

THERAPEUTIC TRANSPERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH
DOLPHINS:
AN ENQUIRY INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF 6 CO-RESEARCHERS
CONCERNING THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH WILD DOLPHINS

By

Anthony J. Hegarty

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science in Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology

Liverpool John Moores University
School of Psychology

*“...his delights
Were dolphin-like, they showed his back above
The element they lived in:”
Antony and Cleopatra (Act.5.2.88)*

Liverpool March 2007.

Module: HUMCTM006

ABSTRACT

THERAPEUTIC TRANSPERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH DOLPHINS: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF 6 CO-RESEARCHERS CONCERNING THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH WILD DOLPHINS

This study examines 6 human/dolphin encounters and seeks to illustrate how they are both transpersonal and therapeutic; in the course of this examination these encounters are seen as “participatory transpersonal events” (Ferrer 2002) for the co-researchers involved. Using in part a phenomenological reduction of recorded interviews (Moustakas 1994) and in part an intuitive, poetic approach, influenced by the work of Jorge Ferrer (2002) and David Abram (1996), the study looks particularly at the therapeutic aspects of the accounts as they relate to depression and in what ways these transpersonal encounters with the Natural World may have brought about healing. It suggests that a symbiotic relationship exists between transpersonal participatory events and healing and in so doing raises the need to include the concept of healing in the concept of the Transpersonal. The study concludes that our ontological transformation through a unity with Spirit is what is ultimately healing both for individuals and perhaps for the Earth itself and questions whether a condition of alienation may be embedded in some aspects of Transpersonal psychological theory.

Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	4
Preface.....	5
Introduction.....	6
<i>Literature Review</i>	7
Methodology.....	17
Results.....	20
<i>Individual Textual Syntheses</i>	20
<i>Composite Textual Syntheses</i>	25
Discussion.....	28
<i>The Transpersonal</i>	28
<i>The Therapeutic</i>	30
<i>Healing is reciprocal: the psyche and the Cosmos</i>	31
Summary and Further research.....	34

Appendix

1. Co-Researcher's Biographies and Comments.....	36
2. Phenomenological Reductions of Interviews.....	41
3. Summary of main Themes.....	82
4. Co-Researcher's Agreement.....	85
5. Guidelines to Qualitative Research.....	86
6. References.....	88

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I would like to thank my co-researchers whose contributions made this study possible:

Chris, Ruairí, Jan, Horace, Jackie and Bill.

They told me their stories and I listened often with awe to their encounters with a wild mammal in the open sea. Their honesty and personal revelation was very inspiring and I owe them a special thanks for sharing their life with me for a short time.

I would particularly like to thank Dr. Horace Dobbs for his help and advice, my supervisor Professor Les Lancaster, and my partner Max Hafler for his encouragement and patience.

Finally; I would also like to thank Jay P. Dufrechou, from Montana, USA, for sending me a copy of his doctoral dissertation.

PREFACE

“Everything we do changes us a little, even when we purport to be indifferent to what we’ve done. And what we witness, we also do.”

*Joseph Chaikin,
The Presence of the Actor*

Though I am writing this as a piece of academic research for a degree requirement I feel as though I am writing it for my co-researchers Chris, Ruairí, Jan, Horace, Jackie and Bill.

I have never had an encounter with a wild dolphin nor have I seen one at close quarters in the ocean. I approached my six co-researchers as an inquisitive fellow human wanting to have a conversation. I was anxious that they would do most of the talking and I should not *lead* them in any way but I brought with me a counselling training and about ten years of counselling practise. I had worked as an employee assistance officer with school teachers in County Mayo, Ireland, for six years just before beginning my M.Sc. and therefore, in this respect, I did bring what one of my early counselling teachers called, “a therapeutic personality”. I felt, as I have always felt in counselling, that I was trying to help them tell their story and participate in that experience with them. I felt privileged and was frequently moved and in awe of the stories they told. I think that ultimately I was also changed, for no matter how objective we think we are, “What we witness we also do.” (Chaikin 1972).

I became aware early on that because of characteristics common to all of these stories these people had all had an experience of very significant connection with Nature; in the form of, or perhaps through the agency of, a wild mammal in the ocean.

I first became interested in experiences of connection with Nature when I found a copy of R. M. Bucke’s, “Cosmic Consciousness” (Bucke 1969) by chance in a bookshop in Boston, U.S.A., about a year ago and when I began this study, I again seemed to stumble across a Ph.D. thesis by Jay P. Dufrechou, “Coming Home To Nature Through The Body”. Jay’s dissertation has been very influential in my understanding and very inspiring and motivating to my work. But I have to explain that personally I have never had a deep or significant encounter with the natural world that I can recall. My response has been vicarious, through the experiences of others, in counselling, in reading or poetry and to a lesser extent in music. This study has, however, made me question these vicarious encounters and perhaps acknowledge that through our human encounters or our encounters with inspired text or art we also participate in the mystery of Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

When I worked as an Employee Assistance Officer with teachers, depression, related to stress or trauma, was one of the most frequent presenting problems. During this period, Chris, one of my co-researchers in this study, told me he had been swimming with a Dolphin named Dusty off the County Clare coast near Fanore and it had helped him in his ongoing struggle with a post traumatic stress condition. I was initially rather sceptical about his experience but it seemed to me that anything that helped with a potentially disabling condition was worth exploring more fully. During my first year of study for my M.Sc. I came across the phenomenological study by De Mares and Krycka (1999) about cetacean triggered peak experiences and wanted to follow it up with some research of my own. Apart from wanting to be clearer about what exactly happens to people who find swimming with a dolphin therapeutic, I wondered what else this might tell us about the nature of depression itself. In the De Mares and Kryka study the emphasis was on “peak experiences”; “peak” implies the highest point of something, something “peaks” before it falls; it is temporary. I have used the term “transpersonal” which I feel covers a broader spectrum of experience¹.

This study explores the experiences, what I will later prefer to call *encounters*, of six people who have all swum with dolphins in the open sea. It focuses upon their encounter with a wild mammal in the ocean. I began by attempting to refine and define the major features of these experiences using the phenomenological research methods of Moustakas (1994). I wanted to present these experiences for what they were worth and let them, and indirectly, my co-researchers, speak for themselves, while at the same time putting their experiences in the context of research into therapeutic encounters with dolphins.

My research question was simply: What was the nature of the experiences that these co-researchers actually had and what might this tell us if anything about stress and trauma-related illness?

As the study progressed, as is often the way with transpersonal enquiries, I found *myself* subject to a transformational encounter and the perspective of the study was somewhat transformed. I moved away from the concept of a phenomenological reduction and its idea of the pre-eminence of individual interior experience to a view that sees transpersonal experiences as “multi-local events” (Ferrer 2002) and that sees individual consciousness participating actively in the world with Spirit itself.

I use the term “Transpersonal” in the definition given by Daniels (2005):

“It refers to experiences, processes and events in which our normal limiting sense of self is transcended and in which there is a feeling of connection to a larger, more meaningful reality.” (Page 11.)

I use the term “therapeutic” as defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary:

“Curative; of the healing art.”

The co-researchers, five men and one woman, were not easy to find. No one answered my notices in magazines and journals or on university notice boards and there were

¹ I note Ferrer (2002) cites Maslow (1971) as having reservations about his term “peak” and changed the term in his later work to “plateau experiences” which as Ferrer points out are “a more serene, stable and noetic response to the sacred than the former.” (Ferrer *ibid* p. 37.) “noetic”: “referring to states of deep knowledge and insight” (Daniels 2005).

times when it looked like I would have to abandon the project, or alter it entirely. In nearly all the cases one co-researcher helped me find another. Importantly, with the exception of Horace Dobbs, who had written “Dolphin Healing” (Dobbs 2000), all the co-researchers had a history of psycho-somatic illness ranging from mild to severe, relating to stress, trauma or depression or sometimes a combination of these factors. All claimed the dolphin encounter had aided their psychological health in some significant way.

It is important to stress once more here that all the events took place with free, wild dolphins in the open sea and not with dolphins in any form of captivity or *pen* open to the sea.

Literature Review:

Cetacea, the biological family to which dolphins belong, includes whales, dolphins and porpoises; dolphins are in fact small whales. The biological group as a whole has excited considerable attention from the general public and from more specialist interests for a number of reasons. The group is unique in its biological history; as Bunnell points out in “The Evolution of Cetacean Intelligence” (1974), the species had evolved a brain size almost comparable to *Homo erectus* approximately 29 million years before that particular ancestor of ours evolved, the Bottlenose Dolphin now has a brain larger than we do and the lamination and regional differentiation of the cerebral cortex in cetaceans is as developed as it is in humans (ibid 1974). The species seems to have played a mythological and, some would say, a spiritual part in human history from earliest times; the ancient Greeks believed dolphins carried the souls of the dead to the next world²; they were renowned for rescuing drowning sailors³ and the story of Jonah’s adventure with the whale is universally known⁴. Today the species is seen by many as symbolic of the urgent need to address the ecological crisis of our planet and many whales and dolphins are threatened with extinction⁵. When we add to this, the strange phenomena of the so called “ambassador dolphin”, the lone dolphin that for some unexplained reason leaves the pod and seems to seek out human company⁶, the area of investigation becomes a minefield of “new age” thinking, unsupported theory and very questionable so called scientific research.

With the above in mind, it is worth noting that the phenomena I examine in this section of the study have often been “documented” rather than “researched”; a distinction I shall endeavour to be aware of throughout.

Setting the scene as it were for this investigation, Lockyer and Muller (2003), state that:

² A theme developed in W.B. Yeats’ poem “Byzantium” (1930): “Astraddle on the dolphin’s mire and blood/ Spirit after spirit!”

³ See Herodotus, Book 1, (23), where he relates the story of Arion of Methymna, who was rescued by a dolphin when left to drown in the sea by sailors.

⁴ The Bible: The Book of Jonah.

⁵ At the time of writing the Government of Iceland has re-permitted the hunting and slaughter of whales in spite of world wide opposition and Japan seems about to resume hunting too.

⁶ The term “ambassador” is of course loaded with assumptions. There is no evidence that dolphins leave their pods and deliberately seek out human contact in this sense. Lockyer and Muller 2003.

“To date, about seventy solitary and sociable dolphins have been recorded world wide – the first proper *documentation* (italics inserted) perhaps being “Opo” a young female off New Zealand 1955-56.” (page, 138)⁷

Of the sobriquet “ambassador”, Lockyer and Muller are sceptical. They documented seven solitary dolphins looking particularly at their propensity for human contact. They noted that most solitary dolphins have been “bottlenose dolphins” an inshore, coastal species, “where contact with humans and their activities is unavoidable”. They concluded that initially the solitary dolphin showed a good deal of nervousness about human contact though bonding would often develop over time due to the dolphin’s natural curiosity; the personality of the dolphin and the patience and respect of humans being additional factors.

Research in the more strict sense of this term into human/dolphin encounters can be divided into four types:

- (1) Quantitative research into Dolphin Assisted Therapy (DAT).
- (2) Quantitative research into more general human/dolphin therapeutic interactions.
- (3) Qualitative research into human/dolphin interaction.
- (4) Other Qualitative research into encounters with aspects of the natural world that would appear to share important characteristics with the encounters related in this study.

(1) Quantitative research into dolphin assisted therapy (DAT):

Smith (2003) seems to have been the first to develop DAT after chance findings with her “neurologically impaired” brother in 1972. In her review (2003) she cites project “Inreach” (she was assisted by Dr. Henry Truby and Nancy Phillips in 1978) in which eight children between ten and seventeen were selected for six encounter sessions of between four to six hours each at the Miami Seaquarium.⁸ The children showed considerably increased attention spans after playing with the dolphins in various structured activities. There seems to have been no control group and no record of the exact methodology used to measure attention spans.

In the same article, Smith describes other less formal observations and also a study, Smith (1981), (cited by Brensing (2005) below, as “the first piece of research” on the topic) in which dolphins were used to assist in developing the communication skills of a 17 year old autistic boy. The results were, according to Smith’s account, very encouraging but she mentions working with the subject “over the years” which makes it rather unclear as to the control protocols of this study. Smith goes on to cite: “Dolphins Plus Autism” (1984), in which “non-verbal adolescent boys considered seriously socially and behaviourally impaired were selected and target outcomes would be an improvement of the dolphin group’s appropriate interaction skills”. However, of the seven subjects, analysis showed little statistical change pre/post the sessions (she admits the sample was small).

There is an acute shortage of exact methodology in these accounts (even allowing for my summarizing) which makes them difficult to assess but Smith was positive about

⁷ With reference to this date for “Opo” it is interesting to note that Horace Dobbs states that he could find no documentation of solitary/ambassador dolphins “between AD 109 and 1955” (Dobbs 2000). Why this is a recent phenomena is open to speculation.

⁸ Is this Smith, Truby and Phillips (1978)? I could find no write up of this and my attempts to contact Betsy Smith were unsuccessful.

the outcomes. In particular she noticed a phenomenon which is evidenced by the co-researchers in this study: the dolphins adapted their behaviour appropriate to the needs of the autistic and handicapped participants but were much more boisterous with the able bodied researchers. In addition she notes in relation to this, what she calls “a fundamental observation”:

“...the dolphins were not attending to the fish or our directions; they were instead following individual children. An attachment had been formed to a specific child, and no matter what platform that child was on, the dolphin was waiting there.” (ibid page 243)

This latter statement, though not supported by statistical analysis, may be a significant observation that requires explanation. Smith’s pioneering work at the time was very influential even if the research methods left much to be desired.

Nathansen developed a behavioural intervention strategy based on the assumption that children would show improved modified responses if tasks were reinforced by contact with dolphins. (See Nathansen 1980, 1989, Nathansen and de Faria 1993, Nathansen et al, 1997.) I shall look briefly at the most recent:

Nathansen (1998) analysed a 15 item closed form, ratio scale questionnaire with 71 sets of parents from 8 countries. The children had received either one week or two weeks of therapy in a multidisciplinary behaviour modification programme at one of two centres both in Florida USA. He found that children maintained or improved acquired skills by about 50% after twelve months away from therapy but there were significantly better long term results after two weeks of therapy than there were after one.

Humphries (2003) has criticised the reliability of this particular research on a number of significant issues. There is no description of the exact form that the therapy programme took; there was no pre-test questionnaire; there were no controls on acknowledged variables; and researchers knew of the desired outcome particularly Nathansen, who alone scored the behavioural changes. Alarming, the post-test questionnaire began with the presumptive phrase:

“As a result of Dolphin Human Therapy, my child has maintained or improved his/her ability to..... (Nathansen 1998, p.24, cited in Humphries 2003.)

A further study Lukina (1999), cited by Brensing (2005) and by Humphries (2003), based on pre-test and post-test questionnaires, parental observations and analysis of cardiac rhythms with 1500 children in a dolphin therapy programme, claimed to show that “a positive influence on child’s autonomic homeostasis and psychoemotional status could be observed” (cited Brensing 2005). This was flawed according to Humphries for the same reasons of bias as the Nathansen and also because there was “no data to support findings other than cardiac rhythm data” (Humphries 2003).

In 2005 UNESCO⁹ asked Dr. Karsten Brensing, (Brensing 2005), to evaluate “Swim with the dolphin programmes and Dolphin-assisted therapy”. In the first section of his report, dealing with dolphin assisted therapy (DAT) he acknowledges the above criticisms but concludes, “Even if there are several criticisms which need to be taken into consideration it could be concluded that DAT seems to be a successful animal assisted therapy” (Brensing 2005 p.3.)

⁹ Specifically, it was the Scientific Committee of UNESCO concerned with ACCOBAMS (Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area).

It is difficult to see how he reaches this conclusion as a scientific consultant. It may of course be right from a lay person's common sense point of view that something beneficial was happening to these children; it is a matter of opinion. There is the evidence of the parents who had paid considerable sums of money for the therapy and seemed satisfied and from therapists like Betsy Smith et al who seemed ethically committed to helping children. But the research papers are more interesting for what they appear to *document*, for what they note in passing and are not measuring, than for some of their research conclusions. Betsy Smith's "fundamental observation" about dolphin behaviour has been noted above and many of the "conclusions" noted by Nathansen and Lukina would have to be put in this category; nevertheless the dolphins do seem to have affected the children's general demeanour or mood as witnessed by the parent's responses.

Dobbs (2000), documents a mechanic at Penlee Lifeboat Station in Cornwall, Geoff Bold, who "was close to a nervous breakdown" and who had had his spirits lifted by "Donald", a local solitary dolphin. This is the same dolphin who had given Horace's 13 yr old son, Ashley, a ride round the harbour at Port St. Mary in the Isle of Man in 1974. At the end of a film for Yorkshire Television¹⁰ about "Donald", Dobbs says, "dolphins have an aura, or give out an emanation, that makes people joyful." (Dobbs 2000).

Is there any scientific evidence for this aura/emanation in the area of DAT?

Brening (2005), asks a similar question by speculating whether there are any other factors that would make DAT any more efficacious than any other "animal assisted therapy". He considers the "very speculative hypothesis that ultrasound from the echolocation clicks of dolphins may have a healing effect".

Cole¹¹ (1996), tested approximately 40 subjects before and after swimming with dolphins (playing, swimming, touching and diving). Measurements were taken of basic vital signs (temperature, blood pressure and heart rate) and Electroencephalograph readings. He found that "the subject's dominate brain frequency drops significantly after the dolphin interaction." (From mid-beta to lower alpha/upper-theta.) In addition; post-interaction there was an observable period of "hemispheric synchronization".

Cole's interpretation of these results is speculative, though he does point to the need for more exacting EEG studies. He suggests that the interaction has induced the alpha frequency brain states but there is no mention of a control for the experience of simply being immersed in the warm water and/or of being given lots of care and attention, nor does he say whether the measurements are being taken by assistants who are blind to the treatment and expectations. He suggests that, "the induced alpha brain state, as psychoneuroimmunology dictates, may be responsible for strengthening the human immune system". Importantly, he seems to imply that the alpha brain state *is* a therapeutic effect, without indicating how such a state is of benefit. He continues under the heading "Interpretation" by saying:

¹⁰ "Ride a Wild Dolphin" directed by Barry Cockcroft, Yorkshire Television.

¹¹ What in the research literature has become known as Cole 1996 is in fact a largely hypothetical presentation made by D.M. Cole in 1996 to The Second International Symposium on Dolphin Assisted Therapy, at Cancun, Mexico. The symposium was hosted by Dolphin Discovery and The Aqua Thought Foundation of which latter organization D.M. Cole was Chairman. I can find no record of the present existence of this organization but see <http://www.aquathought.com> .

“It is not a great extrapolation to consider the entire endocrine system to be affected. This may be the result of sono-chemical changes that occur at cellular boundaries in living tissue.” (Cole 1996.)

He points out that the frequency of dolphin observed ultrasound has a maximum value of 8.3W/cm², as compared with diagnostic testing (ultra sound scans) of 80mW/cm² and Therapeutic ultrasound of 2W/cm², and considers this high level to have the potential to induce “Sonophoresis”. He defines this as, “the enhancement of the transport of permeants, such as hormones, through cell membranes as a result of cavitation.” (ibid, with reference to: Mitragotri, Edwards et al 1995). He continues, “Sonophoresis as a direct result of the dolphin’s echolocation output, may explain both the chemical and electrical changes that have been observed in the brain.”

This *speculative* hypothesis may offer an explanation of what Dobbs (2000) calls the “emanation” that induces “joyfulness”. Little further research into this area appears to have been done since 1996 however.

Reviewing this speculation as to ultrasound influence in DAT, Breusing (2005) is convinced that the ultrasound is of too short a duration and too low a frequency “to be comparable to therapeutic ultrasound in human medicine.”

Summary:

The evidence from DAT research is very inconclusive. There is some evidence that interaction with dolphins helps intellectually disabled children for some reason, seeming to motivate them and improve their language skills, as well as their social and emotional behaviour. Whether this is seen in purely behaviourist terms, i.e. the dolphin is a good form of reinforcement in a training situation, or whether there are more dynamic processes involved is unclear; this area of research does not seem to have the answers as yet. There are, however, more positive indications from the second area of research:

(2) Quantitative research into more general human/dolphin therapeutic interactions.

Webb and Drummond¹² 2001, conducted pre-test and post-test for well-being (a devised test for this study) and anxiety (Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Questionnaire) with 74 females and 25 males, before and after swimming with dolphins. A further control group of swimmers, 14 females and 15 males were tested at an adjacent beach. Imbalances for age differences and differing times of year were addressed in the analyses. Encounters with dolphins were in a semi-open ocean area not an enclosure.

They found that well-being was greater in the dolphin group before and after the swim than in the control group (this anticipatory phenomenon relating to dolphin swims will be noted later in the present study) but that well-being increased to the same extent in both groups. (The effect of a pleasant swim in warm Australian water; not controlled in DAT research!) Significantly, however, *anxiety* decreased significantly in the dolphin group but not in the control group. They found that well-being was equally affected by swimming with or without dolphins but that swimming with dolphins appeared to lower anxiety.

¹² Nichola Webb and Peter Drummond: School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Australia.

This would seem the first sound study to measure an emotional state, rather than aspects of behaviour. It used a well validated test and attempted to control variables. With reference to the present study it will be noted that levels of anxiety can be relevant factors in people suffering from depression.

The final study in this group, Antonioli and Reveley (2005), is one of the most recent research studies available. Importantly, for the present study, it addresses depression specifically and, extraordinarily for research from a mainstream medical school (University of Leicester) it takes account of an ecopsychological viewpoint, i.e. “the biophilia hypothesis”¹³, which suggests an innate human tendency to relate to, and depend on, our connection with the natural world for our psychological and physical health.

Antonioli and Reveley conducted pre-test and post-test questionnaires (a modified Hamilton rating scale for depression; the Beck depression inventory; the Zung self rating anxiety scale) on 15 participants suffering from depression, involving a dolphin swim programme. Part of the encounter involved free and spontaneous contact with dolphins. A control group of 15 were given organized snorkelling and swimming on a coral reef without dolphins. They found the dolphin group improved their scores on both the Hamilton and Beck scales significantly more than the control group, after only two weeks of treatment. There was little difference between groups on the anxiety scores (Zung) though all showed some improvement; possibly due to the therapeutic properties of the water. They concluded:

“The biophilic method of intervention represents a new emphasis in psychiatry.....Psychiatric rehabilitation occurs operating on the emotional, holistic, and psychophysical aspects of participants through the interaction with animals in nature and the stimulation of the nervous system through the senses. Our psychophysical health is strictly dependant on the environment, hence the importance to protect and conserve it.” (from “Conclusions” Antonioli and Reveley 2005)

The size of the study group was disappointingly small for such a well organized and careful study and it is implied that this affected the insignificant anxiety scores. In fact 2 dropped out of the dolphin group leaving only 13 participants. The “conclusions” section of the paper quoted above is perhaps a little vague. In what sense was the “intervention” biophilic? (Perhaps the full study addresses this). But though biophilia is well defined in the paper it is not clear how the study differs in its methodology from other studies that do not speculate about a biophilic factor. It does not seem justified to suggest that “psychiatric rehabilitation” would occur through interaction with “animals in nature”, when only dolphins have been observed? Has this aspect of the biophilic hypothesis been shown by this research? How do they conclude that it is sensory stimulation of the nervous system that has been rehabilitating? I feel that the study *does* show that swimming with dolphins relieves symptoms of depression, perhaps very fundamentally; but questions remain about how this comes about.

Summary:

There now seems some reliable evidence that encounters with dolphins may reduce anxiety and relieve the symptoms of depression but why this is so is not very clear. It

¹³ Defined by Wilson, E.O. (1984) in “Biophilia: the human bond with other species,” as; “The connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life.”

has been suggested, however, that an ecopsychological factor, to do with our connection or grounding with the natural world may play a part. Though there was little scientific evidence of this, it does seem a reasonable hypothesis; perhaps this may be the point at which we need to look to qualitative research and engage with the participants on an intra-subjective level to explore this further.

(3) Qualitative research into human/dolphin interaction.

There appears to be only one Qualitative study relating specifically to human encounters with dolphins, that of DeMares and Krycka (1998). Using the Phenomenological Methodology of Moustakas (1994), DeMares and Krycka identify five “key themes” present in the encounter-experiences of six “subjects” involving either whales or dolphins (cetaceans). They claim that their research shows that such encounters rank as “peak experiences”¹⁴ as defined by Maslow et al and that cetaceans are one of the trigger species for such experiences.

The five key themes are: Harmony, Connectedness, Intention, Aliveness, and Reciprocity of Process.

If we ignore aspects of the “key themes” which seem to speculate about what the cetaceans might be conscious of and confine ourselves to what the human subjects relate about their experiences, some of the outcomes are consistent with the findings shown above. In particular; Harmony manifests in the subjects as feelings of “flow” “dynamic order” and “happiness” (cf. “well-being” above); Connectedness is never specifically mentioned as connectedness to nature but there is a feeling of relatedness to the cetaceans through eye contact and simply being present together; Aliveness manifests as feelings of “awe, elation, deep joy or unconditional love” (cf. “biophilia” above); significantly one subject, Judy, described this as follows:

“I started to have a feeling that I’ve never had before at this level. It was love, exponentially enhanced to a point that I can’t describe. I just stood there and realised that tears were falling off my chin...the feelings were so powerful and so fulfilling.” (Judy, *ibid*, page 175.)

Summary:

These findings do flesh-out the previously un-evidenced claims for the influence of ecopsychological factors suggested in Antonioli and Reverley above and would certainly imply the existence of therapeutic processes in these encounters that could aid people suffering from depression and/or stress conditions but in the absence of other confirmatory qualitative studies with dolphins it will be useful to look at more general encounters with the natural world to see if there are resonances of this kind elsewhere.

¹⁴ The term “peak experience” is not clearly defined in the study and seems to become a little hierarchical when the authors speak of two subjects as “non-peakers”. I have explained above why I prefer the term “transpersonal” in the present study.

(4) Other Qualitative research into encounters with aspects of the natural world:

The powerful emotions expressed by my co-researchers, especially their mention of tearfulness and the up-welling of deep feelings, and the example of Judy quoted above led me to the research of Dufrechou (2002).

He explored the “experiences of grief, weeping and other deep emotions in response to Nature” by a form of hermeneutics called “intuitive inquiry” (Anderson 1998). He explores the significance of 40 narratives of people between 20 years and retirement age, in addition to one particular narrative of his own. Dufrechou states:

“The primary interpretation was that the experiences represent moments in a transformational process capable of restoring equilibrium in an individual’s life and, more broadly, in the culture.” (abstract p. iii.)

Results were, “the interpretation of the researcher presented as discussion”; the study is grounded in the stories and experiences of the co-researchers as interpreted by Dufrechou. He also goes on to find, in what he calls the secondary interpretation, that:

“....

- (a) the body has the capacity to mediate psycho-spiritual healing or transformation;
- (b) humans experience healing.....as unconditional love, when in sensory contact with nature;
- (c) grief for humanity’s failure to live in harmony with nature can initiate or mediate a transformational process; and
- (d) deep connection with nature can be felt as spiritual experience.” (p.iii-iv. Ibid.)

This would seek to explore some of the unanswered questions about the “biophilic hypothesis” and resonates with the findings of Demares and Krycka, whose work Dufrechou cites in his study.

Cahalan (1995) sees this connection between psycho-spiritual health consistent with the Gestalt view of the person. Harper (1995) talking about “wilderness therapy” mentions a client who, camping out alone, becomes “beset by fear and anxiety” when she sees a “king snake” slithering through her camp place. She restores her calm and gains a new vitality when she “decided to become the snake”; she makes a snake mask, performs a shamanistic dance and “talks” to the snake. Discussing her shamanistic practice Harper quotes Alan Watts; “You didn’t come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean.”

Staying in Watts’s metaphor and acknowledging the contribution of poetic literature to this debate: observe this connection between balance and energy (energy here seen as “power” and “triumph”) and the resulting harmony of being part of the very elements that surround us, in this excerpt from Thom Gunn’s poem about surfers:

“The marbling bodies have become
Half wave, half men,
Grafted it seems by feet of foam
Some seconds, then,

Late as they can, they slice the face
In timed procession:
Balance is triumph in this place,
Triumph possession.”¹⁵

The connection can also be seen, as Dufrechou points out, as deep connection and identification with Spirit. The ninth century philosopher of Celtic Christianity, Eriugena (Bamford 2000), speaking of the idea of the immanence of Spirit, what he calls “Word” or “Logos”, writes:

“Visible, invisible, corporeal, incorporeal, rational, irrational—heaven and earth, the abyss, and whatever is therein—in him all live and are life and subsist eternally...contemplate...how they live in the spirit that disposes them.” (p.87)

Abram (1996), with reference to Merleau-Ponty’s work, sees this connectedness as being at the very heart of the perceptual process itself; it is so because perception is seen as “participatory”, “...perception always involves...the experience of an active interplay, or coupling, between the perceiving body and that which it perceives.”

The term “coupling” is suggestive here of creative union, of a kind of wedded state with Nature. He goes on to highlight the dichotomy of the scientific view of objective reality and the alternative view of spiritual idealism and sees that each “bolsters the other” thus avoiding the possibility, as he sees it:

“...that both the perceiving being and the perceived being are *of the same stuff*, that the perceiver and the perceived are interdependent” (original italics p. 67.)

Ferrer (2002), with an extraordinary lack of reference to Merleau-Ponty or Abram, develops this with particular reference to a “transpersonal” vision of reality, which transcending the Cartesian subject/object split, arrives at a “participatory vision of spirituality”. The extent to which Ferrer’s “vision” in this respect is different from Abram’s is open to much debate but it is worth noting the extent to which he sees this “participatory” view changing the world; its purpose is to:

“...midwife an intersubjectively shared reality, a transpersonal reality. The ultimate aim of the transpersonal vision is to bring forth a transpersonal world.” (Ibid p.7)¹⁶

Ferrer develops this in a crucial footnote to the above quotation (note 7: page 194), he explains that he sees the “world” as “relational”, how we experience this world depends on how we “engage” it. Ultimately, the participatory vision will enable humans to “enact and live the world transpersonally”.

¹⁵ Thom Gunn: “From the Wave”, Selected Poems 1950-1975.

¹⁶ This transformation of “world” is perhaps comparable to Dufrechou’s suggestion of the more broad restoration of equilibrium in the “culture” (page 14 above).

Summary:

The question to be answered here is: does our lack of engagement, our failure to find this relational level of reality for whatever reason mean we feel alienation, a sense of loss, sadness and grief, in extreme cases leading to depression and illness? And are deep relational encounters with this “world” a healing of this lost connection, a finding of wholeness again?

The more general qualitative research into contact with nature, like that of Dufrechou, Cahalan, Harper, creative literature and particularly the philosophical work of Merleau-Ponty, Abram and Ferrer all suggest that this is the case.

METHODOLOGY

“Every method in human science research is open ended. There are no definitive or exclusive requirements. Each research project holds its own integrity and establishes its own methods and procedures to facilitate the flow of the investigation and the collection of data.” Moustakas (1994) p. 104.

Introduction:

It became clear to me gradually as I listened to my co-researcher’s accounts and then began to work on them that they involved descriptions of what Ferrer (2002) calls “transpersonal participatory encounters”. I gradually came to recognize that what the co-researchers were describing were “events” that “elicit in the individual what has been commonly called transpersonal experiences” (ibid). But they are *events* that take place in the sea, in a relationship with a wild mammal; Ferrer uses the term, “multi-local” events. This involves, as will be shown when I discuss the “unity” aspects of these experiences, a loss of the more usual way of seeing the world, i.e. as an experiencing subject who has experiences of objects. As Ferrer says; “Both the Cartesian subject and the Cartesian object, as grammatical as well as experiential categories, are rendered implausible by the very nature of transpersonal phenomena.” (2002, p. 116.) This made it necessary to find a methodology that would not predispose my research to seeing these events simply as subjective inner experience. This was particularly important since the therapeutic aspects of my research into the encounters involved an examination of loss of self-centeredness, what Ferrer (ibid) describes as an emancipatory movement from the enclosed prison of the “experiential vision”, involving a loss of “narcissism” and an integration of spiritual experience into the world of everyday life, to a reconnection with the mystery of Spirit. (ibid).¹⁷ I also became aware that a choice of methodology is more than a choice of a particularly accurate technique; it is to choose a particular way of looking at the world and constructing the reality of the investigation.

The work of Jorge Ferrer is groundbreaking and he develops his “participatory vision” in more recent writing that describes transpersonal practice. This practice moves from the individual interiority of subjective experience to situations in which people meet in groups and in pairs to explore a shared participation in the world (Ferrer, Albareda and Romero, 2004); but nowhere does it describe a research method. Nevertheless, it does help to support the view that my participatory/therapeutic relationship with my co-researchers in this study is integral to my methodology. More recently, Blackstone (2006) has advocated a

¹⁷ One of the dangers to Ferrer of “the experiential vision” is “integrative arrestment”; with the “participatory vision” comes an integrative shift, a re-connection with the world of “other”.(Ferrer 2002).

therapeutic relationship that she calls “non-dual” that involves a similar participation in a shared knowledge that brings about transformational understanding in client settings. Both these contributions to the area have helped me frame my own transformational understanding. I have been able to acknowledge that the events have also included me in a transformational journey with my co-researchers.

I have used the methodology of Moustakas (1994) to initially identify the major themes or “horizons”. Moustakas’s approach, however, is still, in Ferrer’s terms, a form of “subtle Cartesianism”; it sees the interior subjective experience as the real essence of the experience and downgrades the world outside to a product of our construction; “What appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears in the world is a product of learning.”(Moustakas 1994, p. 27). In this view the “participatory” union of consciousness and Spirit is all but lost. It was to David Abram (1996) that I turned for guidance as to how I might write up these events and attempt to avoid the road of phenomenological reductionism and the interior subjectivity of Moustakas.

Abram (1996) sees the “conjunction” of the written and oral traditions in 4th. Century B.C.E. Greece as a crucial delineating moment in the development of our abstract mode of thinking; from this time on the abstract alphabet of the West became perceptually an alienating principle responsible perhaps in no small measure for the cognitive subject/object duality that was to reach its maturity with Descartes. Abram’s solution to this alienation is dependent on a poetic approach to language which attempts to re-connect it with the “land” or perhaps to involve it in the participatory event itself. He says, near the end of his book;

“The preceding pages have called attention to some unnoticed and unfortunate side-effects of the alphabet...effects that have structured much of the way we now perceive. Yet it would be a perilous mistake...to...simply relinquish the written word....Our task, rather, is that of *taking up* the written word, with all its potency, and patiently, carefully, writing language back into the land. Our craft is that of releasing the budded, earthly intelligence of our words, freeing them to respond to the speech of the things themselves....Finding phrases that place us in contact with the trembling neck muscles of a deer holding its antlers high as it swims towards the mainland....” (page 273-4 original italics).

....Or, indeed of a dolphin leaping over Ruairi, or its offering of the gift of a salmon to Bill. Of course at the end of the day it is not so much my words but the co-researchers’ words that are the significant ingredient here. I can only hope that my words are accounts of “participatory encounters” in the outside world with my co-researchers; that they are perhaps poetic renditions of a meeting/encounter of two imaginations. A *scripture*, if you will, inspired by a transpersonal event of participation with Spirit. And in this “scriptural” sense when interpreted in a hermeneutic tradition they lead back to Spirit itself.

Design:

In order to investigate therapeutic human encounters with dolphins in the ocean, in as open-ended fashion as possible, I conducted recorded interviews with 6 co-researchers. The co-researchers were asked to talk about their encounter/s in the sea with dolphins. The interviews were unstructured, there was no specific time-limit and I tried to allow complete freedom of expression. I intervened only to preserve relevance, to assist the co-researcher with self expression and in cases where I failed to fully understand a point. I did, however, bring to the interviews what I have called above a “therapeutic

personality” that had as its ideal Blackstone’s (2006) non-dual resonance, which makes of the interview itself a participatory encounter between two people.

All of the interviews were transcribed and then edited for relevance to the topic and to avoid unnecessary repetition. The edited interviews are presented as Appendix 2.

Sample:

The sample consisted of 6 co-researchers; 5 men and 1 woman. The requirements were: that they had swum in the open sea with a wild dolphin and found the experience therapeutic. I did not deliberately look for co-researchers who had a history of depression but as it turned out all but one of them had such a history. Brief details of their sociological background are detailed in Appendix 1 for the purpose of “situating the sample” (Elliott et al 1999).

Ethical Issues:

All co-researchers were asked to read and sign a consent and code of conduct contract with me as shown in Appendix 4.

Procedures:

I began by clustering the “horizons” into themes for each edited interview (Appendix 2) and preparing “individual textual descriptions”. I tried to be very open to the imaginative encounter of this process; I returned often in spirit to the feelings of the original interviews and constantly attempted to ground the writing in the co-researchers’ words.

I then amalgamated the enumerated themes, as shown in Appendix 3, and restudied the summaries and originals before I proceeded to compile a synthesis of my encounters with all 6 co-researchers. Though I was careful to cross check my writing with the list of themes, the process here was one of very much letting myself go with new understanding; if I had been changed by my participation then the new consciousness would express itself. The textual descriptions and final synthesis are shown as “results” below.

Validation:

All the individual summaries were returned to the respective co-researcher for comment. (“checking these understandings with the original informants” Elliott et al 1999) The comments are shown with the respective biographical details as Appendix 1. All comments concurred to the general accuracy of the summaries. There was one critical of methodology. I have tried to take account of comments.

Results

In this section I submit the individual summaries of the 6 interviews and my final synthesis of the individual summaries as the end product of the methodological procedures. It is based on the validated texts and I have attempted to “ground” it in “examples” (Elliott et al 1999).

Individual Textual Syntheses:

1. Chris:

For Chris while there was a feeling of excitement before his swim with Dusty he had no therapeutic expectations; it was decided, “We’d go fool with this dolphin”. Almost immediately the dolphin arrived and he was “amazed” and felt the dolphin was paying him some special attention, “he was hanging about me for some reason.” He swam with the dolphin diving down and watching it leap out of the water. He felt a sense of “awe”, an experience he found difficult to express in words but to do with being both immersed in a timeless experience of the present and a physical immersion in the sea with the dolphin, “You were just right at that very moment...in that space, in the water with this dolphin.” He had no fear but instead, though aware of the dolphin’s size and ability to harm, he felt a sense of trust, of being safe. His remarks about this safety are followed by, “It was pretty incredible, pretty incredible really.” In this atmosphere he felt there was an interaction between him and the dolphin that was playful but which also amounted to meaningful communication. “There was a definite interaction between the two of us...he was playing...maybe...but certainly interacting; and communicating.” And he felt “very drawn” to continue this experience.

While Chris felt “in great spirits” immediately after getting out of the water the next day he felt depressed, tense and angry. It was something he could not understand. He felt very emotional and “I wanted to cry a lot”; he was unable to concentrate. This continued for about a week at the end of which he experienced a short moment or two of complete peace sitting on a bench with a friend but this gave way suddenly to manic laughter. He went home and “lay on the bed laughing and then I started to shake and twitch and jerk...retching”. After this he felt much better and returned to his more usual self.

Chris felt that this negative reaction was largely because he was unable to deal with the powerful emotions that the dolphin experience had released and not directly attributable to the actual experience itself, which he still sees as helpful and healing, in fact, he found, “Another direction...the dolphin time was...a very important turning point.” He found a connection with a deep inner part of himself, a “knowledge” about himself, “a sense of knowing”. At one point he sees this as initiated by the dolphin, he says, “That there was that deeper inner connection, that that dolphin made with me for some reason. And it was like a knowledge.” The dolphin’s ability to be “itself”, as symbolised, as it were, by its agility, physicality and perhaps playfulness, prompted a similar response in Chris. He found it enabled him in

some way, “to get to the body and just be”. Now he feels he has to “trust” and learn “to let go..to say let it be” Perhaps this is similar to the “trust” he felt during the actual encounter, the being safe with a wild dolphin. He concludes by emphasising the connecting factors of being immersed in the sea with the dolphin, its ability to make some connection with a deep part of him that in turn allows him to feel more fully connected with himself.

2. Ruairí:

With reference to his first swim with the dolphin, Ruairí mentions his initial anticipation of fear at getting, “into the water with such a wild creature”, but his actual experience is almost ineffable; “It was something impossible to describe”, it was “something quite extraordinary”. He attributes to the dolphin a sense of deep wonderful peace, he says; “What a sense of calm she brought to your day, what a wonderful sense of peace and a kind of tranquility she brought.”

Ruairí had many subsequent swims with this dolphin; often he felt that the dolphin remembered him and was aware of his identity, she came to meet him on many occasions immediately he entered the water and, he felt, greeted him like an old friend; “it was just like, you know; where have you been, why have you not been swimming with me.” There would then follow moments of intimate physical contact, e.g. rubbing her belly with seaweed and close eye to eye contact. The dolphin’s agility and skill in the water was impressive but I feel that Ruairí’s reaction to it is more than just admiration; he is moved to wonder and awe. He links his feelings of wonder, “she is astounding.....absolutely unbelievable”, with his acknowledgement of her “wildness” and her ability to be aggressive but also with his overwhelming feeling of being safe with her and his lack of fear. In spite of her massive jumps out of the water he says, “she never once....endangered me. That’s not to say she isn’t aggressive.” Rather than feeling afraid he feels, “excited, extremely excited and I suppose blessed.” Blessed because this is a special experience, “one...that you will never experience again”, like climbing the highest mountain peak. He mentions at this point that to some extent the experience can affect other people who are present (in the water and watching from the shore) it seems to unite them, bring them closer together, he says:

“The respect, the love, the admiration, that people showed toward one another, and also obviously” (*by implication*) “towards the dolphin; that was remarkable, that was remarkable.”

My parenthesis because I felt that it was *implied* that the dolphin had initiated this upsurge of feeling or was responsible for it; it was like a binding together.

Ruairí is cautious about the dolphin’s potential for healing but is totally convinced that she is able to reduce stress, “...she does bring a sense of calm to your whole persona...I certainly feel she can take away stress”. But he goes further; he talks of being “refreshed” in every sense; physical, mental and spiritual. Again he prefaces this with expressions such as “remarkable” and it was a “most amazing experience” and then suggests that “in terms of a spiritual side of things” there is a special “level of engagement” which he is hesitant to call a “spiritual connection” but then finds himself doing so:

“I think the connection is really just the spirituality of bonding with a wild animal”. And it is true this is not the same as a “spiritual connection” perhaps. He goes on to note the fact that the dolphin is free to engage in these encounters in the ocean and under no obligation to be present. This seems to add to the unconditional (my word) nature of the “engagement”. Ruairi says, in the context of the idea of Spirit in some religious traditions, that for him at least the dolphin is:

“...she is if you like, the Holy Spirit, she is this being that’s out there and it’s physically there but she doesn’t have to be there she doesn’t have to engage you know.”

It is as though the dolphin is the physical emanation of Spirit for him. Finally: Ruairi says that though one could talk about many issues from the “dangers” to “conservation issues” ultimately it is the “personal engagement” that is most important.

3. Jan:

Jan had already told me a story about being watched by the eye of a Killer Whale called Gudrun in a dolpinarium. The whale’s eye had great intensity for Jan and it seemed to return his gaze with great expressiveness; “... the intensity of..this eye looked at me, like it was sort of very subtly changing and there was a message in there. You know, it was not just only a question, there was something really, yeah, relating and interacting and it was like a shiver on the bone thing, you know.” This story, though not quite relevant to our focus on dolphins in the open sea, was the context in which we began to talk about the importance of eye contact in Jan’s experience of dolphin encounters. He began this by saying; “Yeah, there is something very magic about the eye.” He compares it to the “buzz” and “force” a man might experience if he returns the gaze of a beautiful woman.

And in ordinary conversation, when we interact with another person, we use eye contact to assess, “how the eye is receiving your own body language and what you say and everything.” When Jan is doing some filming of the dolphin he feels she checks out what he is doing, almost secretly, and responds appropriately to his observation of her with the camera by doing one of her most elegant body rolls. On another occasion she tries to encourage him to rub her with seaweed by presenting the seaweed to him but when he only responds by nonsensically putting the weed on his head she appears to Jan to dismiss him as slightly crazy with a sad shake of her head. In both of these experiences Jan perceives a subjectivity on the part of the dolphin, an awareness, and feels that she is appraising him; he sees her as having a point of view about him.

He remembers the joy of his first experience in Dingle. It was comparable to, “how one pictures living in paradise” He speaks of the interest the dolphin showed him and how he felt it was, “much more...unconditional, and it was accepting...it was an acceptance that I did not find in humans.” This brings him to a turning point, a realization that there is a different way of being; it transforms his consciousness bringing with it new possibilities of creativity (particularly for Jan in the area of creative writing). It “opened up a new world”. It was like finding an oasis in the desert; “...suddenly you come to this well with crystal clear and nice cold water. And it’s totally refreshing you and giving you new strength and zest of life...”

Speaking of this changed reality and this opening up of possibilities, Jan goes on to say that; “...the gift of the dolphin consists, at least partly, of identifying with the

dolphin and watching the world through the dolphin's eyes." Jan explains how this also happens with people who are special to us and when he sees the world in this way, from this imaginative perspective, he is, "already bubbling with joy". It is interesting that we began with the importance of the "eye of the dolphin" and have come back to this seeing with the dolphin's eyes as it were. I am left wondering about this as a loss of self-centeredness, as an expansion of consciousness. What does identification with the dolphin mean? Is it perhaps a new *participation* with the dolphin's consciousness? A new way of seeing?

Jan tells me he is cautious about speaking of dolphin healing, for him it was a slow process, over about six years, but that now he is free of depressions and no longer on medication.

4. Horace:

Horace's experience of dolphins is so wide ranging and his documentation of the healing experiences of others so large, it is difficult to limit him to one experience of a very personal nature. This was necessary, however, to satisfy the criteria of the study.

Horace goes back to an experience with Fungi in Dingle; he had simply intended to get in the water to do some filming but he found himself beginning to play and interact with the dolphin. He gets "completely lost" in his "interaction....I'm down, I'm up, I'm around and I'm jumping out of the water. The dolphin's jumping over me." All this while the on-lookers cheer and get excited, empathizing with the experience. As this happens Horace loses touch with the external world and exists only in the world of the dolphin; he is totally absorbed in the dolphin's world of the water and "it's very beautiful. The sun is shining, there's kelp waving....all these lovely shapes of the rocks...", he exists in a "bubble", "I was locked into a bubble of dolphin experience". Time ceases to exist for him; he is totally in the present moment, "...you get locked into the moment and that's when you live that moment." This being "locked in" suggests a unity of experiencing with the dolphin and its world of the sea itself outside of time. One thinks of the mythical power of sea creatures to carry away sailors' souls with their delights.

There is a strong sense of heightened awareness particularly when he talks of the "energy" of the experience; "It's as if we were both in a ball really, of energy." He says it is a feeling of "exuberation" and "exhilaration" and when I ask him about this he says; "...You've just got massive energy...". Though he knows the dolphin can be dangerous this fear is not felt in any way, partly because of the trust he has in the dolphin but also because of this massive excitement; it's like the "Cresta Run".

This exhilaration does not pass with the experience but continues for some hours afterwards, "...the point is it lingersthe excitement is over but you come off the boat and you go and lie down on the bed and you're just floating....I was lying on the bed in a state of nirvana. I was kind of in heaven." And when I ask him to define "nirvana" he is explicit; it is, "The state of calm and bliss."

Horace likes to think of the dolphin as having "zapped" you in some way. As if you have been charged with some kind of transformational energy or information which you then have to unravel (the metaphor is John Lilley's about a satellite and a receiving station on the earth). This is said to elaborate the feeling he has when lying on the bed after the encounter.

5. Jackie:

Jackie gives a wonderful description of a “vision of dolphins”; the arrival of a large pod which comes from the distant “horizon....too many to count” and “whizzing towards the boat”. This sudden arrival and the visual spectacle of the pod after being at sea a few hours was very moving for her and the others on the boat. She felt that there was a quality of a coming together or “meeting” about the event; “They’d found me and I found them. As if it was something that I’d been wanting all my life..”. Jackie felt some anticipation and fear about what might happen when she got into the sea with them but when she did, she was overwhelmed with a mixture of emotions. There was a strong feeling of this being “very special” but difficult to explain in words, it was a very emotional feeling. There was absolutely no fear, “it just felt so right and everything”. All concern, worry or stress “just seemed to sort of vanish”, “I was just there in the moment with the dolphin”. The over-riding feeling was one of “joy” and summing all this up a feeling of well-being and specialness. Jackie emphasises her awareness of the fact that the dolphins were in total control and there by choice. Perhaps there is a feeling of being honoured by their presence in all this and by their individual attention to the swimmers.

After getting back on the boat everyone became very emotional and bonded together; “everybody just hugged one another....it seemed to bring everyone together”. There was an upsurge of many different emotions; “Everybody was laughing, people were crying...and the whole atmosphere was a very joyful moment....every emotion under the sun just seemed to come out.”

Jackie felt strongly that she wanted to repeat this experience; “a feeling of wanting more of that special feeling.”; the “special feeling” that is “hard to describe”. After many subsequent encounters she seems now to feel a deep sense of communication with the dolphins which at times is almost telepathic. “I get sort of like visions of dolphins where they’re giving me words and messages”, words like, “Trusting, caring, sharing, and giving.” And at times of stress or worry she finds that she “can always tap in to that very special feeling of joy.” There seems to have developed a feeling of unity with the dolphins, or the experience, that has become *spiritual* (very much my interpretation) and gives purpose and meaning to Jackie’s whole life. “That calmness seems to stay with us”.

6. Bill:

Bill felt a little afraid and was very unsure about what to expect from his first dolphin swim. He frequently got goose pimples as he told me his story, clearly reflecting the intensity of the emotions he was recalling. He felt from the first moment, before he got into the water, that the dolphin (Semo) gave him special attention, “the dolphin wasn’t interested in anyone else...”. Bill became completely absorbed and lost in the moment, feeling a mutual need between himself and the dolphin as he stroked it; initially from the deck of the boat. Bill felt “wanted” almost immediately. He explains the difference between what he felt was the alienating questioning of the hospital and the unconditional love he felt that the dolphin showed him, “the dolphin...never asked me, “why did you go into depression, what made you go into depression?”.....he’s not asking me questions.” He felt this dolphin (and indeed subsequent dolphins) simply wanted “communication with a human being”; no questions asked. He became totally

lost in the presence of the dolphin, nothing else existed. “It’s incredible” how that made him feel, “I was gone....not with anybody there, just contact with the dolphin.”

Within the first hour of his first encounter Bill felt that it was healing and a turning point in his life. He felt, as the encounter came to an end, a deep desire to renew this contact, “I wanted more, more, because it’s something I’d never experienced before. I thought there was an answer here.” It touched him deeply inside, a part of him the hospital had been unable to reach, “I felt...I’ve (sic) becoming alive again. I’ve been given a treatment....”.

These experiences were repeated in Dingle with the dolphin Fungi. He connects with Fungi, “person to person, being to being.” In addition he feels a connection with the whole world of the dolphin (he gets goose-pimples as he explains); “I was looking down on the bottom of the sea bed.... there’s a wonderful world down there...I was actually part of the marine life.” He feels he wants to share this world with Fungi; a connection has been made. He describes how the dolphin brings him a large salmon in its beak which Bill gives back to the dolphin; this is an intense experience, there is a combination of fear and wonder, as the dolphin returns to him at great speed, “....but he stopped within one metre of me”, making a dramatic show of regurgitating the scales etc; “a sight I will never forget till my dying days.”

It seems that as a result of this intense, heightened experience Bill feels a healing of his alienation from the living world. At first he had felt just like, “something floating on the sea; rubbish as far as I was concerned: a dead man.” But now he feels reunited with life, with the dolphins, he says; “It’s just unbelievable what they mean to me. They are part of my body...I came back from a lost world, to a living world full of dolphins.” He says this is like being on top of the world, “there is no other climbing to do,” it is a joy, ecstasy. “Oh it is a joy; it is.”

Composite Textual Synthesis:

“It was a truly remarkable experience that this creature was in the water, wild yet willing to interact with people, and it was quite amazing, scary perhaps at first, to get into the water with such a wild creature, you know, that could potentially do serious damage if she wanted toit was something extraordinary...” (Ruairí)

The adjectives that sum up these experiences all fall short, all fail, or seem inadequate in some way, to truly describe the person’s experience. Only when taken together in context and then perhaps with the awareness that the English language, certainly east of the Atlantic Ocean, has a propensity for understatement, do they reveal the true wonder and heightened awareness of the experience. One really has to “hear” the emotional tone, the timbre of, for example, the above, “truly remarkable”, to understand that what is being described is so very full of what amounts to “awe” (Chris). We must put them in context then:

We have an experience that though potentially dangerous evokes no fear at all. The individual is aware of receiving a special attention from a wild animal in its natural environment of deep water. The person is totally contained in this world of encounter,

all time ceases, all preoccupations with other things are lost, there is just this encounter in this present moment, this playful communication, which seems, nevertheless, to be very meaningful and yet is totally ineffable; but there is joy and ecstasy, and total well-being, so that they would wish it to continue almost forever, “living in paradise”, says Jan; and with all of this there is often a feeling of total acceptance, of unconditional love. It is in the context of these feelings, common to all the encounters, that words seem to me to be a succession of understatements.

There was after many of these experiences, particularly when other people were present, an upsurge of emotions, a cathartic after effect, sometimes disturbing, but mostly full of joy and love. People became close, they hugged one another, they wept, they lay on their beds in a state of “Nirvana” (Horace). “What a sense of calm... what a wonderful sense of peace” (Ruairi). There was a coming together, a bonding, a restoration of wholeness.

There was an attribution of subjective feelings to the dolphin itself. How else could a human interpret the experience? Frequently the person imagines the way the animal is thinking. Importantly the human felt that there was self appraisal on the part of the dolphin affecting their identity. They were important to the dolphin or needed by it.

As this study has progressed I have found myself turning from time to time to the world of poetic imagination and have often thought of D.H. Lawrence’s poem about an encounter with a snake in Tuscany. Snakes of course are small brained reptiles, not large brained mammals but that is not the point. Lawrence meets the snake at his drinking tap in the morning and describes part of his reaction in the verse:

“Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.....
And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.”

And later with a great sense of regret because he threw something at it to scare it away, he says:

“I missed my chance with one of the lords / Of life.”

That idea of an animal being “one of the lords of life” is I think a useful one. I find both pieces from the poem help my understanding here. Ruairi says, he felt “blessed” by his encounter, which is close in meaning to “honoured”, and more and more I find myself thinking of the dolphin as “a lord of life”.

Above all I feel a communication is made in these encounters, a connection with the natural world, indeed with life itself, a connection that many of us have lost; an overcoming of alienation, a restoration that is transformative: “...a dead man....I came back from a lost world, to a living world full of dolphins.”(Bill). There is a *participation* with life itself; as Lawrence says; “with a lord of life”. And so as Chris says, a deep inner part of oneself is touched and revived. Chris sees this as “knowledge”, Ruairi sees it as a meeting of “Spirit” but it heals and restores and

refreshes. And when I omitted to mention this healing effect on just one occasion, in my account of Jackie's experience, she reminds me of it and adds it in her response:

“Since swimming with the dolphins I have felt healed physically and emotionally. I felt that they communicated with me at a very deep level that was beyond words.”
(Jackie).

Discussion

The “composite synthesis” above flowed powerfully from my final re-reading of the accounts of my co-researchers, it is an attempt to release “the budded, earthly intelligence of our words, freeing them to respond to the speech of the things themselves”; to find “phrases that place us in contact with the.... muscles....” of (in this case) the wild dolphin (Abram 1997). It is an attempt to place a transpersonal “participatory encounter” (Ferrer 2002) in the alphabetic language code we use; as such it is of course inadequate¹⁸. I shall try here to develop some of its shortcomings and suggest further research.

I have claimed that these encounters are “transpersonal” and “therapeutic” I now want to look at them under these headings:

Transpersonal:

I have avoided the use of the term “peak” because it suggests “highest point” whereas I think “transpersonal” can include simply a shift, sometimes a small shift but perhaps a more stable one, from “our normal limiting sense of self” (Daniels 2005) to a more meaningful inclusive state; it does not have to be of the order of a Teresa or an Eckhart. It is interesting to note, however, if one examines the accounts¹⁹, the number of characteristics they share with “mystical extrovertive experiences” as cited and defined by Marshall (2005). Marshall cites Stace (1961) and lists the following characteristics:

- “Feeling of blessedness, joy, happiness, satisfaction etc.”
- “Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine.”
- “Alleged by mystics to be ineffable.”

In Bill’s account we have his wonderful emphasis of the “Joy” of the encounter, of being on the mountain top of ecstasy: “there is no other climbing to do...it is a joy, ecstasy...oh it is a joy”. Jackie expresses similar emotions to “happiness and satisfaction” when she says; “...it was something I’d been wanting all my life...it just felt so right”, like Bill, she sums it up also as a “joy” and well-being, and Jan leaves us in no doubt when he says it was like; “living in paradise”, with the subtle undertone of the sacred perhaps implied. Horace says; “I was kind of in heaven.” In Ruairi’s account we have the connection with “holy” and “sacred” more clearly, he says of the dolphin; “she is if you like, the Holy Spirit”. For Jackie the dolphins have given; “a heightened spiritual awareness” (from her supplementary comments). The “ineffable” qualities are universal to all accounts. Chris finds it is; “hard to capture it in words”, in the sense of something *escaping* cognition. Ruairi says; “it was something impossible to describe...its very difficult to describe...I suppose it’s at a different level”, while Jackie makes the almost identical comment and adds “it was

¹⁸ I considered revising the “composite” to make it more encompassing but decided not to tamper with it; it held a certain magic for me and it seemed better to develop it in the discussion section.

¹⁹ By “accounts” I mean the recorded transcripts not my reductions. I am quoting the co-researchers’ actual words here to “ground in examples”.

difficult to explain to friends and family what this feeling was like.” In addition many of the adjectives used imply the idea of the “ineffable”, e.g. awe, ecstasy, incredible etc.

Marshall also cites Zaehner (1957) and Otto (1987) with reference to the “transcendence of time and space” and the “eternal now”; he refers to all these qualities as the “classic characterizations” of “mystical, extrovertive, experience”, differing from other mystical experience in their “orientation to the natural world”. There are some very descriptive examples of the “transcendence of time and space” in nearly all the accounts. Horace says; “the rest of the world didn’t exist; I was just in a total bubble...it’s like being in a locked location” and Jackie; “I was just there in the moment....Time just seemed to sort of vanish.” Chris says; “it was that sense of being in the moment, that very moment....you were in that space, in the water with the dolphin....you were in it, you were part of it.” Bill puts it in his very special way when he says; “I was gone. I was completely gone, on another...” (His hesitation to complete the well known hackneyed phrase with “planet” suggests the need for something more profound....*level of consciousness* perhaps?)

The other major characteristic cited in Marshall and common to all his three sources mentioned above is called severally, “the unifying vision” (Stace), or “Wholeness/identity of the perceiver and the perceived” (Otto), or “Sense of unity involving the natural world” (Zaehner). It is perhaps not dissimilar to what Daniels calls “inclusiveness” (2005) but its difference from the other characteristics is that it has within itself an inclusive quality, it subsumes many of the other characteristics; Marshall says: “The unity of extrovertive experiences is not distinct from other features. It is instantiated in transformed experiences of self, knowledge, love, vision, light, life, and time. Self is united with others; knower merges with known....times and places fuse in a whole.” This characteristic of “unity” can be recognized in differing degrees in many of the instances from the accounts I have described above; from the awareness of “Spirit” in Ruairi’s account and the “bliss” of Horace’s to the timelessness of nearly all the others. I will emphasize only one other characteristic which prompts us to recognize this unity and which, oddly, only occurs once *explicitly* in my synthesis and that is “knowledge”. Chris is very clear about it, and he links it with connectivity:

“...it was possibly a reaction to the communication in a sense of your deepest part being connected with. That deep part of your unconscious....it was a sense of knowing....knowing that the only way to be in life” (I paraphrase) is to be in touch with one’s entire being, body and spirit, and to “play” like the dolphin, he continues, “but certainly there seemed to be that deep inner connection, that, (sic) that the dolphin made with me for some reason. And it was like a knowledge.”

This connection is very different for different people but it shares always the idea of a connectivity: Jackie says; “And maybe that’s why I felt this profound knowledge....like a telepathy going on between me and the dolphins: almost as though they are giving me messages.” Horace with reference to John Lilley (Lilley 1962, 1967) says, “...when you meet a dolphin you are zapped”, you are suddenly filled with information. Jan touches on it in many different ways, he says; “I can only compare it to what happens when you see a beautiful woman and she looks at you and you are brave enough not to look away....and you get....a real buzz out of it (but) this is on a completely different level of course, but the force is there for sure.” He says it

is like finding a “well of crystal clear water” an “oasis”. (One thinks of “well of knowledge/oasis of learning) Jan is speaking of a kind of refreshment (like Ruairí) but I feel it is a spiritual *knowing* too since he goes on to say how his creativity and especially his creative writing is “freed” “It freed a new appreciation of my possibilities, of the possibilities in general”. I feel Bill’s account is full of these feelings of connectivity, he describes his overcoming the “alienation” he felt during his depression as a result of the dolphin’s connection with him and its offering of unconditional love. But the overall effect is a unity, in this case, a knowing-in-the-body; “when I’m with a dolphin I’m not with anybody else....They are part of my body”.

In some of these cases, and I have tried to illustrate very different but related experiences, “knowledge” *arises* as a result of connection and communication, in others it is communicated by the dolphin itself, Jackie’s “telepathy”, with Bill it is simply synonymous with a oneness of “body”, while one feels with Ruairí that it stems from the dolphin as “Spirit”. All, however, involve not just an inner subjective experience of objective phenomena, but as Ferrer points out; an ontological shift takes place. The subject becomes transformed, as a result of an involvement with, a unity with, the natural world. There is “participation with an event” (Ferrer 2002). “What makes these transpersonal phenomena distinctly “transpersonal” (as well as interesting, provocative, and transforming) is not their nonordinary or occasional ecstatic character, but the character of the knowledge they provide during an expansion of individual consciousness.” (Original brackets: Ferrer, *ibid.*) This “knowledge” is a defining part of the “unity” these accounts show, but unlike the concept of “unity” cited by Marshall, this unity depends on a re-union or re-connection with a lost part of oneself, an overcoming of a felt alienation of spirit, a *dispiritedness* that is healed by an encounter; an event, that invites, “the generative power and dynamism of human nature to interact with a spiritual power in the co-creation of spiritual worlds” (Ferrer, 2002). At this point I want to ground these “spiritual worlds” of the co-researchers in the context of “healing”.

Therapeutic:

I defined “therapeutic” as “curative; of the healing art.” To what extent do these encounters qualify as “therapeutic” and, interestingly, to what extent does Daniels’s definition, or indeed any acceptable definition like it, imply a therapeutic component²⁰? It could be argued that “transpersonal” experience is “healing” experience in the sense that the concept of healing is contained within it. Ferrer’s (2002) definition of “transpersonal participatory encounters” includes, like Daniels’s definition of “transpersonal experience”, the idea of the loss/transcendence of “self centeredness”; citing Evans (1993) Ferrer (*ibid.*) elaborates this, to call it “spiritual transformation” and says it, “involves a shedding of narcissism, self-centeredness, self separation, self-pre-occupation, and so on.” From a psychotherapeutic perspective it would be hard not to see such a transformation as healing; narcissistic self-centeredness is usually seen as a pathological condition. However, one still might see this argument as circular and want to ask the question; is transpersonal experience by

²⁰ I think I am right in saying that though Daniels (2005) mentions *some* forms of healing as being possible examples of transpersonal experience, e.g. as in Shamanism, he does not include healing per se as a component of the definition of “transpersonal”. The argument is important in the same way as the argument about whether transpersonal experience necessarily includes the concept of a “metaphysical transcendent”. (*ibid.*)

definition healing experience? The above definitions do give us clues as to how this might be so, i.e. by a loss of self-centeredness and some form of “connection” as opposed to some form of “self-separation”. First; I want to examine the extent to which the above transpersonal encounters also involve healing.

The evidence for healing in the co-researchers’ accounts is overwhelming. Jan was seriously ill “because of a severe and 27 year lasting manic-depressive affliction”, he says; “the influence that the dolphin had on me is, well, great because after, well, about six years I became free of episodes (of depression)”. Bill was depressed for 12 years, he says; “I felt better and better and better....I didn’t need valium anymore....I came back from the lost world to a living world.” These are perhaps the two most startling and moving accounts of natural healing I have encountered. In the case of Chris, unlike Bill and Jan, we only have an account of one encounter with a dolphin and his attempt to re-encounter the dolphin was unsuccessful, nevertheless he attributes a major change in the direction of his search for healing to the event;

“....there was that deeper inner connection, that that dolphin made with me for some reason.... sincethe dolphin time I have found another direction...that has really helped....the dolphin time....was a very important turning point because it was about moving from the intellect and the psychology....and even the past....to get to the body, and just be; in a sense to connect with yourself deeply.”

Ruairi makes direct reference to the ability of the encounter to reduce stress and more importantly “refresh” one’s entire being; “I’ve never come away from a swim with her where I didn’t feel refreshed in every sense....refreshed in a mental, in a physical and a spiritual sense....in an energy level sense....I definitely think she has the ability to lower one’s levels of stress.” Horace is in no doubt about the therapeutic effects and has written several books on the topic (1990, 1991, 2000); from his personal account in this study, as a healthy person at that time, he comments on the “massive energy” that the swimmer experiences and the sense of exhilaration resulting in total “calm and bliss”. Jackie says; “Since swimming with the dolphins I have felt healed physically and emotionally. I felt they communicated with me at a very deep level that was beyond words.”

Healing is reciprocal: the psyche and the cosmos.

I have here deliberately emphasized clear statements of healing effect in all 6 accounts in order to show that within these transpersonal encounters “healing” in the sense of “curative” experiences did occur. But it destroys the cohesion of these accounts to separate this aspect out from the encompassing transpersonal experiences themselves. They are all part of a common core of experience involving an awesome, joyful experience, existing only in the present moment, in which a deep part of the person was connected with and an inner knowledge found. All of these qualities express the transcendence of a “limiting sense of self” and the “feeling of connection to a larger more meaningful reality” (Daniels 2005) or what elsewhere (Marshall 2005) has been called “unity”. It is because of the nature of these processes that certain types of healing comes about. It seems curious in many ways that the “healing” aspects of “transpersonal experience” are so often overlooked or given scant attention when one considers that many of the founders of the transpersonal movement were so involved in psychotherapy, e.g. Grof, Maslow etc. Why are we surprised (At least I have to admit I was surprised and skeptical) that swimming with

dolphins in the open sea should be the source of transpersonal experience and so of healing? And why are the major academic centres of Transpersonal Psychology not at the forefront of raising ecological consciousness at a time of major crisis? Are there deeper questions about our alienation from the natural world, about our society's neglect and destruction of the planet, which Transpersonal Psychology is not addressing? These are all matters for further research but I want to elaborate a final aspect of the healing experience which I think addresses some of these concerns here.

In nearly all the accounts there was recorded a post-swim experience involving an upsurge of emotions often involving weeping and in some cases close communion with others present. Jackie gives the most explicit account:

“But eventually we were...called back on the boat and everybody just hugged one another. These were people that I didn't really know that well but it seemed (the encounter with the dolphin) to bring everybody together. Everybody was laughing, people were crying, everybody was very emotional and the whole atmosphere was a very joyful moment.” (My parenthesis).

Chris says after the experience he “felt emotional...like I wanted to cry a lot...”. Commenting on his observation of Bill's encounter, Jan says, “I felt the water coming from my eyes in huge waves...it was the total recognition of the situation and I think I must have filled half a bucket or so. I was very totally moved.” Ruairi says, “The other thing about those first swims...is the people who were there: the respect, the love, the admiration, that people showed towards one another...”.

Similar experiences have been mentioned above with reference to the work of Dufrechou (2002) who sees weeping and powerful emotions as significant of transformation and healing but particularly significant of experiences in which an alienation from the natural world is healed. I think Dufrechou (2002) explains much of what was happening with my co-researchers. He raises the idea, also explored by Abram (1995), that it is perhaps this alienation from the natural world that has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster. It is not simply that a lack of awareness of our world has caused us to neglect it, in the sense that a workaholic neglects their health, but that our personal health and the health of the cosmos are reciprocally related²¹. If this is the case then we have much to learn from these human/dolphin encounters.

Ferrer (2002) in speaking of our need to re-connect with the universe uses a metaphor, reminiscent of the Song of Solomon²², in which he describes humankind as the “lovers” of the cosmos; “Only by becoming its sincere and unconditional lovers is the cosmos likely to reciprocate and offer us its intimate secrets and precious pearls. And which are those pearls? To be sure, they are as infinite as the universe itself.” (p. 174) Surely wholeness and healing are part of this *reciprocation*. Ferrer does not stop there however; he sees this alienation as generic to an outmoded view of transpersonal psychology itself. For him the post-Cartesian subject/object split *is* the alienating

²¹ This idea of the reciprocity of the health of both the Earth and Humankind is often mythically represented. cf. The Myth of The Fisher King associated with the Grail Legends. In this case if the King is sick (psychosomatically, because he has violated holy maidens dwelling in the hills) so too is the earth infertile. There are numerous other examples of this relationship. (See J. Weston, 1920)

²² Song of Solomon (Canticle of Canticles): The Bible. There is here also the idea of a search for ecstatic union with the beloved who is full of jewels and riches.

principle still inherent in what he calls the reductionist nature of the “experiential vision”; the explaining of spiritual experience by reference to an individual inner subjective space which can be empirically investigated. He claims this is disabling to true spiritual development because it encourages “spiritual narcissism” (He cites Chogyam Trungpa’s (1987) spiritual materialism) and “integrative arrestment”. He defines the latter as; “the hindrance of the natural integrative process that translates spiritual realizations into everyday life towards the transformation of self, relationships, and the world.” (2002, p. 37). Thus, transpersonal experiences remain temporary phenomena which fail to be transformed into “enduring traits”. His emphasis on “participatory encounters” with events in the world and that knowledge arises from such encounters is fundamental to what I have tried to demonstrate in this study. In this respect the above examination of my co-researcher’s accounts show “participatory events” in action as it were. If this re-knowing of the cosmos, this spiritual union suggested by Ferrer above, is at the heart of Transpersonal experience, both for the individual and the collective, then we need to include more explicitly this healing component within our understanding of the whole concept of the Transpersonal. We need also to ask to what extent we may not have been, unwittingly, perpetuating an alienation of the individual psyche²³ from its cosmic source in our adherence to a “subtle cartesianism” which has contributed to the approaching ecological disaster.

²³ cf. Abram 1996, p. 252-3: Abram in the course of discussing the adoption of an abstract, written language, notes how Plato was able to “co-opt” the term “psyche” from its original meaning. Psyche “was no longer an invisible yet tangible power continually participant by virtue of the breath, with the enveloping atmosphere, but a thoroughly abstract phenomenon now enclosed within the physical body as in a prison”. Which form of “psyche” is the transpersonal psyche?

Summary and Further Research

“Contemplate with your inner eye how in a master the many laws of an art or science are one; how they live in the spirit that disposes them.” Eriugena.

In this study I have attempted to document 6 experiences of human/dolphin encounter. I have declined to make any speculation about the dolphins, these wonderful, and sadly endangered mammals themselves; I have steadfastly confined myself to the accounts of my co-researchers. I think I have shown that they all experienced “transpersonal” consciousness expanding encounters with the natural world and that these encounters were psychologically “therapeutic”; so much so that in some cases they healed certain serious forms of depression. I have hypothesized that this is due in a large part to an overcoming of a fundamental alienation that besets the post-modern world and that this alienation is healed by a re-connection with “life” as it exists and arises in the world, or if you prefer, with Spirit as it sustains the Cosmos. If I am to venture, perhaps unwisely, to comment on the dolphins, it would be simply to add the reservation that while they are perhaps to be seen as one of the extraordinary “ambassadors” of this Spirit or this life, they are not presumably the exclusive ambassadors; there are others in the multifaceted emanation that is Spirit in the world.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that I have concluded with an ecopsychological view of healing. The most convincing quantitative study considered in the review section was Antonioli and Reveley (2005), who found that a group of depressed participants got better as a result of swimming with dolphins and concluded that this was as a result of “the interaction with animals in nature”. Specifically, they suggested that there is a genetic link between our health and our need to connect with life in the Cosmos (The Biophilia Hypothesis: defined as, “The connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life.” Wilson, 1984). My suggestion here is that this link, while it may have a genetic basis, depends very simply on our being part of the same life force, and when we unconsciously, through trauma or stress or consumerist greed or whatever, exile ourselves from it we lose wholeness. In this respect the study does explain some aspects of certain forms of depression; it does not claim to clearly define a particular kind of depression or to make generalizations about other people’s depressive illness. It does make a plea for more qualitative research into the nature of depression and its connection with the everyday world that is the cosmos; research that will honour the spiritual depth of the human psyche. It is also appropriate that some of this research should arise from the transpersonal tradition itself. In this respect it may be advantageous to establish or maintain more productive links between the academic transpersonal schools and the centres for transpersonal psychotherapy.

It may be that at this time in our history we are beginning to challenge the alienation that Cartesianism came to conceptualize and define. Abram and Ferrer, and Dufreschou all highlight this alienation, in particular, if Ferrer’s criticisms are correct then some revision of transpersonal perceptions and definitions may be necessary; such revision could be revelatory in our understanding of depression and ecopsychological healing. I have argued that the concept of healing should form a part of this redefinition. That psychosomatic illness is environmentally related is a truism. We knew about it when children went down coalmines but at this moment in time our widening perception should lead us to the world-view of the reciprocal relationship between our individual

and collective health and the health of the cosmos and ultimately to the awareness that the boundary between individual wholeness and cosmic spirit is illusory.

Further research in these areas will need a more defined methodology and one that involves an acknowledgement that art and literature have a part to play in our understanding. In addition; we need to consider, in the light of my co-researchers' experience, that the transpersonal is not simply the realm of mystics but of everyone; this follows from our oneness in Spirit. We need to research alternative transpersonal therapies that acknowledge a transpersonal everyday world, as Ferrer (2002) puts it; "...to provide human beings with both conceptual understandings and practical injunctions to enact and live the world transpersonally." That many forms of conventional psychology and psychiatry are failing many people are clear from the experiences of Bill and Jan in this study. Transpersonal theory and practice needs to be more pro-active in this area and I have noted the contributions of Blackstone (2006) and Ferrer et al (2004).

Our mythologies and scriptures have long told us of a world of the imagination that unites our divided selves; the boy who rides on a dolphin, Jonah's three day journey into the whale. Is it possible to reassess these stories and like Horace's son²⁴ symbolically venture into the ocean; perhaps the enchanted story of the boy on the dolphin's back, and many others in our religious traditions, prefigure our re-unification with Nature. Our shedding the illusory Cartesian dilemma is maybe a beginning. Of all the animals it is only man who is so divided. D.H. Lawrence wrote in one of his last poems:

"Only man can fall from God
Only man.

No animal, no beast nor creeping thing
no cobra nor hyena nor scorpion nor hideous white ant
can slip entirely through the fingers of the hands of god
into the abyss of self-knowledge,
knowledge of the self apart from god."

It suggests a religious view but it need not; I think it illustrates individual consciousness divided from the Spirit that disposes it.

²⁴ "...there was Ashley rising out of the water, grin on his face, hands in the air like that, waving at me. And he was being given a ride around the harbour. And here's me, a medical research scientist in the Twentieth century watching a story that could have happened two thousand years ago. A boy on a dolphin." (Horace Dobbs, from my unedited interview text.) See also p. 10 above.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1:

Co-Researchers' Biographies and Comments on my summary of their interviews:

1. Chris:

Chris is a single man, 34 years old, living in Galway City in the West of Ireland. He completed a degree in Psychology in 2004 at NUI Galway. He is currently in the process of training to be a Counselling Psychologist in Trinity College Dublin but has at present deferred his place to take some time out to prepare himself for the next phase. He is interested in the area of trauma and more particularly in the role the body plays both in symptomatology and more importantly in recovery.

I have read the summary of my interview and feel that you have captured in a very eloquent and cohesive way my experiences and I guess the central core of the dolphin experience. There were a couple of words that I had some issue with, that may have come from me but the use of 'manic laughter' doesn't really fit well for me. Rather uncontrollable or cathartic but not manic. I would say also that my return to a more usual way of being was certainly not immediate and took some months. And also that my usual way of being was not the ideal but that the experience with the dolphin seemed to propel me into a healing crisis of sorts that I was not quite ready for. Having said this, I feel that you really heard what I was saying and this was very evident in your highlighting the combined effects of the openness of the immersion in the sea and interaction and apparent communication of the dolphin and I. I have been in the sea many times before so it seems that the interaction with the dolphin was an important variable in triggering the events that followed. I'm not sure what else to say really other than I am grateful to have had the opportunity to talk with you on these events as it would be far easier to dismiss and close our minds but it is the willingness to openly discuss and share our experiences that allows us to gain deeper insights and expand our knowledge base. I have also been inspired to further explore this area of phenomenological enquiry and maybe apply it in my own research in the future. So good luck with the latter phase of this exploration and writing process and thanks once again. I look forward if possible to reading the finished work.

(Chris Place: 20th. November 2006.)

2. Ruairí:

Ruairí is the Finance and Operations Officer for The Burren LIFE Project (www.burrenlife.com), "Ireland's first major farming for conservation project". Ecology and conservation are major interests to Ruairí hence his remarks about respecting the privacy of the Dolphin below. He lives and works in County Clare, Ireland and is married with one young son.

Having had the opportunity to review the above I would like to comment that this reflects in a fair and honest manner my thoughts on the matter. The only additional comment I would make relates to the comments made at the time on the importance of respecting the dolphin - her space, her essence and her decision to be where she decides to be and to guard this from commercial tourism development or any other form of commercial or non-commercial exploitation.

Ruairí Ó Conchúir - 16th Nov 2006

3. Jan:

I am an ex-sociology student; I think you'd call it post-graduate. I had to terminate my study because of a severe and 27 year lasting manic-depressive affliction that I got under 'control' in 1998. I got into sculpturing in 1978, nearly broke my back, went into whales and dolphins in 1986, got by on it reasonably successfully but had to give it up in 1998. I try to get a living out of running a website, selling pics and videos. My income for the last 2.5 years comes from an inheritance from my father. Swimming with dolphins is a very central issue in my life and living with nature in the West of Ireland has given me the kind of happiness that seemed to be impossible before. I am 58, was married for 19 years, separated since 1990, and have one daughter.

Thanks for your report. I must say it was kind of a weird feeling to see my attempts to close-up on reality described as a personal appreciation. I do orient, distinguish, differentiate and generally try to depict my appreciation as rendering reality in a share-able way, a trial and error approach to establish reference anchors and expressions to construct a perspective in which observations function to explain and evoke understanding. A mapping by creative science, not too bound by prefabbed strategies, but repeatable and shareable with other observers. The way you describe my observations suggests them to be related to my personal feelings and therefore subject to study as a psychological phenomenon not necessarily related to actual findings.

I think we both have a very different orientation. I'm interested in getting as good a grip on the dolphin phenomenon as I possibly can and you are describing this process as a psychological phenomenon in itself. It's a bit like asking why Einstein was interested in the relationship between mass and energy instead of looking at an understanding that took our appreciation of our planet to a higher level.

I do hope you understand what I mean. I'm trying to construct perspectives that yield more understanding, whereas you are 'only' interested in my motivation to do this.

Of course I see you have to wander around in my subject matter to at least understand what I am talking about and that the better you understand my insights the richer it colours my motivation, but I sort of miss the fusion, the merging of both appreciations into an insight that would be revealing for both views.

But apart from feeling a streak of being 'guinea-pigged' your portrayal is insightful and highly accurate.

Very funny thing is that in my latest Dolphin Address, nr. 25 see:
<http://www.janploeg.nl/english.html> , soon to be on line, and in the tail end of DA

24, I identify strongly with the dolphin to fill in the reader's ability to better participate in the dolphin's 'physical consciousness', the 'what and how', leading to an auto fine tuning of a personal interpretation of 'why's'. This I do for to install interest, pre-meditation and sensitivity 'massage' for my video presentation tour in Germany and Holland from mid December to mid January. And in fact it is a new way of seeing from a dolphin's physical viewpoint, not only establishing points of mental departure, but also creating differentials between human and dolphin perspectives of which we can learn, often by 'flash insights' not unlike 'satori' in Zen Bhuddism. Apart from the effect on one's personal reality it is like designed to bond socially and washes up insights for the keen observer that can be shared as true and operating in a 'scientific' process.

I hope these observations may be useful to you. I realise that I'm pushing the objective towards the subjective. I think they thrive on each other, that trying to not get involved in the object of your inquiry kills of more insight than 'facts' can supply. The methodology used can change the face and portent of your yield entirely. Finding balance is not easy, subject to criticism, but all there is to it. Let me know what you think, don't hesitate to take this further. I find this matter very rewarding to reflect upon.
Jan.

4. Horace:

Horace Dobbs, Ph.D., describes himself as a multi-disciplinary scientist; he has published papers in atomic physics, pharmacology and medicine and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. The direction of his life changed when he saw his young son given a ride by a wild dolphin. In 1987 he founded International Dolphin Watch, a charity dedicated to protecting dolphins and understanding their relationship with humans. He has made films for TV about dolphins and written numerous books, including; Dolphin Healing 2000; Journey into Dolphin Dreamtime 1991; Dance to a Dolphin's Song 1990. He is retired and lives with his wife in Humberside, UK.

(Horace made a few grammatical changes to my summary which I noted and amended and sent the following general comment which I have included in its entirety.)

As I recall in your former emails you indicated that some biographical information would be included with your reports on dolphin interactions. I think this is important. I want to know something about the person, his family circumstances at the time of the interaction and his state of mind. Bill for instance was a chronic depressive who had not worked for 12 years. Throughout this time his wife stuck by him. She must have loved him profoundly and still does. Now he is aware of just how much of a strain this must have been for her he refers to Edna as his "LAND DOLPHIN".

When I first met Donald the dolphin off the Isle of Man in 1974 I my first thoughts were that he would make an ideal animal for experimental study. Dolphins had solved, through evolution, many of the problems such as the bends and nitrogen narcosis that beset humans when they go diving. Donald however, quickly put an end to those kinds of thoughts which in hindsight were an extension of my "work"

as a research scientist. For Donald life was always a "game". And that is one of the many lessons I learnt from dolphins, namely that we all take life to seriously.

In 1986 when a lot of the observations I had made since 1974 started to make sense, namely that dolphins could help humans with neurological disorders, I did revert to doing some more scientific investigations. However, I always, always tried to make them as much fun as possible. And whilst on the subject of dolphin healing it slowly became apparent to me that it was absolutely vital to include the carers in the experience. It was not until long after Bill Bowell had his first encounters that I realized how his wife Edna was also influenced by them.

A final general comment: No one ever forgets a meeting with a dolphin. They may forget when and where it happened but the memory of the magic moment stays with them for ever.

5. Jackie:

Jackie has always been concerned about the environment and the need for a more meaningful and spiritual life for herself and others. She heard Horace Dobbs speaking on the radio and immediately became involved as a volunteer helping him set up International Dolphin Watch (IDW); later she set up "Operation Sunshine" to help provide family therapy for families with special needs children. She worked as a secretary/administrator for a UK University, which assisted her with in-career training in charity administration. She retired in 2006 to give more time, to "Operation Sunshine" and IDW; which she is assisted by her husband. They live in Milton Keynes, UK. Dolphins are still an important part of her life.

Thank you for your summary which I think is very accurate. It was very difficult to put into words my feelings. Here are some extra words:

Since swimming with the dolphins I have felt healed physically and emotionally. I felt they communicated with me at a very deep level that was beyond words. Since the very first dolphin encounter, I knew immediately my destiny - like switching on a light. Your interpretation of the spiritual aspect is certainly the case. I have felt a more heightened spiritual awareness. I feel more appreciative of life, wanting to do something to help cetaceans, people and the earth we share. As a result I work voluntary for International Dolphin Watch and have Founded a charitable organization 'Operation Sunshine' - family therapy programmes www.operationsunshine.org.

6. Bill:

Bill is a retired chef. Bill suffered a severe depression lasting some 12 years following a traumatic work-related experience. During this time he was an out-patient at a psychiatric hospital but all treatment proved ineffective. His recovery began after meeting Horace Dobbs and his encounter with "Semo", a wild dolphin in South Wales; subsequently he went with Horace to Dingle, Ireland and swam with Fungi. He is frequently asked to give talks about his experience which he is more than happy to do and his mission is to help others with depression. He is now retired. Bill is married with 5 grown up children and lives in Oxfordshire.

I am very happy with what you have written; there is not a single false statement in that story. It's a true story which happened to me and I am now reborn again and I have seen people since my encounter with the dolphin who have also been reborn themselves. I am very happy with what you have written and I hope that people who read it will follow this up.

Bill (Words over the telephone Monday, 29th. January, 2007.)

Appendix 2:

Phenomenological Reductions of Interviews:

(Showing fundamental themes and full edited text of interviews)

CHRIS:

CHRIS:

I think it was about 3 years ago that I swam with a dolphin. Now up to that point I'd never heard of, I mean I knew people swam with dolphins, but I knew nothing about it. I had no particular interest in dolphins other than they were interesting looking animals, mammals, and fish. But, basically I didn't know anything about dolphins and I suppose I'd had, I'd struggled up to then over, certainly a few years before that with a lot of kind of, physical problems. Physical tension, very linked into, very psycho-somatic I'd imagine, quite nervous probably disorder of some description. But I just need to set that in context. So anyway, I had been away in Scotland and I had come back, and I was getting ready to go back to college and we went off for a day surfing, me and a few friends of mine and we were coming back via Fanore, which is in County Clare, and we decided to, we'd go fool with this dolphin. It was like 'wow, this is going to be great'. You know, it was really exciting as well, I was just going to swim in the sea and there would be a dolphin there. So I was quite excited about it. And there was two of us went into the water, and one of the lads was watching from the rocks and there was other people in the water. Well, I had no wet suit or anything, I had literally just had swimming togs and I had a snorkel and goggles. And we basically went in, swam around, it was very deep. We were swimming, lots of people around, there was a boat looking for the dolphin and literally the dolphin came and was swimming around me, and was quite amazing, it was just at the moment it was, 'wow, this is so...' Like, not, I would argue that it was nothing profound at that moment, nothing kind of, 'oh, I' but just an amazing, just a really cool thing to do; A really enjoyable experience. And the dolphin was kind of going and kind of, I actually touched a dolphin, I swam down deep into the water to actually kind of hold onto the dolphin's fin. And the dolphin was very...

Comment [MSOffice1]: 1
Anticipation of excitement

Comment [MSOffice2]: 2
The dolphin came/location of human

Comment [MSOffice3]: 3
heightened awareness

Comment [MSOffice4]: 4
sense of well-being

Comment [MSOffice5]: 5
physical contact

TONY:

The dolphin just arrived.

CHRIS:

Yeah, yeah, he literally, he, the dolphin would come in when people were out there he would, you know, that he often would, just that was his area, this was where he lived basically. So, he just came in and he was very so friendly like, so kind of, you know, there was nothing, didn't feel any...there was no reason to be afraid. So, yeah, so he came and he just swimming around the place and other people were kind of, you know, it wasn't just me, but there seemed to be a thing that I felt somehow he was hanging about me for some reason. I'm not sure, but there was something at that, like, I have since swum with a dolphin but that was nothing compared to this, this particular episode was very unusual in that regard. I

Comment [MSOffice6]: 6
lack of fear

Comment [MSOffice7]: 7
individual attention

just felt that somehow he was kind of hanging out, you know, he seemed to be intent on staying close to me. So I'd say we spent, probably half an hour in the water. And I was quite amazed, I wasn't cold...

Comment [MSOffice8]: 7

TONY:
We?

CHRIS:

Me, and another friend, and there was lots of other people around in wet suits and stuff. But it didn't feel cold. You know it was interesting. I thought it would be. But I didn't and it was really amazing. And then we came out and that was it, and we kind of got dressed and got in the car and drove home, and felt great. Chatting about the dolphin and that was great...cool.

Comment [MSOffice9]: 8
unaware of external events

Comment [MSOffice10]: 4
well-being

TONY:

Just go back for a moment to when you were swimming with the dolphin, because I interrupted you at one point. You swam, you said, underneath the dolphin...

CHRIS:

Yeah...he, well you kind of turn around and the dolphins there, coming out of the water, literally jumping and going back in and diving and you're just like – wow! And so, the dolphin literally swims underneath you and you have the goggles. You can actually see under and see where the dolphin is. So I would kind of dive underneath the water, dive down deep, like when I say deep, you know a few feet under to kind of see where the dolphin is and to kind of catch the dolphin and touch the dolphin and at one point I did grab his fin, because I know somebody else had done it before where the dolphin had actually given him a sort like a lift, you know, they held on...

Comment [MSOffice11]: 3
heightened awareness

Comment [MSOffice12]: 9
playing/interacting

Comment [MSOffice13]: 5

.....

TONY:

When you were swimming with the dolphin, did you feel that he swam especially with you?

CHRIS:

There was a feeling of that at that time, that I felt that, it just felt funny that. I mean he was, no, I mean no, I don't think it was specifically me. I mean there was other people there, I don't feel...but it just felt that he did, I felt that he paid me a lot of attention.

Comment [MSOffice14]: 7

TONY:
Yeah.

CHRIS:

I don't say that he didn't pay me less attention because he did, but I suppose when you're in the water with the dolphin you think, oh he was swimming around me, you know? And certainly my friend Noel had touched him, and swam with him as well, you know so, I don't know if there was any particular difference, but certainly from my point of view I was very much a focus on him and very aware

that he seemed to be hanging around a bit. And certainly that I had never swam with a dolphin before or touched a dolphin, so it had that kind of affect I'll say.

Comment [MSOffice15]: 7

TONY:

Do you, I don't want to prompt you – can you just tell me a little more about when you were actually swimming with him. How you felt, perhaps a little about how you thought the dolphin was behaving to you. You said he was paying you a little, certainly some attention?

CHRIS:

Yeah. I suppose what it was, was that he was, I just remember being in the water, it was very deep, and this dolphin was, and the reason I say he was paying me more attention, I mean he might not have been but it was, I felt that it was feeling of like, hard to describe it really that he was just, I might be kind of, I'd touch him and he'd be gone. He'd go off, and I'd be like – oh, he's gone – and then I'd be thinking that...and next there's the dolphin behind me. You know, and he be kind of coming up behind me, and it was like, it was that sort of feeling of kind of, wow! And it just, it just seemed that I got to spend an unusual amount of time with this dolphin before he went away.

Comment [MSOffice16]: 2

Comment [MSOffice17]: 7

.....

TONY:

What do you remember about that looking at him, about how he looked? We say he, whether it was a...

CHRIS:

It was just more of like... Yeah, I presume it was a he. I remember feeling very kind of, just I suppose it was like in awe, in awe, it was kind of like – oh wow! It's one of those things you know, that it's kind of an experiential thing, so it was a very, it was just a moment, it's kind of hard to capture it in words but it was that sense of me being in the sea. It was a sense of, how do I describe, it was that sense of being in the moment, that very moment, that you weren't thinking about anything else, you weren't, you know, thinking about what you were having for dinner the next day or any of that. You were just right at that very moment; you were in that space, in the water with this dolphin.

Comment [MSOffice18]: 3
heightened awareness/awe

Comment [MSOffice19]: 15
ineffable

Comment [MSOffice20]: 11
being part of

Comment [MSOffice21]: 10
being in present moment
11 unity bubble/being part of

TONY:

He was big?

CHRIS:

He was big and the sea was cold and deep, and all of these and you were in it, and you were part of it, and I think that was a big part of it, a sense of like, wow! You know? And a sense of not being afraid, and maybe that was to do with previous know... or maybe I had heard that dolphins were friendly or something like that, I don't know. But I didn't feel like this dolphin was in any way going to, I mean this was a big creature you know, and I, you know I've heard since of dolphins hurting other people and things like that, but I certainly didn't have any of that feeling at all like, you know? Any of that sense of, ooo, you know, I certainly

Comment [MSOffice22]: 11
unity bubble/being part of

Comment [MSOffice23]: 6

would with people but I certainly didn't have it with this dolphin, you know. And yeah, I just remember it was being, it was actually, when I think about back, it was pretty incredible, it was pretty incredible really.

Comment [MSOffice24]: 12
trust/being safe with/love

Comment [MSOffice25]: 3

TONY:

You saw the features of his mouth and his face?

CHRIS:

Yes, all these big _____ you can see is this long sort of sleek, I suppose, sort of kind of picture in my head, his features, his face, and he just gliding. And it was this sense of, he was just in the moment doing what he was doing. There was no kind of _____ yeah, yeah. I'm trying to think of anything else that would be, for me that was significant. I think there was a moment or two certainly that I was, when I was out in the water that I would have felt fear, only so far as nothing to do with the dolphin, but more that, right I should really, you know, I've been in here a long time, I'm getting tired, I better get in, you know. And I think that was the only thing that, the fear element that I would have had or any kind of nervousness, or any trepidation, would have been around being in the sea for too long. Feeling that, you know, it was very deep and I'm not in a wet suite. But having said that, I was kind of very drawn as well, to, it was like I want to have more of that experience, you know, I want at that moment in time, I wanted to swim with the dolphin, in that you know, yeah, because I just...yeah, I don't know why I but I felt I wanted as much contact as well, you know.

Comment [MSOffice26]: 10

Comment [MSOffice27]: 13
wanting more

TONY:

If someone asked you the question what were you and the dolphin doing? Swimming is the obvious you said you were swimming...

CHRIS:

Yeah, swimming, but I think it was...

TONY:

Does that describe what you and the dolphin were doing? You were swimming together?

CHRIS:

We were swimming but I would also argue that we were probably communicating in some level because we were; I mean I was trying to connect with the dolphin. I was trying to touch the dolphin. I was trying to...so I mean, for me that was, it was not a simple case of swimming. I mean I could swim in the sea with other fish when you swim in the sea but there was an interaction occurring, so you could argue that it was much more than swimming because, you know, there was a definite interaction between the two of us. I mean the dolphin was very much aware of my presence, you know, it wasn't that the dolphin was kind of, just happened to swim by and touch off me, it was actually the dolphin was aware, the dolphin, it was obvious that the dolphin was aware that there was people there and that we were there. The dolphin... I mean, again, I don't know if he was aware of how different we were and all the rest of things but the dolphin was aware like, it was obvious he was... the dolphin came because we were in the water, and then he was just, yeah, he would play with us, and he was...I mean maybe it was play,

Comment [MSOffice28]: 14
communicating

Comment [MSOffice29]: 16
dolphin awareness

Comment [MSOffice30]: 9

maybe he was playing, maybe its, but certainly interacting; and communicating. I use the word communicating because I think in a sense that there was some form of communication and maybe that's in hindsight or something like that, I don't know, but there was certainly interacting anyway, and certainly we were both involved in that game, you know, in that interaction as well. Definitely. And it was much more than just swimming.

Comment [MSOffice31]: 14

TONY:
Playing...

CHRIS:
I think definitely playing was involved. I mean I was...

Comment [MSOffice32]: 9

TONY:
Playing and communicating?

CHRIS:
Yeah.

.....

CHRIS:
I didn't think any more of it. Went home, we were having a laugh and we were chatting and messing, all in great spirits. So I was in good spirits that evening; very good spirits. But I woke up the next day, and I woke up very early like it was six in the morning and my mind was racing, and I was saying 'what's going on here?' You know, I felt off, you know I didn't feel good and as the day progressed I felt really down, I felt I had this tension in my face, I'd experienced these probably feelings before, probably a larger scale about 5, 4 years previous to that, or 3 years previous to that. So, but I was feeling that sense of like a depression kind of feeling and feeling kind of angry as well, and not knowing what it was about and feeling very kind of, well, you know, feeling really quite negative and depressed. Makes you feel quite down, and its anger and a tension, very physical heaviness. And I remember thinking right, pick yourself up you know and I got on the bike and I think I cycled a number of miles and trying to shake this off or you know, but I couldn't you know. I really felt, and really for the following, for a number of days after that I felt very, I went on and I felt very, I felt panicky, I felt kind of very tense, a whole, you know, I was having trouble sleeping, I was quite... I felt emotional as well. I felt quite emotional so this would have been in the aftermath of the dolphin experience and I would have been feeling very kind of like, like I wanted to cry a lot, couldn't concentrate that well...

Comment [MSOffice33]: 4

Comment [MSOffice34]: 17
negative depressed tense

Comment [MSOffice35]: 18
Emotional/crying

TONY:
This was the next day?

CHRIS:
Yeah, and the few, and the days after that, you know? And then, I think it was a particular probably about a week later, I think me and Elaine were walking, were walking from her house into town and I remember just feeling awful weak and

I'm saying this now because I think its important only because it links in...I felt very weak and I remember having this experience where I had to sit in a bench and everything felt so peaceful for a moment, just complete peace and I was like, phew...and then I started to laugh for some reason, and I laughed and laughed and laughed, got to the house, got up to my bed, lay on the bed laughing and then I started to shake and twitch and jerk and I had all these kind of, you know, like retching and all manner of strange things, and that was the sort of end I suppose that day of the kind of the depression feeling.

Comment [MSOffice36]: 18
weakness

Comment [MSOffice37]: 19
peace

Comment [MSOffice38]: 20
upsurge of complex emotions

.....

TONY:

That you first panicked; it wasn't your reaction to the dolphin you were swimming with?

CHRIS:

No, no, it wasn't. No, absolutely not and that's the thing. It was more that it was possibly a reaction to the communication in a sense of your deepest part being connected with. That deep part of your unconsciousness, I don't know really what it is but to me that's the only way I can explain why it felt negative afterwards. But it was a sense of knowing, I think the word is like, knowing that the only way to really be in life is to be in that state, in that sense, with yourself, but to connect with that and to get to that point you have to go through, and it was that sense of having to go through a kind of, you know, that I still struggle with now. But that it's that sense of, that otherwise you're just living in the trauma, living in the tension, and so to get through that and get beyond that, and I think in a sense the dolphin may have shown, was kind of going – whoosh – you know, well I don't know if there were purposely but certainly there seemed to be some sense of that; that there was that deeper inner connection, that that dolphin made with me for some reason. And it was like a knowledge, you know, and yeah, so I did, but I certainly went into a, I reacted traumatically but it was more because the traumatic reaction was nothing, was to do with the emotions that were coming up and I think it was because the emotions that were coming up were quite powerful and I didn't feel able to deal with them.

Comment [MSOffice39]: 21
deep inner connection/knowledge

.....

And I suppose since that time in particular, that I equate with the dolphin time I have found another direction in a sense, that has really helped, that is helping me, that has been a sort of curved, bending journey really, and you know at times you think what's going on. But there certainly seems to be a kind of, that the dolphin time was a sort of, was a very important turning point because it was about, it was moving from the intellect and the psychology and all of that stuff and even the past, and it took a while, you know, but to get to the body and just be, in a sense to connect with yourself deeply, like to be in that moment, that everything else was going to happen if you just trusted that process. So that's what I'm attempting to struggle and have been over the last since then, really.

Comment [MSOffice40]: 22
turning point/healing

Comment [MSOffice41]: 23
in the body/being oneself like the dolphin

.....

And so it's a sense of trusting that and being able to let go of the intellect and the sort of psychological interpretation of everything and just to say let it be, let it do what it has to do. And not to even try to analyse when you start twitching and yawning, and what it might be but to accept that it's what the body needs to do. And I suppose why I might link that and what I think it was, and it certainly was from the dolphin, and there's no doubt about that, was because that's what the dolphin did. The dolphin was just doing what the dolphin does. The dolphin wasn't thinking about that if I do this, the dolphin was just being itself and in that complete moment, and it was interacting and doing all of that. I don't for a moment think the dolphin was thinking right I want to heal this human of his deepest pain, and cure him and all the rest, I don't think it was that, but I think it was that interaction and that...them two points of me being in the sea with this dolphin who was being what it was. So I'm not sure if I agree with this idea of the dolphins are communicating with us because we are human, it's nearly like personalising dolphins into some therapeutic model, and I think they are much more than that. I think it's because of what they are in that world of what they do, that they connect with the deepest part of ourselves and allow us to connect with that part. And if we can trust that, then we can move forward, you know, so that's what I really think.

Comment [MSOffice42]: 24
trusting letting go

Comment [MSOffice43]: 23

Comment [MSOffice44]: Composite: 11 unity bubble/being part of + 21 deep inner connection/knowledge + 23 in the body/being oneself like the dolphin

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and “grounding in examples” in red.)

Description of the actual encounter:

1. Anticipation of excitement. **Refers to anticipation of the encounter.**
2. The dolphin came/location of human. **The location of the human by the dolphin**
3. Heightened awareness. **“Wow” “Amazing”**
4. Sense of well being. **“Enjoyable” “good spirits”**
5. Physical contact. **Touching**
6. Lack of fear.
7. Individual attention. **Dolphin singles me out.**
8. Unaware of external events/absorption. **“it didn't feel cold...amazing”**
9. Playing interacting. **Goes with 14 playing is a form of communication/interaction**
10. Being in present moment. **The now. Grounded in the present.**

11. Unity bubble/being part of. Deep connection. “in the water” “in that space” “with the dolphin” “you were in it ..a part of it ..a sense of like wow” (links with 3.)
12. Trust/being safe with/love love is my interpretation maybe only suggested; but this is more than 6 more than a lack of fear it acknowledges potential danger but trusts like a child.
13. Wanting more. With sense of need fulfilment.
14. Communicating. The encounter is meaningful, more than just “play”.
15. Ineffable. Links with 3 a quality of spiritual/transpersonal. Significantly in text it is juxtaposed between “awe” “wow” (3) and being in the moment (10) a complex of transpersonal phenomena.
16. Dolphin’s awareness. The feeling that the dolphin is aware.

Post encounter: (in this case 24hrs later)

17. Negative: depressed/tense. “I felt really down” “tension in my face” “anger” and “not knowing what it was about”.
18. Emotional/crying. “I wanted to cry a lot”. Links with 20 but a more general mood rather than a specific session of crying.
19. Peace. Precedes 20, almost a quiet before the storm.
20. Upsurge of complex emotions. Actually very physical..laughter..retching..twitching.

Post Encounter Interpretative:

21. Deep inner connection/knowledge. Perceived as dolphin initiated! A realization..suddenly being in touch with a deep part of oneself...seeing things as they are.
22. Turning point healing. “another direction” as result of 21.
23. In the body/being oneself like the dolphin. “get to the body” “the dolphin was just being itself in that complete moment” the dolphin experience moves one into the physical body.... emphasis on its movement jumping/diving etc. as a characteristic of physicality.
24. Trusting/letting go. Avoiding the trauma by “trusting the process” of the body of the whole organism....is there a link to 6 and 12? Lack of fear...trusting the dolphin... (transference) a healing because of a learning to trust? Letting go of fear.

RUAIRÍ
Thursday 10th August, 2006

RUAIRÍ:

Yeah well, really I suppose what I wanted to talk you to about is my interaction and experiences with a solitary dolphin. A solitary dolphin had been in residence in various parts of Clare, the north west coast of Clare, for the past 6 years and I have been swimming with her for the past 6 years and probably the most significant element of it all has been just the very first swim with her and subsequent first swims with her, with people who it is their first swim with her. And I suppose that's really what I would like to talk about.

My first swim with her was when I was actually home on leave from southern Africa. I was working in southern Africa from 1991 to 2001, but I was home on leave in 2000, early summer 2000, and I'd heard from my sister living in north Clare that there was this dolphin knocking about Doolin/Fanore and I got to swim with her one summer's day and it was truly a remarkable experience that this creature was in the water, wild yet willing to interact with people, and it was quite amazing – scary perhaps at first, to get into the water with such a wild creature, you know, that could potentially do serious damage if she wanted to.....I was swimming with her 3 times a day. The very, very first swim in the morning, before I'd go to work, myself from 7 o'clock in the morning, 8 o'clock in the morning, to swim with her. Then to swim with her on the way back from work at 6 o'clock or half six, and then to swim with her the very, very last thing at night and it was something extraordinary. It was something impossible to describe just how wonderful, what a sense of calm she brought to your day, what a wonderful sense of peace and sort of tranquillity that she brought. Not just on those who swam with her, but also those who actually watched these events from the shoreline. When she was in Milltown Malbay she certainly had spectators on the shoreline, equally so in Fanore. But just to get into the water with her, knowing that she may or may not be there, that's the other thing, she wasn't always there but if she wasn't there, for her to arrive on the scene perhaps, I don't know, if she knew who you were, or she could sense who you were. But I certainly feel she senses who I am. She senses who I am perhaps from wetsuit, I don't know, perhaps from the way you swim. There's possibly 6 or 8 of us who swim with her on a regular basis, and have swam with her on a regular basis all winter, all summer, all spring, all autumn. So, I certainly say she senses or knows certain people. I've no doubt about that, and I certainly feel that she knows, or is aware, and of course dolphins are highly, highly intelligent anyway, but I certainly feel that she is aware of my presence when I get in the water.

Comment [MSOffice45]: 25
Willingness to interact

Comment [MSOffice46]: 1
Anticipation of encounter

Comment [MSOffice47]: 3
heightened awareness: 15
ineffable.

Comment [MSOffice48]: 19
Peace/tranquility/calm

Comment [MSOffice49]: 27
Intimacy/bonding

Comment [MSOffice50]: 2
The dolphin came/location of human

Comment [MSOffice51]: 16
dolphin's awareness.

Comment [MSOffice52]: 16

TONY:

Can I just ask you a question: when you first swam with her in Fanore, was that the first time you had ever swum with a dolphin?

RUAIRÍ:

It was the very, very first time I'd ever swam with a dolphin. In fact, it was probably the first time I'd ever... see, it was definitely the first time I'd ever seen

a dolphin close up but it was probably the first time I'd ever seen a dolphin as opposed to a porpoise off the Irish west coast.

TONY:

Tell me specifically about that experience, because that must have been – you know, the first time you did it, as it were. How did you begin to just get in the water? Was she just swimming around when you...did you see her from the beach?

RUAIRÍ:

Well, this was early summer in 2000 and as I said, it was my sister who had told me, as I was home on leave. So, there were a few people who knew about her at this stage and there were a few people who were actually swimming with her. So the day I went down, I went down with my sister and my niece and I immediately got into the water. I didn't have any fear or any qualms about getting in. It was quite a dangerous spot that she was at, well one of the spots that she was at in Fanore. But I immediately got in, she was there and she immediately engaged with me. Not in the way that she's been engaging subsequently but she immediately made contact in the sense that she rubbed herself against my hand or my legs or whatever, but she made it be known that she knew that there was a new person in the water, or there was another person getting into the water. Put it that way. There was I think two people in the water at the time and I was only home a couple of weeks, I think, four weeks holiday and I swam with her constantly.

Comment [MSOffice53]: 6
Lack of fear.

Comment [MSOffice54]: 2:
and 5

TONY:

Tell me about that first swim. What did you do...do you remember what it felt like?

RUAIRÍ:

I do remember. I distinctly remember what she felt like in terms of the texture of her skin. It was like, what could you say it was like? It's very, very difficult to describe because it's not like anything else. If you like, it's like a tyre of a car, or the full length of the tyre of a car in a soft version and extremely soft, extremely velvety and soft and obviously lighter than the colour of a tyre. She's a bottlenose dolphin, that's the first thing, and it was just, well to have this animal approach you, this mammal approach you, at such speed as well, and she's still only very young. At that stage she was probably, well, I don't know what age she was, and nobody really knows what age she is now, but I would, having talked to people, sort of guesstimate at that stage that she possibly three, possibly four years old. They're all guesstimates. She could have been two. But she was very big. She was certainly longer than my body, and I'm 5 ft 6, 5ft 7. And in the summer since then, in the winter since then, she has grown remarkably. She is now, probably 6-8, maybe 9 years old, right. And she is at least two metres long, 2.5 metres long.

Comment [MSOffice55]: 5
physical contact

Comment [MSOffice56]: 3
heightened awareness in response to size and speed "well to have this animal..at such speed..."

TONY:

You said you didn't feel afraid.

RUAIRÍ:

No.

Comment [MSOffice57]: 6

TONY:
What did you feel?

RUAIRÍ:

Just felt excited, extremely excited and I suppose, blessed, blessed in the sense that you often hear about these experiences, lets just call them experiences that people have and I just felt that this was one of those experiences that you will never experience again. In the same way I suppose as climbing the highest mountain in the continent, or the highest mountain in the country – it's an experience, the first time you do it, it's wonderful...but it was something extremely special and the other thing about those very first swims, the very first swim and subsequent first swim, is the people who were there. The respect, the love, the admiration, that people showed towards one another, and also obviously towards the dolphin. That was remarkable. That was remarkable. But you know, that was the first experience and like I said, it was really only her making herself visible, making her body, if you like, make contact, you know, making it known what size she was, how fast she could move, all of those sort of things. But subsequent to that, the experiences that I've had with her have been just extraordinary.

Comment [MSOffice58]: 3
heightened awareness

Comment [MSOffice59]: 26
blessed or honoured.

Comment [MSOffice60]: 3

Comment [MSOffice61]: 27
Intimacy/bonding with others
present

Comment [MSOffice62]: 3

TONY:

When you said she interacts, in what ways would she interact? I mean, obviously I hear what you're saying, she appears and she shows herself and she comes close and she may allow you touch. Can you give me a little bit more information about how you feel she interacts with you?

RUAIRÍ:

Well, I'll give you an example from the last 2 years, since she has moved from Fenore and has gone down to, if you like, around Milltown Malbay, let's call it that. As I said to you, for the most of last summer I was swimming with her. Definitely once a day, up to three times a day, and invariably three times a day. My wife wasn't very happy with it but that's life.

TONY:

You felt almost – it sounds like it was an obsession almost.

RUAIRÍ:

No, it wasn't an obsession. It was just a remarkably good summer.

TONY:

But it was an extremely strong desire to do it?

RUAIRÍ:

It was, yeah, it definitely was a strong desire to do it, but it certainly wasn't an obsession and I don't have a problem with not swimming with her. I haven't swam with her all this week but I'll probably swim with her at the weekend. It's just a wonderful thing to do. There's very little else that you can compare to swimming with a wild mammal of two and a half metres long that can do full bodied jumps out of the water, over your head and may or may not land where

Comment [MSOffice63]: 13.

you want it to land. She decides, or... Well, I'll just explain one of the experiences.....

Comment [MSOffice64]: 3

.....I went down again in early May and again had heard on the grapevine that she might have been around. An lo and behold, I walked down the coast for a few hours, I walked up the coast for a few hours from the spot that she had been in, and while I walked up the coast I half thought I saw a dolphin. You know, see the dorsal fin out of the water, whatever. And, I had been sort of told that she might be in this particular point, so I went down and within seconds she was there. She was there...

TONY:

Seconds of you getting in the water or just being on the beach?

RUAIRÍ:

It was very, very dangerous rocky outcrops. Seconds of being at the edge of this rocky outcrop she was there below me and immediately I said, hello, how are you, whatever. What I'll do is I'll actually show you some video of that, because I actually had a camera with me that night. I'll show you some video after we've finished. But anyway, I just said hello to and immediately got changed, swam with her.

Comment [MSOffice65]: 2, 3, 13?

Now, it was my first time swimming in this place, and it is particularly dangerous and particularly difficult to get out if there's any bit of a swell, but she was in fantastic form and basically it was just like, you know; where have you been, why have you not being swimming with me? It was like...

TONY:

You felt that strongly?

RUAIRÍ:

No, *she*...it was like that's how *she* reacted. It was like, you know, meeting an old friend, who was a good friend, after many years of not having had contact and there was no issue, there was no difficulty there, there was no unease there. It was like, you know, that you haven't seen the person until the night before. It was like taking up old conversations from the night before. But anyway, she, as she had done, the summers before, turns over on her back, wants to be massaged with seaweed, wants to get it scratched, wants to get it cleaned down, and she'd just lie there on her back for 20 minutes. Then, you know, this was early May, wasn't exactly roasting, so you start to get cold yourself and you have to get out, you can't stay in too long. She basically begging you not to go. Like, I know it sounds very strange, but that's exactly what she was doing. She was pleading with you to get back in the water. Placing her body basically on the rock, her head on the rock and just, you know, pleading with you to get in again and play more. And that's something remarkable.

Comment [MSOffice66]: 28
reconnection/remembering
previous encounters

Comment [MSOffice67]: 29
Anthropomorphic transference?

Comment [MSOffice68]: 5,
9, (intimate play)

Comment [MSOffice69]: 30
Feeling the dolphin's need for
contact

Comment [MSOffice70]: 3

TONY:

Some people talk about eye contact with a dolphin – did you have eye contact?

RUAIRÍ:

Many times; and the most amazing thing about her eyes is, and I obviously haven't _____ (?) because I'd never seen a dolphin before, but she has two films. She has her eyelid and then she has an inner eyelid, which I wasn't aware of. Not hot on my biology. But she has the most amazing eyes and she'll look dead at you. Obviously, you cannot look at her two eyes together because you know, we don't have that ability, but looking at the one eye she'll look at you straight and she'll also be, you know, very careful about what, you know, you might be, you know, giving her a rub or whatever. And she'll also be careful, you know, about what you're doing but her ability to move in the water is just unreal and move in the water. Even with large numbers in the water. Like when she was up in Fanore, one thing I didn't like were kids running after her in the water. Basically pulling at her and running after her. But she still had the most amazing ability to move around and not in any way be trapped. That also depended on the depth of the water. If it was, obviously, a low tide it would make it more difficult for her to have that degree of manoeuvrability. But she was astounding, she is astounding, in that sense. And again, she's done it a few times this summer now, but last summer in particular, I'd be out swimming with her late in the evening, half nine, ten o'clock, half ten, full body jumps out of the water. You know, if she was in the mood to swim, aggressively or fast, or whatever you want to term it, but moving with considerable speed and twisting your own body to ask her to follow suit, she was often only playing for her because she could do whatever she wanted anyway. But, she, on several occasions last summer, late last summer, she did full body jumps out of the water, over my head. You know, absolutely unbelievable. Not just your little dorsal fin coming out of the water, but full body, up 3, 4, 5, 6 feet in the air, back down, not knowing where she'd come back down, and of course she never once landed or endangered me. That's not to say that she isn't aggressive and she hadn't been aggressive. She has been and she's certainly pushed me around once or twice. But there's reasons for that as well. There's reasons why she has shown aggression towards people. I don't think she's aggressive. She's wild, that's the thing. She is a wild mammal but I don't think she's necessarily aggressive.....

Comment [MSOffice71]: 31
eye contact

Comment [MSOffice72]: 31

Comment [MSOffice73]: 3 +
justification

Comment [MSOffice74]: 12

TONY:

You said, you talked a bit about depending on what mood she was in. What about your moods when you went in the water? Can you remember, you know, you said and I can imagine it, that it was hugely exciting, but I mean were you ever aware of going for the swim in one mood and coming out different, you know, it affecting you in some way?

RUAIRÍ:

Well, as I said earlier, I definitely think she does bring a sense of calm to your whole persona. You know, I've heard lots of people talk that she can, you know, cure, depression, she can cure headaches, she can cure this, that, and the other. I suppose the one big thing that I feel she can help, I'm not saying cure or take away, but I certainly feel she can take away stress. You know, I would be quite stressed out quite often in my work. Very often in fact, you know, to meet deadlines, to meet budgets, to meet this, that and the other. But a swim with her would take all your worries away. Definitely. I've never come away from a swim with her where I didn't feel refreshed in every sense. Not just, you know, from the

Comment [MSOffice75]: 19
calm

fact that you were actually in sea water, and the experience of that, but refreshed in a mental, in a physical and a spiritual sense. Now that might be, like, complete bullshit, but that's what I...

Comment [MSOffice76]: 32
Refreshed mental spiritual and physical

TONY:

Tell me, maybe there isn't much more to say about it, but if you could tell me a little more about that refreshed feeling...what the three categories. The last one was spiritual.

RUAIRÍ:

Well, you'd often feel exhausted going down to swim with the dolphin. Like, if you're going down at half nine, ten o'clock at night in the summer, at the end of a work, at the end of a long day, you'd often feel absolutely shattered, but you'd get into the water and if she was there, if she wanted to play, if she was, you know, just swimming. And to swim in fairly clear water, visibility wasn't always fantastic, but to swim for 50, 60 metres, or even 10, 15 metres, where you're doing a front crawl. You have a mask on and there's a dolphin swimming beside you...

TONY:

It would completely wipe me out...

RUAIRÍ:

It's just the most amazing experience. Or, like I said, to be diving, not with diving gear, because I never dived with her, although others have. But to be diving with your snorkelling gear, and to go down, I don't know, 15 maybe 20 feet, 3 or 4 metres, and then to surface right up as fast as you possibly can get your three quarters of your body out of the water and she would do the same, but to get three or four feet up in the sky with her full body and then land down beside you again. You know, it's the most remarkable experience. So, it would refresh you in that sense, in the physical sense, in an energy level sense. In terms of, I suppose, a spiritual side of things, you know, I think the connection is really just the spirituality of bonding with a wild mammal. That she doesn't have to be there. She, I've swam with her many times over the winter months and she isn't there - gone to swim with her and rain, the winds blowing, there's a huge swell in the water, and there's no sign of her. You know. So she doesn't have to be there, but there's this belief that she will be there, or there's this belief that even if she's not there you've made an attempt to go swimming with her. She's wild; she can decide whether she wants to swim with you. So I suppose there's some sort of spiritual element there. Spiritual. I'm not saying spiritual connection, because I think a lot of that stuff is bullshit, but there is, there's definitely some level of engagement at a level that you know, isn't your average every day household engagement with you work colleagues or your family, or whatever. It's a different type of engagement. I don't know if that explains much.

Comment [MSOffice77]: 3

Comment [MSOffice78]: 3

Comment [MSOffice79]: 32
refresh etc.

Comment [MSOffice80]:
Spirituality of bonding with a wild animal + 34 Voluntary presence

TONY:

It's quite different from what you would get with a very close friend or even a partner, or something. It's a totally different...

RUAIRÍ:

Well, it's a different experience in itself, but it's very difficult to describe. It's just, I suppose it's at a different level, you know.

Comment [MSOffice81]: 15
ineffable + 3

TONY:

You kind of said, it leaves you with absolutely no obligation on her part to be there at all.

RUAIRÍ:

No. So it's a bit like you know, people go...

TONY:

Where human beings tend to make contracts don't they – I'll be there for you this evening...

RUAIRÍ:

But it's a bit like, you know, in a spiritual sense, in Muslim faith, in the Christian faith, in all faiths, we have this belief that there is another higher body there. But no-one's ever seen the other higher body. We have manuscripts, we have this, that and the other, we possibly have some evidence, but you know.....she is if you like, the Holy Spirit, she is this being that's out there and it's physically there but she doesn't have to be there, she doesn't have to engage, you know. That's the way I see it.

Comment [MSOffice82]: 33
+ 34 connection with Spirit,
emanation of Spirit.

TONY:

She's something other than the normal...

RUAIRÍ:

Yes. She is, yeah. But she's something special as a result. I could talk to you forever about this. I could talk to you about some of the dangers, some of the issues, some of the issues around conservation of... There, you know, in personal engagement there the main things...

TONY:

That's the personal engagement. I think is the important thing. Something that occurred to me, I don't know, it might seem a bit personal, but I don't know. I just want to... you mentioned that your job was stressful, that there are deadlines to meet, and so on and sometimes you'd gone feeling quite stressful and one of the effects is this calming, de-stressing effect she has. I don't know whether you've ever suffered from headaches, asthma, or any of those things associated with stress that some people get bugged with, tummy problems or whatever, there's millions of them, you know. Could you ever say that, you know, you really felt she actually healed something like that? I just wondered if there was any example...

RUAIRÍ:

Alright, well I suppose it is on a more personal level...

TONY:

It is, and I don't know.... My stress is in my tummy, but I don't know...

RUAIRÍ:

Well, I tell you, the reason I mentioned stress is because I have had problems both when I lived in South Africa and now in more recent time, Bell's Palsy. I don't know if you've heard of Bell's Palsy. Well, it's a neurological disorder, basically where, it looks a bit like a stroke in people that have had it but it's a collapse of one side of your face from, primarily from stress. That's what they've said. You know it could be from other things, but I had it seven, eight years ago and I had it last year, and I also suffer from asthma, and have suffered from asthma which I also firmly believe is related to levels of stress. But, because, aside from that I actually keep very, very healthy and missed one day's work last week from swimming with the dolphin, and that was the first day of work I'd missed in six years, so generally speaking, I keep extremely healthy. But anyway, on the issue of the Bells Palsy and on the issue of the stress...

TONY:

And the asthma...for someone with asthma to do all this heavy swimming...

RUAIRÍ:

And the asthma... well, let me just explain about the asthma right. I was swimming with the dolphin, as I said, last summer, from April, May right through till I moved to this house, and then obviously I wasn't swimming with her three days a week. I shouldn't have been swimming with her three days a week, or three times a day, should I say. I shouldn't have been swimming with her three times a day when I was living in West Clare, just like it was 5 minutes away from where she was, that's why I had the opportunity to do it, and I actually passed her on the way to work, passed her on my way back from work. When I moved up here, having not had any problems with asthma for possibly a year and a half, two years, no attacks, no nothing, no real issues with my asthma; moved up here, couldn't get to swim with the dolphin any more, because moving into a new house, boxes to unpack, la la la la, had an asthma attack. Now I'm not saying it was tied in with not swimming with the dolphin, but I do think it was tied in with increased levels of stress, not getting if you like the release valve and possibly other things. It's probably tied in with other things, but I definitely, definitely think she has the ability to lower ones levels of stress. How, I don't know.

Comment [MSOffice83]: 35
Therapeutic

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and "grounding in examples" in red. In order of appearance in text.)

25. Willingness to interact. That a wild animal was willing to interact was "amazing"

1. Anticipation of encounter

3. Heightened awareness: important to not dismiss terms such as "amazing" or "remarkable" in response to what the dolphin did e.g. jumping up 6 feet out of water. In the context of being in the water with a wild animal I argue such events are at least the lower end of an altered state of awareness.

15. Ineffable. James/ Stace (Marshall 55)
- 19 Peace/tranquillity/calm “to your whole persona” in sense of person/personality I think.
- 2 The dolphin came/location of human “within seconds she’d be there” and “if she wasn’t there for her to arrive” feeling of expectation of keeping a date.
16. Dolphin’s awareness. “I certainly feel she senses who I am”
6. Lack of fear.
5. Physical contact. Can be intimate “wants to be massaged with seaweed”
3. Heightened awareness. In response to size and speed “well to have this animal approach you”. Idea of being extraordinary.
26. Blessed or honoured.
27. Intimacy/bonding with others present. “The respect, the love, the admiration that people showed towards one another”
13. Wanting more. Three times a day...expectation of meeting her.
28. Reconnection/remembering previous encounters. “Like meeting an old friend”
29. Anthropomorphic transference?
9. Playing interacting (intimate play). Relates to 5 physical contact
30. Feeling the dolphin’s need for contact. “pleading with you to get back in the water”
31. Eye contact. “she’ll look dead at you”
12. Trust/being safe with/love “she never once endangered me..that’s not to say she isn’t aggressive”
19. Calm. “what a sense of calm she brought to your day”,
32. Refreshed mental spiritual and physical. Mental physical and spiritual.
33. Spirituality of bonding with a wild animal/Emanation of Spirit. “she is if you like the Holy Spirit” !!
34. Voluntary presence. “she doesn’t have to be there”
35. Therapeutic. Lowers stress.....does she heal asthma etc?

JAN:
(Fanore: Friday 11th. August, 2006)

JAN:

.....Yeah. There is something very magic about the eye. I remember, I think I wrote about this somewhere, but I don't know exactly where, but this was with Fungi that I was swimming alongside Fungi, and I saw that, well, they have the eyes at the side of the head, not in the front like we have. But I saw this one eye, sort of, well it was slanted, sort of slanted and then it suddenly became round and very intense looking at me. Well, I can only compare it in power to what happens when you see a beautiful woman and she looks at you and you are brave enough not to look away. And she keeps looking at you and you get, there's a real buzz out of it, and this is on an entirely different level of course, but the force is there for sure. It's not the only thing that I look at when I'm swimming with a dolphin. Its, well the whole body actually, but the eye is, well like with humans. I mean when you talking to somebody you mostly orient on the face and automatically I'd say, on the eye, and how the eye is receiving your own body language and what you say, and everything; so yeah, absolutely. But I just would like to, well, maybe I can do it as short or as extended as you like, but from this first well, really getting into stations by the eye of Gudron, I started swimming with a monofin because I wanted to sort of feel closer to, well, living in the water and especially like dolphins and whales do. Then, I got an exhibition in the dolphinarium and I managed to tie a sale of a large piece to that and also to tie the making of another sculpture on the premises of the dolphinarium before public and everything. And that actually got me invited by Ten Bell – that's the name of the travel organisation – to Tenerife and then I met Horace Dobbs, we had lots and lots of talks and on the last evening we were in Tenerife he had sort of reserved part of the evening for a little show of himself and he showed a video there which was about three people that he brought to Dingle to swim with Fungi. One was called Bill...

Comment [MSOffice84]: 31
Eye contact

Comment [MSOffice85]: 31
Eye contact

Comment [MSOffice86]: 11.
Deep connection in the water with dolphins.

TONY:
I saw that one...

JAN:

You saw that one? Well, I saw it too, and while it was running I felt the water coming from my eyes in huge waves and I wasn't crying like for feeling hurt or whatever, or for bad reasons but it was just the total recognition of the situation and I think I must have filled half a bucket or so. I was very totally moved and then...

Comment [MSOffice87]: 18/
27 crying/bonding

TONY:
Because you identified somewhat with Bill?

JAN:

Absolutely! Well, with Bill.....Bill for sure, but the whole situation of people who have in some sort of way, by well, lets say natural causes, well not entirely natural. But anyway, the issue of that they were deprived of well, a lot of pleasure of life that is so normal to most people that they hardly realise how blessed they

are. And at that moment it sort of crossed my mind that nature had been good to me in this respect that it made me step on the path to what, was cetaceans and identifications with cetaceans and the whole, well, thing that surrounds it. And, now, my manic depressive condition sort of sluiced in, and I've never ever seen, had never ever seen it before in that perspective, but I sort of realised that the Gods had given me the interest into cetaceans only to cross it, at that moment my path with well, the supposed healing properties of dolphins and, well, Horace had already advised me to go up to Dingle because of course I told him about the manic depressive thing and everything. And when I went to Dingle two years later, yeah well, this was an experience that was well, only comparable to what one, how one pictures living in paradise. It was this huge animal that came to me and was interested in me, and me who was a very diverse person.....And, well coming back from Dingle I sort of had a whole new insight and came back into the old situation and I found it quite rapidly, a few bills had accumulated, the same kind of shit problems that bothered me before didn't go away, but were still there or would come back and in the course of about two or three months I'd be back on my own, old level again and not liking it very much. But still the dolphin experience was, well, like a, like a holiday from myself so to speak. So the next year...

Comment [MSOffice88]: 41
Joy

Comment [MSOffice89]: 7
Individual attention

TONY:

You mean that you still remembered it?

JAN:

That I felt that the alievement...can you say that? That I felt the allevement, and that I realised that there was a possibility to escape both these manical state of mind and depressions in a different dimension so to speak, and that was the dolphin dimension. That I was so much focussed and impressed by my dolphin experience, that it sort of well, like opened up a new world.....And that the main thing, the main message out of that is that there is another condition that you can live in and well, literally....that there is hope – like I said before this evening.

Comment [MSOffice90]: 22
Turning point

TONY:

A different consciousness maybe or is consciousness too strong a word?

JAN:

Well, no, no, no. It is a consciousness, absolutely. It's the way that you appraise your surroundings.....And, well, just this sort of change of, well you could say consciousness, of appraising the moment in time that you're in is so very different from just five minutes ago when you were thinking well, how am I going to spend this day, and its only ten o'clock now, and I have to go all the way for the whole day now.

TONY:

And the dolphin did this in Dingle?

JAN:

This, yeah, well, as you can see, it's apart from the whole consciousness thing or whatever, dolphins are still filling my days. They are a major part of well, my acting and my planning, my thinking, my well, sort of everything. That's all on

Comment [MSOffice91]: 42.
Change in consciousness.

the one hand, I am very cautious telling people that the dolphin can heal you because the influence that the dolphin had on me is, well, great because after well, about six years, I became free of episodes and it's only last year that I quitted with the lithium.

Comment [MSOffice92]: 35
Therapeutic

TONY:

.....So from, but from that point, and then particularly the Dingle experience with Fungi, somehow that then gave you this added dimension did you call it?

JAN:

Yeah. Well, it is like...

TONY:

It was a breakthrough, sort of.

JAN:

Yeah, well, I'm looking for maybe a more apparent comparison. Somebody shows you *the way*, or even *a way*, to cope with a problem that has bothered you a long time and well, just go to the technical moves and you feel better. And, what happened with the dolphin was that there was a dimension of interest that I have very much sought in people especially when I was depressed but being very tedious in doing so, and I just chased people away from me and with the dolphin I had the idea that the interest I got was much more, well as they say, unconditional, and it was accepting the, well the kicked in situation that I departed from, and yeah, it was an acceptance that I did not find in humans..... And yeah well, I think, it is well, kind of comparable to the proverbial oasis that you've been walking through the desert for days and you are really drying up totally, and then suddenly you come to this "well", with crystal clear and nice cold water. And it's totally refreshing you and giving you new strength and zest of life and everything and I think that's a comparison that sort of oddly, that yeah, quite fits into the dolphin experience.

Comment [MSOffice93]: 7.
Individual attention

Comment [MSOffice94]: 39.
Unconditional Love

Comment [MSOffice95]: 32
Refreshed spiritually.

TONY:

It's amazing.

JAN:

But as I say, I am very, very cautious to tell people to go swim with a dolphin when they have some sort of well, any affliction or comparable psychological conflict...affliction, because it did take me six years before I, well, got a hold of myself and actually there happened something else that I think is also, at least partly, responsible for, well my getting out of the rut of half year up, half year down, and that was that in '98 I started writing on a more, well, I wouldn't say professional but, on a more dedicated way. I've always been writing in the way of keeping notebooks, and when I have an idea or just a joke or a funny expression or something that I heard somebody else say, that sort of stuck in my mind I've wrote it down. But that was just a loose collection of remarks and in '98 I started writing short stories and I noticed that I had to sort of discipline my mind and arrange my thinking to convey a rough idea I had in my head into speech, into a

way that it was well conveyable to other people. And, well, it seems very logical that you have to do that but the actual process of doing that, well it takes quite a bit of focussing and also, quite a bit of self searching and projecting yourself in a way that you can monitor yourself, so step out of yourself and look at, well what am I saying, what am I writing, what do I mean, how do I want to land this into other people's perception and stuff. So, in a way you could say well this is also an issue from dolphin experience but it is a bit of a well, forced eye to ascribe it to that and I've never really put too much energy of trying to tie the two together. There is a connection for sure but it's a sort of intuitive thing, with which actually you have to be careful, because if you study your intuitivity (sic) too much, it can be well kicked back, and makes you less perceptive and intuitive than, well the opposite actually of what you seek to be. So, yeah, have to be careful there.

TONY:

Would it be...if I'm not straying into that intuitive area too much, would it be fair to say that it was something the dolphin triggered, well allowed this creativity to come up? It wasn't the dolphin that made you write creatively, but it allowed it to free itself, or arise or something...

JAN:

Yeah, freed it, absolutely. It freed a new gest (sic) of life, a new appreciation of your possibilities, of well not my possibilities, of the possibilities in general.

Comment [MSOffice96]: 43. Freeing Creativity (writing)

.....

JAN:

.....which is opening up, well quite a different reality from what is normally and I think that that is something that happens in a very strong way when you're swimming with a dolphin because well, the gift of the dolphin consists, at least partly, of identifying with the dolphin and watching the world through the dolphin's eyes. It's like when you live, well, in a beautiful place like this, like last year my daughter came to visit me and I was very looking forward to it, and when she was here I was, sort of, perceiving the world through her eyes. Feeding my world to her and enjoying it through her eyes, as it were through her personality and her appreciation and that was a wonderful experience.....

Comment [MSOffice97]: 44. Identification

Comment [MSOffice98]: 45. Seeing through their eyes/the eyes of the important other/ loss of self centeredness

.....

.....but I don't have that many visitors but when people come to visit me, and I'm expecting in the next week a friend of mine from Germany to come here for a week, and I'm already looking forward to it. And even now when I run the rocks, or just walk around or well, while here on the meadow I have these spells of imagining looking around here through her eyes, and I am already sort of bubbling with joy...

Comment [MSOffice99]: 45.

TONY:

Yes, I think I do that too...

JAN:

...for her to come here and...

TONY:

And do you do that then with the dolphin too, in a sense?

JAN:

Yeah, sure. It's not only an act on my side. I see that well, she is very knowing of things that I do. Just to give you a small example is a video that I took a few weeks ago. I was in the water, underwater, and only half a metre or something like that, and she was on the other side of a rock that was just submersed by the water. And I saw her coming in to that rock and getting well, mostly out of sight and then I saw her just peek over this rock and I had the camera on and well, I don't recall her doing that actually on that time, but I've seen the video several times now and what happens actually, let me more tell it from the perspective of the video. What you see in the video is that she comes close to the rock, then she peeks over the rock in a way that we sometimes inadvertently, no not inadvertently, secretly do to other people, trying not to be caught looking at them, and she sort of tries not to be caught looking at me but she checks out if I am in position and then she comes along the rock and gives again, a beautiful, very slow mo barrel roll all the way around me, and I follow her with camera for 36 degrees, and in this... 36 degrees she makes the total, well, barrel roll, around me and then swims away. And I'm pretty sure she knows that I am recording her. She doesn't maybe not know exactly what video is, and that later you can watch it again, but she knows that I am capturing an image of her and she displays this image in the most well, elegant way that she can think of on that very moment, and shows it to me and before she does this, she checks out if I am ready to record it. That is, well, human behaviour you could say. But from a dolphin, and I don't know if this is generally dolphin behaviour, I don't think so, I think this a dolphin that is very, has gathered a lot of expertise being interacting with people and she has built a sort of experience and appreciation of our behaviour that she can tap into, and that she can cooperate with. And I think that is absolutely what she does. I mean, another shot, another video is that you could see that she gathers a bunch of seaweed that's drifting there by going above it, turning belly up, so her beak is, well the other way around, and then she takes it down, and then she manoeuvres it in such a way that the seaweed wants to float up because it's the kind with these bubbles in it, with air or gas anyway, so it floats. And she manoeuvres it in such a way around her beak that on both sides it floats up so she can hold it down, then she swims over to me and then she retreats her beak. So it starts floating right in front of me, and then she floats just at the side of it and you see her beak going up and down, like nodding, like well, sort of, encouraging me to do something with that seaweed and she knows that I know, that I like, that she likes to be rubbed with the seaweed so she is, like, inviting me to rub her with the seaweed. But I don't do that, I just keep on filming and this is not like a thing that I do on purpose or so, it just comes out in, well, the specific situation. So, then she obviously thinks that I do not quite understand what she means so she takes the seaweed around her beak again and brings it even closer to the camera and then lets it go, so it floats rather close to the camera. I still don't do anything, just keep on filming her, then she swims around me in a circle and then she comes to the seaweed again, takes it again and then almost pushes it into the lens of the camera. And then I take it with one hand and put it on top of my head, like a totally crazy thing to do, for her, for me too, and the reaction of her is that she takes her beak and she does it from side to side,

Comment [MSOffice100]: 16
. Dolphin awareness.

Comment [MSOffice101]: 14
. Communicating/reciprocity

Comment [MSOffice102]: 9
playing/interacting

like almost expressing a human emotion like, 'well, these crazy people, they don't really don't understand what I mean' and then she swims away like, "ah, ha ha ha", that this is mean something.... And I know this biologist would immediately jump up and say, ah, he's anthropomorphising, and these things, and so, and that's what humans do who don't know anything about the behaviour of animals and so. But I think this is not just an animal-animal, this is an animal that has been in contact with people a lot and has copied quite a few things of human behaviour and is trying to interact with human behaviour to humans just well, for the sake of interacting; for the sake of communicating.

Comment [MSOffice103]: 14 /29

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and "grounding in examples" in red)

31. Eye contact. "I can only compare it in power to what happens when you see a beautiful woman and she looks at you and you are brave enough not to look away." "buzz" "force"
11. Deep connection in the water with dolphins. "I wanted to sort of feel closer to, well, living in the water and especially like dolphins and whales do."
18. Crying. "It was just the total recognition of the situation and I think I must have filled half a bucket or so. I was very totally moved." Also 27 perhaps more so!
27. Intimacy/bonding with others present. Crying was in this context watching Bill.
41. Joy. "This was an experience that was well, only comparable to what one, how one pictures living in paradise."
7. Individual attention. "It was this huge animal that came to me and was interested in me, and me who was a very diverse person."
22. Turning point. "That I felt the allevement, and that I realised that there was a possibility to escape both these manical state of mind and depressions in a different dimension so to speak, and that was the dolphin dimension."
- 42 Change in consciousness. The dolphins become a major part of his life in some way.
35. Therapeutic. He has remained free from depressive episodes for 6 years now...
39. Unconditional Love. "With the dolphin I had the idea that the interest I got was much more, well as they say, unconditional, and it was accepting."
32. Refreshed spiritually. The "well" image. "And it's totally refreshing you and giving you new strength and zest of life and everything."

43. Freeing Creativity (writing) “It freed.....a new appreciation of your possibilities, of well not my possibilities, of the possibilities in general.”

44. Identification

45. Seeing through their eyes/the eyes of the important other/ **loss of self centeredness**. And this causes a “bubbling with joy” 41.

16. Dolphin awareness. **Reciprocal awareness**.

14. Communicating/reciprocity. **A degree of imitating human behaviour?**

9. Playing/interacting. **Rubbing with seaweed etc.**

29. Anthropomorphic transference.

**HORACE:
11th Sept. 2006
North Ferriby.**

HORACE:

I have written down a lot of my very intense experiences, and one I hope I can recall correctly, because I wrote a trilogy of books: A Tale of Two Dolphins, Dance to a Dolphin’s Song and then Journey into Dolphin Dream Time. And that represents my personal account of my experiences with dolphins, many of which were very intense. But one of them I remember in particular is when I was in Dingle with the dolphin there...

TONY:

That’s Fungi, isn’t it?

HORACE:

With Fungi, and we were filming him. And I got in the water, and we were in a gully, and the dolphin was getting very excited. We had the boat called the Tuna outside, and we’re supposed to be doing filming and things like that and then I got completely lost in my interaction with the dolphin, and the dolphin was whirling around in this and he was coming out of the water, jumping over me, and I was chasing after him. The rest of the world didn’t exist; I was just in a total bubble. So I was locked into a bubble of dolphin experience and the people on the boat could see what was happening and they were all cheering away, and things like that. And it was just one of those...I was, afterwards I was in kind of Nirvana, when I got out, but suddenly the dolphin went like that, and everybody was saying ‘hooray, Horace’ you know, and I was on a pitch right up there and the dolphin was asleep. He’d just switched off, just like that. And I eventually kind of found him and there he was, just lying in the water with one eye open, and of course my adrenalin levels running high and that was just one of the things, you know, to be locked into that bubble where nothing else exists whatsoever, except

Comment [MSOffice104]: 8.
unaware of external events

Comment [MSOffice105]: 11
. Unity bubble

Comment [MSOffice106]: 41
Joy

an immense exuberation, exhilaration, of hurling around in the water and doing you know, being in totally in the dolphin's sphere as it were. It's as if we were both in a ball really, of energy. But then he popped out of the ball and he was asleep. And that characterises dolphins. They'll play, be very energetic, jump 6 times and you can imagine a dolphin jumping, I can't get more than, you know, than the top of my body out of the water, no matter how good I am at rushing to the surface. They'll do 6 jumps in a row. And then they'll go to sleep. And I think that, I've kind of picked up on that. I can go to sleep very quickly if you say to me "HORACE, look, turn it off", I'll sit in the chair and go to sleep.

Comment [MSOffice107]: 3
heightened awareness + 11

TONY:

It's a kind of switching off?

HORACE:

Yes. So that's just one, you asked me for one experience. There it is.

TONY:

And, how would you describe what you were doing with the dolphin? And you were in a gully you said, that's a diving term presumably...

HORACE:

Oh no, it's an alcove in the rocks. So if you can imagine that's the cliff there, and there's a V of sea going into the rocks, that's the gully. And it's steep sided so you've got rocks all around it and then you've got an opening to the sea and in the opening to the sea sits the boat that we're doing the film from. And so we've got people on the boat, and they can see what's happening. But it's like being in a locked location, because it's in a small space. Yeah. So I'm going round and I'm flying round the rocks, and it's incredible, it's also very beautiful. The sun is shining, there's kelp waving, we've got all these lovely shapes of the rocks coming down into the water, sandy bottom with rock on it, and so on, so I'm down, I'm up, I'm around and I'm jumping out of the water, the dolphins jumping over me. You know, as soon as I come up to the surface he may come up beside me, fly over my head and then I'm totally exhilarated so I drag some air into my lungs...

Comment [MSOffice108]: 11
. Bubble + 9. Playing interacting

TONY:

When you say exhilarated?

HORACE:

Well, you've just got massive energy you know. And it's...

Comment [MSOffice109]: 47
. Massive energy

TONY:

Excitement?

HORACE:

Oh, absolute, you know, a total thrill. I guess its like you know, going down the cresta run, or something like that. You're just locked into it aren't you? I don't know. If you're doing the cresta run or something like that, running down the rapids I guess. You know, in Colorado, for the first time.

Comment [MSOffice110]: 3.
heightened awareness

TONY:

But there's no question of fear about it?

HORACE:

Oh no, none whatsoever.

TONY:

I mean, if you're going down the rapid in a it must be very scary and yet you're having to exercise all sorts of skills to stay alive.

HORACE:

But I'm exercising skills to stay alive anyway because I'm breathing in, you know, I'm, and I know the dolphin can kill me at any moment, should he want to.

TONY:

But you're pretty sure that wouldn't happen?

HORACE:

oh, I know he wouldn't. I mean, I'm not scared from that point of view. And I have lost all fear, but I think that happens often in very excite...you know, like footballers, they get injured, somebody comes on, slaps a cold sponge on their leg and off they go again. If it happens, in they fell over in the road here they'd be off to hospital and have it sorted out. And you get to a stage where the adrenalin is running so fast that you don't feel pain. It's like, if you're in battle, you know, I think, maybe bull fighters and people like that don't feel the pain to start with, or even the bull feels the pain when its....

Comment [MSOffice111]: 3.
heightened awareness + 6. lack of fear

TONY:

So there's an element of excitement and sort of danger there.

HORACE:

Yeah, there is a sort...

TONY:

Potential danger, anyway?

HORACE:

Oh, there's potential danger, for sure. But it, I just didn't feel it at all. No. And I was totally unaware of the boat, the people cheering, everything else. You know, it was only when I came...when the dolphin had gone and everybody's cheering, "more Horace, yeah, good old Horace". And I've had that kind of experience on other occasions, not... you know, with different dolphins in different situations, but not that particular experience. Where you get locked in to the moment and that's when you live that moment.

Comment [MSOffice112]: 8.
absorption

Comment [MSOffice113]: 10
. being in present moment.

TONY:

Right. So that time stops.

HORACE:

Yeah.

TONY:

It's just the present.

HORACE:

It is, yeah you're in that moment.....

Comment [MSOffice114]: 10

TONY:

Does that experience....you obviously would attribute to that experience then, health benefits. Did you think it was good for you? I mean, this is not a question you would immediately coming out of the water, but you know...

HORACE:

Well, afterwards I was in a state...I was lying on the bed and I was in a state of nirvana. I was kind of in heaven...

Comment [MSOffice115]: 41
. joy ecstasy. + 19 Peace

TONY:

You said nirvana...

HORACE:

It was, yeah, the point is, it lingers. It's not all over, you know, it's over, but you're still floating as it were. And the excitements over but you come off the boat and you go and lie down on the bed and you're just floating.

TONY:

This was on the boat you were lying on the bed, or when you got to shore?

HORACE:

No, no, when I got to shore, you know, afterwards. It was over...

TONY:

And you were just floating.

HORACE:

Yeah. And this I think, again, but I remember talking to a guy called John Lilley, who you may or may not have heard of.

TONY:

I have heard of him.

HORACE:

A doyen of dolphinology, and he said, when you meet a dolphin you are zapped. So I said, what do you mean by that? He said, well think of a weather satellite going around the planet, he said, and as it goes round it gathers information, then when it comes over to the station it zaps the information down to the station. They then start to unravel it within the mean...but the dolphin...the satellite's still on its way, taking in more information and the people down below

are unravelling that information. You can zap it all down I suppose in one go, now with modern computer and everything else, but you're still on your journey now.

Comment [MSOffice116]: 48
. Zapped ..filled with
emotion..knowledge...

TONY:

So, you're lying on the bed...

HORACE:

I'm lying on the bed looking out; I can see the poppies on the curtains even now. Just, in Peggy O'Connor's farmhouse. You know, I'm on the bed...

TONY:

You can recall that...

HORACE:

I can recall the curtains exactly. Yeah. Just lying there.

TONY:

And, now you described that as nirvana.

HORACE:

Well, that's....

TONY:

Can you be more specific? I'm not sure what that....

HORACE:

The state of calm and bliss.

Comment [MSOffice117]: 3.
+ 19. + 41.

TONY:

Calm and bliss. Right. OK. Which even for you at that point, would have been quite unique, I mean...

HORACE:

No, I'm not a....

TONY;

Not that you hadn't been calm and blissful before...

HORACE:

No, no, this was a unique experience...

TONY:

You've never been so calmly blissful before?

HORACE:

No, and also I was making this transition from being a scientist, being totally objective in all that I was doing, and you know, I was making a film about Bill Howell, so I was trying to be objective. I was trying to look at the effect of this dolphin on three people, diagnosed as clinical depressives. So I was trying....and

I've been dragged back into my...and I was very resistant. When I saw what happened to Bill, I tried not to believe it, to start with. Because I thought...I'm the sceptic, you know, and I'm very sceptical about this stuff.....

TONY:

Let's go back to the poppies on the curtains and you lying in a state of nirvana on the bed. How long did you lie on the bed?

HORACE:

Well, again, time is irrelevant in a way. I just remember lying on the bed you know, and it was...

Comment [MSOffice118]: 10

TONY:

And the days that followed that, how did that experience that produced the calm and bliss lying on the bed impact on the immediate next 24 hours, or 48 hours, or whatever. I mean was there...

HORACE:

Oh well, I have a job to do...

TONY:

And you went back to doing that.

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and "rounding in examples" in red)

8. Unaware of external events. Absorption "completely lost in my interaction."
11. Unity bubble. "The rest of the world didn't exist; I was just in a total bubble. So I was locked into a bubble of dolphin experience"
41. Joy. + 19 "I was in kind of Nirvana, when I got out"
3. Heightened awareness. (Excitement/thrill... "an immense exuberation, exhilaration".)
9. Playing interacting. "So I'm down, I'm up, I'm around and I'm jumping out of the water, the dolphins jumping over me."
47. Massive energy. "You've just got massive energy you know."
6. Lack of fear. I know the dolphin can kill me at any moment
10. Being in present moment. Where you get locked in to the moment and that's when you live that moment.
19. Peace. State of Nirvana.

48. Zapped ..filled with emotion..knowledge... as in zapped with information from a satellite.

JACKIE:
Tuesday, 12th September, 2006
Milton Keynes.

JACKIE:

We'd been going out...I didn't know what to expect....we'd been going out on the boat for a few hours. I was beginning to think, oh well, this maybe isn't going to happen and maybe if it does, maybe we'll just sort of see one or two dolphins and that will be it. So I just wasn't sure what I was going to see. And I was beginning to sort of feel a little bit disheartened because we'd been out on the boat for a few hours, and nothing was happening. When all of a sudden somebody shouted and pointed to the horizon, and I looked up and there was dolphins all around the horizon, too many to count. Just sort of jumping out of the water, whizzing towards the boat, and by now everybody is standing up, and everybody is clapping and shouting and all excited and I couldn't believe my eyes, because I could just see dolphins everywhere I looked. And it was a very emotional experience. In fact, even thinking about it now I could cry, it was a very emotional feeling to think that these dolphins were just as excited to see us. That's how they looked, as we were to see them. They were completely in control. There was no way that we could be chasing them, or forcing them to do anything. They chose to come and be with us. We'd been out to sea for a few hours, so they could...these dolphins could have been anywhere. They didn't have to come and swim with us, and I think that was what was so amazing really.

Comment [MSOffice119]: 1. Anticipation of encounter + visual spectacle + 37. Emotional recollection.

Comment [MSOffice120]: 18 . Emotional response/crying

Comment [MSOffice121]: 34 . Voluntary presence +2. The dolphin found us.

TONY:

You felt like it was a meeting almost?

JACKIE:

Oh yes, yeah. And it was almost as if...

TONY:

They'd found you...

JACKIE:

They'd found me and I found them. As if it was something that I'd been wanting all my life without really knowing. And maybe that's why I felt this profound knowledge really, when I first heard Horace talk about the dolphins, that maybe this was a meeting that I'd been waiting for all my life without really knowing it. I don't know. I don't know.

Comment [MSOffice122]: 2. Dolphin found us + 38. Overall interpretations/destiny

TONY:

And what happened then? So you're feeling very full and emotional and they're there and what happens next?

JACKIE:

Well, the boat was going along and we were told that we could just sort of watch the dolphins and see how they interacted. If they wanted to stay with us, then they would do. If not they might just swim away. But just to be open to whatever might happen. So we slowed the boat down. The dolphins were still sort of swimming from all directions towards the boat, and then they were enjoying a ride on the bow waves with us...everybody was sort of lying on their tummies, looking over the bow and watching the dolphins. And, when you were lying on the boat it felt as if you were amongst the pod, because you could sort of lie down on your tummy and you felt as if you were swimming with the dolphins. And then they'd slow the boat right down and the dolphins still stayed with us. We were told that sometimes when the boat slows right down that they would maybe go away because they liked to sort of play on the boat. But on this occasion they didn't, and they stayed with us, and we were told to sort of get our mask and snorkel on, and get in the water with them. And at this point I'm feeling a bit nervous because we're out in the middle of the ocean, I'd never swum with dolphins before, and I didn't really know what to sort of expect. I felt a bit nervous, and the dolphin seemed so big and you know, I wasn't sure that they was going to be...well, I guessed they were going to be friendly because I knew that they wouldn't let us get in the water if not. So I got in the water and I looked down and the dolphins were swimming around us and underneath us, and amongst us, and it was a very special feeling. It's difficult to know how to describe it really. It was a very emotional feeling. It was a feeling of joy, once I was in the water with them, and swimming amongst them I had no fear whatsoever. It just felt so right. And everything...every other worry or concern or stress or anything, just seemed to sort of vanish. I was just there in the moment with the dolphin. And the feeling that they were...they were in total control. They didn't have to be there, but they chose to be with us and that was quite special. Time just seemed to sort of vanish; I don't know how long we were in the water with them. But eventually we were sort of called back on the boat and everybody just hugged one another. These were people that I didn't really know that well but it seemed to bring everybody together. Everybody was laughing, people were crying, everybody was very emotional and the whole atmosphere was a very joyful moment.

Comment [MSOffice123]: ?

Comment [MSOffice124]: 1. Anticipation of excitement + 6. lack of fear??

Comment [MSOffice125]: 15 . Ineffable

Comment [MSOffice126]: 41 . Joy.

Comment [MSOffice127]: 6. Lack of fear

Comment [MSOffice128]: 10 .

Comment [MSOffice129]: 10 . Being in the Present

Comment [MSOffice130]: 7 individual attention + 34 voluntary presence

Comment [MSOffice131]: 10 being in present + 8. Unaware of external world

Comment [MSOffice132]: 27 . Bonding/intimacy + 18 Emotional/crying + 20. Upsurge of emotions

Comment [MSOffice133]: 41 . Joy

Comment [MSOffice134]: 20 . Upsurge of emotions

TONY:

Do you think it seemed to bring up these emotions, of tears and laughter...

JACKIE:

Yeah, every emotion under the sun just seemed to come out. That was my first time. I've now been every year.

TONY:

That was in 19...how long ago, roughly?

JACKIE:

I think it's about 6 or 7 years ago.

TONY:

So you've been, 6 roughly 5 or 6 times more.

JACKIE:

Yeah. I wanted to; it was difficult to explain to friends and family what this feeling was like because I wanted them to experience it for themselves so they understood how I felt about it. I just wanted to share it with everybody. On that first occasion my husband was with me, so it was good to be able to share that with my husband. And then I just wanted to keep going back and taking friends and as many people as possible that I could share this very special feeling with. And each time I've been back for myself that bond between me and the dolphin seems to be that much stronger. So much so now, that I do feel that there's a, hard to describe, but sort of like a telepathy going on between me and the dolphins: almost as if they're giving me messages.

Comment [MSOffice135]: 15
. Ineffable

Comment [MSOffice136]: 27
. Bonding but wanting to share!!

Comment [MSOffice137]: 14
communicating + 50. Telepathy

TONY:

When you're in the water?

JACKIE:

When I'm in the water with them. But even when I'm not in the water with them. It's a feeling that I can always tap into. Whatever is happening in my life, if there's even any difficult times in my life, if there's any worries or upsets or concerns, I can always tap into that very special feeling of joy. I get messages. I can be shopping, walking down the road, I can be at the supermarket, I can be driving my car when its, I get sort of like visions of dolphins where they're giving me words and messages. I don't know if that makes sense.

Comment [MSOffice138]: 49
. Lasting effect of tapping in to Joy

Comment [MSOffice139]: 50
Telepathy/messages

TONY:

Well, it's amazing. Yes. I'm thinking about it anyway.

JACKIE:

When I'm swimming with them, I get given words. The words are normally the same, it's normally 4 words that they always give me and it's almost as if they're throwing arrows at me and I'm just happy to duck. It's almost as if they're saying do not avoid....you know, don't forget this, you've got to remember these words. And the words are always – trusting, caring, sharing and giving. Now that seems strange but these are the words that they give me.

Comment [MSOffice140]: 50
.

.....

TONY:

Well, what happened later on...you know, the hours, take me just into three or fours hours say, after the swim, how were you feeling, what was going on...? Was there anything significant, I mean maybe it was over then but...

JACKIE:

Probably, a feeling of wanting more of that special feeling. A bit like a drug I suppose...

Comment [MSOffice141]: 13
. Wanting more

TONY:

You want to do it again...?

JACKIE:

Can never get enough of it, you want to do it again, yeah. So, I just wanted to keep going back and swimming with the dolphins, you know...

TONY:

Did the very ecstatic, open, tearful, joyous feeling wear off as the evening went on or did you...

JACKIE:

No, no, no...it was again, like I said before, it's something you could always tap into. **That calmness seems to stay with us, and we could take that home.** And as I say, when things were tough then you could always seem to tap into, remember those memories were so easy to sort of go back to. And it wasn't the same...not like when you go on a normal holiday, you know, most holidays are special aren't they, and you know, you feel good when you've been on holiday, and then when you're at home, you know, maybe you start to go down again. Erm, this was a bit different to that. It was something that always stays with you.

Comment [MSOffice142]: 49
. + 19. Peace

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and "grounding in examples" in red)

1. Anticipation of encounter + visual spectacle.
37. Emotional recollection. **"Goose-pimple affect"**
18. Emotional response/crying. **"These dolphins were just as excited to see us. That's how they looked, as we were to see them"**
34. Voluntary presence.
2. The dolphin found us. **"These dolphins could have been anywhere. They didn't have to come and swim with us, and I think that was what was so amazing really."**
Applies to 34 also.
38. Overall interpretations/destiny. **"As if it was something that I'd been wanting all my life without really knowing." A "meeting".**
6. Lack of fear??
15. Ineffability. **"It's difficult to know how to describe it really. It was a very emotional feeling."**
41. Joy.
10. Being in the Present. **"..Every other worry or concern or stress or anything, just seemed to sort of vanish, I was just there in the moment with the dolphin"**
7. Individual attention. **"They chose to be with us and that was quite special"**

8. Unaware of external world. "Time just seemed to sort of vanish"
27. Intimacy/Bonding with others present. "Everybody just hugged one another. These were people that I didn't really know that well but it seemed to bring everybody together. Everybody was laughing, people were crying"
20. Upsurge of emotions. "Every emotion under the sun just seemed to come out".
14. Communicating.
50. Telepathy. "Trusting, caring, sharing and giving"
49. Lasting effect of tapping in to Joy. "It's a feeling that I can always tap into. Whatever is happening in my life, if there's even any difficult times in my life, if there's any worries or upsets or concerns, I can always tap into that very special feeling of joy."
13. Wanting more.
19. Peace. "That calmness seems to stay with us, and we could take that home"

BILL:
(Wednesday, 13th. September, 2006)

.....I went to Psychiatric Hospital, I had electric treatment, I had hypnosis, I had all these different kind of treatments and all I had from those places was; what happened, they need to do this, was it true, was it not true, right go back into the day room, go and do this and go and do that...and every day, I mean I went for 7 months, day treatment to the hospital and they gave up in the end, they could do nothing for me because they could not get through to my brain; and this is when he spoke (sic.Horace Dobbs) and gave me this sort of flicker in my heart to say that there's something out there; I wanted to know about it. Well, he wanted to meet me down at the harbour, at 10 o'clock the next morning, and I went down at 10 o'clock...

Comment [MSOffice143]: 40
 Alienation

TONY:
 And of course, at this time, you were still...

BILL:
 I still hadn't met a dolphin...

TONY:
 Very depressed though...

BILL:
 Oh yeah, I was. I mean I had to...

TONY:

So how did it, you took him down was it to the docks.

BILL'S WIFE:

One of the family, yeah one of the family took him there, and I can't remember which one.

BILL:

I'm sure it was Karen, but anyhow...

TONY:

You went down...

BILL:

I was obviously in the land of another planet. And Horace introduced me to all the crew and film people, and he told me, he said, Bill, he said what's going to happen he said, when the boatman starts his engine up, dolphins going to come through the water and come to the boat. He said, what I'm going to do, take him out into the harbour and anchor up and do my filming with him. Anyhow, the engine started, suddenly came through the water is this dorsal fin; you can imagine the film called 'Jaws'. I mean, you don't know what to expect. You see flipper on television, I mean he's only a small creature on television, but when you see the size of this dorsal fin floating through the water you wonder what the hell's coming along. Anyhow, he done what he said, he took him out into the sea, he took him out into harbour, anchored up and we sat there and suddenly (you've got a picture in your hand) we was all looking over the side of the boat for 'Semo'. Why, I do not know, I've got goose pimples now, but I've given it some _____. The dolphin wasn't interested in anybody else...

Comment [MSOffice144]: 1.
Anticipation of fear/excitement

Comment [MSOffice145]: 37
Emotional recollection.

Comment [MSOffice146]: 7
Individual attention

TONY:

This is you here in the picture?

BILL:

That's me. That's 'Semo'. He came up, just wanted me to stroke him and I was gone, I was completely gone, on another...I was back into something that wanted to turn me back into a human being again. And there's another photograph where he turned over on his back for me to stroke his belly and he was not interested in another soul on the boat and from then on Horace said, well, Bill, he saw this happening between 'Semo' and me. He said, Bill, can you swim. I said, well, the last time I swam was when I was 18, I haven't swam since then, and he said I've seen something, could you put my wetsuit on. Well, Horace is a very, very slim man, and I was out here with drugs and I was 15 stone plus, and Horace was what, 13 stone. So I managed to get the wetsuit on, he said, I've never done snorkelling, I've never done wet-suiting before – he said Bill, I want you to slip over the side, I want to watch what happens. He told me what not to do and what to do. It was very specific instructions – he said, don't do this, don't do that, you know, go flipping around here, flipping around there – just drop in the side of the boat. Well, I dropped in the side of the boat, into the sea...

Comment [MSOffice147]: 30
Feeling D's need for contact

Comment [MSOffice148]: 8/
10 Absorption in moment

Comment [MSOffice149]: 30
.

Comment [MSOffice150]: 7

TONY:
The suit kept you a bit buoyant?

BILL:
Oh, yeah, kept me buoyant and managed to use flippers which I had never used before to be upright. But from the start-with, I was just like a...something floating on the sea; rubbish, as far as I was concerned; I was a dead man. But 'Semo' came up to me, whining and crying and I'm responding to him, calling, I knew his name was 'Semo', I was calling him Semo, but the message I felt I was receiving from him was 'come, I need you, you need me, share my lonely world'. Now, if you look at it realistically, the dolphin 'Semo', Fungi or any dolphins going to these places that are throughout the world, they are there for a purpose. And I feel they are there for a purpose because they are lonely. They're sent out on a mission to communicate with human beings, in some way or another, and I felt I had that from Semo, come I need you, you need me. And then it's a beautiful world down there now, when you think two-thirds of the world, our world, is covered by water, there's something in the water wanted to bring me out. But Horace...

Comment [MSOffice151]: 36
. negative self image

Comment [MSOffice152]: 30
. + mutual need

Comment [MSOffice153]: 38
. in general interpretation

TONY:
That's how you felt then?

BILL:
How I felt then...and I feel champion man now. And Horace...

TONY:
Keep to how you felt then because that's...

BILL:
Oh, yeah, I mean I felt I was wanted.

Comment [MSOffice154]: 46
. Being wanted

TONY:
Because this was...you'd no idea what was going to happen.

BILL:
I had no idea what was going to happen at all. I was a complete...well, I thought I was just going out for a boat trip.

TONY:
So you felt wanted?

BILL:
I felt wanted for the first time. The dolphin, that 'Semo', or any other dolphin I swam with have never asked me why did you go into...depression, what made you go into depression; they wanted communication with a human being. So I felt I wanted more of this but after an hour in the water with him, Horace had to get on with his filming and he said, well, Bill do you mind getting out I've got to get in to do my filming. Very reluctantly, I wanted more, more, because it's something I'd never experienced before. I thought there was an answer there. And I got out reluctantly and saw Horace get in to do his filming and every day after then I was down to the boatman every day, and was swimming, going out to the

Comment [MSOffice155]: 39
.

Comment [MSOffice156]: 40
. seen as alienating
. questioning/analytical.

Comment [MSOffice157]: 14
.

Comment [MSOffice158]: 13
. Wanting more

Comment [MSOffice159]: 22
. turning point ..healing

sea with him and 'Semo' gave me...I wasn't in with him then, but he came up and gave me the medicine which you see in those photographs. He came up and gave me...anxiety for more, more, more, I want more of it. It's happening to me. Something's happened. Anyway, after the...

Comment [MSOffice160]: 5/9/14 Compared to medical model again...alienation v 39 Love

Comment [MSOffice161]: 21/22 deep inner knowledge activated

TONY:

What did it feel like, can you... I mean... when you say you know he wanted more and more, and it, I mean...you said it, there was a feeling of being wanted...

BILL:

Yes.

TONY:

And the dolphin's saying, come to me, I want something from you.

BILL:

Yes, I need you, you need me, share my lonely world.

Comment [MSOffice162]: 14/30 mutual need

TONY:

Does that sum it up or was there something more than that?

BILL:

Well, to me it summed it up, because he's lonely, I'm lonely, he's not asking me questions, I'm not asking any questions, I wanted his love, he's showed me love. Being wanted. I mean when you're in a hospital you're do this, do that, what did you do this, why did you do that and the treatments I had which was unbelievable, I felt...I've becoming alive again, I've been given a treatment...

Comment [MSOffice163]: 39 Unconditional Love: Hospital was alienating seen as questioning: Unconditional Love no questions asked!

TONY:

You felt that coming alive again when you...

Comment [MSOffice164]: 21 inner connection 32 total refreshment: lack of stress = being more alive..more in touch with oneself.

BILL:

Yes, when I first, well my wife will tell you the smiles I had on my face was, Horace said when he saw me get out of the water, the smile I had on my face, if you could see the first photograph, you see how I was gone. I was completely not with anybody there, just contact with a dolphin. It's incredible what feeling does give to you. You can see it, can you see my expression on the face, I mean I felt as if I was...I'm not with anybody, same as I am now, I'm wanting it more, I'm wanting that love.

Comment [MSOffice165]: 3 heightened awareness.."incredible feeling" 13 desire for more as in love: 39 Love: 11 unity bubble deep sense of being with the dolphin...united .

.....

BILL:

Well, we had a phone call from here to say Bill, Dorade, all systems go, "Operation Sunflower" starts. Be over in Ireland such and such a time, such and such a place, you know, and I'd never been to Ireland before.

TONY:

How long was this after....

WIFE:
Was it a year?

BILL:
Possibly...it was the next summer. The early summer of the following year.

WIFE:
June, July...wasn't it.

BILL:
And we went over to Ireland, not knowing what to expect. I had hoped to find what I had found with Semo would continue with Dorade. I'm going call him Fungi because that's his name now which the Irish people have called him where there own thoughts.....But we got in this boat, went out and Fungi gave me the same impression as what Semo did; connection with me. That gave me a bit more I want you, you want me, and course when people jump in the water I didn't get in the water until Horace said because there's people gets in there, and he'll jump up in the air and jump down by the side and swim around under this that and the other. And then Horace would say to me, right Bill you can get in now, and Horace knows every time that I've got in with a dolphin, the dolphin leaves them and just comes and lays by me; nose to nose to me.

Comment [MSOffice166]: 21
deep inner connection.. "connection with me"

Comment [MSOffice167]: 7

TONY:
This is another photograph now from Dingle?

BILL:
This is a photograph of Fungi and myself. Why he, I felt the same as what Semo did, gave personal contact with me and there's another film where Fungi wanted me all the time. Just personal contact with me. They weren't interested in anybody else.

Comment [MSOffice168]: 7

TONY:
And you're just lying on your tummy here, floating in the water and the dolphin's sort of becoming nose to nose with you.

BILL:
Yeah, yeah I mean. In the book, the Dolphin Healing book, there's another photograph of another dolphin I met which you see me nose to nose with the dolphin.....Person to person, or being to being and I, you know, what it did for me and what Fungi did for me was unbelievable. Because I've swum with him 5, 6 hours a day in the water, I didn't want to get out. One time, now I'm going to go very goose-pimply over this, but one time in the film, when I was in the sea he went away to feed, and the water was so clear, like looking through those windows, the sun was shining, I was looking down on the bottom of the sea bed, you could see lobsters and crabs crawling about, and swimming amongst sprats and eels – there's a wonderful world down there. I mean, people have seen Jacques Cousteau on television, of his experiences with marine life and I was actually part of the marine life. And, it was just going along on this (*phone ringing in background*) you know, and the experiences I had with him, just wanted to be with me, I wanted them to cuddle me – not cuddle me, I don't want to grab their

Comment [MSOffice169]: 21
deep inner connection

Comment [MSOffice170]: 13
Desire for more

Comment [MSOffice171]: 37
.

Comment [MSOffice172]: 11
unity with that world..with the sea nature.

world, I want to share their world. And the fact is that this is my, how everybody, don't go and take their world, share their world because there is medicine down there for a human being in depression.

Comment [MSOffice173]: 11
wanting to be part of.

.....

BILL:

.....as I said he went away from me that particular day and I says, do you want to get out of the water Bill. I said, no Horace, I want to stay here. But at that time I was sort of standing up in the water, managed to use my flippers and he said, well he'll be around, away for about quarter of an hour, something like that feeding. So I said, well I'll still stay in here because it's beautiful down here, I didn't want to get out. And I'm picturing it in my mind; even now it's still a picture in my mind. And suddenly within a matter of 2 or 3 minutes, I had one almighty smack on my flippers, I looked down and there was Fungi, and I'm a chef by qualification, with the biggest salmon I ever saw in my life. And he had it across his jaws like that...and he slithered his body up against my body, and all the way up, and I felt body to body contact, and he stopped in front of me with this salmon. I thought, he was whining and crying to me, and I said "Fungi, what are you doing?" And I felt he was asking me to turn the salmon for him. Well I turned, got hold of the salmon tail, and it was a mighty salmon, I never seen one like it, I turned it, he took it down into his throat and Horace said to me...well he told me this afterwards...he went down underneath me, Fungi did, he came up at me full pelt, I thought goodness me, I'm going to land on the moon, because I mean the speed that a dolphin can swim are really, was really a bit scared that time, but he stopped within one metre of me, went 'puff' like that, and here I go, goosepimply again, and he released only the salmon scales. And it was a scene like looking at the sky at night with all these glittering salmon scales, were glittering all the way around me, and there's a sight I will never ever forget till my dying days.....And I was out with Fungi 6 or 7 hours a day, all times with Horace, we went the following year, I was out there with him again, and I had the same treatment, I felt better and better and better, and it did give me...I was wanted. I felt I didn't need a valium any more, I wanted more dolphin, more dolphin.....

Comment [MSOffice174]: 39
. + 41 Salmon event

Comment [MSOffice175]: 12
. Combination of speed and power of dolphin/some fear/ but being safe = 3 heightened awareness.

Comment [MSOffice176]: 37
but as indicator of intense emotional impact...3.

Comment [MSOffice177]: 3.
+ 26. Being blessed in sense of remember for ever.

Comment [MSOffice178]: 22
Healing + 35 Therapeutic

BILL:

.....when I'm with a dolphin I'm not with anybody else. It's just unbelievable what they mean to me. They are a part of my body...I came back from the lost world, back to a living world, full of dolphins. And I'll say to you now, to anybody who's got depression, if you make contact with somebody's that been with dolphins, make contact with a dolphin yourself, but don't try and grab their world, share it. There's a lot of beauty down there – what things we'd never see on land, the sea anemones, urchins, to swim in that with, like Jacqui Cousteau swim with sprats and sand eels, oh its, I mean it's uplifting. I'm on top of the world when I'm talking dolphins. I'm on top of the world when I'm thinking dolphins.

Comment [MSOffice179]: 11
unity. + 32 refreshed

TONY:

What is that on top of the world like? I mean I know it's a daft question in a way, but how would you describe it?

BILL:

Well, there's no other climbing to do. I am on top of the world. I mean when you've got the snow caps...you've got the ice caps on the bottom of the world and on top of the world. I'm on top of that ice cap. I'm between there and heaven. And that's what it means to me, being on top of the world, it does. I'm bubbling inside of me now with the joys of talking to you about...

Comment [MSOffice180]: 3
+ 41 Joy Ecstasy

TONY:

Is it a joy?

BILL:

Oh, it is a joy, it is...

Comment [MSOffice181]: 41
Joy.

Fundamental Themes

(Duplication eliminated; elaboration and “grounding in examples” in red)

40. Alienation. Hospital experience seen as alienating; questioning/analytical; contrast with 39.

1. Anticipation of fear/excitement.

37. Emotional recollection; but as indicator of intense emotional impact = 3.

7. Individual attention.

30. Feeling D's need for contact. + A mutual need; “You need me I need you”.

8/10. Absorption + Being in present moment.

36. Negative self image. Just “rubbish”.

38. General interpretation; interpretation of presence of dolphin; “ambassador dolphin hypothesis.”

46. Being wanted.

13. Wanting more; desire for more as in love.

22. Turning point; healing.

5/9/14. Playing, interacting and communicating; compared to medical model again...alienation v love 39.

39. Unconditional Love. Hospital was alienating seen as questioning: Unconditional Love no questions asked!

21. Deep inner knowledge activated; “connection with me”.

32. Total refreshment: lack of stress = being more alive; more in touch with oneself.
3. Heightened awareness; “incredible feeling”. (goose-pimples).
11. Unity bubble; connection; deep sense of being with the dolphin; united; unity with that world; with the sea nature; wanting to be part of; “when I’m with a dolphin I’m not with anybody else. It’s just unbelievable what they mean to me. They are a part of my body”.
12. Trust/Being safe; combination of speed and power of dolphin/some fear/ but being safe = 3 heightened awareness.
26. Being blessed; in sense of remember for ever.
- 35 Therapeutic; “I felt better and better and better. I felt I didn’t need a valium anymore.”
41. Joy; ecstasy.

Appendix 3:

Summary of main Themes:

1. Anticipation of excitement. Refers to anticipation of the encounter.
2. The dolphin came/location of human. The location of the human by the dolphin.
3. Heightened awareness. "Wow"... "Amazing".
4. Sense of well being. "Enjoyable/good spirits"
5. Physical contact. Touching.
6. Lack of fear.
7. Individual attention. "Dolphin singles me out".
8. Unaware of external events/absorption. "It didn't feel cold....amazing".
9. Playing/interacting. Goes with 14, playing is a form of communication/interaction.
10. Being present in the moment. The "now"/Grounded in the present.
11. Unity bubble/being part of. Deep connection...."in the water"...."in that space"...."with the dolphin"...."you were in it....a part of it....a sense of like wow. (links with 3).
12. Trust/being safe with/love. Love is *my* interpretation, maybe only suggested but it is more than 6, more than a lack of fear; it acknowledges potential danger but trusts like a child.
13. Wanting more. With sense of need fulfilment.
14. Communicating. The encounter is meaningful; more than just "play".
15. Ineffable. Links with 3; spiritual/transpersonal quality. Significantly in text it is juxtaposed between 3: "awe"... "wow" and 10: being present in the moment: i.e. a complex of transpersonal phenomena.
16. Dolphin's awareness. The feeling that the dolphin is aware.

Post Encounter

17. Negative/depressed/tense. “I felt really down” “tension in my face” “anger” and “not knowing what it was about”
18. Emotional crying. “I anted to cry a lot”: links with 20 but a more general mood rather than a specific session of crying.
19. Peace. Precedes 20; almost a quiet before the storm.
20. Upsurge of complex emotions. Actually very physical, laughter, retching, twitching.

Post Encounter Interpretative

21. Deep inner connection/knowledge. Perceived as dolphin initiated! A realization....suddenly being in touch with a deep part of oneself....seeing things as they are.
22. Turning point/healing. “another direction” as result of 21.
23. In the body/being oneself like the dolphin. “get to the body” “the dolphin was just being itself in that complete moment”: the dolphin experience moves one into the physical body: emphasis on its movement/jumping/diving etc. as a characteristic of physicality.
24. Trusting/letting go. Avoiding the trauma by trusting the process of the body, of the whole organism. Is there a link to 6 and 12? Lack of fear/trusting the dolphin.... (transference). A healing because of a learning to trust? Letting go of fear.
25. Willingness of dolphin to interact. “That a wild animal was wiling to interact was amazing”.
26. Blessed or honoured.
27. Intimacy/bonding with others present. “The respect, the love, the admiration that people showed towards one another.”
28. Reconnection/remembering previous encounters. “Like meeting an old friend.”
29. Anthropomorphic transference?
30. Feeling the dolphin’s need for contact. “....pleading with you to get back in the water.”
31. Eye contact. “....she’ll look dead at you” Ruairi, Also as “reflected appraisal” Jan (cited by Myers and Russell 2003) Self image and identity, 44 and 45.

32. Refreshed mentally, spiritually, and physically.
33. Spirituality of bonding with a wild animal/Emanation of spirit. "...she is if you like the Holy Spirit."
34. Voluntary presence. "...she doesn't have to be there."
35. Therapeutic nature of contact. Lowers stress....does she heal asthma etc.
36. Negative self image. "Just rubbish" (Bill).
37. Emotional recollection. But as indicator of intense emotional impact = 3.
38. General interpretation. Interpretation of reason for presence of dolphin: "ambassador" dolphin hypothesis.
39. Being wanted.
40. Alienation. Hospital experience seen as alienating; questioning /analytical (Bill): contrast with 39.
41. Joy/Ecstasy.
42. Change/transformation of consciousness.
43. Freeing creativity. "It freeda new appreciation of your possibilities....of well not my possibilitiesof possibilities in general."
44. Identification with dolphin. Possibly as result of "reflected appraisal" see 31.
45. Loss of self-centeredness/seeing as the "other". And this causes a "bubbling with joy". See also 31. Eye contact. Seeing self through eyes of others.
46. Being wanted.
47. Massive energy. "You've just got massive energy....you know." (Horace).
48. "Zapped". Filled with emotion/knowledge. As in "zapped" with information from a satellite.
49. Lasting effects of tapping into Joy. "It's a feeling that I can always tap into. Whatever is happening in my life; if there's even any difficult times in my life, if there's any worries or upsets or concerns; I can always tap into that very special feeling of joy." (Jackie)
50. Telepathy. "...trusting, caring, sharing and giving" (Jackie)

Appendix 4:

Co-Researcher's Agreement

I agree to participate in the research study:

“Therapeutic Transpersonal Encounters with Dolphins”

I understand the nature and purpose of this study. I understand that it is primarily a thesis for a M.Sc. degree in Transpersonal Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University. I give permission for the data to be used for the above purpose, including a dissertation and any future publication.

I understand that only an agreed first name will be used to identify my contribution.

I agree to provide, in co-operation with the principle researcher, a brief personal synopsis, to include only such information as I feel appropriate and which I am happy to reveal.

I am aware that I have the right to:

1. Review the transcript of this interview and will be asked to recommend changes.
2. Review a subsequent “textual description” and may make recommendations as to its accuracy as a description of the experience in question.

I am aware that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time and to require that my own data be destroyed.

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and that no payment will be made.

I am aware that I have the right to a final debriefing when the research is completed and if I wish to a copy of the research document.

I understand that the principle researcher, as a student at Liverpool John Moores University, is subject to the Code of Practice of the University Ethics Committee.

Research Participant/Co-Researcher/date

Principal Researcher/date

Appendix 5:

Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999)

B. Publishability guidelines especially pertinent to qualitative research

The following guidelines are either specific to qualitative research, or are specifications of how more general principles apply to qualitative research. These guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive or definitive. Authors should be able to address how they meet the intentions of these guidelines for reporting qualitative research, or their rationales for meeting alternative standards.

1. **Owning one's perspective.** Authors specify their theoretical orientations and personal anticipations, both as known in advance and as they became apparent during the research. In developing and communicating their understanding of the phenomenon under study, authors attempt to recognize their values, interests and assumptions and the role these play in the understanding. This disclosure of values and assumptions helps readers to interpret the researchers' data and understanding of them, and to consider possible alternatives.
2. **Situating the sample.** Authors describe the research participants and their life circumstances to aid the reader in judging the range of people and situations to which the findings might be relevant.
3. **Grounding in examples.** Authors provide examples of the data to illustrate both the analytic procedures used in the study and the understanding developed in the light of them. The examples allow appraisal of the fit between the data and the authors' understanding of them; they also allow readers to conceptualize possible alternative meanings and understandings.
4. **Providing credibility checks.** Researchers may use anyone of several methods for checking the credibility of their categories, themes or accounts. Where relevant, these may include (a) checking these understandings with the original informants or others similar to them; (b) using multiple qualitative analysts, an additional analytic 'auditor', or the original analyst for a 'verification step' of reviewing the data for discrepancies, overstatements or errors; (c) comparing two or more varied qualitative perspectives, or (d) where appropriate, 'triangulation' with external factors (e.g. outcome or recovery) or quantitative data.
5. **Coherence.** The understanding is represented in a way that achieves coherence and integration while preserving nuances in the data. The understanding fits together to form a data-based story/narrative, 'map', framework, or underlying structure for the phenomenon or domain.
6. **Accomplishing general vs. specific research tasks.** Where a general understanding of a phenomenon is intended, it is based on an appropriate range of instances (informants or situations). Limitations of extending the findings to other contexts and informants are specified. Where understanding a specific instance or case is the goal, it has been studied and described systematically and

comprehensively enough to provide the reader a basis for attaining that understanding. Such case studies also address limitations of extending the findings to other instances.

7. Resonating with readers. The manuscript stimulates resonance in readers/reviewers, meaning that the material is presented in such a way that readers/reviewers, taking all other guidelines into account, judge it to have represented accurately the subject matter or to have clarified or expanded their appreciation and understanding of it.

© Robert Elliott, Constance Fischer & David Rennie, 1998. May be reproduced or cited for personal, educational or noncommercial use. For further details, see text of article.

REFERENCES

- Abram, David. (1996). *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage Books
- Anderson, Rosemarie. (1998). *Intuitive inquiry: A transpersonal approach*. In: Braud and Anderson (Eds.), *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honouring human experience* (pp. 69-94). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Antonioli and Reveley. (2005). Randomised controlled trial of animal facilitated therapy with dolphins in the treatment of depression. *British Medical Journal* Vol. 331, 2005.
- Bible, The. Authorized King James Version. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blackstone, Judith. (2006). Intersubjectivity and Nonduality in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Vol.38, No.1, 2006.
- Brening, Dr. Karstan. (2005). Expert Statement on “Swim with the Dolphin Programs and Dolphin-Assisted Therapy”. UNESCO (ACCOBAMS Secretariat) Monaco.
- Bucke, R. M. (1991) (originally 1901). *Cosmic Consciousness*. New York: Arkana.
- Bunnell, S. (1974). *The Evolution of Cetacean Intelligence*. In: McIntyre, J. (Ed.) *Mind in the Waters* New York: Scribner, San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Cahalan, W. (1995). *Ecological Groundedness in Gestalt Therapy*. In: Roszak, T. et al (Eds.) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Chaikin, Joseph. (1972). *The Presence of the Actor*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc.
- Cole, David M. (1996). *Electroencephalograph Results of Human-Dolphin Interaction: A Sonophoresis Model*. A paper given to The Second International Symposium on Dolphin Assisted Therapy, at Cancun, Mexico.
- Concise Oxford Dictionary. (1976). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Daniels, M. (2005). *Shadow, Self, Spirit: Essays in transpersonal psychology*. Exeter: Imprint Acader
- De Mares and Kryka. (1999) *Wild Animal-Triggered Peak Experiences: Transpersonal Aspects*. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Vol. 30, No.2, 1998.
- Dobbs, H. (1990). *Follow a Wild Dolphin*. Souvenir Press.
- Dobbs, H. (1991). *Dance to a Dolphin’s Song*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Dobbs, H. (2000). *Dolphin Healing: the extraordinary power and magic of dolphins to heal and transform our lives*. London: Judy Piatkus Ltd.

- Dufrechou, Jay P. (2002). *Coming Home to Nature through the Body: An intuitive inquiry into experiences of grief, weeping, and other deep emotions in response to nature*. Doctoral dissertation: Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Palo Alto, CA.
- Elliott, Fischer and Rennie. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research Studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, **38**.
- Eriugena (John Scotus). (2000) (originally 877 C.E.) In: Bamford, C. (Ed.) *The Voice of the Eagle*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfare Books.
- Evans, D. (1993). *Spirituality and human nature*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ferrer, Jorge. (2002). *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A participatory view of human spirituality*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Ferrer, Albareda and Romero. (2004). Embodied Participation in the Mystery: Implications for the Individual, Interpersonal Relationships and Society. *ReVision: The Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, 27 (1) pp. 10-17.
- Gunn, Thom. (1979). *Selected Poems*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber.
- Harper, S. (1995). *The Way of Wilderness*. In: Roszak, T. et al. *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth Healing the Mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Book Club.
- Herodotus. (1996). *The Histories*, trans. De Selincourt, A. London: Penguin Books.
- Humphries, T. L. (2003). Effectiveness of Dolphin-Assisted Therapy as a Behavioural Intervention for Young Children with Disabilities. *Bridges*, Vol.1 No. 6. 2003.
- Lawrence, D.H. (1972) *Selected Poems*. Harmondsworth: penguin Books.
- Lilly, John. (1962). *Man and Dolphin*. Gollancz.
- Lilly, John. (1967). *The Mind of the Dolphin*. Doubleday.
- Lockyer and Muller. (2003). *Solitary, Yet Sociable*. In: Frohoff and Peterson (Eds.), *Between Species: Celebrating the dolphin-human bond*. San Francisco: Sierra Book Club.
- Lukina, L.N. (1999). Influence of dolphin-assisted therapy sessions on the functional state of children with psychoneurological symptoms of diseases. *Human Psychology*, 25, pp. 676-679.
- Marshall, P. (2005). *Mystical Encounters with the Natural World: Experiences and Explanations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Nathensen, D. E. (1980). Dolphins and Kids. Paper given to Congress 16th. World Assembly of the World Organization for Preschool Education. (pp. 447-51).
- Nathensen, D.E. (1989). Using Atlantic bottlenose dolphins to increase cognition of mentally retarded children. In: Lovibond, P. and Wilson, P. (Eds.) *Clinical and Abnormal Psychology*. North Holland: Elsevier.
- Nathensen, D.E. and de Faria, S. (1993). Cognitive improvement of children in water with and without dolphins. *Anthrozoos* 6 (1): pp. 17-29.
- Nathensen, D.E., de Castro, D., Friend, H., and McMahon, M. (1997). Effectiveness of short-term dolphin assisted therapy for children with severe disabilities. *Anthrozoos* 10 (2/3): pp. 90-100.
- Nathensen, D.E. (1998). Long term effectiveness of dolphin assisted therapy for children with severe disabilities. *Anthrozoos* 11 (1): pp. 22-32.
- Otto, Rudolph ((1932) 1987). *Mysticism East and West*, trans. Bracey an Payne. Wheaton, Ill: Theosophical Publishing House.
- Stace, W.T. (1961). *Mysticism and Philosophy*, London: Macmillan.
- Smith, B. (1981). Using dolphins to elicit communication from an autistic child. School of Public Affairs and services, USA.
- Smith, B. (1984). Using dolphins to elicit communication from an autistic child. In: Anderson, R.K., Hart, B.L. and Hart, L.A. (Eds.) *The Pet Connection: Its influence on our health and quality of life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Center to Study Human-Animal Relationships and Environments.
- Smith, B. (2003). The discovery and development of dolphin-assisted therapy. In: Frohoff and Peterson (Eds.), *Between Species*. San Francisco: Sierra Book Club.
- Trungpa, C. (1987). *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Webb, N.L. and Drummond, P.D. (2001). The effect of swimming with dolphins on human well-being and anxiety. *Anthrozoos*, 14(2), 2001. pp.81-85.
- Wilson, E.O. (1984). *Biophilia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Weston, Jessie L. ((1920) 1980). *From Ritual to Romance*. Bath: Chivers Press.
- Yeats, W.B. (1933) *Collected Poems*. London: Macmillan.
- Zaehner, R.C. (1957). *Mysticism Sacred and Profane: An inquiry into some varieties of praeternatural experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

