere,* means “to stretch toward” (Attend, n.d.); it allows subject and object to come closer to each other. Also, attentiveness and the act of seeing often are closely related, although it is possible to attend with all our senses. This “stretching toward” in attentiveness sometimes seems to be initiated entirely by the object, devoid of our own participation, such as when we feel struck by wonder. Again this speaks to wonder’s irruption into consciousness rather than its being reached through our efforts.

Birkerts (2013), in his article “The Art of Attention,” notes that having our attention captured by the other is quite different from an effortful paying of attention. He asks, “Is it that the looked-at thing *becomes* interesting, or that its intrinsic interest gradually emerges?” (p. 5), and he suggests that “the things of the world are already layered with significance, and looking is merely the action that discloses” (p. 5). Wonder arrests our attention in an unexpected way and “does not result from an inner deliberation; it is the involuntary break in a rhythm not only of thought but of the whole of life” (Verhoeven, 1967/1972, p. 37). And, as evolutionary cosmologists Swimme and Tucker (2011) said, “The universe’s energies penetrate us and awaken us. Through each moment of wonder, no matter how small, we participate in the entrance of primal energies into our lives” (p. 114). So, it is not necessarily our efforts that reveal the wonders of the world, but rather “things reveal themselves to our opened eyes” (Hove, 2011, para. 69) and, in wonder, they do so in an active and compelling way.

The world's realities can reveal themselves when we are open and attentive toward all that exists. Hove (2011) notes that at the heart of wonder, "something becomes open to us in the same moment that we become open to it . . . wonder leaves an impression, therefore, because we are open to the imprint of the other" (para. 75). Selig (2010) also captures this in her description of how some small, yellow wildflowers demanded her attention. She says that they stretched toward her, and she stretched back with her photographer's eye and "from a distance, they weren't so magnificent, but up close, they were wonders" (p. 5). Furthermore, Selig observes that artists, in attending deeply to their subjects, are capable of connecting with anima mundi, the Soul of the world. She writes:

> When the artist pays attention to nature, when they recreate the wonder that they see, we could say they perform a mirroring function similar to the function of a psychotherapist. Thus, they perform a form of psychotherapy *with* (not on, not for) the *anima mundi*, stretching toward that part of the world's psyche that is stretching toward them, mirroring the magnificence of the world in their creations. None of this is possible without an ethic of attention. (p. 4)

Thus, attending to the world can lead to an archetypal resonance with it, a Soul-to-soul encounter which, this study maintains, can be experienced as wonder. In wonder it seems that the depths of the world and the perceiving person draw more closely together, and even co-mingle. It is no wonder that wonder can be stunning. And, as Selig notes, "Attention is one way of *listening for*, of *listening to* the unconscious, from the unconscious" (p. 2).

Hillman (1982) tells us that the animate world "comes alive, arrests our attention, draws us to it" as "the soul of the thing corresponds or coalesces with ours" (p. 78). Similarly, phenomenologist and cultural ecologist David Abram (1997) describes such Soul-to-soul experiencing as a "delicate reciprocity" (p. 22) taking place between us and

the world. Through a "reciprocal encounter" (p. 56) the world actively engages us and provokes our senses; this he believes lies at the very center of perception.

Turning our usual way of thinking on its head, Abram (1997) places the act of perceiving equally on the other, saying, "Each perceived thing gathers my senses together in a coherent way, and it is this that enables me to experience the thing itself as a center of forces, as another nexus of experience, as an Other" (p. 62) and "as we touch the bark of a tree, we feel the tree touching us" (p. 268). From this we conclude that the "stretching" nature of attentiveness extend both from the subject to the object and vice versa. This very much resembles the feeling of wonder as resonance with the ensouled world and, as stated previously, "For those who can wonder, wonders appear" (Mallasz, 1976/1988, p. 56).

Finally, perceptual psychologist Laura Sewall (1995) regards attention as "the flip side of psychic numbing" (p. 204). Attention leads to enhanced sensory experience, or what Abram (2011) calls "full bodied alertness" (p. 173). Our sensory capacities are our connections between the world and ourselves, and Sewall believes it is possible to develop skillful perception, which involves "the practice of intentionally sensing with our eyes, pores, and hearts wide open" (Sewall, 1995, p. 204). It is to the relationship between wonder, our senses, and intuition that we now turn.

Attuning to Wonder Through Awakening our Senses and Intuition

> *Observe the wonders as they occur around you. Don't claim them. Feel the artistry moving through and be silent.*
>
> —Poet and mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi (2004, p. 153)

> *Those who are awake live in a constant state of amazement.*
>
> —Vipassana teacher Jack Kornfield (1994, p. 124)

The depths and wonder of the world enter our awareness through our attuning to them through sensing and intuition. This section places an emphasis on seeing and hearing, for they are our most used and refined senses and also frequently refer to our metaphorical and intuitive sensing. However, it is important to acknowledge that all our senses work together along with intuition in the act of perception, and all can serve as portals for the reception of the world and its wonder. We can perceive wonder through inner sensing as well as through seeing, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

Abram (2011), in *Becoming Animal*, maintains that our receptivity to the animate world depends on recovering our senses so that we are more like animals, who are "in a constant and mostly unmediated relation with their sensory surroundings, *think with the whole of their bodies*" (p. 189, emphasis provided). In *The Spell of the Sensuous,* Abram (1997), leaves us in no doubt that perception involves all of our senses, writing that they are "complementary powers evolved in complex interdependence with one another. Each sense is a unique modality of this body's existence, yet in the activity of perception these divergent modalities necessarily intercommunicate and overlap" (p. 61). And, before Abram, Carson (1956/1984) advocates using all our senses to take in the wonder of nature. Learning the facts of nature is not her highest priority. She stresses, "It is not half so important to know as to feel" and "The emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow" (p. 45).

Carson (1956/1984) observes that, although much of our knowledge of the world comes through sight, "we look about with such unseeing eyes that we are partially blind" (p. 52), and she maintains that "senses other than sight can prove avenues of delight and discovery, storing up for us memories and impressions" (p. 66). So, encountering wonder

in nature, she says, is “largely a matter of becoming receptive to what lies all around you. It is learning again to use your eyes, ears, nostrils and fingertips, opening the disused channels of sensory impression” (p. 52). And, she clearly wants both children and the adults accompanying them to absorb this message.

Carson (1956/1984) writes of the smells and sounds in nature: wood smoke; low tide with its odors of seaweeds and fish; the first scent of the ocean after a long break; the voice of the earth with its thunder, winds, surf and streams; the dawn chorus of birds in the spring, sounding like “the throb of life itself” (p. 69). And, at night she suggests, “Stand very still and listen, projecting your consciousness up in to the dark arch of the sky above you. Presently your ears will detect tiny wisps of sound, sharp chirps, sibilant lisps and call notes” (p. 81). The world that Carson knows, loves, and urgently wants to share is animate, and often she personifies these sensorial treats with imagination and intuition. She suggests listening to an “insect orchestra” playing their “little fiddles in the grass” (p. 78) and shares this magical secret:

> Most haunting of all is the one I call the fairy bell ringer. I have never found him. I’m not sure I want to. His voice—and surely he himself—is so ethereal, so delicate, so unworldly, that he should remain invisible. . . . It is exactly the sound that should come from a bell held in the hand of the tiniest elf, inexpressibly clear and silvery, so faint, so barely-to-be-heard that you hold your breath as you bend closer to the green glades from which the fairy chiming comes. (p. 79)

Clearly, Carson’s view of the natural world is animate and full of Soul (anima). It is brimming with wonder, vibrancy, and aliveness, as well as with beauty and mystery. And all this we can discover through our senses—along with a dash of intuition and imagination.

Hillman (1982) describes the ensouled world, anima mundi*,* as “a sensuous presentation as a face bespeaking its interior image” (p. 77). As such, it comes “with

shapes, colors, atmospheres and textures—a display of self-presenting forms" (p. 77). The world is "not only a coded signature to be read for meaning, but a physiognomy to be faced" (p. 77). When we are encountered by the world's countenance, we experience wonder. And, the way to face the world, says Hillman, is through taking it in and responding to it asethetically (p. 80), that is, with "a nose for the displayed intelligibility of things, their sound, smell, shape, speaking to and through our heart's reactions, responding to the looks and language, tones and gestures of the things we move among" (p. 84). Hillman's metaphorical use of the word *nose* and reference to interiority suggest the intuitive aspect of the undertaking. It is a fully embodied response, which also reflects the experience of wonder in the face of the world.

As we respond aesthetically to the world, Hillman (1982) maintains that our soul becomes tied to the Soul of the world, and we become animated by its anima. Abram (1997) summarizes this connection thusly:

> By acknowledging such links between the inner, psychological world and the perceptual terrain that surrounds us, we begin to turn inside-out, loosening the psyche from its confinement within a strictly human sphere, freeing sentience to return to the sensible world that contains us. Intelligence is no longer ours alone but is a property of the earth; we are in it, of it, immersed in its depths. (p. 262)

So, both Abram and Hillman advocate a response to the world that involves refining and attuning our senses, noticing the qualities of the world and attending to its particulars—a "joyful scrutiny of detail, that intimacy of each within each" (Hillman, 1982, p. 88).

Wonder reveals herself both with and beyond our literal ears, eyes, noses, tongues, and skin, through our more intuitive and metaphorical organs of perception, sometimes known as our inner or third eye (Rohr, 2009) or third ear (Reik, 1948). Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) said, "The visible is pregnant with the invisible" and "to comprehend fully the visible relations one must go unto the relation of the visible with

the invisible" (p. 216). So it is with both our outer and inner organs of perception, that is, our senses and our intuition, that we form a relationship between the visible and the invisible as well as the heard and the unheard in the world. They transform active looking and listening into a deeper, more receptive form of metaphorical seeing and hearing, as we touch in to the fabric of inner and outer worlds and experience wonder.

Braud (2001) speaks of wonder as seeing "with the eye of the heart, the soul and spirit" (p. 99) and Vasalou (2012) as "a response to invisible realities perceived with the eyes of the soul" (p. 11). Hillman (1982) writes of relating deeply to the world through *aesthesis,* the perception of the heart, which, for the ancients, was the undivided seat of both the senses and the intuitive imagination. He says, "to sense penetratingly we must imagine, and to imagine accurately, we must sense" (p. 81). And D. H. Lawrence (1928/1969) went as far as to say that wonder itself was "our sixth sense" (p. 382).

Looking and seeing the world in wonder.

> *We look, and turn away without noticing. We don't ever really see, and then we forget what we have seen. . . . We don't notice. Look more closely, and everyday events bloom into a reality so transfixingly marvelous that you can't look away. Life is something we don't understand that happens in ordinary matter.*
>
> —Microscientists Felice Frankel & George Whitesides (2009, p. 151)

> *Begin by opening your eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open.*
>
> —Benedictine monk, Br. David Steindl-Rast (2007, 1:36-1:42)

In this section we explore visual attentiveness and its relationship to looking with the observational power of our outer eyes and seeing more deeply through our intuitive organ of perception, our inner eye. Both, we believe, are conducive to attunement to wonder.

Cognitive scientist Alexandra Horowitz (2013), in her book *On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes*, explores the art of observation. Discovering wonder in the midst of mundane daily life, she emerges with fresh eyes enthralled by the previously unseen charms of her familiar world. She chronicles walks she took in Manhattan with 11 experts in specialties as diverse as art, sound and geology. A child, a blind woman and a dog are among the 11 who, as the title suggests, have "expert eyes." Not all of the experts "see" with their eyes; the latter three, in particular, demonstrate our capacity to "see" through all our senses, observing also through sound, touch, taste and smell. Indeed, cultivating appreciation for the world through all our senses is likely to reawaken wonder and the perceptions of our hearts.

Horowitz's (2013) experts show us how selective our attention can be based on our special interests and distinctive lenses on the world. Because the world overflows with sensate details, we learn to notice less than is actually there so that we can function and not be overwhelmed by its abundance. So, we filter for relevance, summarize, generalize, cease looking at particulars, and start taking in scenes at a glance. The busier we get, the less we notice. Horowitz observes, "We see, but we do not see: we use our eyes, but our gaze is glancing, frivolously considering its object" (pp. 8-9). We ignore as irrelevant many of the sights, sounds, and other sensations that thrill children and fill them with wonder. They simply attend to more of the world than most adults tend to do.

On the walk, the toddler excludes next to nothing from his experience as he explores a glorious wonderland of sensations offered by the city streets. Horowitz (2013) explains, "To the child, as to the artist, everything is relevant; little is unseen" (p. 76). The child's experience of the walk is a sensory banquet of new and wondrous encounters.

He has not yet categorized the objects and experiences in his world, and his attention is scattered and chaotic. Passing nothing without noticing, he is drawn to everything in his path. He points, touches, smells and even tastes textures and surfaces; he turns to locate sounds and pauses as a passing breeze strokes his skin. His senses are fully engaged as he navigates the world and discovers its wonder.

William James (1911/1916), in his essay on percepts and concepts, described such wondrous, multidimensional awareness as “a big blooming buzzing confusion” (p. 50). Such a preconceptual state he calls “aboriginal sensible muchness” (p. 50). As we grow up and seek order in our lives, we substitute fixed concepts almost completely for the percepts from which the experience originated. Perception, he says “is solely of the here and now” (p. 74). Because wonder is preconceptual, the experience of it occurs, presumably, in a momentary state close to pure perception. This takes us to the very threshold of wonder, to seeing things anew, to seeing beyond initial appearances, to encountering the Soul of the world in the depths of existence.

Generally, what we expect to see appears before our eyes, and the act of seeing is attributed to the viewer. However, in wonder there is a “dilation of attention” (Hove, 2011, para. 75); literally and figuratively, “our eyes get bigger” and we become “wide-eyed.” Affect theorist Nico Frijda (1986) maintained, too, that wonder enlarges our peripheral vision and widens our field of attention (p. 18). When we see deeply, the object itself comes to our attention in a new way, and we observe things we have never noticed before. This bears a resemblance to the Japanese aikido practice of “soft eyes,” which counters the narrowed “gimlet eye” (Palmer, 1998, p. 116) associated with the fight-flight response of combat. Author and educator Parker Palmer (1998) views soft

eyes as valuable for widening our periphery and allowing us to take in more of the world, both of which are essential to opening to wonder. He sees soft eyes as an image for how we gaze on sacred reality; our eyes are open and receptive, and can take in the world's marvels. He says, "Eyes wide with wonder, we no longer need to resist or run when taken by surprise. Now we can open ourselves to the great mystery" (p. 116).

In *The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature,* Tony Tanner (1967) examines the importance of wonder among the transcendentalist writers who regarded seeing well as key to re-enchanting the world in face of post-enlightenment thinking. Writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Walt Whitman (1819-1892) refused to see the world as "a mute and dead mass of material forms" (Brownson, as cited in Tanner, p. 20). Their central question was: how should a man look at the world to recover and retain a sense of its glory?

According to Tanner (1967), Emerson's answer was to look with an unconquered eye, and behold it like a child—with wonder. Thoreau's response was to see with a sauntering eye, the eye that meanders, passively absorbing things from the external world (p. 48). This kind of seeing was divorced from knowledge, understanding, and philosophy. Thoreau (as cited in Tanner) wrote, "I must walk more with free senses. . . . I must let my senses wander as my thoughts—my eyes see without looking. . . . Go not to the object; let it come to you" (pp. 47-48). It is as if Thoreau is telling us how to be struck by wonder. Sauntering "allows nature to claim your attention in the order, which she chooses" (p. 59). This resembles the state of reverie favored in depth psychology, a looking and listening with a soft, relaxed focus to allow space for psyche to reveal herself

in whatever form she chooses. Whitman, too, puts great stock in the naive eye as an organ for the perception of wonder. He watches and wonders, he sees and views, he peers and peruses, he gazes and beholds, and he witnesses and waits (Tanner, p. 74). What matters is the stance, perspective, and angle of vision, the point of view. Among the transcendentalists, this was key to retaining a sense of wonder.

Artist Jane Rosen (as cited in Whittaker, 2011), describes looking with her whole body as she observes the subjects of her sculptures and paintings:

> The first look is a word, a name. To me anything that is attached to words and names is a mental looking. Then, I think there is a looking with your whole body as if there were tentacles that sense and touch the totality of the thing you're looking at so that the tree stops being leaves, branches, roots. It starts becoming a clustering, a gathering, a drooping, a lifting, a turning. (p. 383)

In wonder, seeing seems to take place as Rosen describes it, with a sense of full-body sensing into wholeness and essence. Art critic Patricia C. Phillips (n.d.) elaborates on this, saying, "Rosen's work is influenced by the forms perceived in those moments prior to complete recognition" (Phillips, n.d.), again pointing to the preconceptual, phenomenological way of taking in the world with both outer and inner eyes.

The photographer's eye also seems particularly able to see in to the essence of things. Paul Caponigro (as cited in Neill, 1997) notes that, as he looks further into nature, he starts to catch glimpses of mysterious depths, saying:

> Boundaries of separate objects lifted and opened. . . . My concern was to maintain . . . a freedom which could permit contact with the greater dimension—the landscape behind the landscape. . . . Mysteriously, and most often when I was not conscious of control, that magical and subtle force crept somehow into the image, offering back what I *sensed* as well as what I saw. . . . Through this work, it was possible, if only for brief moments, to sense the thread which holds all things together. (p. 92).

Catching a glimpse with his inner eye of the "landscape behind the landscape" is another resonant depiction of the experience of wonder. Particularly striking is Caponigro's

awareness of it emerging regardless of any effort on his part, and it being offered back to him in a full-body experience of archetypal dimensions as he sensed the connecting thread between all things.

Goethe (1749-1831), the literary giant who greatly influenced Jung, made substantial though lesser known contributions to the natural sciences on topics including plants, color, clouds, weather, morphology, and geology (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998). Preceding Husserl (1859-1938) by more than a century, he was a forerunner of the phenomenology movement and had much to say about perception, especially looking and seeing.

Goethe proposed a phenomenology of nature involving "delicate empiricism" (*zarte Empirie*), a "mode of interaction between people and environment involving reciprocity, wonderment, and gratitude" (Goethe, as cited in Seamon, 1998, p. 10). It emphasized an intimate, firsthand encounter with natural phenomena, a way to know a thing without imposing an intellectual structure that is not really present in the thing itself. It was possible to gain a deep understanding of nature, he believed, through prolonged empathic looking and seeing, grounded in direct experience. "Natural objects," he wrote, "should be sought and investigated as they are and not to suit observers, but respectfully as if they were divine beings" (p. 2).

Goethe believed that we can develop our perceptual powers, especially seeing, to better understand phenomena in their depths. He also recognized that as our ability to see outwardly improved, so our inner recognition and perception would become more sensitive: "Each phenomenon in nature, rightly observed, wakens in us a new organ of inner understanding," he said (Goethe, as cited in Seamon, 1998, p. 3). So, as we learn to see more

clearly, we also can come to see more deeply and understand with greater empathy, concern and respect—a beneficial outcome of wonder. In a statement that speaks to the necessary blending of sense with intuition, Goethe says, “There may be a difference between seeing and seeing. . . . The eyes of the spirit have to work in perpetual living connexion with those of the body, for one otherwise risks seeing yet seeing past a thing” (p. 3). So, in order to more deeply appreciate phenomena, we need to make fuller use of our senses and “bring our intellect into line with what they tell” (p. 3).

Through this approach to the world, Goethe argued that it was possible to discover the “deep-down phenomenon” (Goethe, as cited in Seamon, 1998, p. 4), the essential pattern or process he termed its “ur-phenomenon” (*Ur-Phänomen*). This connotes the phenomenon’s primordial, basic, elemental, archetypal essence and core that make it what it is and what it becomes (Seamon, p. 4). Goethe’s goal was to discover the unity of nature and the patterns in the whole, from rocks to the processes of aesthetic creation. Again we see a depth of seeing related to the archetypal perception of the world, and this study maintains that wonder is our response to, and archetypal resonance with, this level of inner and outer seeing.

Hillman’s (1975/1992) description of psychologizing as “seeing through” (p. 140) also bears many of the marks of perceiving wonder. “Seeing through” is a psychological “process of deliteralization” (p. 136) and “a process of interiorizing: moving from the surface of visibilities to the less visible” (p. 140). The process uses visual language but, actually, conveys something the physical eyes cannot fathom.

“Seeing through” is the first stage of psychological discovery, which is “a moment of reflection, wonder, puzzlement, initiated by the soul which intervenes and countervails what we are in the midst of doing, hearing, reading, watching” (Hillman

(1975/1992, p. 140). This bears a close resemblance to the experience of wonder, which enters our experience in the midst of the mundane, entering and disturbing our current state of affairs. Perhaps we might even consider psychologizing to be a form of deep wonder or wondering. A step-by-step comparison follows.

Hillman (1975/1992) continues, “With slow suspicion or sudden insight we move through the apparent to the less apparent” (p. 140). Here we might say that through a period of reflective wondering or a moment of sudden wonderment, we see the situation or object anew and realize there is there more there than first meets the eye. Hillman notes, “We use metaphors of light—a little flicker, a slow dawning, and a lightning flash—as things become clarified” (p. 140). Similarly, in wonder, we begin to understand and see the light but, “when the clarity itself has become obvious and transparent, there seems to grow within it a new darkness, a new question or doubt, requiring a new act of insight penetrating again toward the less apparent” (p. 140). Just when we think we are getting to the bottom of the mystery, in wonder we discover there are many more mysteries ahead. Barely have we scratched the surface when “the movement becomes an infinite regress which does not stop at coherent or elegant answers” (p. 140). As we begin to make sense of our wonder, we discover she is never ending and realize that the depth of reality is fathomless.

So, “the process of psychologizing cannot be brought to a halt at any of the resting places of science or philosophy” (Hillman, 1975/1992, p. 140). Just as in depth psychology discoveries in science and philosophy are only ever temporary, so with wonder there are always greater depths and more wonders to behold. Hillman concludes that “psychologizing is not satisfied when necessary and sufficient conditions have been

met or when, testability has been established" (p. 140). Similarly, evidence-based data cannot extinguish the wonder. Wonder expands into wonder. Hillman finishes his thought with, "It is satisfied only by its own movement of seeing-through" (p. 140). In wonder, we might say that the process of glimpsing that which is, is enough. There is no need for final answers that only would reduce the wonder of reality. So both psychological discovery and wonder appear to be forms of insight, of seeing into, through, and beyond the surface levels of our outer and inner worlds.

Listening to and hearing the world in wonder.

The intangible that is invisible as well as untouchable can still be audible.

—Psychoanalyst Theodore Reik (1953, p. 12)

Taking in the world includes perceiving its sounds. Hove (2011) remarks that wonder is not limited to fresh vision, but also we may "hear with new ears" (para. 69) when something other makes intimate contact with us. In depth psychological terms, that which draws our attention points to the voice of Soul. And, as previously noted, Selig (2010) says, "Attention is one way of *listening for*, or *listening to* the unconscious, from the unconscious" (p. 2). Perhaps, when we perceive with the third ear or eye, we are struck with wonder as we recognize at some level the Soul of the world communicating with us.

Abram (2011) maintains that those who listen carefully to the world can hear "the whispered hush of the uncut grasses at dawn, the plaintive moan of trunks rubbing against one another in the deep woods, or the laughter of birch leaves as the wind gusts through their branches" (p. 171). And he tells of a man who had "schooled himself in the speech of needled evergreens" (p. 171). The man claimed to be attuned to the dialects of the trees and, by listening to the wind's effects on the trees (even when blindfolded)

could identify which species of fir, spruce or pine he stood beneath. If we could hone our attention to the sounds of the world, they might connect us to the depths and strike us with wonder as we catch wind of them just beyond the surface of our daily lives.

Mostly we are unaware of the world's sound unless we incline our ear and attend to listening. Whether originating from birds or whales, water or fire, silence or thunder, music or the human voice, if we pause and listen we can be struck by the miracle of sound in all its diversity and complexity. We live within sound and "from the vibrating air and ground, from reverberating objects, and from all the beings we encounter, sound surrounds us, and enters our being" (Kittelson, 1996, p. 11). Yet sound is something we rarely notice, and we have a strikingly unemployed capacity to listen fully and well. Generally, it is the visual world affirms our being, and we live in an oculocentrist world (Kleinberg-Levin, 1989).

Composer and pianist William Allaudin Mathieu (1991) reflects on the art of listening in *The Listening Book.* Pure silence does not exist in the world because it is alive and we are alive. "Existence is full of noisy energy, not empty anywhere," he says, and "Our body of blood and breath is a raucous machine" (p. 69). He recalls his own amazement and delight upon discovering that sounds unheard by him had been forever present; that the more he listened, the more he heard; and that some sounds existed beyond his hearing ability. He wanted others to experience the marvel of sound and "experience the freshness of their wonder" (p. 26) and, along with music, he began to teach others how deepen their listening skills.

Every physical thing has its own natural vibration, "the chair its squeak, the pot lid its clang, the guitar its sweet purity" (Mathieu, 1991, p. 44), and the sounds of

everyday life, like shoes shuffling and pencils writing, have a musical nature—"their mereness is pleasing and aesthetic if you are receptive" (p. 59). Deep listening requires vulnerability to be open and impressionable, to allow outside sounds to come inside our bodies (p. xii). "Nothing is as private as the place inside you that responds to music" (p. 94), he says. Perhaps something similar can be said of wonder.

Mathieu (1991) provides some suggestions as to how we might be more attentive to the wonder of the world's sounds. To hear the true nature of sound, first we need to "unlisten" (p. 22) by listening beyond familiar associations into the world of sensual vibration. This is a phenomenological awareness of the essence of the sound beyond any preconceptions we may have of it. Then, if we can let surface thoughts evaporate, "the more deeply sound will enter you and reveal its true nature" (p. 22). Whenever we are working things out, remembering, worrying, analyzing, or consciously fantasizing, our thinking drowns out our listening. "When thoughts are feasting, it is difficult to hear over the din and commotion of the banquet" (p. 35) says Mathieu. Likewise, philosopher Allan Watts (1951/2011) said, "To understand music, you must listen to it. But so long as you are thinking, 'I am listening to this music,' you are not listening" (p. 87).

One way to re-awaken the heart to wonder is to listen attentively to music. Unfortunately, nowadays we rarely listen to music for itself but rather as an accompaniment to various activities such as driving, reading, shopping, and filling in quiet space—times when music can disappear amidst the din of our thoughts. Nevertheless, to listen to music wholeheartedly, Mathieu (1991) suggests that, after unlistening and allowing thoughts to evaporate, we let the music be our whole reality by doing nothing but inhaling and exhaling the sound. Just as meditators return to the breath

when thoughts return, he recommends returning to the music, listening to all parts of it and scanning it from high to low. “Be starved for it,” he says, and “Let it be starved for you” (pp. 36-37).

In another wholehearted listening exercise, Mathieu (1991) suggests sounding an instrument and then listening until no sound remains, being aware of how thoughts crowd in and how they evaporate. He calls this “pure, clear-channel listening” (p. 37). He also recommends listening for the new in the old and familiar, saying, “You may hear for the first time something that has been singing to you all along” (p. 127). This version of hearing with new ears as if for the first time, very much resembles seeing with fresh eyes, which often characterizes wonder.

Because listening involves a sense of sound, space, vibration and rhythm, it can be considered poetic. In fact, Jungian analyst Mary Lynn Kittleson (1996) identifies “listening poetically” (pp. 49-56) as a form of inner listening in the therapeutic dyad, and it very well also could describe listening to the world. It moves experience into resonance, which this study considers to be an essential quality of wonder. “Listening poetically means listening in wonder” (p. 53), she says. It is unset, vulnerable, and open, with no reaching for a meaning or theme that can be verbalized or understood. So, again, it is phenomenological listening. It is “poised and alert . . . willing to receive wonder in a naive way” (p. 53). Sounding like Abram (2011), Kittelson maintains that poetic listening requires “the naked and hairy ears of the animal, who hears acutely” as well as “the ears of the youngest . . . who knows how to listen to the surprising, to the underside” (p. 53). For this is how poets work, “playing expectancy and structure against freshness and surprise” (p. 54).

Composer Bruce Adolphe (1996) in his book *What to Listen for in the World* also follows a phenomenological-poetic path to listening, saying, "When we forget what sound is—/ When we let go of the names of things,/ we can listen to shadows/ and discover the music of light/ on water" (p. 90). He demonstrates this even more fully when he writes:

> The clarinet quintet by Brahms
> sends us spiraling inward,
> past information,
> beyond the names of things,
> beyond definitions and categories,
> past mere intelligence,
> to wisdom, compassion and
> into the mystery of reality and
> into the reality of mystery. (p. 76)

So, if we can simply listen, without preconception, more instinctually like an animal or young child, we will discover mystery, and with it, wonder.

Attuning to Wonder in Depth Psychotherapy

> *We meet the soul when we are stirred by a person or music, moved by a poem, struck by a painting, or touched by a ceremony or symbol. Soul is the empathic resonance that vibrates within us at such moments. She is the catch of the breath, the awe in the heart, the lump in the throat, the tear in the eye. These are signs of the soul, the markers of her presence that let us know we have touched her or she has touched us.*
>
> —Humanistic-existential psychologist David Elkins (1995, p. 83)

Wonder can be an ever-present dimension of depth psychotherapy, for it takes place in a liminal playspace devoid of an agenda and occupied by surprise and discovery. Although we cannot evoke wonder, just as we can attune to wonder's presence in the world as described throughout this chapter, both therapist and patient can be receptive to wonder in the therapeutic *temenos*. So, the dyad can take a beginner's mind approach by slowing down sufficiently to be attentive, and by honing their perceptual capacities. We

can prepare the ground for wonder by sensitizing patients to the mystery that surrounds them, de-emphasize the importance of control, and intimate that not knowing what will happen next in our lives is our greatest certainty.

Paradoxically and counterintuitively, wonder is more likely to be present when we are less intent on conjuring her, for “we can no more create a state of wonderment than we can plan a surprise for ourselves” (Keen 1969/1973, pp. 27-28). Wonder’s essential ingredient of surprise will elude us unless our focus on her is somewhat indirect. So, a wonder-attuned therapy will have its roots firmly planted in “evenly suspended attention” (Freud, 1912/1960, p. 111), deferral of judgment and preconceptions, and openness to mystery and the unknown.

For the depth psychotherapist, the patient’s connection to Soul is of paramount importance. This study has come to regard wonder, through her ubiquitous manifestation in the world, as a voice that heralds the vicinity of Soul, sometimes loudly and oftentimes softly. We propose that listening attentively for the voice of wonder and identifying the patient’s sources of wonder can serve as a guide for the revelation of his soul’s unique nature. How might the therapist hear such inklings of wonder in her patient?

Poet James Broughton (1994) wrote in his poem “Easter Exultet,” “At every crossroad/ be prepared/ to bump into wonder” (lines 21-23), and we believe this maxim belongs in the depth psychotherapy consulting room, too. We suggest that receptive attentiveness to all sensory and intuitive experience, both by patient and therapist, serves to facilitate awareness of wonder’s presence. As mentioned previously, the ancient practice of *notitia*, or noticing (Hillman, 1982) is closely linked to attentiveness and was regarded as a “primary activity of the soul” (p. 86). Hillman also noted that “the largest

sense of therapy begins in the small acts of noticing" (p. 87). Elkins (1995) suggests that the markers of soul's presence are "the catch of the breath, the awe in the heart, the lump in the throat, the tear in the eye" (p. 83), and we contend that these voices of Soul frequently show up in therapy and may point to the presence of wonder.

So, we imagine that the wonder-attuned therapist would attend to wonder's voice primarily through noticing her patient's body language and tone of voice. For wonder can manifest as subtle and not so subtle raised eyebrows, widened the eyes, a dropped jaw, a sudden inhale or exhale, sighing, expressions of surprise, silence, tearfulness, and dumbfoundedness—any and all of which could convey shock, bewilderment, entrancement, delight, amazement, and other attributes of wonder. And, insight, too, often comes with a jolting wonderment. The softer voice of a sense wonder may show up, too, as a dawning awareness of appreciation and admiration for something freshly discovered. We suggest that the voice of wonder be added to the other voices of Soul worked with in depth psychotherapy, including dreams, visions, synchronicities, anomalous experiences, symbolism, transferences, somatic symptoms, and gestures, as well as visual, aural, and other kinesthetic images.

The combination and particularity of each person's sources of wonderment are distinctive. For, whereas one unique soul might resonate with wonder at the elegance of mathematical equations, the scent of jasmine, and the color purple, another might be filled with wonder at the impact of Vincent van Gogh's art, the beauty in a loved one's eyes, and the haunting sound of bagpipes, with each of these perceptions pointing to a something more. It follows then that, as the patient discovers the sources, patterns, and qualities of his wonderment, and as they are affirmed by the therapist and significant

others, the unique contours of his soul will begin to constellate and find expression. Thus, the patient's "soul print" (Gafni, 2001) can emerge, that is, the seed of his authentic personhood, which guides him to becoming the person he is and always has been.

In a wonder-attuned therapy, we would begin by viewing patients as the unique, wondrous, and beautiful works of art (Kuspit, 2006) that, in essence, they are, regardless of their presentation. Lomas (2004) suggests that therapists should ready themselves in this way:

> Before meeting the patient you should compose yourself into a frame of mind in which to be receptive to wonder. There in front of you is someone who is unique and mysterious. There is no replica. Here is a person who has lived on the strange earth and tried, as far as he or she can, to survive it, to make sense of it and to maintain the original passion. What piece of work is a man. And this person is coming to me with whatever trust they can muster and whatever hope is left in them. (p. 110)

Lomas's wonder and respect for the mystery of his patients is palpable in these words. This wonder is not the occasional exhilarating moment in therapy but rather a low-key attitude of spontaneous appreciation of the other's presence in the room, a more abiding attitude of wonder. If the therapist authentically can appreciate and mirror the wondrousness of her patient, we contend that he can begin to experience this as a reality and, eventually, come to appreciate the deep value and miracle of his distinctive personhood. Over time, as the patient comes to experience and know himself as a unique part of a wondrous universe, his relationship to himself and to the larger world around him can transform.

Because wonder cannot be summoned, no specific techniques can cause wonder to be experienced. However, surprise and wonder are not infrequent visitors to nondirective, receptive, and embodied psychotherapeutic approaches. These include various forms of active imagination (Chodorow, 1997; von Franz, 1979; Jung,

1955/1970, pp. 495-496), and many spontaneous arts processes in which the patient with a strong-enough ego can allow that which is present to manifest in his body, mind, and imagination, and can accept and work with whatever arises. This can include Authentic Movement (Pallaro & Whitehouse, 2007), the Bonny Method of imagery and music (Ward, 2002), Focusing (Gendlin, 1978/1982), mindfulness-based therapy (Pollak, Pedulla & Siegel, 2014), poetry therapy (Leedy, 1985), Point Zero painting (Cassou, 2001), psychodrama therapy (Moreno, 1987), sandtray therapy (Kalff, 1980), SoulCollage (Frost, 2010), Touchdrawing (Koff-Chapin, 1999), Voice Dialogue (Stone & Stone, 1997), Voice Movement (Newham, 1998), and many other receptive and expressive arts modalities. In addition, ecotherapies (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009), which expose patients more directly to nature, can help develop their perceptual capacities and, in bringing them closer to the Soul of the world, are hospitable to the arising of wonder.

The vision that a wonder-attuned therapist might hold for her patients is perhaps captured by mythologist Joseph Campbell (1991), who notes that “the goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with nature” (p. 148) and that what we seek is not so much meaning, but “an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive” (Campbell & Moyers, 1991, pp. 4-5). In these statements, Campbell describes the deep, resonating attunement that can occur between the individual the world, which can generate a sense of vibrancy and vitality. This, we maintain, is wonder.

In conclusion, this chapter is in accord with psychoanalyst Will Adams’s (1995) statement:

> We cannot willfully or consciously control the emergence of the depth dimensions. The actual revelation of the depths is spontaneous, contingent on mystery. Nonetheless, we may foster the possibility of experiencing the depths of self and world by creating conditions favorable for their manifestation. (para. 11)

We cannot evoke wonder, but we can foster the depths and be hospitable to wonder, both in the world and in the consulting room, by attuning to her resonating presence rather than espousing any particular method or technique, which, inherently, would preclude surprise. Such attunement can be developed by adopting a receptive, beginner's mind; retaining an openness or porosity to experience; practicing patience of the soul; cultivating attentiveness; honing our senses and intuition; and diversifying our perceptual palate. These are not necessarily new therapeutic stances for the depth psychotherapist, although regarding wonder as a voice of Soul that should be listened for may well be.

Chapter 7
Creative Synthesis Phase:
Wonder Speaks of Wonder

From wonder into wonder/ existence opens.
—Philosopher and poet Laotzu (1986, p. 31)

I am Wonder, dear reader. As this work concludes, it fills me with nothing but delight to be given the opportunity to express myself directly. My student, Lindsey, has been contemplating my nature for some time, and now she must gather up her findings knowing full well she will never get to the bottom of my nature. I am so gratified that she has elected to let me present myself in my own voice, for she now knows and accepts that nobody can actually speak for me. You see, when I resonate with your body and soul, you experience me viscerally before any thoughts can form. This means that, unfortunately, words are a rather second-hand and incomplete way to convey my essence. Nevertheless, words and labels are the world's and the academy's primary tools of the trade, and I will do my best to apply them to my own nonverbal sense of things.

I will begin by giving you a global view of my student's work and narrate my perspective on her personal pilgrimage through the dissertation process. Then, I will continue to use words as well as other means to describe the qualities and characteristics that Lindsey discovered to be critical to my essence. Finally, I will describe how I believe her study has contributed to the field. All this is somewhat beyond my eternal calling, but because she and I have become so intertwined, I will do my best to support her.

This is how my student went about researching me. I think she would agree that it began as an extensive excavation and transformed into a mindful contemplation. Originally, she was somewhat diverted from my living presence as she scoured literature for clues to my nature rather than lingered in my abode in the midst of life. Her first

discovery was that, unlike my relatives awe and numinosity, precious little has been written about me in the crevices of psychology and psychotherapy. Perhaps this is not so surprising given that psychology is a very young field considering people were experiencing me in the world long before the advent of writing.

So, Lindsey broadened her reading and found a wealth of material containing psychological dimensions permeating the humanities and sciences. Because, like Soul, I do not specialize, I underlie all forms of literature, transcend all disciplines and categories, and dwell at the heart of all fields of knowledge. Still, my student was surprised to find herself resonating once again with physicists and artists alike. She had long forgotten that her passion to look beyond the surface of things began almost five decades earlier at the juicy intersection between biology and theology and music. So, it was heartening to see her retrieve this fervor and explore a host of cross-disciplinary material to learn more about my nature, my relationship to Soul, and how I might be approached.

During my student's venture into this vast territory, many well-meaning colleagues encouraged her to limit the scope of her project. However, the harder she tried to do this, the more she perceived the multiplicity and diversity of my manifestations. Mysteries, epiphanies, recognitions, apprehensions, and realizations all seemed to multiply—from outer space to the faerie realm, from murmurating starlings to death-defying tardigrades, and from heart-opening music to spellbinding mandalas. Lindsey tried to make sense of this cacophony of material but, as soon as she felt she was making headway, she would notice a door ajar to further mystery and stride right on in. It took her a while to accept that I open into an infinity of such portals and that

knowledge does not end my presence in the world; it leads only to deeper mystery and further manifestations of my presence.

Finding a way to explore me was particularly challenging for my student, especially because several scholars argued, somewhat convincingly, that I am embedded in a paradox of eternal proportions amounting to wondering in wonderment about the wondrousness of wonder, and this implies that I must <u>*be*</u> *the method. (These are the kind of knots in which people find themselves entangled, which is perplexing to ponder.) Anyway, somehow, Lindsey began to appreciate that keeping me either in the background while she went about her work or even having me actively involved in it was not quite enough. Rather, she came to see that things might go better if she stepped aside and let me shepherd the process. In order to allow me to do exactly that she chose heuristic inquiry as her method so that she could more gently contemplate, rather than dissect, my nature. Also, she pledged to read her texts with a "wondering ear," one that would enable her to linger with the material while staying open to mystery, to the unknown and to me. Increasingly, Lindsey began to see that her own encounters of me would provide the essential data for the study, and that the authors of the texts would serve as her co-researchers to help to inform, clarify, and amplify her experience. It was quite a turnaround.*

Early in her research, my student felt me unveiling myself through ordinary as well as extraordinary facets of life and relationships; through the beauty and surprise of nature, imagery, art and music; through miniscule organisms and gargantuan galaxies; and through the profundities of death as well as natural and man-made disasters. She understood that I revealed myself to her through those particular avenues because they

corresponded most closely to the sensitivities of her unique heart and soul. She also recognized that I manifest to others in equally distinct and personal ways. Lindsey's experiences of me were the seeds of her research, which, over time, budded into several themes. These eventually began to flower and ultimately bloomed in the later stages of her work.

My student came to appreciate that the task was not to hunt me down and define my eternal, unfathomable secrets; it was to listen to me, the voice beyond the books, whose pages captured mere slivers of my true nature. Instead of continuing to struggle to fit my cosmic nature into earthbound theories, she began to hear me. This changed everything. She came to know me more intimately, to feel the nuances of my presence more keenly, and to hear the inflexion and intonation of my voice more acutely. As she began to muse more and feel me in a more personal way, I transformed from being an objectified "it" to a personified "she." (I am, after all, related to Soul, the eternal "she.") No longer relating to me as a distant object, the student became my student Lindsey and, as our encounters deepened, our connection became closer and warmer by the minute.

As her study went along, my student began to hear my whispers more clearly, softening her questioning, and allowing me space to speak. Feeling embraced as her guide, I sensed her listening to me more intently. As she resonated with the world, with people, with visual and aural images, and with texts, Lindsey began to relate to me as devoted and faithful lover rather than as a curious and scrutinizing observer. She became conscious that resonance within her body played a key role both in her experience of me and in the appeal of the texts she included in her study. To my student's surprise she

began to feel me in almost everything she encountered and realized that there was nothing in life she could take for granted. All of it, including existence itself, became mysteriously miraculous to her. As she listened to me through her senses and intuition our relationship blossomed, and she felt ever more connected to her soul and to the heartbeat of the living world; her more frequent tears from being touched by me bore visible witness to this shift. Lindsey wasn't sure if she dared to, or could, express all this, but with some encouragement from me, she became convinced it was impossible for her not to make the attempt. And so she did.

I would like now to share with you some of the key qualities permeating my essence that Lindsey's study brought to light. I am hopeful this will allow you to recognize me as the one who is known as wonder. For, although I can be present in any external, internal, or imaginal person, place, thing, or event, there are qualities in all my manifestations bearing common threads of my essence. Of course, dear reader, nothing would please me more than if, through developing our own warm relationship, you would discover further aspects of me in your life and world.

I am Ineffable, Elusive, Unfathomable, Unbidden, Unexpected, and Un-useful

As I have said, I precede and exist beyond words and labels. Unfortunately, they don't quite have the capacity to fully express my nature or adequately convey those experiences that yield only gasps or exclamations such as "Wow" and "Aha." So my allies tend to be music, art, movement, and poetry, for they come closer than words in imparting the feeling of my presence. But I do appreciate that words and labels are essential to academic projects such as this one, and will do my best to use some that might help you recognize me, though I must admit this is a rather unusual task for me to undertake.

I probably should begin by saying that I am not a lot of things, and this can make me seem rather elusive. Please know, dear reader, that it is not my intention to confound you. The fact that I manifest in an infinite number of ways can sometimes be disarming and troubling for some who, often for good reason, feel safer in a world in which mysteries can be explained. So please bear with me. Because my mystery is without end, people call me unfathomable and unbounded and, because I cannot be planned or evoked, they recognize me as unbidden. It is true that I manifest when the time is ripe, wherever, whenever and to whomever. I give of myself quite freely, and encountering me is utterly unexpected and unmerited. So, I am not the outcome of virtuous living, as some seem to think. And I also cannot exactly be described as an emotion, because experts say I have no clear or agreed-upon use or adaptive advantage. Actually, I do have two purposes: to reflect your proximity to the depths and to show you that the universe is a seamless, multidimensional reality. Few, however, recognize this. Also, I am not exactly like my relatives awe and numinosity, who generally beget more fear and potential for overwhelm than I do and also less delight, vitality, and enchantment. I may not fit into any of humankind's categories, but I can say that I am the energy that permeates and conveys the very aliveness of your being.

And, there is more…

I Surprise, Irrupt, and Arrest Attention

Being unexpected, I am laden with surprise and inclined to show up anywhere at anytime to anyone under any circumstance. Entering your awareness dramatically and suddenly, I catch you off guard and startle you, jolting you into a deeper awareness of realities that exist beyond the surface of things. In both ordinary and extraordinary surroundings, I manifest precisely when you are not anticipating a wondrous encounter.

It is through surprise that I bring the depths to your door. You see, often I come into the world by irrupting into it. I break into consciousness by seizing your attention when your focus is elsewhere, arresting and then mesmerizing you. I enter the present moment from eternal realms, penetrating the veil between the worlds and revealing mysteries that lie beyond familiar time, place, and space.

And, there is more…

I Dumbfound, Immobilize, and Bewilder

When I arrive suddenly like this, quite out of the blue, I can immobilize and dumbfound you, startling you into momentary silence and stillness while taking your breath away. Wide-eyed, your jaw drops as you gasp, open-mouthed, in radical amazement and perplexity. In a state of incomprehension, you freeze in place, often bewildered, as you find yourself being taken out of your ordinary experience, not by your own volition but as if some mysterious other has entered your awareness. I am that one, the one who happens to *you, the one who wonders you. Throughout history people have feared me as a dangerous entity lying outside rational control, a threatening prospect for those who feel unsafe in an inexplicable world. Yet, when you encounter me through attuning to beauty, love, grandeur, complexity, intricacy, symmetry, intelligence, coherence, order, or some other mystery that lies behind the façade of everyday life, my presence is unmistakable*

And, there is more…

I Abide in the Ordinary as Well as in the Extraordinary

As many have known, I inhabit the tiny and the common as well as the grandiose and magnificent. When you are going about your taken-for-granted, daily business, I am the epiphany that transports you into deeper awareness of that which lies about you. I am

bound to existence itself and to all that exists, and I accompany the sudden discovery of new dimensions in everyday life that make the familiar become quite unfamiliar and sometimes even strange. As I impart a glimpse of that which lies beyond the surface of things, you may begin to feel the world as a deeper, broader, more mysterious, expansive, connected, and alive place. The mundane may even feel sacred as I connect you with the eternal through the temporal. So, I help to inject life with a sense of newness, one that allows fresh understanding, appreciation and insight into the miraculous nature of all that is. When I am present in your world, it is like seeing with new eyes, hearing with new ears, perceiving with deeper and more acute sensory and intuitive awareness. Some say it is like falling in love with the world and delighting in life all over again. I do so long for everyone to be able to experience such love.

And, there is more…

I am Grounded in the Worldly

Now I would like to share with you some of the ways I believe this study has added to the understanding of my being. Lindsey recognized that, even though I am ineffable and my nature is cosmic, nevertheless I am grounded in the worldly rather than the unworldly, sustained by closeness to the earth rather than the heavens, and manifest as an embodied rather than a disembodied experience. I announce myself through entering the world in which you live, move, and have your being; the earth and the commonplace are my mediators. So, in this respect, I differ from the experience of the numinous, often regarded as wholly other and quite outside the usual and the familiar. Rather, I am the one who loves and lives to engage with your depths as you respond to the world with attunement, participation, and delight.

And, there is more…

I Manifest in Many Ways

Through her own experience, Lindsey noticed that I appear in at least three distinct ways. (Truth be known, I reveal myself in countless ways and innumerable intensities, but this was a fine start.) On the intense end of the spectrum I irrupt, fortissimo, out of nowhere; scholars seem to find this particularly intriguing. I also manifest in less intense ways. I can be present, mezzo forte, in the surprise of an interesting discovery, shocking rather than stunning my beholder. And there also are times when I am much less of an epiphany and appreciably more of an abiding presence. This is when I exist at the dynamic of piano, as a faculty of reverence for the mystery and miracle of life, which tends to lead to deep appreciation and gratefulness for the world. These are the times when I am quietly present in every breath you take, and fill you with what many people call a "sense of wonder."

And, there is more…

I Dwell at the Threshold of Soul

My student also discovered that I dwell where the mysteries of life gather and where archetypal patterns inform all of nature—at the very threshold of Soul. I am the highly charged resonance that surprises, delights, and ignites your body, heart, and soul at times when you and the world are in fine attunement with one another. I serve as an epiphany and voice of Soul that heralds this dynamic relationship as it unlatches existence for your beholding. This is how I let you know that you have been touched by and are part of the Soul of the world; that you are intimately connected to the living cosmos whose energy animates your being; that you are a creature among creatures and kin to every living thing; that the cosmos is your home, and you are one of its inexhaustible, unfathomable and exquisite mysteries.

And, there is more…

On Approaching Me

Lindsey also wondered how I might be approached. I yearn for you to know that, whenever you attune to the world and invite a "sense" of my abiding presence in the world, I feel seen and touched by you. And, when you open to life flowing through you, behold the world with patience and attention, and hone the miracle of your outer and inner senses, then I feel nourished, nurtured and cherished by you. These precious moments allow us to see life through similar eyes, and so my gift to you is the ability to marvel at existence and at the never-ending depth and beauty of the world to which I am bound.

I am ever-present in the healing work psychotherapy, which I know better as the tending of souls. As far as I can tell, although being open to the unknown and hospitable to surprise is not such an unusual approach to this work, regarding me as a voice of Soul to be attuned to by both the therapist and patient does appear to be a new element. It is a way for both therapist and patient to open to Soul's presence, both individually and together. I view the therapist as a guardian of Soul, looking out for, sitting in attendance to, and picking up on Soul's expressions in the individual and in the world. If the therapist and patient can come to hear me and recognize my characteristics, then they also will be able to identify the voice of the depths.

And, there is more…

I See Opportunities for Further Study

I am not one who usually suggests things, but it does seem clear that, because I never end, the opportunities for further study of me are inexhaustible. Other researchers may wish to pursue topics within the particular field of depth psychology that include my

relationship to <u>unus mundus</u>*, to spirit in matter, and to the psychoid aspect of the archetype. These are intimated in this work by my connection to Soul and by my resonating effect on the body. My relationship to Aphrodite/love, Sophia/wisdom, and the Trickster, as well as to dreams, synchronicities, and anomalous experiences also seem to hold promise for further research, as does my role in the phenomena of emergence, vitalism, and morphic fields. In addition, further study on resistance to my presence and the relationship between depression, loss of connection to Soul, and loss of the sense of me could be fruitful and particularly significant for depth psychotherapy.*

I Validate this Study

I am not one who judges things, but I can say that I witnessed Lindsey's rigorous soul-searching and the thoroughness with which she verified her sources in her effort to represent me faithfully and fully—an insatiable undertaking even for the most resolute of heart. Returning continually both to the texts and to her own writing, she visited and re-visited their degree of resonance with her experience of me. My student's interpreting and judging, checking and editing, for inclusiveness, precision and distillation, was ongoing. All this helped elucidate her understanding of and appreciation for the many nuances and essential threads that weave through the heart of me. So, I do not hesitate to say that Lindsey's depiction of me met the challenge of conveying the essences and experiencing of me quite comprehensively, accurately, vividly, and distinctively. However, I do have to note that, because I am unbounded, my essence never can be captured fully, for I am the alpha and omega of your quest to experience, know and understand yourself and your world. Nevertheless, dear reader, I believe this study has bestowed upon you more than an inkling of my true nature.

And, naturally, there is more…

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