

BELONGING A LITTLE IN LOTS OF PLACES:

National Identity as a Doorway To Commonality

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | i |
| Abstract | iii |
| Preface | iv |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Belonging | 1 |
| Definition | 3 |
| Personal Journey | 4 |
| Process Work | 6 |
| Questions that Guide and Shape my Research | 9 |
| Overview of this Thesis | 10 |
| CHAPTER ONE: Levels and Layers in National Identity | 12 |
| The Structure of National Identity | 13 |
| The Psychology of Nationalism | 19 |
| National Identity and Process Work | 27 |
| CHAPTER TWO : Process Work, Identity and Me | 31 |
| Awakening to Awareness | 31 |
| Process Work | 34 |
| CHAPTER THREE: Methodology | 40 |
| Research Focus & Questions | 40 |
| Research Purpose | 40 |
| Research Paradigm | 41 |
| Orientation to Enquiry | 42 |
| Phenomenology and Process Work. | 42 |
| Heuristic Enquiry | 42 |
| Storytelling and Writing | 44 |
| Participants | 45 |
| Delimitations | 46 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| The Interviews | 47 |
| Data Collection | 48 |
| Interview Questions | 50 |
| Interpretation | 51 |
| Validation and Crystallization | 53 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: THE INTERPRETATIVE PROCESS | 55 |
| Weaving it all Together | 55 |
| Subjectivity and Edges in Interpretation | 58 |
| An Awareness Quilt | 59 |
| Consensus Reality | 59 |
| Dreamland | 60 |
| Essence Level | 60 |
| The Intentional Field | 61 |
| From Fabric to Fiber: Revealing the Levels | 62 |
| The Finished Quilt: Consensus Reality or Primary Process | 63 |
| Templates that Make the Pattern of the Quilt | 63 |
| First Moments | 63 |
| Threads of Primary Identification | 63 |
| The Quilt of Mixed Identity | 64 |
| Complex Weaves and Structures | 65 |
| National Narratives, Doors to Dreamland | 65 |
| Complexities of National Identity | 65 |
| Dreamdoors | 66 |
| Borders Between Patches | 67 |
| Edges to Identity | 67 |
| Strands and Fibers: Essence Level Moments..... | 69 |
| Dreaming in the Enemy | 71 |
| Victimization and the Power of What is “Out There” | 73 |
| Fibers and Filaments: Finding the Source and the Spirit of the Freedom Fighter..... | 76 |
| The Hem that Holds it Together | 78 |
| CONCLUSION | 80 |
| Appendix A. Interview Questions | 85 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Appendix B. Interview # H | 87 |
| REFERENCES | 95 |

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a qualitative heuristic study, influenced by the phenomenological approach of Process Work, of the phenomenon of national identity. It addresses the question: How can the experience of national identity be a doorway into unexpected places of commonality or oneness? Data was collected from nine semi-structured interviews and interpreted using an analytical framework structured by Mindells' four levels of awareness (2001b): the "known experience" or "consensus reality," the less or unknown experience" or "dreamland," the "pre-signal experience" or "essence" and the "guiding force" or "intentional field." The study suggests that national identity is a rich experience that can be unfolded in ways that reveal in the background deep experiences of sameness and commonality.

PREFACE.

I have always dreamed of one-day stitching a patchwork quilt of my own, something that I would create from the scraps of fabric that I have gathered together during my life. It will be a thing that once unfurled would make a 'whole' of all the things that over time have become scattered. It will be a beautiful piece of work, not instantly recognizable, neither art nor craft. It will be the creation of one thing from the myriad of pieces some that traveled with me for a lifetime, others that lost their meaning as they lay at the bottom of some box or drawer, stored for an unknown time in many forgotten and only half remembered places.

This quilt will be made of the pieces of this and that, which have been discarded by one time and saved by another. They will be swatches of multicolored meaning, and scraps of textured memory. Some will have been a long time hidden; others will have lost their use but be impossible to discard. Pieces will be discovered stuffed in between soft and hard places, pulled out crumpled but surprisingly preserved in their brightest colors. A few of the patches I will have saved from times when spinning, carding and dyeing were my craft, when the bringing together of warp and weft were my meditation of choice, and these patches will hold special places on the quilt for these came from the calm that exists within me, the experience before outer life takes over. There will be things in my quilt that make no sense till they are lined up beside an unexpected neighbor whose own design serves only to bring out all the textures and patterns that seemed to have faded.

In my quilt there will be many frayed edges that need hemming, and some pieces will be almost impossible to fit into the scheme of it all, their uneven surfaces and mismatched colors will appear to have no place in the bigger piece, though I am sure that even these will find a

place, and may even become a feature that some who see it will comment on and bring their wisdom to. This quilt will tell a story. It will be my story held in its crazy blends of knits and weaves. The printed pieces will tell of journeys taken, the multi- textured surface will remember myriads of moods and the seams between pieces will be stitched with threads of many colors and weights, big clumsy stitches in some places, small almost invisible stitches in others.

And when you come and see this quilt of mine, for you will be welcome to see it, I will show you around its length and breadth, I will have you feel the rough and the smooth of it – from silk velvet pile to rough woven hessian, golden brocades to homespun khadi. If you are interested I will share the technique with you and encourage you with your own patchwork projects.

In November 1986, as part of a memorial in San Francisco for the gay rights activist Harvey Milk, one of the organizers Cleve Jones asked some of the people attending the march and vigil if they would make signs to hang on the city hall. He asked if those who had loved ones and partners who had died of AIDS, a then relatively unknown illness, would make simple cardboard signs with the names of those who had died written large upon them.

Using an extendable ladder that he and other organizers had hidden in the bushes, they taped and hung the names, some only the first name, some simply anonymous “my lover,” over the building’s facade. That night when the panels were up and hanging Jones saw in them the image of a quilt, and with that image the Names Project was born. A small beginning to what has become a vast quilted memorial to some 43,000 of the many millions of people who have now died of AIDS.

In 1991 I saw a part of this quilt displayed in Melbourne Australia, and like many of the people at the Town Hall that day, I spent the hours that I was there with tears rolling down my

cheeks as I read and saw the lives of so many people creatively and lovingly stitched onto the 3ft by 6ft panels. That the quality and essence of a life could be held in a piece of embroidered or painted or collaged fabric was a striking image that has stayed with me since that time. The idea of making a panel for my own life stayed dormant in one of those places in one's mind where creative ideas are held in storage, waiting for their moment to re-appear.

When looking for a metaphor with which to structure and formulate this thesis, the image of the quilt reappeared in a dream I had. In the dream an old woman and I travelled to the Middle East for her to collect her possessions that she had left there. These possessions had been laid out as a kind of exhibition in the sand, and one of them was a quilt, another a map. She told me to pick them up for her and then she went on to tell me that she had been the person who had drawn on a map the borders of this place, which was now this country.

The dream came to me in the midst of my research and preparation for writing this thesis. It also came to me at the time when the so-called war in Iraq was being fought and I had been reading about the drawing of the borders of Iraq in the early 20th century by a British woman, Gertrude Bell. For me the dream captured elements of the consensus reality events of the time, and also my own dreaming of the creation of an identity and "map" or quilt of my own that is a repeated and deeply felt part of my dreaming and fate in this life time.

This thesis is a patchwork quilt of personal stories, my own and my interviewees. It has panels of patterned research, textured reviewing and decorative appliqués of interpretation making up its whole. The stitches holding the swatches together are threads made of fibres and filaments extruded from the ideas of Process Work. The needle used to draw the patches and scraps of it all together is the spirit in me that asks over and over again questions about the

presence and absence of identity, its value, its limitations and its pathway to places where momentarily we can experience a sense of freedom from its presence.

The pattern I have chosen from the many templates available is the pattern known as National identity.

Identity seems to be a peculiar phenomenon to those of us who lack the more consensual points of reference to connect ourselves to. This mysterious assumption that it is a human right to know ourselves, be free and able to connect ourselves to something past and present, is part of what has driven and inspired the creation of this paper. Without history, language or land and lacking a connection to myth, faith or ancestors “identity” becomes a moment-by-moment experience of life, an identity that deep down holds the same sense of connection and belonging which these other consensual experiences of identity typically provide for so many.

INTRODUCTION

After all I have no nationality, and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. Far, Sui Sin (1865-1914)

Sui Sin Far was born in the Industrial heartland of the North of England in the middle of the 19th century. She was christened Edith Maud Eaton, the child of an English father and a Chinese mother. Her father had met her mother while he was stationed in Shanghai, China, and after a romantic courtship and marriage he brought her back to England where their two children were born. From England the family moved to Montreal, Canada, where Sui Sin Far grew up. Then as a young woman Sui moved to the United States of America to work as a journalist and writer. She was the first Asian American to have her fiction published and the first to write on her and other's experiences as Eurasians.

When I read Far's article "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian," published in 1909, and listened to her experience through her words, I felt I had met a fellow traveler on the path of life. Her parental connections to two impressive and diverse cultures, and her absence of connection to the reality of either nation, culture or identity struck a chord with my own experience as a child of refugees, distanced from a rich and ancient culture that in my case was lost to war and genocide. In her final paragraph in this article, Sui Sin Far writes:

After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. "You are you and I am I," says Confucious. I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant "connecting link". And that's all. (Far, Sui Sin, 1909.)

My interest in writing this Thesis comes from a deep inner wondering that I have carried with me since childhood about the experience of Nationality and National identity. As I have read and researched and conducted interviews for this paper, the word 'humbled' has stayed, like

a mantra, in my head and heart. Humbled in the sense of discovering in myself a deep appreciation and awe for the various topics I have researched, exploring ideas of identity and power, community, family, spirituality and myth. Finding an inspiring sense of depth and longing in the background of something that to me has so often appeared as superficial and consensual, has been a great gift from this task. Having the opportunity to sit with and at times meditate on the assumed yet also mysterious concept of ‘identity’ has given me time to pull certain fragments and pieces of my own identity out of storage or hiding. At the same time I was blessed to be joined by others – my co-researchers/interviewees - in the creation of this work by their willingness to participate in unfolding lesser known patterns and textures of their own.

Belonging.

Belonging to groups is an essential part of our identities. In the earliest moments of an interaction that we have with a stranger we might initially share only our names, but in time we will also wonder and ask about one another’s place of origin, family background, profession and perhaps even language, religion, ethnic group or nationality.

Each of our answers to these questions will place us somewhere on a map, be it a geographical, political, social or psychological landscape. Each of the answers to these questions will also inform us of the ways that we are connected to groups and our identities in terms of which groups we hold membership to. Membership of a group is clearly a central experience of being human, but being aware of what that means is a less well known experience. For when we identify ourselves with a group we are sometimes unaware of how that self-identification instantly sets a boundary or limit to our sense of identity. Oftentimes we are also unaware of how we create another group, the group who are “not us”, and sometimes we may even not really care that we have done that.

For some of us being a part of a group can be a worthwhile experience of deep connection, love and togetherness, shared experiences, traditions and ideas, a sense of solidarity and safety. For some of us, being identified with the “wrong” group can mean a terrible danger, or even a life and death situation. And for some of us, without realizing it, the very naming of a group that we are a part of or identify with can lead to divisions, revenge, hatred and even violence.

Nationality or national identity is just one of many groups that we humans have created and chosen to identify with. It is a modern experience of unity and community and it can be useful to give a sense of roots and togetherness. But as with all groups and categories of identification it holds many dangers and limitations.

One thing I would really like to tell [children] about is cultural relativity. I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is defensible and attractive. It is also a source of hope. It means we don't have to continue this way if we don't like it. (Vonnegut, 1974)

Definitions.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Edition (2000), lists two definitions for Nationality. One is "The status of belonging to a particular nation by origin, birth or naturalization", the other "A people having common origins or traditions and often constituting a nation". As I read these two definitions, so neutral and bland in my eyes, I wondered at the other sides of nationality which I have experienced and witnessed at various times in my life, where exclusivity, violence, superiority and a closed-ness to another 'way' of life has dominated the sense that an individual has of his or her nation and national identity.

In these definitions, I ask myself, where are political fervor and fury that rear their head when immigration and diversification issues come to the fore front of local and international news? Where is the "status of belonging" in those all too frequent disturbances of the equilibrium of so-called national unity and identity?

As a child of immigrants and refugees my life has been full of and shaped by this myth of not belonging that my family carries. I have lived as a resident and in some cases as a citizen of four countries in the world, never quite realizing a sense of belonging in or to any of them. I have become fascinated by the experience of others who identify strongly with their country or nation, who mention it, name it and in some deep sense believe in it. I wonder to myself what that is like, how that shapes a way of thinking. But more often I wonder at how that then shapes a

view of the world and the “not-me” individuals who live beyond the borders that surround that primary nation and identity.

I recall jokes about other countries and cultures that serve to reaffirm stereotypes of difference and definition that many of us are brought up to believe are inherent in our world. Here I include one well known example from Europe. The whole structure of this joke can be interchanged with different countries and different occupations depending on which place you are from and with which countries you have an historical or cultural connection or clash of values with. Non-British Europeans may not have the same associations or stereotypes with these particular countries and so the joke may only work for British people, I have also heard different versions from people from other parts of the world where other nationalities take on other roles.

David Frost’s study of the British character, published during International Tourism Year (1967), humorously commented that the British definition of Hell was still as follows: a place where the Germans are the police, the Swedish are the comedians, the Italians are the defense force, Frenchmen dig the roads, the Belgians are the pop singers, the Spanish run the railways, the Turks cook the food, the Irish are the waiters, the Greeks run the government and the common language is Dutch. (Weight, 2002, p.506)

Personal Journey.

For the last 5 years I have been a member and participant in the international community of learners at the Process Work Center of Portland and have noticed over and over again how issues of national identity appear at times both as a kind of relieving balm for a deeper understanding of a situation and also sometimes as a paralysis and closed ness to diversity and difference both within and without.

I learn this also about myself. I have seen repeatedly my own closed-ness to other unfamiliar ways of doing things and have been aware of using aspects of my, albeit first generation, British background culture and identity to explain my limitations or boundaries around particular ways of behaving. I read this quote from Jean Rook, a well-known British journalist in the early 1970’s, and instantly felt something key about my own character and internalized sense of identity limitations in how she wrote about the British people in reference to the United Kingdoms entry into the European Common Market at that time.

Since Boadicea we British have slammed our seas in the faces of invading frogs and wops, who start at Calais. Today we're slipping our bolts. And of what we have to offer Europe, what finer than contact with our short-tongues, stiff-necked, straight-backed, brave, bloody-minded and absolutely beautiful selves? To know the British (it takes about 15 years to get on nodding terms) will be Europe's privilege. (Rook, Jean.1973.)

But along with this experience of identifying with a common national identity I have as the daughter of refugees and immigrants, had other experiences where I have felt both the curious sense of freedom to shape shift, to try on other hats, to drop one identity and pick up another and also the discomfort of being an outsider, someone without roots, someone left out through failing to belong in the 'correct' ways to the mainstream establishment in places where I have lived.

On the one hand the experience of not belonging has been a background agony, a deprivation or a sense of loss around not being a part of a particular community and culture, somehow living always on the edge of worlds.

I want to give up the condition of being a foreigner. I no longer want to tell people quaint stories from the old country, I don't want to be told 'exotic is erotic', or that I have Eastern European intensity, or brooding Galacian eyes... I no longer want to have the prickly unrelenting consciousness that I'm living in the medium of a specific culture... I want to re-enter, through whatever looking glass will take me there, a state of ordinary reality. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 202)

On the other hand not having a sense of belonging has given me a freedom to mis-behave, to not identify with or hold a set of defining values that need to be upheld, a curious freedom to be whatever calls to me in the moment.

"we'll come back," said Papa.

"I know," said Anna, "But it won't be the same – we won't belong. Do you think we'll ever really belong anywhere?"

"I suppose not," said Papa. "Not in the way people belong who have lived in one place all their lives. *But we'll belong a little in lots of places, and I think that may be just as good.*" (Kerr, 1971, p.186)

It is from this place of belonging in many places that this thesis has been born. The belonging *a little in lots of places* brings in another level of identity, the experience of being able somehow to live in many places on the physical realm and infinite places on the dreaming and essence levels, the experience of which unexpectedly gave me the so-called experience of ‘identity’ I thought I was longing for. From this experience of identity, of belonging in many places, also emerged the metaphor of the patchwork quilt that I have used throughout this thesis. It serves as a creative structure on which to hang and bring together the various matching and mismatching parts and sections of my life and of this thesis. Where my writing style changes from personal to theoretical, from structured to free flowing I find the presence of the quilt, its shapes and forms as patterned and higgledy-piggeldy as the dream quilt that would be my life’s journey. Having this metaphor as a background pulse during the writing of my thesis gave me a freedom to refer to and understand one thing in terms of another. As Richardson (1994, p. 579) has noted, “A literary device, metaphor, is the backbone of social science writing. Like the spine it bears weight, permits movement, is buried beneath the surface, and links parts together into a functional coherent whole.”

Process Work.

As a model of psychotherapy and an inner-work discipline Process Work has encouraged me to appreciate my experience of having a looser sense of identity in the consensus reality levels of the world. Mindells’ recent development of “sentience” and “essence” level work has been particularly important in this regard. Rather than wish for a clearer identity, something that was mythically not there for me on the consensus reality level of experience, I was supported to discover what it was that *was* there and to celebrate and relax into my personal

path. Catching that longing for identity and the pleasure in finding a framework that could hold my own immigrant/refugee experience gave me a sense too of something of the spirit that holds other peoples in their own more traditional definitions of who they are. With Process Work I experienced what I felt must be the pleasure and relief that comes with holding an identity. A sense of exhalation on finding a group or place of belonging no matter how numinous or symbolic it might be.

This thesis has grown from my experiences in therapy, asking the eternal questions “Who am I? Why am I here?” The creativity and imaginative openness of the Process Work model of psychotherapy has helped me over and over again to find unexpected answers that have inspired me onwards. Finding a teacher in life, a teacher and a path that celebrates and supports one on the journey of it all, is truly a magical and precious gif to embrace.

[A] group of visitors came to visit the Buddha. They said to him, “ Many teachers come through here. Each has his own doctrine. Each claims that his particular philosophy and practice is the truth, but they all contradict each other. Now we are totally confused. What do we do?” The Buddha replied, “You have a right to be confused. This is a confusing situation. Do not take anything on trust merely because it has been passed down through tradition, or because your teachers say it, or because your elders have taught you, or because it is written in some famous scripture. When you have seen it, and experienced it for yourself to be right and true, then you can accept it. (Palmo, Ani Tenzin, 2002, p.163.)

You could say that there is a dreadful freedom in the path of the refugee and migrant, a tabula rasa and the absence of roots and legends that link person to place. Children born to these new comers will bring the only place they have known home to their parents and so continue the creation of a new experience of where it is that they have landed.

I felt something of that myself growing up in the UK in the 70’s and 80’s. There was no doubt that I was born there. I had the birth certificate to prove it. But when people met my father

and asked me about his “funny accent” I was reminded that having a Polish father was not the typical ancestry of the native. I was barely a local in so many ways. My history and creation all stemmed from wartime events and misfortunes and very gradually it dawned on me that I was unusual. I was in my own nation and unconsciously and unremarkably my choice of friends at school tended to be children with their own similarly “funny accented” parents; a Swiss Father, an American mother, a Hungarian father, an Indian mother, all of us linked by our parents with “funny accents.” I might say that even as children we were already looking to form a group that we could belong to and feel validated by, a sense of shared identity that anchored us to an otherwise unreasonable sense of being misplaced in a nation that was not ours.

All my friends are exiles

*Born in one place, we live in another
And with true sophistication,
Rendezvous
in most surprising places –
where you would never expect to find us.*

Between us we people the world.

*With aplomb and a command of languages
we stride across continents
with the self-assurance of those who **know**
with absolute certainty
where they are from.*

*With the globe at our command,
we have everywhere to go
but home.*

Abena P.A. Busia, from *Testimonies of Exile*.

Questions that guide and shape my research.

In the background of this thesis lies my main research question that has grown from both my personal life experience and also my studies and therapeutic journey in the modality of Process Work. The question I hold in the background is: How can national identity be a doorway into unexpected places of commonality or oneness?

I also began this thesis with a number of linked questions that I hope to shed some light on along the way. These included questions on the structures behind national identity, what it is and how is it useful. There were also questions on how national identity is a disturbance, a limitation or something valuable. I wondered about where it tended to appear, and other times when it was absent, and I asked myself about the roles that existed under the umbrella of the topic, the roles of the enemy, the leader, history and home.

From another more dreamy perspective, a geological/geographical dreaming, I also found myself wondering if land itself has a consciousness that urges the formation of boundaries and borders. Is that why large rivers formed and mountain ridges appeared? Do canyons and impassable jungles exist, to delineate the end of one thing and the beginning of the next and does nature have a national identity consciousness herself with dramatic weather patterns, climate differences and diversity among indigenous peoples of the world. In my nighttime dreams and fantasies these natural wonders can appear as symbolic experiences of separation, challenge, boundary and restriction, and in some of my interviews the landscape played a significant part.

Deeper still I wondered how we are all nations within ourselves, holographically containing all of every culture and the potential to belong in and to all places and ways of being. I thought to myself, "How, like modern nations, have we embraced ideas of defining our 'self' with internal borders and concepts of difference? How do we feel safer with that, enjoy it even, and how

are we uncomfortable with or becoming disturbed by that?" These ponderings were prompted in part by Mindells' thinking in this area:

When you think about a group you think 'well that does not really belong here', but the moment you say that, if you think about it some, maybe you will say "it does not belong in the consensus reality definition of the group, but it belongs in the group somehow". And that feeling is really a key issue around diversity issues, and around 'who we are not'. People have been saying that for centuries, but thinking about it and feeling it every time you say "group", do you mean that or not? When I say, "group" I mean its primary identity and its dreamland things, all the things that it isn't. (Mindell, 2002 c).

Finally, in the background of this thesis is a high dream, a hope or ideal that comes up for a moment and then retreats, over and over. It is a high dream about the world itself, about its borders and differences, about wars being fought and cultures annihilated under the umbrella of nationalism and xenophobia. My hope and dream is that we, as a global people, are getting closer to recognizing the deepest values of diversity and the limitations of borders and so-called "difference", and the uselessness of trying to be rid of what we think is too much trouble for us. As Maalouf proposes,

[E]veryone should be able to include in what he regards as his own identity a new ingredient, one that will assume more and more importance in the course of the new century and the new millennium: the sense of belonging to the human adventure as well as his own. (Maalouf, 2000, p.162-163)

Overview of this Thesis.

In Chapter One of this thesis I introduce the topic of national identity by explaining the main themes and ideas that most interested me in the recent literature that I reviewed on the subject.

In Chapter Two I introduce the paradigm of Process Work through my personal experiences and then give an introduction to ideas central to the work itself. Chapter Three explains the research method I have used for this thesis and introduces my nine interview participants and the interview structure used in my research.

In Chapter Four I return to the metaphor of the quilt, this time as the background structure, which orders my interpretation of the nine interviews I conducted to illustrate the levels of awareness from the Process Work paradigm. This chapter is a unraveling, teasing apart and weaving together of threads of diversity and sameness, edges and the levels of consensus reality, dreaming and deep sentient essence work. In it I share a sense of the flow and movement between the various levels of awareness. Chapter Five is a summing up, my personal sharing with the reader about what I learned from these interviews and research.

CHAPTER ONE: Levels and Layers in National Identity

Historians are to Nationalism what poppy-growers are to heroin addicts: We supply the raw material for the market. (Hobsbawm. E.J, 1990)

In August 2001 I was having lunch with my mother and younger sister in a restaurant in London. I was en route from Greece to the United States and had a 24-hour stopover in London. At the lunch table I brought out my bag of travel documents to show my sister my new United States residency card. As I rummaged around looking for the card my sister noticed the contents of my bag and proceeded to empty them onto the table. In a pile on the table were my Australian and British/European Union passports; my three drivers licenses, US social security card and work permit, and the new US residency card in its protective envelope. “You look like you are a spy!” she laughed, and for the first time I was aware of how unusual my traveling or national identity looked from another’s perspective.

While reading some of the considerable literature on national identity I chose to include subjective personal experiences along with political and psychological theory. Alongside reading more scholarly literature I was drawn to works that illustrated personal experiences that the authors had of this particular element of identity. I went through various sections of the libraries and bookstores. From anthropology to psychology, politics and biography, spirituality to history, I touched on various levels of the experience of identity specifically where it connected to a nation or nationality. They describe issues of ethnic groups that lacked a nation, entire nations that identified or attempted to identify with only one culture, spiritual practices that transformed identity into ether, the development of awareness in cross cultural psychology and a greater and more sensitive awareness within psychology and politics, of multiethnic and multicultural societies existing within the boundaries of one so-called nation. I read about the immigrant

experience of being between identities, the refugee's experience of the loss of a nation, the pioneer's experience of the birth of a nation and the disenfranchised experience of being nation-less. Since my research method was a heuristic one, and since in the background of my research I was looking to deepen an experience of identity, I was aware that whatever I read "I" was constantly relating it to my own experiences and in doing so getting closer to a personal appreciation of the question that lay behind my research.

The Structure of National Identity.

Within the structures that define national identity are multiple layers of "proof" or reason for the existence of that group or identity. I began my reading by going into the components of national identity itself and uncovering the structures that lay within it.

Nations themselves are a relatively new phenomenon in history, only becoming a political force in the 19th century. Existing for little more than 200 years nations have emerged from wars and revolutions, political changes, unifying languages, cultures and religions, and in the background some mysterious global dreaming that has tried to group together dominant groups of similarly organized peoples by drawing boundaries around them.

There are two distinguishing concepts of the nation. One is the "Civic" or "French" concept that emphasizes "inclusion," whereby anyone who accepts loyalty to a civic structure is a member of that nation. In this "style" of nation it is the individuals who belong to the nation. They are citizens and their citizenship is defined by participation in a "civic" culture or religion or education system. (Gellner, E, 1973). There are four key components in these types of nation. One is the existence of an underlying "ethnic core" that is cohesive. The second is the presence of strong rulers that create the administrative, financial, military and bureaucratic structures.

Thirdly what is needed is the economic revolution of capitalism that creates wealth; and finally a cultural secularization is present that creates a political consciousness. (A.D.Smith, 1986).

The second concept of nation is the Genealogical or “German” concept, which emphasizes the presence of a shared ethnicity, shared ties of descent and myths of origin of the people. In this structure of nation the rituals, language, culture and customs are key to the idea of nationality, and the historical experiences of the community are central to the sense of identity as a part of this nation. Neither of the two main concepts sits alone and the construction of modern nations has always involved a mix of both, with proportions varying with the political and social context that is present. (Thiesse, Anne-Marie, 1999).

The literature on nationalism suggests that any nation possessed underlying primary similarities with its neighboring nation in as much as they shared the same symbolic and material items required for the definition of nation. This means that in the background of even the fiercest of enemy nations were the exact same components that structured their very existence, and it was these specific items, which, though different in content, created the structures that supported the so-called cohesiveness of the populations. It was also easy to see that any nation also possesses similar marginal components or elements of the population who do not meet the uniformity required for inclusive national identity. Within each nation there are always substantial groups of outsiders who did not fit into the definitions of citizenship. In some cases these groups were denied legal rights or citizenship by the dominant governing bodies of the nation.

The symbolic and material items required by any nation begins with the existence of a history, which establishes continuity and authenticity throughout the ages. This history preferably includes common myths of origin and descent, historical memories, cultural patterns and values. These myths often serve as reminders of power and past glories and in times of

contention and disagreement can be used to overcome possible destabilizations that threaten the population's existence. (Weingrod, A. 1995, pp. 8)

Myths can also hold information in such a way that wars can be started just on the basis of how the myths are told and passed along, “[national myths] are the kindling nationalists use to light a conflict.” (Hedges, C. 2002, p.46) Myths and stories have been transmitted across time through songs and folklore, oral traditions, poems and ritual. Traditionally there were traveling storytellers who moved from place to place sharing news of neighboring populations through their songs and stories, but without doubt some of the greatest storytellers have been priests and religious leaders, who are endowed to tell their versions of stories with the blessing of God in the background.

Typically woven into the myths will be important historical sites and geographical features. A specific field or hill, a rock or coastline becomes intrinsically connected to the history of a people, and historic sights have frequently been features for which battles have been fought and boundaries challenged. The connection to land goes deepest of all with indigenous peoples whose essential existence and identity is tied up with the landscape and the dreaming that specific to place (Rose, 1996).

I feel with my body. Feeling all these trees, all this country. When this blow you can feel it. Same for country...you feel it, you can look, but feeling...that make you. (Big Bill Neidjie, Gagudju Elder, Kakadu.)

In non-indigenous cultures the land is at times experienced as holding something of the person in its very structure. The idea of the soil growing a person, being a part of a person's identity, holds a deep and intense meaning for people, meanings that are frequently carried in handfuls of soil, or perhaps seeds from their place of origin, when a person leaves their homeland to migrate or go into exile. Similarly it is not unusual to see a prominent

person returning from exile or many years away from “home” kneel down and kiss the earth, the national soil, on arriving and setting foot again on the country of his or her origin. (Weil, Simone. 1987).

The concept of a homeland also provides a vital stage for the myths and legends of the group to be set upon. Plenty of history and heritage has been developed and constructed in order to establish the required elements of derivation and ancestral rights of possession, and these constructions include claims upon particular areas of land. Smith (1986a) describes this connection to land as providing “maps for collective regeneration.” In her book “Lost in Translation,” Eva Hoffman (1989) writes of the primacy and romance of her relationship with the country of her childhood:

It has fed me language, perceptions, sounds, the human kind. It has given me the colors and the furrows of reality, my first loves. The absoluteness of those loves can never be recaptured: no geometry of the landscape, no haze in the air will live in us as intensely as the landscapes that we saw as the first, and to which we gave ourselves wholly, without reservations. (p. 74).

A shared spoken language is another essential connection in the structure and validation of a nation. The codification of national languages, bringing together all the dialects and variations that exist and systematizing the one dominant language is considered a vital in further defining national identity. A common language creates a demotion, rather than an eradication, of marginal local identities, and results in an attempted unity and homogenization of the population. A common language also provides a sense of distinction from neighbors and foreigners. John Lukas (1993) makes this wry observation,

A nationalist is pleased when a foreign visitor attempts to say something in his language, but he finds it distasteful when a fellow citizen of a race other than his speaks his national language incorrectly, with a jarring slang or intonation. (p. 209)

Wars fought under the banner of an identity with place or language, culture or myth, create an experience of cohesion between peoples. Wars create the sense of a shared danger and reinforce the presence of a common enemy. They also then provide inspiration for more myths and memories of heroism, which then become embellishments on the fabric of communal life and are remembered by, and influence future generations. Wars give a peculiar and specific sense of purpose and meaning to people and their nations. They allow for an experience of nobility and one-sidedness; they create a peculiar momentary unity and also the experience of sharing a higher moral purpose and idealism. Nothing brings people together faster and more efficiently than having a common enemy and the resultant experience of group relevance and conformity serves to diminish the perception of the self as unique or special.

The nation, as a kind of “organism” exists only through the emotional unity of its citizens, and nothing cements this unity more decisively than war.. peace saps the strength of nations by allowing citizens to drift back to their individual concerns. (Ehrenreich, B, 1998, p. 202)

War puts the diversity of the world into the simplistically understandable framework of “them” and “us” and gives the seemingly welcome space for the suspension of self-critical thought. Momentarily a population seems to become one thing. It is cohesive and united under the banner of some belief system that proclaims the conflict as essential and the sacrifice as necessary for some higher good.

As an individual becomes more connected to a social group the less she is free to stand out or be significant on her own. Therefore as a nation forms, the resultant group membership creates the majority of support for individuals shared beliefs and with the sharing of beliefs the comfort of solidarity and validation.

Another important layer in the weave of national identity is the presence of self-rule in some form. The survival of authenticity of an ethnic group typically requires self-rule, although it is also worth remembering that many ethnic groups have survived under foreign rule with their own systems and self-rule. The Jews, Tibetans, Kurds and Basques are a few examples of this and all have historically had to take great care in how much they are assimilated into the dominant culture and whether that assimilation holds fast in all “national” situations. All of these groups have created or are striving to create nation states for themselves, meaning that the option of being without a state or nation is definitely not the one they would choose.

Religious difference and specializations provide other emotionally significant social groups that allow important consensual validation. They also hold the additional quality of existing under convictions that are unverifiable. The influence of the teachers and preachers of these faiths with their involvement in education, historical notation, authorship, guardianship and leadership, is yet another opportunity, which allows the creation of a structured lifestyle that has an identity and a set of rules that ask to be adhered to. These rules and traditions when put side by side can become striking or even comical in their similarity and also their diversity:

A Christian man shows respect for his religion by taking off his hat but keeping on his shoes, while a Muslim man will show similar respect by keeping on his hat and removing his shoes. (E. Evans-Pritchard, 1962)

More seriously though, religious interpretations have not only provided a source for the confirmation of difference but also an unquestioned “divine right” to stay in one defined identity and become unrelated to or even completely intolerant of another. (Stakehouse, 2003). The presence of a religious conservatism also slows down the natural modification of beliefs and behaviors, which seems to be the preferred if not entirely

conscious direction of humanity on the planet. Religious conservatism significantly slows down the rate of any ethnic assimilation maintaining the “other” as more separate and foreign than any political or social argument can manage.

Keeping all this in mind, there is something else that is also happening constantly and, with the overwhelming developments of technology these days, more dramatically than ever, that is the almost global modification of beliefs and behaviors.

Throughout history peoples beliefs and behaviors have been constantly modified by adopting or borrowing from other cultures. The background attitude that foreign sources would contaminate a culture has been an argument that creates the isolation of cultures from one another. But in the long run no amount of isolation or conservatism can guarantee that changes will not happen to a way of life nor that the extinction of a culture will not occur.

Those who can accept their diversity fully will hand on the torch between communities and cultures, will be a kind of mortar joining together and strengthening the societies in which they live.Those who cannot accept their own diversity may be among the most virulent of those prepared to kill for the sake of identity, attacking those who embody that part of themselves which they would like to see forgotten. (Maalouf, 2000, p. 36)

The Psychology of Nationalism.

Nationalism has been described as “the most powerful political force in the world” (John Lukacs, 1993), a “dark elemental, unpredictable force of primordial nature threatening the orderly calm of civilized life” (Chaterjee, 1993, p. 4). C.Geertz in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* connects nationalistic hatred with religious bigotry, suggesting that they “have probably brought more havoc upon humanity than any two forces in history, and doubtless will bring a great deal more.” (1973, p254). However, Geertz then goes on to wonder at how we

might use these forces of havoc, which along with creating disasters and wars have also been “a driving force in some of the most creative changes in history, and doubtless will be so again in many yet to come.” His suggestion that we might take some time to try to figure out why this creative force takes these particularly negative forms brings me to some ideas of the psychology behind national identity.

Nationalism has been studied primarily from political and sociological perspectives and only more recently by the psychological field. What psychology has vastly researched however is the concept of identity, categorization of people, ways we think of ourselves and others and our behaviors when we get into groups. In order to deeply study nationalism it is essential to have some understanding of some of the developments in social psychology. Over the last 20 years the study of the role of self and identity in the fields of social and behavioral psychology has become increasingly emphasized. In part this is because issues of self and identity appear on multiple levels of experience and analysis: the individual in her social context, the group within society and the nation as part of the world. Like a hologram each level holds all the elements and dynamics of in-group connections and out-group hostilities as well as the demand for a status quo around rank and power issues and an on-going marginalisation of, and violence against, minorities. These minorities might be ethnic groups in a nation, dissenters in a society or those parts of our inner nature that we keep hidden from our more public or known sense of personal identity.

Since the 1970's researchers in anthropology, political science, sociology and psychology have begun to focus on the study of groups: the individual in a group, intra-group dynamics and inter-group patterns. How these experiences contribute to conflict, how identity is influenced by

the group and how identities might be harnessed to reduce intergroup hostility. (Ashmore, Jussin, and Wilder, 2001, p.12)

Throughout my reading on national identity I heard the voices of academics and journalists, philosophers and psychologists, wonder at the nature of humankind and the ways and choices we make in our paths of so-called “evolution.” Maalouf (2000, p. 9) writes “ I want to try to understand why so many people commit crimes nowadays in the name of religious, ethnic, national or some kind of other identity.”

Henri Tajfel, the great name in social identity theory, was, a survivor of the holocaust. From 1940-1945 he assumed a false identity as a French soldier, as opposed to a Polish-Jewish soldier, and in disguise spent those five years in various German prisoner of war camps. In his later academic life he referred to his experience living under a false identity, on guard against the ever present danger of discovery, and used his experience to make the point that it was irrelevant what his personal characteristics were or what his relationship with his German guards was like, because had his “true” identity been discovered it would have been his social category as a Polish Jew that would have determined the guards reaction and so sealed his fate. (Robinson 1996, p.3) Tajfel’s later studies delved deeply into group membership, Intergroup relations, ethnic loyalties, social categorization, the cognitive aetiology of prejudice, stereotyping and ethnocentrism. Social identity theory is not easy to summarize since the ideas are complex, vary in implication and the theory is a developing one. But Tajfel saw it as a conceptual tripod with these three legs. One leg was the psychological sequence whereby people with an unsatisfactory social identity would seek to change that by “restoring positive distinctiveness to their relevant group memberships.” (Robinson 1996, p.17). The second leg or concept was that people unsatisfied with their social identity would tend to act and seek solutions at the inter-group level

(ie: collectively as group members) rather than as individuals pursuing personal interests. This intergroup behavior allowed people to act in terms of shared social category memberships, treating out-group members similarly and perceiving out-group members as homogenous stereotypes. The third leg of the conceptual tripod is that of seeing the importance of human relationships – and of how they always occur in a social environment be it a family, a society or a nation – and to understand the psychological events that occur in human relationships as the interplay of these events with the social context in which they occur. (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965, pp.2-3.) Tajfel emphasized awareness of how people internalized their defined social categorization in order to define themselves subjectively.

One of Tajfel's central questions concerns why so many people, so often, behave in unison. His general point is that people are fundamentally governed by rules be they social appropriateness, culturally based values, historically shaped ideals or family created norms. In order to feel positive about ones identity; in order to be able to positively evaluate ourselves Tajfel suggests that we seek to act appropriately according to these social systems and ideologies which stem from political, social, moral or religious ideals.

Social psychology is not about individual differences or individual identity, it is about the socially shared; the collective aspects of behavior and how social forces shape the many not the individual exception.

Joshua Searle-White, in his book *The Psychology of Nationalism*, breaks down the process of nationalism into a sequence of attitudes and behaviors, in the background of which are a specific combination of experiences. He suggests that underlying much of the psychology of nationalism is an essential fear or panic around change. We are attached to historical markers on which to connect our identities and the appearance of unfamiliar events or roles which

challenge this historical sense of self disturbs the linear experience we like to have of the future of one's self or ones people or identity. Therefore having a viable set of enduring values is one of the great searches of our lives. But why do we do have this aching need? Why do we want hang onto this so tightly?

Searle-White suggests that, “not having a clear set of values or goals makes us feel as though we are adrift and incomplete” (Searle-White, 2001,p. 98). He writes that this “being adrift” is a kind of trauma for human beings, that in these modern times it is a fact that our identities are being constantly threatened by developments and technologies that we could not have foreseen happening even within our lifetimes. This sense of threat to aspects of our identity, he says, increases “the degree to which [the individuals] feel that aspect is important” (Searle-White, 2001, p. 65) and in response to fear of change combined with the phenomenon of our fragile sense of self-esteem, we start to frantically try to shore up our identities.

I have taken what Searle-White writes and have broken it down into phases of what I see in his work as the main steps to the process of Nationalism and particularly the to the experience of separation from “the other” and the violence that can result. As you read each of the steps you might ask yourself the simple questions: “Why would I want to do this? Why would this be important to me?” and go quietly into your own inner workings around the need to feel connected, valued and enduring.

Searle-White's first step to building a national identity is categorizing. Be it entropy or the natural tendency to follow the “path of least resistance”, we have a need to try to simplify everything, to make life easier, more known and less uncertain, and for this to happen we like to break things down to their lowest common denominator. We find things out about ourselves by knowing which categories we belong to, and we define appropriate behavior by referring to the

norms of the groups that we belong to. You can only do this, however, if you know who belongs to your group. In national identity it is place of birth, citizenship, heritage, traditions and ethnicity which fall into the simplistic categories of who “you” are, and once these are established it is made clear which groups we belong in and which we are outsiders of.

The next phase of the nationalistic process concerns our attitudes to insiders and outsiders. Having defined the in-groups to which we belong, a sense of “better than” arises. Group membership is not something foreign that is tacked onto our personal identity, it is a real, true and essential part of who we identify as being. Once that is established there comes the experience of competition, and the tendency to describe the out-group as if all members of that group are exactly the same. In the most extreme example of war, the members of the opposite group are treated as identical and completely different to the in-group, so making violent behavior against this “enemy” accepted and even expected behavior. Instead of encouraging and celebrate the diversity within ourselves and our surroundings, we raise just a handful of our affiliations to the status of being the most important and in doing so use them as “an instrument of exclusion and sometimes into a weapon of war.” (Maalouf, 200,p. 159). Self worth and having a positive self-concept seems to be the driving force behind this elevation of ourselves and the required social comparison and denigration of others.

Stereotypes appear next in the process. These generalizations we make about others, that are presumed to hold true about a group of people, support us to assume that everyone in another group are exactly the same as one another. Stereotypes reinforce difference to the extreme, meaning that the more extreme a person’s viewpoint, the more extreme her judgment of people in the ‘other’ group will be. Stereotypes become particularly dangerous because they affect so significantly how we receive new information about a person or group. Having adopted

stereotyped ways of thinking about another person, we tend to notice and remember the ways in which that person seems to fit the stereotype, while resisting evidence that contradicts the stereotype.

What is most important for understanding nationalism is that if we hold a stereotype about a group, that stereotype then 'shapes' how we understand new information that we encounter about that group. (Searle-White, 2001,p. 13)

As the in-group experience is formed the out-group devaluation increases. The “not us” becomes denigrated and joked about, exaggerations appear in how we think or talk about the “other” and negative thinking becomes the accepted norm. Propaganda next enters the mix, and the important clarification of the “enemy” occurs. Stories are told, articles and books written, movies made, art, journalism, radio, television, all mediums are used to spread propaganda. Typically the “enemy” becomes portrayed as aggressive, godless, uncivilized and greedy. Propaganda uses techniques and language to de-humanize the “other,” making them animal like, wild and without morality or ethics.

The nationalist is by definition as ignoramus. Nationalism is the line of least resistance, the easy way. The nationalist is untroubled, he knows or thinks he knows what his values are, that's to say national, that's to say the values of the nations he belongs to ... he is not interested in others ... (Kis, Danilo, 1992, p. 45)

Once propaganda is well established the stories of atrocities freely emerge. These stories serve to support the negative feelings about the out-group, and upon them we further clarify our reasons for separation, hatred and vengeance. As Maalouf (2001, p. 32) notes: “The world is full of whole communities that are wounded – either enduring present persecution or still overshadowed by the memory of former sufferings –and who dream of exacting revenge.”

Rumors become facts. They appear everywhere, rumors that spur people to act, to retaliate, riot and seek revenge. Searle-White sees the intensity of a rumor as being the sum of the importance of the subject to the group or individual, multiplied by the ambiguity of the information held in the rumor. Rumors serve us to help society to come to terms with many of the situations it finds itself in.(Searle-White 2001, p. 23)

A testimony that is heard and reported then begins to lose its' details, the story becomes shortened or "leveled," and salient aspects of the story meant for a particular audience or group become more prominent through "sharpening". Finally the stories are shaped to fit the beliefs and needs of the listeners, "assimilation," and there you have it, a rumor that has become set in concrete, ready to be made into history.

The final step of the process is that of riots and violence. As I talked about earlier these wars, retaliations, stand-offs or sanctions serve to bring groups together and to keep the in-group and out-group apart.

Searle-White concludes his book on a note of self-reflection and hopefulness for how we might behave differently were we to pick up the pieces in nationalism and take them internally and treat all the sides as parts of ourselves.

Even though social and political conditions can set the stage for hatred and violence, our feelings about ourselves drive us to 'participate' in it. We find it much easier to focus on the evils in others than to accept the evils in ourselves ... our only chance to get out of conflict is to accept the reality of who we are, without denying or projecting the parts we do not like.
(Searle-White, 2001, p. 122)

National Identity and Process Work.

My review of the literature on national identity, was also guided by a question that derives from my studies in Process work: “How is this external experience of national identity an inner process also?”

In language we anthropomorphize nations, making them living beings that “mourn” or “celebrate” or “risk”. We have national days and national debts, national birds, flowers, costumes and greetings. I wonder internally how we are also a bundle of “nations,” parts that feel validated and relevant, and parts that cannot stand one another? How do we categorize ourselves and create in-groups within ourselves, in doing so becoming closed to the diversity that is there also? How do the wars and battles appear in our inner and outer dreaming in our lives? Searle-White (2001) writes about a step-by-step process of nationalization while Mindell reminds us of our own tendency towards a step-by-step inner marginalisation of what we do not know or understand. He reminds us of our internal attachment to what is known and accepted by our more known identity, just as a nationalist will hold onto his or her more known and acceptable national identity when faced with the unknown “stranger” from somewhere else. In a seminar in 2001, Mindell spoke about xenophobia in terms of our attempts to know the un-knowable:

Before things become a specific culturally accepted thing it is something unknown.one of the reasons we name things is that there is a slight and tiny fear about it. We are phobic. What is unknown we have to name... When you have a name for it then you ‘know’. And doing that is important because it can be a relief to know what it is. But actually there is a part of it that is just about unknowable. (Mindell, 2001b.)

In the on-going creation of Process Work, from inner work to large international groups, Mindell weaves many threads of learning into reams of fabric that bring us back over and over again to the idea that we share a common ground and a deep connectedness to one another. Our

diversity on the planet earth is our diversity within ourselves. There is no outer or inner reality; it is all one vast dreaming in which we are living out our songs and stories, following our “pilot waves”, our dreamings, our Tao. The Process Work paradigm views identity only partially as a causal experience shaped by what has gone on before now, more importantly though it has a teleological attitude whereby what is happening now has a direction or movement towards some mysterious and unknown meaning. This meaning is found within the “dreaming process,” be it of the individual, a relationship, a group of people or even an entire nation or planet. Having the attitude of the beginners mind, an openness and willingness to explore what is unknown to us, Mindell and his colleagues have shown over and over again how the most unknown or less identified with experiences we have are doorways to dreaming processes that hold meaning, creativity and sometimes even solutions for problems and issues that trouble us. More recently in his work incorporating modern physics and Process Work, Mindell has taken us down to the sentient levels of experience, pre-signal, and has modeled over and over again the deep background connectedness of everything. He asks:

Where in our inner diversity are we shut down? What is it that we project onto the neighboring nation or enemy that we cannot imagine could be anything to do with ourselves? Where and why it is almost impossible for us sometimes to see another person as part of our own family? How are we internally and externally paralyzed around our sense of identity? What is our unwillingness to give some of it up, and adopt something of another’s? (Mindell, 2001b.)

As we ask these questions of ourselves we probably find that the answers to them parallel exactly the connections and disconnections that exist in our personal and worldly lives. It is most likely that our honest answers bring out our deepest needs for connections to identity, to place, to history, and belonging. In my reading of the literature on national identity and nation building I noticed that I was curious about the deep human need to shape something -beliefs,

behaviors, lifestyles - that is somehow concrete. This pull towards identity and the experience of belonging to something and being a part of something is such a long held and deep rooted craving and now living in a country shaped and created on the basis of immigration I have felt more than ever that human need to connect to a place and to the history of that place.

Amin Maalouf in his inspiring book, "In the Name of Identity", writes of his own experience of multiple identities. He writes of his experience of being a Lebanese man who has lived half his life in France:

The question "What do you really feel, deep down inside?.. no longer makes me smile. It seems to reflect a view of humanity which though it is widespread, is also in my opinion dangerous. It presupposes that 'deep down inside' everyone there is just one affiliation that really matters, a kind of "fundamental truth" about each individual, an "essence" determined once and for all at birth, never to change thereafter. And when our contemporaries are exhorted to "assert their identity" they are meant to seek within themselves that same alleged fundamental allegiance, which is often religious, national, racial or ethnic, and having located it they are supposed to flaunt it proudly in the face of others." (Maalouf, 2000, p. 2)

This idea that an "essence" or "fundamental truth" exists in the background of our identities also appears in a completely different form in Process Work. Maalouf uses it here, to suggest a fixed and static identity, which one is encouraged by outside forces to stick to. In Process Work the concept of the "essence" level of experience is of a deep and eternal level of consciousness that is experienced in more contemplative or meditative states, close to death or under the influence of some substances.

In the research question behind this project I have asked if the experience of national identity can be a doorway into deeper levels of experience, and it is this "essence" level of commonality or deep connection which in the background most inspired me to explore this

theme. In the next chapter I will give a more thorough explanation of Process Work itself before introducing the research component of this paper.

CHAPTER TWO: Process Work, Identity and Me

It would be disturbing if the United States said “we are also Afghanistan”. It might solve a lot of problems if it could say that, but it is unlikely to, yet. Saying it is one thing, but really feeling it is another thing all together, and acting on that, it would make quite a difference. And feeling what you don’t feel and don’t want and letting that out that would be a solution to the world’s problems in a nutshell. It would be a very big nut, but it has a nutshell. (Mindell, 2002c.)

Awakening to Awareness.

Sometimes it takes a shock to have us realize something about ourselves that we might never have known otherwise. For me that shock came while attending my first Process Work seminar in Australia in 1995. For most of my life I had avoided large group settings finding them overwhelming, feeling myself lost in them and basically identifying as a ‘one on one’ person who more than anything enjoyed the intimacy and personal intensity of meeting people, preferably one at a time.

One day in November, 1995 changed all that for me. In a group of 110 participants I became conscious of my gender, my sexuality, my race, my nationality and my unawareness of them all for the first time in my life. A good deal of my ignorance came from the privileges I had, of being a part of the mainstream in the places I had lived till then. I am white, a woman, middle class, I speak English and I have a tertiary level education. At that time I identified also as heterosexual.

In this large group I participated in my first process oriented “Group Process”. The basic idea behind this style of large group work is to bring forward the dreaming background of the group a dreaming that exists and is trying to come out through the particular group gathered in the moment. At this seminar the entire group gathered and made consensus to work on the issue

of racism. In this particular process the “people of color” as they named themselves in that moment, choose not to participate and instead walked out of the room leaving the space for the white-skinned people to work with and on themselves on the issue of racism.

As those of us who remained moved into the work together, issues and perspectives were raised and worked on, and I sat there, silent, listening over and over to the many points raised and the repeated mention of the colors of skin, “the white attitudes,” “the marginalisation of colored people,” the racism of white’s against blacks, the work that the white people had to do around privilege and awareness. The white, the white, the white-skinned person. I became dizzy listening to the voices, my stomach began to tighten and I became more and more afraid. Sitting there in that room that November afternoon, for the first time in my life I consciously told myself, “I am a Jew and racism is not about only black and white, or brown and white, or any color differences at all... because the people who put my grandparents, my aunts and uncles and extended family into those cattle car trains in Poland, and sent them to their deaths in Treblinka, in Majdanek, those people had exactly the same skin color as my family.”

I had lived my life till then with very little consciousness or sense of responsibility about my identity, the privileges of identity that I took for granted, the dangers of it, the limitations that came with it and the fog I had lived in around my experience of the world and my place in it. I had been fortunate in so many ways, but I had also been skating over something of the surface of life. I had grown up in England, the child of refugees from the Second World War. My parents had divorced when I was very young and I had grown up with three sisters in my mother’s violent and alcohol saturated second marriage. The bi-monthly visits to my father and his new family were typically somber, strict weekends, formal and disciplined, with school work the focus of the two days there. The remaining twenty seven days of each month were complex

survival stories, some days were fine, other times were violent and terrifying, broken noses, holes punched in doors and days at and after school with friends getting away from it all and finding any excuse not to go home at 4pm.

At seventeen I left home to go to University in a city several hours away from my family, and at twenty I left the country permanently. I headed to India alone, "I feel I have come home. For all its difference and difficulties I feel well," I wrote in my journal. I spent 15 months there traveling the length and breadth of the country, studying the place and myself in it. I was living "life," learning about difference and sameness and losing something of my familiar identity on the journey. I made friends with people from India and other countries I had never been to. I spent long evenings listening to people's stories about their lives and lifestyles, adventures they had had that suddenly were close at hand not the stories in books or magazines that I had read so many of. I met writers and artists, spiritual seekers and alternative healers and after ten months I ended up in the foothills of the Himalaya in Nepal, falling in love with a Nepali man and starting to plan my life of babies, rice harvests, Hindu festivals and leading long treks up into the mountains to visit sacred sites fifteen days by foot from our lakeside village. This dream became another and another and another and when something of the Australian spirit that I had met in people who were from that country took hold of me, I headed down-under to see what life held for me there.

I was no longer the "Susie" I had been in the UK for 20 years, Down Under I became "Sue" and I dived into the worlds there that resonated with me and sang my song. Worlds of spirituality, alternative lifestyles, "living simply so that other's can simply live." I moved in circles of artists and performers, white activists, friends of the earth and the rainforest. I demonstrated on "Invasion Day" against the Bicentennial in 1988. I marched for indigenous land

rights, for Peace, for rainforests and for the survival of rare and endangered marsupials. I sold handspun, hand-woven fabrics and clothes to fellow simplicity seekers, then moved into the Organic food world and sold even more essential supplies to the aware and the converted. My Englishness soon faded into a local accent, a more liberal attitude and a love affair with ways of living that I could hardly imagine possible in the country and family that I had grown up in. I wore my hair long to my waist, strung amulets, sacred threads and beads around my neck and wrists. I meditated at the local ashrams, studied Tai Chi, saw a Chinese doctor or a naturopath for all my ailments and visited my friends who were becoming new mothers and fathers after giving birth in portable water tanks constructed in their own homes. I shaped my life into these worlds and with no family to remind me of how I should or used to be, no landscape to link me to other times and stories, no past systems participated in that connected me to a particular class or identity I was free to try out everything I could. This sense of freedom was profound, and I made the most use of it imaginable, listening to the land, the city, the people, watching and waiting for each sound of my song, the pattern of my fabric, the guidance of the “pilot wave” that moved me along.

And there, in that seminar room, high in the New South Wales mountains, on an afternoon in November, during a group process on racism, there it was that the song that I had searched for found its key, its rhythm and opening bars. It is the song that I have been learning to sing for the last seven years, and lifetimes, the song of awareness, of identity, of history, politics and creativity. For me it is the song of place, of nature, of deep love and of dreaming. It is the place of the “I” and the place of the “Not-I”, where all things are welcomed and the unexpected and unknown is most welcomed of all.

Process Work.

Process Work, or Process Oriented Psychology, was shaped into its earliest life by Arnold Mindell in the 1970's. It has so many possible definitions from the books and articles written about it, I have chosen two descriptions from two sources that show something of the diversity that exists in the choice of language used to describe the work. This first one is from the December 2002 "Introduction to Process Work" on the Mindell website, www.aamindell.net:

Process Work or "pw" is a multicultural, multileveled awareness practice. Depending upon the individuals and group consensus, as well as the historical moment, process work is an evolving, transdisciplinary approach supporting individuals, relationships and organizations to discover themselves and thereby resolve inner, relationship, world and personal body issues.

The second definition is from Amy Mindell (2002) :

The process work model has a triadic foundation that is scientific and empirical as well as deeply mystical in nature. Its practitioners focus on signals that can be seen and measured, while knowing that these signals emanate from a deep and invisible dreaming process. Like the "Tao that cannot be said," this dreaming process is the mother of all things. We cannot see it directly, but we notice its reverberations in its spontaneous manifestations in our daily lives. In essence, process work is a phenomenological approach emphasizing the perception of, and respect for, the flow of events, as well as the belief that inherent within even the most difficult problem lies the seed of its solution. Therefore, the therapist is an awareness facilitator who notices what is happening, helps the client with her or his awareness and follows nature as best she or he can. (p. 6)

Process Work is about "process", the eternal river of experiences, the constantly mysterious and unpredictable flow of life. And true to its teaching it is in itself something that refuses to remain static. It is a constantly moving and changing modality. Amy Mindell writes on the website, "...over the past few years significant expansion and deepening of process theory has arisen" beginning "when Arny returned to his studies of theoretical physics". (Amy Mindell, 2002b.)

In the six years that I have been studying Process Work, one of the central foci has been Mindell's idea stemming from his studies of Quantum Physics. That there is a basic wave pattern, a songline, frequency or pilot wave existing behind matter that can be felt but not easily named or measured. "The Dreaming Process that is within everything and which is guiding it in a particular direction. It guides our lives, it guides the universe, it guides the life of groups" (Mindell, A. 2001b.)

Mindell has called this wave the "Intentional Field," a kind of generative force that moves and guides and shapes us. It has many names yet cannot be named. It is "The Tao that can't be spoken," (Wilhelm, 1986, p. 27) it is the quantum wave function, Bohm's pilot wave, the great spirit, God and soul. It is mystical and immeasurable, it is a constant presence yet also non-local. It can be experienced but not talked about. It is the immortal self, the seed of all things, "Mu-mind," aboriginal dreaming and the sentient essence of all things. Mindell put it simply this way during a seminar in 2001:

I have been calling this Quantum Wave function 'soul like'. I have finally found a definition of the soul which fits me. It is an essence, the deepest truest you. It is timeless, it may be immortal and it appears in many, many ways. And this Quantum Wave Function is soul like. It can't quite be measured, it has your deepest truest patterns in it. In other words it is your stone song. (Mindell, 2001b.)

In 2002 at Amy and Arny Mindell's Big Medicine Seminar Arny gave this metaphor for this mysterious force which moves us in the background:

The wind blows up through the leaves and they are floating there, and she thinks, "That must be my relative who had died". You can't see the wind, but you can see the leaves, and it is that wind that we want to get in contact with. A wind that is invisible that blows the leaves together up into who 'we' are, so to speak. And it isn't the leaves that are as crucial this time... as they have been in the past, because as therapists we have been

focusing on the leaves and what the wind does to us. What does this generative power, this unknown, do to us and how can we use it in life?

From the intentional field (the wind) arise patterns and tendencies (the various movements of the leaves). The earliest movement, or micromovement, that the wind creates is a level up from the intentional field, at what Mindell calls the “essence level”. In her article, “The Evolution of Process Work” on the www.aamindell.net website, Amy Mindell describes the essence as “the realm of subtle tendencies that occur *before* they can be verbalized the seed, or core of an experience from which the other realms of consensus reality and dreamland arise experiences here are subtle, fleeting, and cannot be verbalized...(they are) beyond ordinary space and time and “non-local”. Amy Mindell (2002b.)

It is from these deep and immeasurable realms that the more familiar consciousness levels of dreamland and consensus reality arise. Consensus reality is our everyday reality where things are broken down into their parts and are named. It is where “I” and “you” exist, and where “real” events take place. Dreamland is the mysterious level where dreams and deep feelings exist. At this level of consciousness unintentional body signals or double signals appear and missing figures from stories and myths that might be told by the individual or group manifest. Here also the phenomena of the past and a sense of the future have their place and it is here that ancestors and ghosts and transgenerational events make their place. The dreamland world appears in the consensus reality level consciousness in the form of night time dreams and day time disturbances and unexpected experiences that happen to us as individuals, in relationship or in larger groups. Mindell has also written in detail about training ourselves to live this dreamland level in a more conscious way, allowing ourselves to believe more in the unknown and the unexpected things that happen throughout our waking days.

Dreaming is happening all day long. If you track your experiences closely, you notice the Dreaming showing itself during the day. Every time you feel a bit sleepy, sense a slight moodiness, or feel strange sensations in your body, you are Dreaming in the daytime. (Mindell,A. 2000, p. 14)

The infinite ways that dreamland experiences appear in the consensus reality world is part of what Process Work calls the “dreaming process” of an individual, a couple or a group. The Process Worker herself then is a facilitator of process, using her awareness to track the signals in herself and the other person or people and then following those signals, with the mental guide book of process structure to help her, to wherever it appears that the signals are wanting to go. Signals appear in different sensory oriented channels, such as seeing, feeling, moving, hearing and relating. Some of these signals are more familiar and more known. In Process Work terminology these are named primary signals and they are connected to the primary process, the identity of the person or group of people. Other signals are less known or even unknown and these are named “secondary signals” or “double signals”. These are further away from the individual or groups identity. Signals, like processes, are not static and will constantly change. What is less known and secondary can become primary, and when that happens a new secondary signal or experience will appear, an infinitely flowing river of dreaming.

What lies between the primary and secondary processes is the “edge”, which Amy Mindell describes as “the place where your identity is challenged when a new process begins to emerge” (2002, p. 53). At this place there is often the tendency to avoid or ignore what is coming up, for beyond it is the unknown and a way of being that has not been consciously lived before. Xenophobia is literally this fear of the unknown or “foreign,” and Mindell speaks of the essence of xenophobia as this deep fear of things that are unknown:

There is something within us which is xenophobic and says, 'we get scared of things we don't know, that are unknown.' And instead of staying with our fear of the unknown and living with the fear of the unknown, our minds marginalise the different things and immediately make us come up with a particular behavior. In other words, our minds marginalise what is unknown and try to act as if it is a known thing. This is the essence of Xenophobia. It is a very deep thing and it is how something in us operates to create reality. (Mindell, 2001b.)

Whether it is an individual struggling to come to terms with a part of themselves or an attitude they hold towards themselves or the world, or a group that has closed its doors on another participant or way of doing things, this marginalisation of things that we do not know about ourselves or others is, as Mindell writes, a deep thing. It is the thing that I want to explore further in this research paper. At the start of this chapter I wrote about one of my own personal awakenings to how I had marginalised parts of myself. I had been blind to my privileges in the world, and I had been closed to the experience of my history and Jewish ancestry and most of all the grief that I have carried for 30 years concerning my loss of family, culture and identity due to the Holocaust of the Second World War.

As Mindell noted in his Stones Songs seminar, focusing on xenophobia and marginalisation and how holding it in our awareness can allow us to expand our concepts of reality and identity:

We talked about how Xenophobia means the fear of the foreign, of what is foreign. And how it creates this world, this consensual world by marginalising other things that don't fit into that consensus reality. How on the other hand, if we are aware of this xenophobia and marginalisation, we can create new worlds and expand the concept of what reality is. (Mindell, 2001b.)

In the remainder of this thesis I will describe the interview study which I undertook in order to explore and deepen the more "known" concepts of nationality and national identity. Using Mindell's concepts of the levels of awareness I describe what I found lay deep down in the dreamland and essence levels of people's sense of nationality.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

Heuristic research is a demanding and lengthy process. Once one enters into the quest for knowledge and understanding, once one begins the passionate search for the illumination of a puzzlement, the intensity, wonder, intrigue and engagement carry one along through ever growing levels of meaning and excitement. (Moustakas, C. 1990, p. 55)

Research Focus & Questions.

My study is an exploration into the experience of identity through the looking glass category of national identity. Using my own experiences as well as interviews with nine other people I wanted to draw out a sense of the importance of “belonging” to a group or identity and also the deeper meaning that might exist behind it. Using a process-oriented attitude, my focus was on deepening and searching into the experience of national identity, its value and its limitations in a very personal sense. I chose to interview people from different backgrounds and national identities, though they shared in common an understanding of and some participation in the model of Process Work. In this way I was free to use terms, ideas and structures from this work to shape the interviews and my interpretations of them. In the background of all this was the question: Can the experience of national identity be a doorway into unexpected places of commonality or oneness?

Research Purpose.

The purpose of my research was to explore the familiar phenomenon of national identity, taking a consensus reality level experience of national identity and using Process Work ideas and metaskills in a more conventional interview and interviewing procedure see where unfolding the experience of it would take people. In other words, using the Process Work paradigm and taking

national identity as a primary process and through a series of specific interview questions seeing what secondary and tertiary level experiences and imaginings were present.

Research Paradigm.

My research falls under the heading of qualitative research – a term that means different things to many different people (Denzin 1994, p. xi) - in that it is an interpretive, naturalistic piece of research. The background basis of this qualitative style of research is the philosophical assumption that holds that there is no absolute truth and that knowledge is relative and subjective. In relativism “there is no single certain foundation for knowledge, knowledge is shaped by knower and context” (Jones, Lee. 2001). One description of the qualitative researcher is as a *bricoleur*, someone who pieces together a set of practices that provide non-static and changeable solutions to a problem in a momentarily concrete situation. (Denzin, N. 1994, p. 2). In qualitative research a level of self-awareness is also required in the researcher, an ability to reflect upon and track one’s own experience of the phenomenon being researched. (Patton, 2002, p. 495) In the qualitative research world the researcher not only cannot be separated from the research but she is also an involved participant who has significant effect on the observations made. She performs many tasks, from reviewing and researching the topic to interviewing and interpreting the data, knowing all the time that the research only lives because of her own personal history, gender, race, ethnicity, social class and those of the people in the setting. (Denzin, N. 1994, p. 2) Any knowledge that might be created doing this type of research is done only through the context presented and none of the phenomena that emerge can be studied in any meaningfulness outside of this context. In this way the end result of a qualitative journey of research is a creation that is representative of the researchers experience, sense, understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon she is analyzing. (Denzin, N. 1994, p.3)

Orientations to Enquiry.

Strategies of enquiry emerge from the deep philosophical roots, foundations, and ideas that lie at the base of any theoretical or practical research. They are the underlying beliefs or orientations that shape and suggest ways of approaching the design of the research, how you are going to collect data and how you are going to interpret and analyze the data you collect. My approach to inquiry in this study has been influenced by phenomenology, Process Work, heuristic inquiry, narrative inquiry and writing as a research mode.

Phenomenology and Process Work

My research is influenced by the ‘phenomenological’ approach to inquiry, in the sense that it studies the ordinary experience or “life world” and attempts to extract meanings from those studies. As Patton (2002, p.104) notes: “... phenomenological approaches share ... a focus on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared memory.” Process Work itself is a phenomenological model and is well suited to shape a study which is basically phenomenological in its research and revelation.

Heuristic Enquiry

Returning to my quilting metaphor, if qualitative and phenomenological approaches are the backing of this quilted research project, it is the heuristic research approach that are the embroidery and appliqués that make up the interesting pattern and design of the work. My thesis is heuristic in the sense that my own experience has been key to what I have given ‘meaning’. Patton describes heuristic research as “...a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher.” I have played a central role in the

research, my intense interest in and experiences of the phenomenon being researched were key to my choice of topic, and I have used my own reflections and explorations in interpreting and deepening my discoveries. The participants I chose to interview also shared an intensity of experience with the phenomenon of national identity, a factor that is also considered important in the field of heuristic research.

Heuristic literally means to discover, and as a strategy of enquiry it has a spontaneous and highly creative path of its own. The importance placed on having personal connection with the research itself, the search for essential meanings, the use of the writers intuition and personal understandings of her world were all key reasons why I chose to use this method of research. And I loved the sense of being on a personal quest to discover and convey an essence of meaning in my topic of enquiry.

[Heuristic research] "... involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some facet of human experience in order to understand its constituent qualities and its wholeness" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24)

Heuristic research is a method of research that is shaped significantly by the process of the researcher, in fact it is through the journey of the research that not only is information and knowledge shared but the researcher herself is "illuminated" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 11). Some phases of heuristic research are more active and others more reflective but all phases are essential for deepening and giving meaning to the core ideas behind the research, where the emphasis is on process as well as outcome. There is a background sense of searching for a deeper awareness of the questions that lie behind the research. In heuristic research the background questions are rooted in the researchers "own knowledge and experience of a critical life issue, challenge, or problem [that] enables one to begin a study of the problem or concern" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 17).

A heuristic research paper can be done based only on the researcher's experiences, but for the purpose of this thesis I chose to gather data from others who have a deep interest in their experience of national identity.

Story Telling and Writing.

My research is also influenced by narrative inquiry. In narrative inquiry the background idea is that we understand our world through telling stories about it, that within the stories themselves is the meaning that is being communicated to the listener and within the stories is also meaning for the listener herself. This method of enquiry appears as I write about my own life experiences, and also in the stories that my interviewees have shared with me in their interviews.

In her article "Writing. A Method of Enquiry" Laurel Richardson suggests that writing itself is another method of inquiry "a way of finding out about yourself and your topic... writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research paper ... [it] is also a way of "knowing" – a method of discovery and analysis" (p.516). She says that "writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable" (Denzin, N. 1994, p.516). Taking her lead, I would say that along with keeping a journal while researching and working on this paper, my writing has been a channel of interpretation as it emerged from mind to page, and writing itself has also been a method of inquiry.

Participants

I chose to do a purposive sampling of interviewees. Since I wanted to interview and interpret from the Process Work paradigm it was important to me to work with people who would understand the language and techniques of this model. In purposive sampling, “..the interviewer seeks out respondents who seem likely to epitomize the analytic criteria in which he or she is interested” (Warren, C. 2002, p. 87)

Seven of my nine interviewees were enrolled students of Process Work. Six of them Phase 2 students, one of them was a Phase 1 student. One interviewee was a graduate of the Diploma program and the ninth interviewee was an informal student, who was not enrolled in a formal program but has studied Process Work through seminars, classes and a Process Work intensive.

The people I interviewed were from different countries and cultures, and all had in common the experience of having been born in an existing “nation”. I invited people to be interviewed who represented a diversity of experience around national identity, which I felt would bring depth and meaning to my research. One of my interviewees had lived through the change in status of his nation from one identity to another; two of the people I interviewed were born in countries other than the ones that they identified with nationally. One woman I interviewed had been orphaned as a child and so grew up between cultures and identities, adopted into a foster home entirely different to her cultural and ethnic background. Two women were adult migrants to their present country of residence.

Five of the nine interviewees had a language other than English as their original language, though of these five, four of them were fluent English/American speakers. The

interviews took place in the United States of America and for three of my interviewees this was not their country of permanent residence.

Participants were also diverse in their racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexuality, relationship status, family scenes and economic and residential status, had obtained or were enrolled in tertiary level educations and all held valid passports and had traveled to countries other than their country of origin.

Delimitations

The sample of people I chose is noticeably incomplete for the following reasons. I chose not to interview anyone who had not in some way questioned their national identity and in this sense my research is one sided. I also did not interview any non-Process Work experienced people for the reasons I have given earlier. The age of my interviewees ranged from 32 to 45 so it was not a broad age group of people and did not include children.

I did not interview any 'strangers' as such. By that I mean that all the people I interviewed were known to me personally and in some depth. These are my friends, people I have studied with, played with, been in relationship with. Everyone I interviewed 'knows' me in some degree of familiarity and intimacy.

I also did not interview any indigenous people/s, which from my personal opinion leaves a noticeable gap in my research, one that I regret, and fill with a deep honoring and the dreaming sense of their presence on the land everywhere on this planet.

I did not interview other marginalized groups like prisoners, illegal immigrants, the homeless, those labeled as mentally ill or persons from nation-less cultures. Again I regret their

absence and know that their presence in such a piece of research would have deepened this thesis even further.

In the interview transcriptions I chose not to make non-verbal moments of the interviews too central essentially for reasons of time limitation. This was not ideal for me in a way, since so much information and meaning is present in a gesture, a facial expression, a shift in sitting position or unexpected sound or action. As Poland (2002, p. 635) comments, “many aspects of interpersonal interaction and non-verbal communication are not captured in audiotape records, so that the audiotape itself is not strictly a verbatim record of the interview”

The Interviews

The interviews were all conducted in Portland, Oregon over a three-week period in the Winter 2003. Four interviews took place in the interviewees’ homes, and the other five were done in my home at the time, which was a familiar place for those who came to be interviewed there.

The interviews each took about an hour and a half and the atmospheres were relaxed and familiar in all cases. Tea was drunk; in one case the interview took place after dinner together. This was important to me, to have the atmosphere of familiarity since I felt the interviews themselves required a level of trust and ease that would enable people to feel comfortable to speak openly about themselves.

The interviews were semi structured in that they were focused on four areas: “national narratives,” “enemies,” “victimization” and “the freedom fighter”. Each area of focus was explored using a series of questions that I put together from my reading of the themes that particularly interested me around national identity.

Each section of the interview had the quality of a guided innerwork exercise. In addition to ordinary conversation I drew on my training as a Process Work facilitator and in certain moments I took a more facilitative role in drawing out, deepening and extracting levels of experience and meaning from the initial answers people gave. Moustakas (1990) notes, “Ordinarily such an interview is not ruled by the clock but by inner experiential time. In dialogue, one is encouraged to permit ideas, thoughts, feelings, and images to unfold and be expressed naturally. (p. 39)

As interviewer I did not identify as an expert on the subject of national identity, rather I felt that a mutual learning and understanding process took place in each of the interviews. This is consistent with an interpretive approach to inquiry, “We’re advocating mutual understanding as opposed to advocating that we, as all knowing researchers understand the other unidirectionally” (Ellis & Berger, 2002, p.864). I regarded my interview participants more as meaning makers, rather than as “passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers”. (Warren, 2002, p. 83)

Data Collection.

The qualitative oriented heuristic scientist seeks to discover the nature and meaning of the phenomenon itself and to illuminate it from direct first person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon in experience. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 38.)

Throughout my thesis, consistent with a heuristic approach, I have included stories from my own history and life. This personal ‘data’ is the foundation of the research project and the inspiration for the interviews I did with others. In addition to my own experience I also gathered data through semi-structured interviews. I asked the same series of basic questions with each person. There were four parts to the interview each part focusing on a different level or

experience of national identity. The semi-structured method of interview allowed me to explore with the people I interviewed their feelings, thoughts and ideas about the questions that I asked them. I found that although my questions were specific and identical for each interview, because of the diversity in language ability, style of listening and the comprehension needs of the interviewee I would alter my wording, or emphases according to feedback and requirements of the individual.

Each interview had a conversational style to it and in this way was not a static sequence of questions and answers. In moments the interviews might also have a vaguely therapeutic quality whereby at times I assumed a slightly more facilitative role for the process that I felt was unfolding before me.

In qualitative research interviews the “interviewer remains flexible and attentive to the variety of meanings that may emerge as the interview progresses. This open stance includes being alert to developing meanings that may render previously designed questions *irrelevant* in light of the changing contexts of meaning” (Warren, 2002, p. 87) I kept this in mind during my interviews, keeping alert to the ways that participants answered questions and the unexpected directions and moments that arose during the meetings.

In some moments where I felt the interviewee might benefit, I added my own understandings of aspects of the subject that I had learned in my background reading. I would say that my own goals and style were dominant and though I followed the structured format of the interview questions I also wanted to follow the individuals ‘process’ in the moment. This might mean that I made suggestion or emphasized something the person had said at times where I considered we needed to return to or expand on something they said rather than only follow the direction they were taking.

I taped each interview on a Sony® Walkman Play/Record machine, and transcribed each interview word for word using the playback function of the same machine.

Transcribing the interviews I made notes of some non-verbal and para-linguistic moments in the interviews, laughter, long pauses, even some requests to turn off the tape recorder, but this was not a consistent noting and I chose not to make the non-verbal parts of the interview too central. For the purpose and value of simplicity and time limitations I chose to use only the verbal information, which in itself held plenty of gifts and surprises.

Many times I was moved myself by what the participants talked about and how they talked. In one interview both the participant and I cried together, and in another something that the interviewee shared with me was so intense and moving that I burst into tears. Each interview was an awesome subjective process for me, a profound experience of following someone's awareness as it deepened and unfolded.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were based on a series of assignments given by Joshua Searle-White. He is an assistant professor of psychology at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania and I adapted my questions from the assignments that he set his students on his website for his course in Psychology of Nationalism. I took four of his assignments and adapted them into a group of four exercises. My questions also included background and demographic questions asked at the start of each interview, to get a simple understanding of some aspects of the primary identity of my participants. I asked my questions in an open-ended way, leaving the participants to respond freely and completely in their own words. A complete interview schedule is found in Appendix A. One of my nine interviews is found in complete form in Appendix B.

In the first part of the interview we focused on and unfolded two national narratives that the participant recalled. In the second part we brought in and unfolded the role that the “enemy” played in the dreaming that happened around national identity. The third part brought in the experience of “victimization”, what role that played in national identity and how it served both to maintain a status quo around identity and also as a doorway into different experiences around national identity. The last section brought in “ghost roles” in the form of “freedom fighters”, roles that played a part in the interviewees sense of identity but were not identified with or filled out by the participant in the moment.

Interpretation

Approaching the interpretation of my interviews I kept in mind my understanding of a process oriented viewpoint. By this I mean a viewpoint in which all parts are welcomed and appreciated on one or many levels of experience, and that all levels of experience are present at any one time.

Process oriented research sits easily with qualitative, heuristic research because they share the idea that the observer herself influences what is happening, and her presence, observations and sensitivity to the mystery of signals helps to deepen and unravel something of the mysteries of the phenomena being researched. With this in mind, my interpretation of the interviews was based on what I was interested in that supported the answering of my earliest question on the topic of national identity: Can the experience of national identity be a doorway into unexpected places of commonality or oneness? I originally considered organizing and analyzing my data using the phenomenological research techniques of horizontalizing the data, listing the meaning units, clustering them into themes, developing “textural descriptions of the

experience” and constructing meaning and essence of the phenomenon I studied. (Moustakas, 1994, p.118-119)

However since I was researching and analyzing or interpreting from the perspective and identity of a process work student I found instead that I wanted to interpret my data using the structure of the levels of awareness that have become well known in the last five years of the development of Process Work theory. In most texts on qualitative interviewing, the perspective of the interviewer is taken to be that of the discipline: she or he is interviewing in order to write, publish and contribute to a body of knowledge and literature (Warren. 2002, p. 84).

Interpreting the interviews from this Process Work perspective meant a kind of teasing apart of the data into parts I felt represented and illustrated elements of the levels of awareness – consensus reality, dreamland, essence and the intentional field. Rather than looking for emergent patterns or themes in the data I collected, I looked instead for passages and comments in the interviews, which I thought of or interpreted as belonging in specific levels of awareness.

The whole process of interpretation was entirely subjective and also something that I had not seen done before so was not able to refer to other research studies where the data was analyzed or interpreted in this way. In my reading on the field of qualitative research Norman Denzin writes that postmodernists argue that “the very idea of assessing qualitative research is antithetical to the nature of this research and the world it attempts to study” and that poststructuralists suggest that “an entirely new set of criteria divorced from the positivist and postpositivist traditions needs to be constructed ... [that] would flow from the qualitative project, stressing subjectivity, emotionality, feeling and other antifoundational factors” (Denzin 2002:480). With these thoughts in mind I felt that my qualitative analysis process and my attempt to incorporate Mindell’s concept of the four levels of awareness was an emotional, subjective,

feeling-full and entirely personal experiment and journey into an unknown area of data analysis, looking at the data from a new angle and analyzing it from a process work perspective.

Validation and Crystallization

As with all aspects of heuristic research the primary researcher, who has gone through the entire journey of inquiry from the earliest conception of the ideas through to the birth of the thesis, judges the validity of the research. As the researcher I brought out a depiction of an experience I had sought out. I reflected on and explored for relevance the material I had gathered, and I interpreted it to present meanings and essences of the experience. (Moustakas, 1990. p. 32-33) In this heuristic style of qualitative research validity is always subjective and dependent on the judgment and interpretation of the researcher. My approach to establishing soundness or validity was, like my interpretation structure, subjective and influenced by relativistic ideas about truth. Sociology professor Laurel Richardson (1994) writes:

[T]he central image for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central image is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with multidimensionalities, and angles of approach ... what we see depends upon our angle of repose ... we have moved from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be both particles and waves. (p. 522)

My interpretation of the interview data was conducted with this crystal image in mind. Maintaining an open attitude to what is “true” or “relevant” was also important to me. Having an open mind to what it is that I thought I knew, or allowed myself to not know, stayed with me throughout the entire process of research and writing. As Richardson (1994) further states:

Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity” (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically we know more and doubt what we know. (p. 522)

The belief that there can be more than one determined structure for “truth” or “meaning,” which is also found in Process Work theory about reality and awareness, supported my own explorations and attitudes to what emerged as I interpreted my data and brought my discoveries to the page. In my thesis what emerged was a momentary “truth” or structure, which was able also to become something that existed without structure or form, just as light can exist as both particle and wave and other un-nameable forms at the same time.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Interpretive Process

Weaving it all together.

Over the years of my traveled and relocated life, I have at times moved in circles where there is an emphasis on education and learning. In these circles it is not an uncommon question to ask or be asked about where and what you have studied and sometimes even with whom you have studied. In these conversations when I tell people I have a degree in textile design it is rare that the person asking will know what that means or even what a textile designer might do. I will usually end up pointing at a cushion, a piece of soft furnishing or the cloth that their clothing is made from and explain that someone somewhere at some time was involved in the production of that fabric from which the shirt or the cushion cover is made. Even then there is oftentimes a misunderstanding, the person thinks that I am talking about the design of the shirt itself, the cut of the blouse, the size of the pocket or placement of the buttons, but no, I explain, this shirt is made from a fabric and even before it was a shirt it was first a length of cloth. See the weave, feel the weight, the texture, the pile of it? And see there within its seemingly blue shade, yes there, see how the weave makes a diagonal grain through the cloth? See how in fact that t-shirt is knitted? See how that fleece is barely a fabric at all, more structured like a felted slab, threads melded rather than brought mechanically together? As far as I know it is not a well known tendency, to look closely at the covers of chairs, feel the weight of the curtains and drapes, notice different weaves in the contents of our wardrobes or even to appreciate the various depths in the woven piles in the towels and face cloths we use, but there all around us is the structural skill and the creativity and art of the textile designer.

When looking for a metaphor on which to build and shape my interpretation of the interview conversations in this study, I found myself returning to those studies that I pursued after leaving school, when my hopes of working in the design world were dominant and many long afternoons were spent dreaming and sketching my way through a world of textures and colors, being moved by the unexpected curve of a stem, the colors of the world and the infinite shades within one form. I am remembering now the layers involved in the fabrics' creation. From the earliest bud on the cotton bush, the strands of wool in the fleece of a sheep, the miracle of unwinding the thread from the cocoon of the mulberry consuming silk worm, the brilliance of the scientist extruding threads from chemicals, to the forming of raw material into yards of thread and from thread to textile, then from blank material to yards of dyed, printed, embroidered or painted finished product.

I am reminded how easy it is to take for granted the layers and levels of so many things that we live with and experience. Like the humble quilt that is made of so many components often missed by the naked eye, so many if not most of life's experiences seem to start very small, almost unperceivable, long before they appear in their known and familiar form. In my interpretation of the interviews I have attempted to illustrate some of the templates and designs, the layers and levels that appear before the known experience of national identity makes its appearance. I have tried to unravel and pull apart the woven cloth of interviewees' experience of national identity, attempting to draw out the raw materials behind an experience, the cotton seed, the woolly fleece of the sheep, the fibers made from the liquid underground oils and the laboratory synthesized chemicals of the scientists. This process has been guided and structured by Process Work concepts of the different levels of reality and awareness that we live our experiences within: consensus reality, dreamland, essence and intentional field.

Through reading and re-reading, focusing on the block and template design, the fabrics and patterns, unraveling and unwinding the threads and fibers of the nine interviews, teasing

them apart and putting them back together in various ways, my interpretation of the interview data illustrates momentary yet at times profound experiences of the various levels of awareness. Although some experiences were beyond the resources and time limitations of this study to pursue, they nonetheless serve as valuable doorways to experience into which we could only place a toe or at most take a couple of steps.

In this chapter I describe how through sitting with and reading, re-reading, pulling apart and recompiling my interviews I was able to see how these nine people's experience of national identity moved from level to level over the course of the answers that they gave. I was fortunate with my interviewees because all of them were able to freely allow themselves to go deeply and creatively into the questions I asked them and also to move with their personal awareness from level to level. During the interview it was not unusual for an interviewee to pause in the midst of an answer and let me know that they had not thought about things 'on this level' or 'in this way' before, and how in doing now so they were finding themselves woken up to an experience that they did not know about beforehand.

From my own initial sense of disorientation around my personal experiences of national identity I found that from the interviews came a soothing sense of reassurance, that it was not only me who questioned the assumed sense of belonging to a place or a culture or history. In fact as the interviews progressed and deepened I repeatedly found that indefinable and blurry place of commonality that in analyzing the data later revealed the presence of levels of experience that seem to have almost no name or identifiable traits.

Each interview was a journey into deepening an experience that the interviewee and I initially called "national identity" but during the course of the hour or so together became a multi-leveled

dreaming experience that would go so deep as to touch even on what I understood as something of the “essence” and “intentional field” levels of experience.

Subjectivity & Edges in Interpretation.

Initially I found it difficult to represent my interpretive ideas in this solo effort of writing since they were only my personal and subjective ideas about what constitutes a momentary experience of awareness and its associated level of awareness. I had many conversations with my internal critics each time I associated this or that piece of data with this or that “appropriate” level. Finally found an inner conviction in the excitement and sensitivity I felt around my chosen topic and approach to awareness. I was able to just throw the critic and its scary and paralyzing comments as far away as possible for brief moments of respite. This allowed me to go more courageously into my data. In this way the process of unweaving the interviews became an empowering experience of believing in the excitement and sense of inspiration that I feel about the movement of consciousness between levels of awareness. Mindell writes about the importance of the observers attitude in any experience or event in which they participate. He states that if an observer has a psychology that is open to a fluid movement from one level to another, this will support the manifestation and freedom of this movement, and enable flow to take place. Likewise, if edges exist in the observer that stop the flow of ideas or experiences in particular directions, so too the observed will become caught up in those edges.

Mindell writes:

[Y]ou know that the psychology of observers who are looking at you influences your body- you can feel it. If individuals can affect you, then families, towns, whole environments, even the world and the universe influence your body as well. This means that if your family, your culture, or your universe has certain edges, you get more stuck more readily than in an atmosphere that is freer. In an open-minded environment, you have an easier time being fluid. In this way, your individual psychology is connected with where you live as well as with the rest of the universe. (1998 p. 509.)

I am sure that there were things that we skipped over in my interviews because of these personal edges of mine. Keeping in mind that I was going to affect the interview interpretation as much as I had already affected the interviews helped me to have the courage to begin to tease out the content of the interviews into my representation of the levels of awareness and experience that they contain.

An Awareness Quilt.

In presenting my interpretation of the interview conversations, I return to my quilt metaphor to illustrate the various levels of awareness and experience the interviews reveal. Four levels of awareness and experience are identified and illustrated: “consensus reality” “dreamland,” “essence” and “intentional field.” Each required an associated quality of awareness on the part of the researcher.

Consensus Reality

Consensus reality relates to the world of ‘real’ events. It can be likened to a finished quilt, something that others can see and feel, and whose existence is known and readily agreed upon by others. It is “the everyday reality that most people consent to, the doings of our world, the consensual aspect of body symptoms and the signals that can be spoken about and agreed upon. These experiences are consensual and dualistic.” (Mindell, Amy. 2002b.)

At this level of awareness, participants talked about their experience of identity from a primary perspective using “I” statements and conventional perspectives in their answers. A consensus reality level aspect of a participants’ answer would hold a quality that would be agreed upon by the participant were they to be asked if this or that statement were “true” or fixed in some way.

Dreamland

Dreamland consists of the “out there” and unknown experiences. It can be likened to the weaves and structures of the fabric swatches shaped into templates that make up the structure of the quilt.

To “witness” the dreamland level in the interview transcriptions, I found myself blurring the boundaries of my comprehending mind. I read and re-read the pages of transcriptions, doing with my reading mind what one does with ones eyes when squinting at a bright light. The sense of blurring the edges of known experience was what I was noticing in my attention, and from this place I drew out what I saw as the dreamland or less known experiences of the participants.

Shamans learn to relax their gaze, and she or he will allow the thing to become what it was, and she won't become phobic. She won't fear it. They let the unknown speak to them. A big part of our work is relaxing and letting the unknown come forward again and again. (Mindell, 2001b.)

Essence Level

The essence level involves a sensing of tendencies that can be felt to move us. The fibers that make the threads, the strands and micro-filaments that are there before the thread is even begun can be likened to this level. As far as my interpretations of moments where the essence level appeared in the interviews, I was extremely aware that at this level things that happen can hardly be put into words.

Here is where my own creativity was called upon, and the kind of introspection that is characteristic of heuristic research. I chose to place in this category pieces of the interviews where participants described things in such a way as to be beyond duality. I am cautious to even suggest that what I have done is an accurate representation of this level of awareness, since the micro-moments in which this level is accessed are usually not verbalized. Instead it is through

noticing the subtlest tendencies and “flirts,” pre-signal that we come into contact with the essence level. These moments are so fleeting and often so unknown that very quickly they rise to the levels of dreamland, and with further marginalisation, to consensus reality.

The essence level is the realm of subtle tendencies that occur before they can be verbalized such as a tendency to move before moving. Experiences here are the seed, or core, of an experience from which the other realms of consensus reality and dreamland arise. This is a non-consensual area and experiences here are subtle, fleeting, and cannot be verbalized.

[W]hen we experience this sentient realm it takes us out of the world of duality and brings us to a deep, eternal, or cosmic aspect of ourselves that we frequently only experience for example in deep meditation, during ecstatic states, in near death experiences or sometimes through the use of drugs of addictive substances. (Mindell, Amy. 2002b)

In my exploration of essence level experiences of national identity, I chose to include were references that were made to something that was experienced beyond the identifications of “you” and “me,” beyond the sense of ghosts and “not-me.” They were only fleeting, these moments and only a few could be fit into this category.

The Intentional Field

The intentional field is a moving force, a guiding wave. The source of the filament, the spirit of cotton seed, fossil transformation, the conception of the sheep, the lava of the silk worm, are examples of aspects of my quilt metaphor that represent this most subtle of level.

If the essence level was not hard enough to represent without being filled with doubts, my attempts to categorize the spoken experience of participants into this level showered me with more terror and doubt than I had experienced at any other time during this study. After much sitting with these doubts, struggling with inner critics and almost throwing in the towel more than a hundred times, I finally went deeper with these experiences I was having, opening up to them as potential guides towards where I needed to go. To my surprise and relief I found that deep within the terror and paralysis that were set to quitting levels, somewhere far beyond the

battling and the criticisms, as I believed in a bodily sense of suffocation and utter brainlessness, I went deeper. I became more and more paralyzed, more beaten down and as utterly and completely overwhelmed as I could manage, and way down there in my almost not breathing state, lying completely still in the middle of the floor I found an a unimaginably quiet place of stillness and humility. Mindell speaks of this in the following way:

Can you program it? Can you learn it? I now think it is a matter of practicing it, thinking about it. I have never had teachers of this area myself, we have not really seen that, so we really don't know exactly how one learns about this essence level, these intentional waves, though we see them in all the spiritual traditions, the essential basis. We think maybe those moments when we can model it, and when you model it and feel it, those moments are the teachers. There are not enough teachers of this particular area, and it is an area that we are all tending to and are coming from, and as I said at the start, maybe children are the best examples of this area because you can see them being down at that level while playing. And the very playfulness is that you are down there and you are delighted to be creating something. (Mindell, A. 2002b)

As with the essence level there were few moments that I felt fit into this category. But as far as I felt and trusted there were enough to show that going deeply into ideas of national identity there is way down there, deep down, beyond all dualistic thinking, a sense of something vast and un-nameable that we are all a part of and all somehow moved by. Mindell describes a way to experience this:

I wanted to mention also the spiritual concept of 'dropping yourself', that is another form of getting there. Surrender, all sorts of spiritual methods of dropping down there, as long as one does not make a program of getting down there. If you do that you find yourself turning against the everyday world and turning against the dualistic world is something that we are trying not to do. (Mindell, 2002b)

From Fabric to Fiber: Revealing the Levels

In exploring the ideas that I sought to illustrate from my interviews, I have chosen to use a narrative and chronological interpretive style structured by Process Work concepts of levels of awareness and experience. I found that I returned to these levels repeatedly as I explored various other interpretative

frameworks, and the pull to move back and forth, up and down, honoring the levels of experience eventually became the co-creator of the structure I ended up adopting. I interwove my reflections on the process of interpretation with narrative descriptions of the meanings generated by the interview data. In the remainder of this chapter I will revisit each of the interview sections, showing the layers and levels of awareness and experience as I felt they appeared in participants' responses. "Threads of meaning" are discerned for each level and are illustrated with quotations from the interviewee's responses.

The Finished Quilt: Consensus Reality or Primary Process

Templates Making the Pattern of the Quilt

In participants' responses to my primary questions, I found initial glimpses of the structure or design templates of their "quilt." In some of the interviews a main "template," pattern or design was found in the first answers given. In some of the primary answers, clues to the quilts' layout or "themes" appeared. Later, in penetrating more deeply, these would reveal themselves more clearly in the participants' experience in subsequent questions. These themes in turn would then unfold and reveal the textures and patterns, structures and threads which lay in the background of the finished fabric of "identity."

First moments

In studying Process Work the first moments of a session are often seen to hold all the information that is needed to unfold a particular process. I had the same experience in the first moments of the interviews, where participants, even though they were not aware of what lay ahead, brought in themes and ghosts, roles and symbols that would emerge in other ways later in the work.

Threads in Primary Identification

Each interviewee answered my opening questions with general statements about their lives and backgrounds and in doing so brought in plenty of "I" statements, thus introducing their primary process or

“known” identity into the field. In my process of interpreting the interviews, I could refer back to these earliest statements and see clearly those small clues to what themes might come up in the interview and how things might unfold once we got further into my questions. For example, in her primary introduction to herself J said, “[W]hen I was two the family moved to the countryside, the “bush” and when I was fifteen the family moved back to the city.” Something of this “template” or dreaming of the split between city and bush, earth and concrete, would re-appear many times in her interview and was a kind of background pulse within her interview. The same was true with E who mentioned in the opening, “I am a lesbian which is part of why I am not living in Greece at the moment.” This issue of diversity and intolerance was later to appear in stories she told in answers to questions about her national identity.

The Quilt of Mixed Identity

Within the information participants provided about themselves from a primary perspective, a dominant “design” was that of mixed identity. Seven of my nine participants had some migrant or multi-national ancestry in their heritage and this mixture of identities in the background illustrated clearly the “national identity” of a nation like the United States of America or Australia that has been established as a place of recent migration with relatively little non-indigenous history when compared with other nations. In S’s interview, it was the sense of “the old and the new” that appeared as a design which created the fabric of her answers. S whose national identity was American, listed her heritage as “Portuguese-English-Scottish-Irish-French on my mother’s side ... on my father’s side ... of German and Russian origin”. She mentioned in her introduction to herself that her parents “...were part of a hippy rebellion, against religion, conservatism... into exploring new ways of living and being... and the beginnings of a very exciting time in psychology”. She introduced these two ‘ghosts’ of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, as it were, then later in her interview she talked about the “land in Europe [as being] hard, the past, the history, the seasons... something depleted”, and her dreaming of the United States as being “new land... fresh soil itself” and “victims of being immature... victims of our youthfulness... that needs eldership or something.” The old and the new were to appear in the patterns of her answers throughout her interview.

V, also American, was orphaned when she was two years old and although she was a child of immigrants from Puerto Rico she and her sister were found permanent foster placement when she was three or four with “an older second generation Italian Catholic couple”. In her opening statements she said, “I was placed in...an orphanage which was the best place my sister and I were placed”. This ‘orphanage’ dreaming, a place where everyone must somehow have lost a sense of ‘belonging’ to a consensus reality identity appeared in a comment she made later in the interview when she named “my struggle around identifying as something, my struggle *is* my nationality.”

Complex weaves and structures

National Narratives: Opening Doors to Dreamland

In this section, in which participants told stories about their nationalities, the key patterns that appeared were the complicated blurring of lines and edges around a singular identity and also doors into and experiences in dreamland which in turn hinted at the levels of awareness which lay beyond dreamland.

Complexities of National Identity

The seemingly simple concept of belonging to a national group turned out to be more complicated than I had imagined for most of my participants. Being from migrant or multi-cultural backgrounds was carried as a clear part of identity, before identifying with place or country occurred. Four participants answered directly with the national identity of the place where they were born, the others all hesitated before giving their answer. Some who said that they felt they had several national identities or none at all surprised me with their answer since having known them for some years I had made assumptions that they identified with their country of origin in a way that it turned out they did not. Even at this early stage the consensus reality experience of national identity was not entirely clear for three of my nine participants.

K said, “I feel I never got to be Georgian, I never got to be Russian completely and now in America I don’t get to be American”. In his opening introduction to himself, K had told me that his mother was Armenian, his father Georgian, he was born in Tbilisi which at the time was part of the Soviet Union, and he had lived in the United States for all of his adult life. Later in the interview he said that “having a complicated story is my identity”, this was the most congruent sense of identity that I felt that he had throughout the interview. G described himself for different reasons as having three national identities.

Growing up in Australia it was always exotic to be ‘not-Australian’ so I was Canadian ...not from *there*... my mother also being an immigrant ... she would be an “Australia basher” so it was incredibly safe for us to be not-Australian ... then when I was a teenager ... there was a period I felt incredibly close to the land, the environment and the sense of my body. Then I started to wonder if maybe I was Australian... Now [with] two extended stays in America I started to more identify with this place as being my home.

G went on to describe himself as a “dual-er” or someone with dual-citizenship, able to move easily from place to place between cultures, and we went into the interview from this perspective. The ghost of the “basher” appeared through his interview in the form of an oppressive spirit who says “that I should belong to one thing, and that ... leaving was always a negative connotation in my life.”

Dreamdoors

Asking a participant to tell a remembered or made up story about their nation was a means of entering another level of awareness in the moment. I particularly encouraged interviewees to believe in the first story that came to mind no matter how strange or insignificant it might seem. This allowed fantasy and unexpected experiences to appear, which could act as doorways into dreamland.

One person, N, replied with a poem, “ Listen my son and you will hear about the midnight rider Paul Revere ... one-eth by land and two-eth by sea”. The dreamfigure of Paul Revere represented to N a

“freedom fighter” who would “die for freedom”. This dreaming of dying for “something that you know you would do no matter what”, would appear again later in his interview.

Y told me a narrative from the 6th century, “a historical event actually that is also very mythic. It is about the Kamikaze ... actually means ‘God wind’ or ‘wind of God’ ... we were saved by the Kamikaze”. This was the first appearance of the spirit of “natural forces” which would pattern the whole of the interview. E’s national narrative was also a specific historical tale she had been reading recently to her daughters, “ a story of heroism, extreme nationalism, brutality and sadness”, all these qualities on more known or unknown levels would re-appear in the rest of her answers.

With their answers we were instantly, albeit for some participants only briefly, in the more dreamy level of experience. Characters, images and symbols were introduced that were less known and further from the participants identity.

Borders between patches.

Edges to identity

Edges are boundaries between known and unknown parts of ourselves, “the place where your identity is challenged when a new process begins to emerge”(Mindell, Amy. 2001 p.53). Typically the natural tendency at the edge is to try as much as possible to ignore what is coming up and stay on the more known path of the primary identity or process. Edges appeared in various ways in this section as participants explored each national narrative and reacted to what these brought to their awareness. In telling their initial narrative I noticed that for some participants their initial stories were *already* uncomfortably over an edge to a more known personal identity, and to compensate for the surprise of that they quick to identify with the story in a more primary way. By this I mean that although the story they chose first was a more ‘consensus reality’ or stereotypical experience of a description of their nation, in *their* more primary identity as rebels or social activists this stereotypical story was less “known” or

identified with and in the second narrative therefore, they quickly found a story that took them back over their edge to their more primary process.

This was illustrated in H's initial response: "The first thing that comes to mind is the whole movement west, the western migration... an expansiveness which I think then becomes a mental way to think outside your circumstances – to think bigger than you really are, bigger than your parents were." And in the very next sentence, she hits her edge to this expansive dreaming and her more primary social activist voice comes in to balance out her initial dreamy answer, "... It's fucking corny, but it is the land of opportunity for people who are white and privileged." Her edges to expansiveness and 'thinking beyond your circumstances' were quickly backtracked over in the same sentence.

S's first narrative was almost identical. She said, "Something that flashed when you said that: The new Promised Land ... the land of opportunity where we can really live our dreams and create a new life ... leave the hardships behind." As with H's answer S did not stay long in this "new land... fresh soil" dreaming of nation, and in her second narrative she was quick to go back to her more primary process of political awareness and being informed, "I think of the parts left out of that story, of that sense of opportunity... that there was so much bloodshed and so much 'being taken away from', so much killing... taking from other people and hurting them." Her second answer of course contains dreamland information also, the killers, the one who sheds blood, but the background attitude that came forward, of the educated liberal worldworker, was a more primary part of her identity.

For some of the other participants the opposite structure appeared. Instead of the initial narrative being more dreamy and unknown and the second narrative being a return to a more known identity the sequence was the other way around. The first narrative was a more primary experience and the second went more deeply into a less known dreaming.

In Js' first story she talked about her "white European" ancestors. "...who came first... they were criminals ... low class ... thieves ... convicts... the land was treated very brutally, like it was a dumping ground .. they raped and pillaged the land ... wiped out the aborigines." Her second narrative was about the indigenous people of Australia,

[T]hey look after the land, they care for it, they love it ...they live on the earth, they have to sleep on the earth They don't want permanent structure, they want to go walkabout, get up and follow the dreaming... they have not lived with boundaries.

She went into her second narrative and became more altered as she talked, I noted that she closed her eyes many times, was not really talking to me directly, was more internal than she had been in her first responses. Her edge to her story appeared at the end of her answer when she apologized for going off the subject and was concerned that she had lost track and not sufficiently answered my question.

As shown in these examples, participants attempted to stay as close as they could to their known identity by back tracking or not identifying with aspects or dreamfigures in the stories they shared with me.

The Strands and Fibers: Essence level moments

Once the two narratives were told, I asked the participants how the two stories had served them psychologically. Answers to these questions took people deeper inside. Since each person had a psychological background or interest, this self-reflecting came easily to each participant.

In answers to this question in the section I saw dreamland level experiences again. Also, moments of what I would name as 'the essence level' appeared. References were made to something beyond polarities, the subtle feelings that are there before something arises, something greater than identity itself. I will give three examples of such "essence level" moments.

Y in her first story talked of the "Kamikaze" or Wind God. She tells a myth of the timing of a great typhoon coming twice in Japan's history and driving away invading forces from its shores. "We were saved by this natural force" she says in the myth "...we are special, we are protected by God". In her second national narrative Y described how things in Japan are changing around personal pride and patriotism:

It is more nationalistic and more one sided about self-glorification – how great we are, how special we are and not so much reflection about what Japan did in WW2 ... in the last 57 years we did not have the chance to really be proud of ourselves and feel good about ourselves.

When she goes more deeply into how these stories have served her psychologically she says:

There is a certain uniqueness in Japanese culture ... though Japan looks on the surface so westernized it stays deep down Japanese. I think some kind of connection with nature is there, old Shinto believes everything has life ... we're surrounded by natural spirits ... it is like the dreaming or the Tao ... there is a natural dimension, always, that informs us all the time.

That moment of bringing in and naming the Tao as a background force, Y had deepened the experience of 'special-ness' that appeared in both her stories and made it somehow beyond polarities, there was nothing special, and nothing not special, there is only nature, something that informs us all the time.

Js' initial narrative was about her ancestors "criminals ... thieves ... convicts" who came and took the land. Her second story was about the indigenous people "who basically have a mindset of being caretakers of the land". When she went into the psychological function of these stories she reacted like this:

Well of course they are me! Both sides are me... the more brutal ignorant one, the less aware part of me ... has been so self destructive... the [indigenous part of my nature] helps me to be more aware ... reclaim my awareness... It is about having nothing... being simple ... detached ... following the Tao ...being in the dreamtime, a sense that everything is right, that what is happening is right ... having more awareness about it.

Again this idea of everything being right is in her answer. In her answer nothing is 'wrong', perhaps even 'self destruction', had we gone further with unfolding it, would have held something of the detached 'sense that everything is right' that she spoke about.

I took the last example in this section from N's answers. His first narrative was about "heroics ... fighting... freedom of expression." And his second was about "the freedom to exploit ... to do whatever you want ... it's my way or you will be annihilated." Going deeper he talked about dying for freedom – "if you have a dream, live it... if there is something inside of you and it is meaningful to you, you will be

willing to die for it ... never give up". He took a moment with the energy of the second story, became quiet and then said,

[I]t is something that can't be destroyed because it just exists – poof!.. that 'poof!', that thing that happens, nothing can ever stop it happening... like babies being born... they keep popping out with the same innocence.

He swung from death to birth, and he names an un-nameable force "that thing that happens", the unstoppable cycle. In that moment, again I would suggest that he momentarily touched on an aspect of the essence of his experience.

Dreaming into the Enemy

The "enemy" is commonly written about in literature on national identity and nationalism. This "other" or "foreigner" is often the object of immense projection and important difference in dialogues on national identity. In the interviews I chose to explore the concept of the "enemy" because in working with people in process oriented therapy the "enemy", edge figure or secondary thing that is *against* the primary process can hold great insights and gifts when it becomes more known and unfolded. I believed that unfolding whatever was named as the enemy would be another doorway into deeper levels of awareness and the creativity that exists at the dreamland and essence levels of reality. Many different threads of meaning arose as each participant followed the course of their dreaming. Because the participants were already in a kind of altered state having talked about the psychological functions of the narratives, this section of the interview flowed from there and I asked the first question, "Can you think what could be the enemy of the experience of the national narrative dreaming?" referring specifically to the quality or less known experience that they had arrived at in the unfolding of the final question of the last section. For example E had ended the last section with a comment "my soul is like a sponge and the Greek-ness is the liquid that it is in." So I posed the first question of this section by asking "From that place of Greek-ness, what would you see as your enemy, what is against that?" I did the same with each participant.

Again the interviewees responded with a loose and open attitude, and a wonderful curiosity about how this 'enemy' spirit was going to unfold.

The enemy of H's "nation," the spirit of which was now named as an "unbridled potential... a way you can really create yourself the way that you want to be," was an excess of "choices". H said,

the overabundance of choice is unnecessary ... it is an empty world for those of us who have had it... we have to be fed with all these different choices because we don't know what it is to go inside and really be with ourselves.

She paused and then took her comment deeper, "There is an emptiness ... that translates into a spiritual emptiness". I suggested she make a figure in her mind of the one who presented all the choices.

A greedy, controlling, power crazy character appeared. Behind that, she said,

[A]t its more essential level, it is something that wants to take in everything and won't be satisfied until it takes in everything – it is not happy to have one experience, it needs 5 billion if that is what it takes. It is an intense curiosity about life... it is precision... something so exacting.

As an example of moving between the levels, H went from the consensus reality level, being fed so many choices, to dreamland, with the appearance of a dream figure trying to fill the emptiness. We did not explore the "emptiness" any further, though as she talked of it H related it to the "emptiness in the landscape" that she had referred to in her first narrative about the expansiveness of the USA. Just briefly there was this reference to an "intense curiosity about life" perhaps a spirit of the universe that seemed to be way back there before any polarization in identity occurred.

In another example, E talked about the enemy being "the other", the "non-Greek, xenos", something "different ... unknown to me... threatening... an element of excitement in there." When I asked her what that character or figure would be like she answered "Someone who is brutal, violent and has no culture or civilization... It does not have a face". Then she paused and remembered another level to this xenophobic attitude. She recalled traditional myths from Greece about the "stranger or the foreigner" stories where the stranger knocks at the door of someone's home, "he is terrible looking, and then he is God, he is one of the Gods". From this recollection she went deeper still and said, "That faceless, mystical thing has an element of spirit... being open to some element, to a spirit, you have respect with a certain amount of distance and fear" momentarily again I felt that we touched on a sense of

the enemy before it became something distinct and when it was simply a divine or spiritual antagonistic potential.

In J's interview the enemy named was an attitude, "the enemy is that way of thinking [which] is against another way of thinking ...", when I suggested going deeper into that dreaming attitude she found a figure, "the role of being God ... sees itself as infallible, the almighty, the powerful, the right... power like something thrilling, a force, an energy." I asked her to notice for a moment that thing that thinks it is ultimately right, to notice if there was something "even before that", and she went inside, closed her eyes and replied:

[T]here is a flicker of light... a flicker of energy... it is a beginning, an energy of a beginning. The flicker or flame is unknown, it depends on how you use it. It is like a source... It is something, of everything, and then it depends how you approach that.

Deep behind that attitude was a force or energy and when D.O went into that she discovered it as the source of everything.

Other participants talked of the enemy as "a feeling of drudgery", "feigning life and relationship", "the rules and the guidelines and the form you are supposed to fit into", "a capitalist, the one that is out to exploit... for whatever it would get" and "a demonic power that drives... power... forcefulness". Each participant took their answers deeper, but the examples I have given illustrate most clearly something of the flow into and between the three levels of awareness.

Victimization and the power of what's "out there."

The "victim" role has always played an important part in the maintenance and importance of national identity. Historically victimhood creates a feeling of unity and co-operation with other similarly victimized people. The experience of being a victim can often also hold the seeds of revenge. Including it as part of the interview allowed for another opportunity to deepen one of the experiences frequently written about in studies of national identity. Since the previous section was on enemies, this section of the interview flowed easily into questions on victimization and perpetration.

Using examples from the interview conversations again, I will illustrate how the participants moved between levels of awareness in their answers to the questions on experiences of victimhood.

Y gave the example of the dropping of the atomic bomb on her country as an illustration of where she felt that her nation had been victimized. She named it as a racist act since,

[I]t was obvious for America at that time that Japan was going to lose the war... I don't think America saw the Japanese as the same human beings, so we were treated as guinea pigs. They wanted to know how effective the atomic bombs were.

She went on to talk about it being “a little like mathematics... we did something wrong in China and Korea so we are plus one and minus one and we are zero.” That attitude of “it is plus and it is minus” the ‘dreaming of a zero state or experience, led on to her saying that “in a sense those atomic bombs are seen as a natural force” and there in her answer was the same “natural force” that she had described in her first narrative example of the Kamikaze, the natural force that had saved Japan in the 6th century. It was fascinating to see this deep attitude towards nature and natural forces somehow allow for a kind of detachment and harmony in her attitude and answers. I hesitate to link this only to the essence because the horror of those bombs is so recent and vivid, but perhaps in that moment she was modeling to me something of the metaskill or feeling attitude of the essence, a kind of detachment or even forgiveness.

In her response to the question “can you tell a story about how and why your nation might feel victimized?” E laughed and said “ ‘Victim’ is our middle name! ... the cultural identity of modern Greece.” The primary process of her nation was as a victim. She illustrated what she meant by relating the background attitude as having “the ancient Greek glory... taken from us by... the whole world that hates us!” There was plenty of laughter in her voice, and with that the sense of how edgy it was to name and speak so lightly about something that also held a lot of weight and something painful in the background. When I asked her what felt justified because of that victimization, she answered more dreamily with a hint of sarcasm in her voice, “since our superior knowledge is not allowed to bloom there is nothing we can do but sit back and have an ouzo and hang out with our friends and we don't need to be accountable

for anything.” That laid back more dreamy attitude appeared again in her next comment, “we are this little country with nothing in particular to show, a weird language... a weird mindset... most of it is dreamland and that is kind of a nice place to be.” Encouraged to go deeper into that state of being unaccountable and having nothing in particular to show, she said “it is very critical for the Greek psyche to live in the magical world, the dream world, the glory of something bigger than ourselves.” Albeit briefly I thought for a moment that E was stepping beyond the consensus reality experience of being victims of something, to finding deep within the “thing” that victimized her a kind of permission or freedom to exist and honor a magical experience un-namable and detached.

S’s answers were based on her view of her “nation” as a victim of its “own unconsciousness.” She talked about being “not very introspective... not so much looking interiorly” and from that there being “a self-righteous innocence...vulnerable... victim to the ‘bad guys’... something arrogant, cocky, rebellious”. When we took that spirit a little further, she talked of her nation being “victim of our youthfulness... of being immature”. Going beyond that and dreaming more deeply into that youthfulness she found “a purity in that... that initial feeling of hope... the heart of what is driving us...sitting back and listening ... more interested in discussion and relationship... that needs eldership or something.” It was a surprising but authentic flow from being the unconscious one who identified as “we are the ones helping the victims” to being more aware of the eldership in innocence and youthfulness, the ability to hope, the purity in that youthfulness before identity takes over and becomes firmly set.

Similarly N talked about his nation being the victim of “not being understood by other countries” but he added “... because it does not understand itself... you would not be worried about people not understanding you if *you* understood yourself.” To the question, ‘what would the group lose if they were to give up their victim status?’ N replied, “it would get closer to what is important to itself, it would get closer to the fear, it would nurture itself, it would get closer to other people, it would have the potential to relate.” Then he added, “it is like death... like being on your deathbed, you would ask yourself what is actually worth living for. You would get closer to life...” For N within the experience of being a victim of

not being understood was a dreaming around being the ‘understanding one’ and deep in that character who ‘understood’ was the dreaming of the death bed, where life and death meet in the one place.

Fibers and filaments: Finding the Source in the Spirit of the Freedom Fighter

For me the most exciting part of this final of the interviews was seeing how many ghost roles that had appeared earlier in the interviews got filled out and embellished in the answers that participants gave. In this final section I asked interviewees about dreamfigures, real or imagined who were leaders, freedom fighters, spokespeople who identified with their nation as the focus of their lives. In my studies of nationalism and national identity I read about many charismatic and important figures that stirred up nationalism, led their people to freedom, and who represented some characteristic that a nation often sought to emulate. I brought this element of identity in because I wanted to see what dream doors these characters might open. What would the fantasy conjure up? What energies and forces would appear?

In this section I found the most references to what I considered to be the essence level of experience, the fibers of the threads that weave the fabric. Although it really cannot be talked about as such, the intentional field, the unplanted seed of the cotton plant, the new fleece of the lamb, the silk worm weaving her cocoon, this element that was there before anything else manifested. I will illustrate this with examples from six of the nine interviews.

Y's dreamfigure was a historical figure from Japanese politics. Shotoku-Taishi was a man who wrote the first constitution that named harmony as a quality that was integral to the Japanese national character. For Y he was a mystical figure “known for his smartness and intelligence” and his ability “to listen to many people at once... he could listen to different levels of the reality, not only consensus reality but also the dreaming world.” When I asked what psychological function she thought he played for the people she said it was his “mystic, dreaming aspect or ability, a more shamanistic aspect of him” that she thought people liked so much. She talked of his “believing in his inner experiences, being in the dreaming house and waiting for dreaming” when he had decisions to make, “people believed so much in the spirit world that even the minister can be in the dreaming house.” In her answers Y began with a dream figure

who brings out the presence of spirit worlds, dream houses and an approach to consensus reality that begins deep down in un-nameable and unpredictable places.

V named several key freedom fighters from the US and other countries. After putting them together in a composite figure she dreamed into the energy of them, saying "...they followed the truth of who they had to be, they did not move from that no matter where it took them or how difficult it became." That "truth" seemed mysterious and when I asked her more deeply about it. She took her time to answer, "they had no choice, it is a calling, it is your life's task, it is what your soul has to do, that inner most decision that you cannot but obey, there is no choice in it." In her answer she brought out and named the presence of that background wave or field that calls a person to their task in life. It is the "pilot wave," "quantum state crossover" or "intentional field, a generative power beyond time and space that pulls and pushes us and calls us to our truest nature.

On a consensus reality level J mentioned many figures from history and the present day that worked with marginalized groups and people in political, spiritual and psychological roles. She talked about her own paths in life and her belief in shared responsibility for work in the world. "I think that a lot of us are not picking it up. A lot of people think about doing things... they never do anything, myself included!" When dreaming into the characters she had mentioned she talked about their inspirational natures "we need some sort of figure that helps us to pick up our dreaming and follow that spirit... they remind us, they help us to go back, go inside and pray and hang in there." J then named a force she believed existed in the background of the group of freedom fighters and spiritual leaders she had named, "they had a deep connection to the 'other'... a dreaming... spirituality... beyond the normalcy... they go much deeper... become the essence... they live in a world of essence where they don't marginalize anything." Again, this "other," a field or force that drives, is connected to, seemed to me a momentary reference to the intentional field.

E chose a particular hero from her nation's recent history. On a consensus reality level this figure "represented resistance to the outside", a reference to a theme that had already appeared in earlier parts of E's interview. Beyond that E described him as having a "connection to nature and his love of the

country”, and even deeper than that she answered, “he believed in something bigger than himself... the connection to the divine... connecting to oneness, to leaving your little self and being part of a bigger whole.”

In her interview, S felt that her dreamfigures held a “deep feeling for humanity”, that they “caught hold of a spark within each person and the [people] are drawn in because it is speaking for something internally that can’t yet speak for itself.” The dreamfigure/freedom fighters are “driven by something bigger than them... this feeling right from the ground...they were totally used... something was simple... the calling, that inner momentum.”

N described his figures as believing “in something in your heart and you just live it, it resonates, it inspires other people... you believe in other people no matter what they are doing.” He dreamed into their work as “a feeling they were part of a movement, they were not alone” and he remembered “there were a thousand heroes nobody ever heard of, ones that hid someone in an attic, or spoke out in a meeting, or took the time to do something.” And when I asked him what led them to their path again he replied with a answer that held great depth and reference to this driving force: “something that you know you would do no matter what ... those moment when you do something because it is all that you can do... you would never not do it.”

The Hem that holds it together.

It was important for me as interviewer to check in with each participant at the end of the interview. In the time we had spent together we had laughed and at times cried, gone deeply into unknown elements of experience. As the hem of the quilt the participants feedback took me back to my research that wondered if unfolding a consensus reality topic such as national identity, doorways to commonality and oneness might be opened and explored. Checking in with the participants was an opportunity to see if they had gained insights from the experience.

I asked each participant how it had been for them and all of them said they had got something from it. K said, “It was pretty fun. It gave me another idea of why I have such an edge to being proud of that kind of thing,” and G noted, “Oh that was fun! Very dreamy. If I were to take this whole thing as innerwork I would have to start taking responsibility for the different parts of myself and the parts that are powerful.” N said he felt “humbled”, “taking the time to ask somebody what they think and feel, it changes something,” and E said, “I love your questions, it was very interesting talking about that stuff, it gave me insights I had not known before...your attitude as a listener was very helpful to me, it made me really able to go there and go to the dreamy places very easily.” J smiled widely and said, “Great! Wonderful questions! You helped me to dig deep into myself, helped me to reflect and think about what my feelings are and my belief systems,” and S replied, “Incredible questions, so deep and provocative and personal, so exciting to go through this.” The topic itself was appreciated by Y, “It was fun, this interview made me realize how complicated it is for me the relationship towards the Japanese nationality,” and V’s final comment broadened that sentiment further, “It is a great topic and it is needed.”

CONCLUSION

What is the self anyway? Buddhists don't believe there is a real conceptual self, only the illusion of it. This belief contrasts with Western traditions that hold sacred the notion of an absolute soul, and by implication, a self. Such an identity in the western way of reasoning, has defined borders, characteristics, solidity, cohesions and continuity. (Brewer, M. 1991. p. 103-104)

There are at least two contexts for using non-ethno-national metaphors. First, in moments of reflection when you think about the complexity of your own multi-cultural antecedents, it is germane to employ a metaphor that cuts across fixed boundaries on the map. These transnational metaphors can better capture the essence of a person who functions regularly in several cultures. The second context is when someone asks you how you manage the ethno-national-racial-religious-caste-class-clan-role-age-gender paradoxes of your identity, you can respond by saying that you see yourself as a river fed by many streams. (Seelye, H.N & Wasilewski, J. H. 1996. p. 195)

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the human made structure of national identity and see how the concept of national identity can serve us as a doorway to various levels of identity and awareness. In particular I sought to illustrate the presence of the less known experiences that exist as underlying threads and fibers in the fabric of our national identities.

I began with a research question that asked: How can national identity be a doorway into unexpected places of commonality and oneness? Typically national identity serves to both keep a select group of people together and other groups of people separate. It creates boundaries that can be a wall separating us, excluding others and supporting difference and exclusivity, or it can be a line that can be used to relate with others, connecting us with one another. National identity can both pave the way to a sense of connection and commonality with strangers whom we meet and who come from the same place as ourselves. It can also bring to our attention some long ago fought war or historical injustice that drives us apart from one another and allows nothing to

change. At different times when we meet new people we name our national group and, in doing so, lay the foundation for connections and invitation, projections and stereotypes. National identity can give us the experience of a sense of value or a sense of antagonism, a moment of understanding or the return of some age-old bigotry and one sidedness. At the consensus reality level, national identity is a hot topic, and can be a powerful and potent force which both unites and separates individuals and groups.

I learned from my research that the experience of national identity can become a doorway into levels of awareness that reveal experiences of commonality and almost un-nameable experiences of 'essence' experiences and the intentional field that lies deep within and beyond our known identity. This field serves us as a kind of driving force or "pilot wave" in the background of other experiences we have of our known selves. I learned that exploring national identity together with others could develop a kind of ease as well as a deep understanding of previously unknown aspects of ourselves, which was then helpful to our more primary or known identity. I also learned that the deepest levels of awareness generate common images and descriptions that we use to describe our national identifications yet are almost unnamable when experienced at these levels. The participants in my study, including myself, all suggested that whether you are of Greek origin, Japanese, Georgian, Dutch, Australian-European or American origin it is "nature" or "love", "Tao", "something that holds and just understands", "spaciousness", "a calling", "no word that means human", "timelessness", "a curious universe", "the divine" or "the spirit world" that exists in the background once we get beyond the polarities and names that we give ourselves in our more known national identities. Through my interpretation of the interviews I saw that if you are able to allow yourself to drop into these other levels of awareness the earliest thoughts you have about national identity, what it means to

you and how it serves or fails to serve you, become changed and deepened and even take on a whole new sense of value and importance bringing a different emphasis to the foreground.

In the literature that I reviewed for my research paper on national identity I read nothing that presented the experience of national identity from a more transpersonal viewpoint like this. I do not believe this kind of research has been done before in this field. I read some valuable literature on the psychology of nationalism, which explored the human tendency to seek out a needed feeling of justification often through being a part of something larger than ourselves, and finding from participation in the group experience a sense of meaning in life and the fulfillment of a need for connection. In that literature, there was also a sensitivity to and naming of the fear of the “other,” the foreigner or enemy as a way of avoiding the reality of who we are, and awareness of the importance of not projecting disliked parts of ourselves onto another group or nation. (Searle-White, 2001).

In this paper I have attempted to explore this need to be a part of something larger than “ourselves,” that commonality of experience. Rather than look for it on the outside, I was more interested in exploring deeply and internally to find where and what that experience is from the inside out. What we think is “out there” waiting to be found is more often than not something we have marginalized right “in here,” also waiting to be identified.

This thesis is one of the few studies that have so far attempted to illustrate the more recent work being done by Mindell and his associates on levels of awareness and the intentional field. My interpretation of the interviews illustrates moments where the essence level appears in conversations about national identity. I have represented these momentary appearances as parts of the flow of awareness from level to level, (consensus reality to dreamland, dreamland to

essence and so on,) that is the nature of the river's process or the flow within the awareness-loving psyche.

As I review my research to draw a conclusion from it, I noticed that I have, without doubt, opened more pathways and explorations, than reached any concrete conclusions. Had I time and unlimited resources I could have gone on and on with the research, re-assembling and unraveling the data in alternative ways until I discovered the ultimate extract from the raw materials on hand. Were I to carry out future research I would definitely include more video work and interpret the interviews using more of the visual channel and less of the auditory channel. One of the main limitations of this study is linked to the verbally-based method I chose in using interviews as my data generation technique. Video work would allow the essence level to appear more clearly since the essence level typically appears in a non-verbal channel. With video, non-verbal signals could really be studied and recorded in detail.

Another possibility for future study would be to use a more psychological structure in the interviews themselves. Having less structure around national identity and more interview steps that supported and held the momentary dropping of identity would be productive. It might allow a deeper exploration of the essence level with participants, and would be more focused on finding out about their experience on that level. I would also plan to spend more creative time there, perhaps using masks or clay or movement work, exploring and studying what came out of the essence level experiences. In the present study, I adapted a more passive 'fisher-woman' style, waiting with my rod for the essence-fish to come and find the hook, only then noting it's appearance before throwing and watching it swim away, back into the water.

For me the main significance of this study is particularly found in alerting the reader to the amazing and exciting reality of parallel worlds, and the creativity that exists in the constant

movement and flow between them. Perhaps from that awakening there is an implication for further study in this area that goes even more clearly and deeply into the fluidity and presence of these worlds at all times and in reference to all areas of fixed identity, be it gender, color, class, race, sexuality or religion.

I believe that Mindells' work on the quantum wave function in physics, and the immeasurable, non-cognitive realm of the essence level in psychology is an exciting form of worldwork. I found it exciting that, in the background of so many issues, polarities, fixed identity experiences and wars, there might be a deeper dreaming that is about a "sum of all worlds," a common ground, and the curiosity to explore that common ground. This has enormous implications for the world, its conflicts, its limitations and its potential for change.

It is one of the things that I think... that maybe one of the things behind war is the drive to get rid of our identities... that is not to 'kill' ourselves but to 'drop' ourselves momentarily. (Mindell, 2003)

It is this dropping of ourselves momentarily which engenders a kind of "belonging a little in lots of places," that I have tried to show through this study. With supportive guidance and practice it is possible for our inner work muscles to develop and to create inner worlds that can ask us both the "right" questions that allow us to move more easily between levels, and also take us fearlessly and deeply to the unexpected and un-nameable answers that exist in a micro-moment of awareness way down there beyond and before any of it even began. Within these unexpected and unimaginable blinks of awareness, in all their abstraction and seeming meaninglessness, there might be answers and resources which we can use to answer some of the most impossible questions about the nature of the world: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?"

APPENDIX A: The Interview Questions

NATIONAL NARRATIVES.

- Name your own national group, the one you identify most closely with
- Describe a prominent story that comes to your mind about this group, for example a story about its origins, defeats, triumphs or destiny.
- Describe any incidents in which a national narrative about this group has changed or come under question.
- So, when you think of these two stories, can you make suggestions about what psychological function those stories have served you now or in the past?

ENEMIES

- When you think of that psychological function, can you think of something that would be the enemy of that experience?
- Describe who or what that enemy is, and in what circumstances you experience ‘them’ as enemies.
- Do you have any suggestions as to what the psychological characteristics of that enemy might be?

VICTIMIZATION

- Going back to the National Identity that you named in the first section, can you tell a story about how and why your nation might feel victimized?
- What steps does your nation believe are now justified because of their victimization?
- What would the group lose if they were to give up their victim status?
- How does maintaining that victim status prolong any conflicts or difficulties that nation might have?

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

- Can you think of a real or imagined character in the moment who was a leader, freedom fighter, national leader, terrorist, spokesperson or someone who essentially made identifying with their nation or group the focus of his or her life?
 - What is it about their lives that might have led them to this path?
 - Why were they followed, or listened to, or respected by their people?
 - What psychological function did they play with relationship to those people?
 - Would anyone else have been able to do the same thing, or were these people in some way unique?

FINALLY

- How was that interview for you?
- What did you get out of it?

APPENDIX B: Interview with #H

S: Can you introduce yourself?

H: I am a 41 year old white woman. I was born in Florida and moved to Holland when I was 6 months old. From there the family migrated to Hawaii when I was 8. My parents are Dutch and they had emigrated once before to the USA. My father is 80 and my mother 76. The rest of my family, half are in Europe, and half are in this country. I have a Masters degree in education. I am mother of two children who do not live with me, and I live and study in Portland. I work in the mental health field. I am in a long and loving relationship with my partner, a woman.

S: Name your national group. Which national group do you most identify with?

H: America.

S: When you think about that experience of being nationally identified as being American, can you tell a most prominent story that that group tells about itself?

H: The first thing that comes to mind is the whole movement west. The Western migration. I think this country identifies as being very independent and self-serving and self-reliant. I think that spirit underlies everything, about the politics, the economics.

S: When you think about that particular story, what is it about that story that comes to mind?

H: An expansiveness. In a CR way the country affords it because it is so large, but it is an expansiveness which I think then becomes a mental way to think outside your circumstances that allows you to think bigger than you are, bigger than your parents were. It is fucking corny, but it is the land of opportunity for people who are white and privileged.

S: Can you describe any incidents in which the national narratives have changed or come under question?

H: I think a story that has changed is.. my parents saw.. literally were rescued by the Americans during WW2, so the big brother had a benevolent side to it and they certainly experienced that. But I think now that the stories are much clearer now about all of the havoc that this country has wrecked on other countries, other governments. It is very self-serving in the name of money, politics, political power. Without a mal-intent on the part of those people, but never the less...

S: So the big brother has become..

H: It is not benevolent, it is completely self serving and does not have the interest of the people at heart though they really believe they do. I believe that they believe they do, that is how I can be kind to that side. Did you want to know more?

S: If you have more.

H: When I think of my parents generation – cans of food fell from the air, and they were starving. That is a big moment. They were liberated, literally liberated, and what a huge thing when you have been in captivity in a sense. So that experience is, for people of my parents generation, I think it is hard to even see this country as a bad brother, given what they have experienced, they must be very conflicted. Since I am removed from that I can see it with much more detachment, and being somewhat of a social activist I can see then the whole other side about how things are completely self serving. And even that war was self-serving, all wars are self serving!

It is a big story.

S: So, when you think of these two stories, you have one story about expanse, opportunity. Than you have this other story about self serving, self interest. Can you find ways that these stories have played a psychological function for you?

H: That is a complicated question. I don't know if everyone you are interviewing is an immigrant?

S: No.

H:I think being an immigrant that makes it complicated. On the one hand I can say that my parents always said “aim high”, they sent me to the best private school in Hawaii paid a lot of money for it, so there is a way where my ambition has this sense of ‘yeah! Really anything is possible’, has this expansiveness about it. I feel that, and at the very same time I feel.. that in a way goes together with self-serving ness, it is about what do I want for myself, and just being focused on me. How am I going to be, how am I going to make money and be out in the world?

I am not splitting those two stories I realise.

But at that very instant there is also something incredibly insecure, because of the immigrant experience, you are being watched. My sense of being in school was of being watched ‘ you have better do well otherwise we are kicking you out of this school’, so I had to really perform to a certain standard, that if I didn't do it right I would get kicked out – that whole immigrant mentality of making it. Not that my parents were poor, but it is that sense of being able to belong in a place and in order to do that you have to give something up of your self. You can't afford to make a lot of mistakes, you have to do what is expected of you, and do it right. It is very exacting and there is a lot of pressure. So that expansiveness in that one story immediately in a way gets tempered by something else – that is out there but the pressure is so intense but you barely know anymore if you are expanding because of what you want, or because of what is expected? It is hard for me to find myself in that story.

S: You mention being a migrant and though your national identity is to do with America it is interesting to me that you came from one of the smallest countries in Europe, at least geographically. And though you grew up here, you had Dutch parents and your first language was Dutch.

H: It's interesting to think of that, I never thought of that, such a tiny country. And then I moved to Hawaii and that is a rock, which is limited space as well. Then I moved to the mainland, as they say if you live in Hawaii, when I moved to the mainland I LOVED driving on the freeway, there was something about a road that I knew I could be on for five days I knew I would not get to the end, that was just amazing to me. I loved that, I still love that. It's amazing!

S: I see something in your face when you say that..

H: Yes, I feel that now! It's just whoosh! I just saw the Nevada desert, you are driving across the Nevada desert and there is nothing. There are hills, some sage brush, a truck every now and then, and just empty space, it is amazing!

S: Why is it amazing?

H: It is amazing because... what is that?... I think there is a sense of limitlessness and potential. Unbridled potential, because there is nothing to encroach on you, you can project everything on that road. The space that is open there. There is way that the land has not yet been built upon, no people that are making you turn a certain way yet , you can still make your own way.

S: If we drop the negative aspects of self-serving... there is a freedom in it, I remember the early self serving cafeterias in England..

H: Yes, I don't only feel it as a bad thing. I see it as a way that you can really create yourself the way you want to be.

S: Regardless of?

H: well, you see I can't totally stand for that because I know too much about other people's experiences. I can't say 'regardless of race, class' that is bullshit. So that is not true at all. I can only speak for my experience as a white person and wish that it were true for everybody, that I feel, and knowing that it is not.

We have to be reminded, because we don't have that experience.

S: So, there is an expansiveness and an awareness in that, and when you think of that experience can you think of something that is the enemy of that experience?

H: Can you ask that another way?

S: yes, when you think of that open road, of going for what you can, wherever you want to go, that feeling, can you think of something against that, a stopper of that?

H: Are you saying what stops me? Or is it a more general question? If you are asking me my edge to it..

S: Yes, let's talk about you.

H: I don't know if this answers your question, but there is a feeling like there are too many choices. It makes me think of supermarkets in this country. It is like an overload, if you are in a privileged place, you have all these options it is almost overwhelming. And that, then with that comes a responsibility, with all

these choices comes ‘wow! I can choose and this is my life and I am choosing this or that, no one is making me do anything, I was not born into a family business where I had to follow a certain thing, so what do I choose then given the social consciousness I have?’ it can become overwhelming I think.

I think of a supermarket, I actually can’t stand American supermarkets, it is ridiculous!

S: What is ridiculous?

H :It is unnecessary, the overabundance of choice, it is unnecessary. I can feel I am about to get on a soap box about consumerism. We have to be fed with all these different choices because we don’t know what it is to go inside and really be with ourselves. It is an empty world for those of us who have had. And that is where you then get the whole other experience of marginalised group who have actually had to suffer and have a different experience, the spiritual rank and all that stuff that comes with that.

There is an emptiness, there is literally an emptiness in that landscape that I described that translates into a spiritual emptiness from a different lens.

S: If you saw that as a character, someone who is presenting all these options, if you imagined that character who had that job as it were, can you imagine a figure?

H: It is hard to keep your politics out of these things.

S: Don’t then.

H: Then that mythic figure for me is something that is highly creative for better or worse. It has a mind that will manipulate that will create, that will find whatever it does or can, to have yet another thing be consumed. “Can we change the color on that box to get people to buy it?”, they will come up with everything, and that is amazing. The creativity and the ingenuity around that is amazing. The manipulation is disgusting and it is amazing.

S: So, when you think of this amazing, disgusting character, can you imagine what their psychological characteristics be?

H: Well I am sure it has an essence, and that is something.

S: And if we started a little higher.

H: If we start at the top, it is greed, it is about more.

S: More what?

H: (pauses)I have a vision of all these little ants, and this character is in the control tower, and we all become robots. So, what does that figure want us to become robots for? I guess power. I think power, something like : I can control people’s emotions, habits, addictions. I feel a lot about it. It is an amazing theme. It goes so deep. What can be controlled with that whole consumer, media. We stop becoming thinking beings, so it is to dull, to even out any kind of ... it makes me think of communism in a way. Something that kind of flattens, everyone becomes the same, creative thinking is not encouraged any more, there can be only one creative thinker, this big mythic thing.

S: And what is behind that?

H: That's a great question. (Pauses) If I do greed first, at its more essential level, it is something that wants to take in everything and won't be satisfied until it takes in everything.

S: What is it Army talks about? The curious universe.

H: Yes, it just wants to taste and have everything. It is not happy to have just the one experience, it needs 5 billion if that is how many there are. Yes, it is intense curiosity about life.

S: And power?

H: First I think of control, it is controlling all these little ant creatures. And control is about, controlling them to... this is harder ...it feels different. When I think of greed I think of something that is taking in, when I think of power I think of control. When I think of what is the essence of control... oh! It is precision. It is something that is so exacting, it can manage, manipulate – that is a negative word – no, it can orchestrate everything to its finest millisecond of an experience or a thing or an operation or anything, it is something very, very precise. Which does not have, I think power can also have a force, and that is not what comes up for me in this, though I can imagine there is a whole dreaming there around that.

S: Do you have any suggestions as to why psychologically a greedy powerful character would be the enemy?

H: Well it does not leave room, pre essence work, for everybody to taste everything. That experience does not get shared.

S: Psychologically, why wouldn't someone want that?

H: Well, it sounds too Freudian to say, but it feels like it is because they did not have it. If I were to think psychologically I would think of someone who has not had enough tasting, like someone who is young. And when I think of the US it is a young country and it has not tasted everything. Europe is old, it is seasoned, it is slower it has been there, done that kind of thing.

S: Going back to your national identity, can you tell any story or a story about how and why you feel your nation is victimized?

H: Because, meaning – why do people pick on it? That is how I translate that question in my head. Because it is arrogant and any time there is an arrogant force around people don't like it, they don't like being told what to do so people want revenge.

S: So it is a victim of other people's revenge?

H: Yes, and people are vengeful because of what it has done in its misguided attempts to be benevolent.

S: If you took that role for a moment, what would it say?

H: When I said that thing before about it being young that really sticks with me. There is something about the youthfulness of this country that drives a lot of this psychology that would say "I am young, I am

little, I am just trying”. It is misguided, “It is not really what I want, this does not look like goodness to me, but what can we do? We are big and there are a lot of different forces here as well. Give us a break!”

S: Great, when you feel that, what steps do you think the nation feels justified to take because of its experience of being a victim?

H: I think of isolationism, when the nation feels like a victim it then starts to isolate itself from other experiences. It is like marginalised groups that have a victim identity they band together, us against them. And even though we are huge and have a lot of power that victim identity still makes you band together, and that then closes you off to dialogue and other experiences from other groups. You stop wanting to listen because you are getting pounded over the head and you get pissed. And secondarily you get angry, send B-52 bombers or whatever it is you do.

I think The US sets itself apart, I really don't think it feels like it is part of the global economy , I mean it is in a larger sense, anyone in the stock market knows that, but as an identity I feel like the people who live here don't feel like they are a global anything, They are the US, they are America!

S: And what do you think the group would lose if it gave up its victim status?

H: It is hard because once you know about marginalised groups and their experience, but what I was going to say is that it would give up being a group. Being able to identify with something that is national – I am American and it means this. But once you realise the diversity in this country and that it is not just one experience, there is no group, that is a myth.

S: Are you saying it would give up its ignorance of its own globalness?

H: Exactly, yes, and it would have to look at and relate to all of the issues that that brings up, and that is what it absolutely does not do, politically. That is interesting.

S: Are you saying that it would have to look at itself?

H: Yes, I think that is right, that is good.

S: How do you think maintaining that victim status prolongs difficulties that this country has?

H: As long as you are separated from, and cannot identify with how you are the aggressor, you wont open yourself up to having any dialogue with anyone where you are really listening, I think that prolongs any conflict, that is my bias.

S: Can you think of a real or imagined character , one or more, who was a leader, freedom fighter, national leader, terrorist, someone who has made the focus of their career or life their country or group?

H: Martin Luther King, Malcolm X. I am thinking of Hanna Ashari –she was a spokesperson for the PLO for a long time. She was on NPR a lot when I listened to it in the old days, when my kids were little and I listened to the radio a lot to keep me sane. The early 90's. She has since changed her politics a little bit, but back then she was very much a Palestinian freedom fighter and a very eloquent spokesperson for them.

S: What do you think led them to their path?

H: I think of their suffering.

S: What do you mean by that?

H : It is almost like being a Bodhisatva, that you cannot stand to be in this world if you cannot somehow at least try to ease the suffering or the fear of the people like you who are having the same experience.

S: What does Bodhisatva mean to you?

H: In a more dreaming way, it is something about, a little bit like how when I talked about this expansion and I cant not mention people who are not experiencing that. It is like, how do you live a life – you cant feel well in yourself - while you still know people are suffering. I cant think how else to put it.

S: When you think of those people and that image of the Bodhisatva, why do you think they were listened to, followed or respected by the people?

H: I think it was because they somehow managed to speak so directly to their experience that their experience was no longer marginalised. It makes me want to cry.

I think, I have picked people of color, but it could be the same of a white leader in eastern Europe or someplace like that. It is like you have been suffering in silence or with your group or family. There is a sense of suffering that you or others like you must feel, and there is amazing power that comes out of that, but it is all of that. The suffering, the power, the don't we kick ass, but if it does not get recognized and become part of your identity then it stays in isolation with one another.

I think these leaders put it on the map for people and then they could start to identify with each other, they could start creating their own narratives about themselves. Not only the poverty or this or that, but also the flip side the positive aspects. I think the Palestinians have been so vilified by the USA because of our connection with Israel, and her speaking of her experience, and even Arafat, he was a popular leader for a long time I think because he put their experience on the map and they could see their own experience better because of it. That is what I imagine.

S: When you think of the people that follow those people, what psychological function do you think those leaders play for the people?

H: I don't know, the first thing that came to mind was a mother or father figure.

S: By that you mean?

H: A grandmother, something that holds, a holder, an elder, something that can hold the container no matter how horrible, it is somehow held. That is their function psychologically.

S: When you think of those people, do you think that anyone else would have been able to do the things that they did or are doing?

H: Well, knowing process work and role theory and stuff it is hard to answer that question without saying, no someone else could have stepped into that role.

That role was waiting to be occupied. Whoever was closest to that role, yes, but it did not have to be that person. It was like 'Martin Luther King-ness' or 'Malcolm X-ness' was waiting to happen. I think that is what I think about that. I am a little conflicted because I think there is something about fate and people's personal fate, but I also think that if the role placement was not there, the little place holder, they would not have been able to step into it.

Yes, there is a timespirit element in it, the right person and the right time.

S: When you study these individual leaders what do you think we can learn about the psychological dynamics of conflict escalation and conflict resolution?

H: I want to say because these people I chose are not all into peace, I think that figure gets people over an edge, They help people over an edge whether it is an edge to peace or an edge to war. Hannah Ashari was someone very polarizing , she was not a diplomatic speaker when you heard her, neither was Malcolm X. Martin Luther King I know he talked about peace, but what did he do psychologically? I would have to think about that more, but my first thought Is that they helped people over an edge.

S: How was that for you, what did you get out of it?

H: Oh that was fun! Very dreamy

You were very good therapist facilitator helping to get things out.

Something about the immigrant experience helps me anchor that feeling of conflict I have sometimes. I feel like I should be such a competent person out in the world without struggle. Yet I experience a lot of struggle and it doesn't make a lot of sense to me on the outside when I look at my skin color and stuff. I don't get it. But then when I think of those beginning questions I do get it.

That victimization was interesting, I had never thought about what we would lose if we did not have the victim identity. We would really have to start relating. And if I take this whole thing as innerwork I would ask myself that question. I would have to start taking responsibility for the different parts of myself and the parts that are powerful. But the thing about taking responsibility for yourself, the country does not do that very well, it is great to go back and forth there.

Great, good work! Thanks!

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