

Towards Understanding the Dynamics of  
Transformation in Spiritual Psychology with particular  
reference to Buddhist Teachings

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with love and gratitude to my parents Elizabeth (Lily) Noonan (1928-2014) and William (Bill) Carey (1920-1994) whose optimism, loving support and indomitable spirit have been inspirational driving forces throughout my life. They never saw a limit to the possible and the attainable and taught me to never let circumstances dictate what might be achievable.



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## Abstract

My thesis brings into conversation, Buddhist spiritual teachings with the medieval contemplative Christian understanding and modern ontological thoughts, to investigate the dynamic characteristics of spiritual transformation.

The thesis explores the following questions:

Is there a spiritual journey? To what extent the journey itself is the transforming energy? To whom is transformation happening? How do we become the truth uncovered? Have we always been living in a 'plenum' with respect to the Buddha nature teaching? Is the Buddha and his teachings revolutionary agents of continuous transformation. Does the spiritual path focus on the cultivation of a Nirvanic-mind only, what about the body?

My conversations revealed the following:

That it is possible to become aware that conditioned thoughts are thinking the person. That it is possible for the conditioned (*klesha*) mind to become aware of its own Nirvanic mind-nature. A deluded mind uncovers its own wisdom nature by practising an unconstructed knowing. Thus, the enlightened mind perfects 'objectless awareness' and encounters reality as wisdom itself. The transformative power of failure is a yoga and as such it is perfected in the Bodhisattva vow to save all beings.

Central to sustaining the spiritual path is to have a question such as 'Is what I am doing what God is doing'. Life and the spiritual path are unpredictable; the unpredictable challenges the mind's tendencies to conceptualize experience. The body holds the unpredictable energy of the disowned, which relates to as 'flashing' energies in the body. Transformation is the recognition of the first pure moment of awareness which also recognizes that goodness is at the heart of all things. The liberating doctrine is that everything is open (empty) and unbounded thus all matter is redemptive and as such we are always in the realm of truth.



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## Introduction

The Buddha's teachings have been characterized as a prescription to treat the sickness of *dukkha*. Prescriptively the 'three marks of existence' in the *Theravāda* tradition says that all constructed things will decay; that these constructions are ultimately unsatisfactory; and that all the 'patterns' (*dharma*) in existence are 'not-self'. If this is the liberating medicine, then the sickness must be seeing things as permanent, ultimately satisfying and as being selves. The soteriological effect in contemplating existence as 'impermanent', 'unsatisfactory' and 'not-self' is that it undermines 'craving' (*tanhā*) for and attachment to these ultimately unsatisfactory things. Being free of craving creates the psychological environment in which *Nibbāna* can be experienced. 'Seeing things as they really are' thus undermines attachment and is soteriologically transformative. In this way Buddhist soteriology, both describes the sickness and prescribes the remedy. What is of soteriological value is 'seeing things as they really are' and this is accomplished by gaining insight into the way things are. It is insight into the impermanent and dependent arising nature of things that brings about a new way of viewing the world and this is the knowledge that saves. Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist soteriology work together in a feedback loop whereby the doctrine is the soteriology, one leads to the other, they cannot be separated.

The path to be travelled to achieve liberation as outlined by the Buddha in the *Theravāda* tradition is an 'Eight-fold path' which is sub-divided into 'Wisdom', 'Ethical conduct' and 'Concentration' where 'right' insight is seen to lead to 'right' action. The rationale for the effectiveness of the 'Eight-fold' path is that ethical discipline minimizes mental anguish leading to peace and stability of mind. Through practising the eight observances the practitioner gains more control over his once habitual actions. These controls allow the practitioner to develop deeper insights or wisdom which reveals the world to be 'impermanent', 'unsatisfactory' and 'not-self'. These insights unhook the person from craving and opens the way to the experience of *Nibbāna*. In this

way, the Buddhist path is the practice and it has the goal of *Nibbāna* in-built into its mind- training. Buddhist doctrine, contemplative exercises and moral values thus form a combined network of practices whose focus is liberation. It is impossible to talk about *Nibbāna* without having to talk about the human situation of suffering and the path that leads a person out of suffering. The path is thus all inclusive, from the simplest act of charity to the most profound philosophical insights and meditative experiences. Buddhist doctrine can be seen to correspond to its practices and to flow from them. Its world view and value system can be seen to be implicit in its practices. It is the Buddhist emphasis on the ‘path’ that creates a sense of community(*sangha*) and allows it to be accessible to everyone. As a ‘practical spirituality’ the highest spiritual achievements are of value to the extent that the understanding might lessen suffering and thus be helpful to those more limited in understanding and practice. The interlocking nature of practice and realization is exemplified in *Nyingma Dzogchen* Buddhism which sees itself as incorporating all the insights of the other schools and in that way, calls itself the ‘heart essence’ of Buddhism.

A spiritual doctrine cannot, however, be solely reduced to its principal doctrines. Doctrine becomes effective and measurable only in so far as it is relevant to the daily life of a person and in this way the everyday activities of body speech and mind, as exemplified in the ‘Eight -fold path’, become part of the soteriological process. Activity is transformed into prayer when there is no difference between mystical insights in sitting practice and mindful practice of the ‘Eight-fold path’ in the ordinary activities of a person’s life.

The position I take in the thesis stems firstly from the interlocking nature of Buddhist doctrine. If the goal of Buddhist practice is to bring the person closer to the ‘true nature of things’ I begin my investigation by looking at how the earliest Buddhist practitioners saw the true nature of reality. If reality is, as they suggest, a ‘point-instant’ ‘flashing energy’ and if this is a foundational realization, what then can be implied from this understanding? Many doctrines follow on from this realization, such as phenomena are; *infinitely open, dynamic, unbounded, a continuous revolution, radical, referenclessness,nowness, isness, luminous transparent, simple, empty, self-annihilating, self-liberating, the absence of absolute viewpoint, non-knowing, beyond language and failure.* Thus, the goal of

liberation is built-in to the path which leads to it. The efficacy of any doctrine is the soteriological effect in the life that a person is living and thus my thesis is interested in how a person's life can come to be viewed as part of the soteriological process. In this regard, Heidegger's phrase of thinking the 'truth of being is to think that which is closest' is an apt axiom that encapsulates how doctrine and its soteriological purpose cannot be an abstract understanding but rather must be grounded in the life of a person. What is closest to the person is the self and thus my work examines the view of the self from the Buddhist perspective. The Buddhist 'not-self' teaching I take to imply that the solution to suffering is the realization that phenomena are other than how we wish to make them and are thus open and free of our projections. If the awareness of otherness and openness is part of the path to realization then there is a *Nirvanic* nature in everything. If there is a *Nirvanic* nature folded into phenomena then the potential realization as I see it is that the path of a person's life is occurring within a sacred mandala, it only needs to be realized. This possibility is explored and expanded in my work by looking at how Buddhism outlines the grasping conditioned nature of mind and by examining its views on what it sees as the true 'brightly shining' nature of mind that is covered over but never lost. Free of 'greed', 'hate' and 'delusion' the 'brightly shining mind' is the realized mind that becomes *Dhamma*.

Otherness and openness arising from the 'not-self' view, imply that there is a fundamental unbounded-seeking element in the mind, as opposed to the binding desires that the craving (*klesha*) mind wishes to impose and that unboundedness is the fundamental truth of all phenomena. This fundamental openness or unboundedness is to be seen clearly in the 'point-instant' view of reality where nothing can solidify and thus openness is preserved. This is the soteriological position of Buddhist *Dzogchen* which begins with the view that things are 'complete within the sphere of reality'. The *Dzogchen* view expresses the soteriological truth of unboundedness, in its views of the 'self-liberation of thoughts' when seen 'non-conceptually' or with 'naked awareness'. *Bon Dzogchen* likewise sees the truth of being as 'unbounded wholeness' wherein phenomena arise as a dynamic display perceived by 'open awareness'. There is nothing outside 'unbounded wholeness' and thus the soteriological realization is that a person is never outside the realm of truth. No matter what is occurring in a

person's life they are always within a sacred mandala. The soteriological view of *Dzogchen* begins at the realization stage of 'completeness' which is also its doctrine.

The 'Eight-fold path' builds goodness power or positive force and helps to unhook the person from negative cravings and misunderstandings. The purpose of the 'Eight-fold path' doctrine is to uncover a person's fundamental goodness or 'Buddha-nature' which, together with insight and meditative contemplation, becomes expressed as a 'not-self' compassionate soteriological activity. This is just one example of how doctrine works to bring about a 'practical' soteriological outcome. Another way to the path of liberation is through focusing on Buddhist insights into the nature of reality. If the purpose of doctrine is to bring about change then the 'point-instant' view of reality is the perfect insight which highlights that change is inbuilt into reality at every moment and anything that does not change is not real. It's insistence on the present moment implies that goodness power and positive force can be uncovered without going anywhere else because they are inbuilt in the 'nature' of the person as 'Buddha-nature' and in the 'nature' of reality as an all-inclusive openness. This no-need-to-go-anywhere-else is echoed in the writings of Kabir '.... You don't grasp the fact that what is most alive of all is inside your own house.....' (Kabir in Bly 1977.9) This is also the view of *Nyingma Dzogchen* which says that all things are complete 'within the sphere of reality' and that the 'pure awareness of nowness is the real Buddha'. Liberation or transformation is available in every moment, it is never closed off to us. The 'point-instant' reality keeps the possibility of transformation open and accessible always. Thus, we are always in the transformative matrix. Being in a transformative matrix is further supported by the *Hua yen* view which sees the relative as an expression of the absolute, consequently 'all matter becomes redemptive'. This relative absolute paradigm I explore further by looking at Medieval Christian and Sufi mysticism. The redemptive power of matter I explore by looking at how the body can play a role in the spiritual experience. To work with the body on a vegetative level is to work 'non-conceptually' with reality in the form of 'flashing-energy' which manifests both in and around the body.

My position in the thesis is that doctrine and its soteriological liberating effect is summed up in the intention to bring a person's identity as close as possible to the

true open unbounded nature of reality. One of the characteristics of a ‘point-instant’ reality is that failure is inbuilt into its very fabric. Caputo gives a contemporary interpretation on how liberation also has failure as a transformative liberating experience. He also proposes that a ‘passion for the impossible’ is a spiritual paradigm itself. Liberation for him is achieved by staying in the flux repeatedly as this is where a person moves towards ‘what they were meant to be.’ In the Buddhist language that movement is towards realizing our ‘Buddha-nature’. There is a confidence that the fundamental goodness of the person will come to the fore in Caputo’s thinking.

A path that wishes to bring a person to recognize the true nature of reality needs to be travelled back to through the ‘point-instant’ characteristics outlined above. Desmond and *Zen* Buddhism are examples of how soteriological liberation is a travelling back through one of reality’s characteristics, in this case to the first pure ‘point-instant’ moment, before the erotic-*klesha*-mind begins its conceptual elaborations. Another characteristic implied by the ‘point-instant’ reality is that the path must be travelled without references or openly. I explore this by looking at what it might be like to journey in the dark like the Buddha did ‘without support’ without the usual references and how this journey might be spiritually rewarding. To gain insight into the experience of travelling in the dark I look at how Medieval mystical Christianity saw its relationship to the dark and to the ‘nothingness’. This type of journey into the dark is also of interest psychologically because it’s a typical journey that a person in personal crisis finds themselves needing to take. The soteriological views of unboundedness and openness arising from the ‘not-self’ view also imply inclusiveness and as such I look at John Dunne’s spiritual paradigm of ‘passing over’ to other ways of looking at the spiritual journey. This is also based on the Buddha’s teaching of not holding onto one’s views so tightly as that is to mistake doctrine for the liberating experience it is pointing to. My thesis is also an enactment of this passing over paradigm as it sets out to discover what other spiritual views say about the spiritual journey. I am not suggesting that the diverse approaches should be blended in a kind of great spiritual soup. My thesis shows that the ‘point-instant’ nature of reality as a ‘not-self’ dynamic of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ is an inclusive

soteriological view which naturally leads to speaking about and dialoguing with other spiritual traditions.

My thesis looks at the possible factors that make up spiritual transformation. I begin in chapter one by looking at what the nature of reality is said to be from the early Indian Buddhist perspective. The Buddhist view of reality being a ‘point instant reality’ is characterized as a ‘flashing energy’ and suggests by extension that reality must have the ‘characteristics’ of being; *infinitely open, dynamic, unbounded, a continuous revolution, radical, referenclessness, oneness, isness, luminous transparent, simple, empty, self-annihilating, self-liberating, the absence of absolute viewpoint, non-knowing, beyond language and failure*. These themes could be characterized collectively as unbinding energies. These are themes that inform my work and which I discuss and contrast with the energies that seek to bind a person not only in relation to Buddhist teachings but also in relation to how some of these themes appear in other spiritual traditions also. Thus, my thesis has a comparative religion focus also.

If the spiritual journey is characterized as journey to experience what is real, then it is from the Buddhist perspective the journey that leads to the experience of a ‘point instant reality’. A journey to experience a ‘point-instant’ reality cannot be travelled on a conceptual road as all its ‘characteristics’ are contrary to a conceptual understanding. What a ‘non-conceptual’ journey might look like, what questions or experiences might set it in motion, and where it might lead is the subject matter of my work.

‘Point instant reality’ being; unbounded, all embracing, unlimited and impartial, leads to the absence of absolute viewpoints. This view of reality promotes greater understanding, tolerance and respect and an openness to other spiritual paths. Buddhism being ‘open’ lends itself easily to comparisons with other spiritual paths and thus my thesis will be of value to those interested in comparative religion. Openness actively promotes an engagement with other faith traditions and with those involved in the healing professions. My work is in keeping with the ‘point-instant’ philosophy that promotes, because it undermines absolute viewpoints, a ‘passing over’ to other spiritual and psychological insights in an ‘experiment with truth’ that enhances both the Buddhist, Christian and western

psychological understandings of the spiritual and psychological journey. In a cross cultural dialogue Buddhism is perfectly at home talking about God from the early Christian point of view as a ‘nothing’ (*das nicht*) that is to be experienced by ‘wanting’ or ‘knowing nothing’. These are characteristics that are in line with its own view of reality.

My work shows how the Early Christian and Sufi writings, correspond to the Buddhist view, focused as they are on the path of transformation that leads to compassion. Early Christian mystical writings outline how the journey to the ultimate unbounded is a perpetual journey in compassion. In a continuous transformation of the heart, God’s compassionate ‘isness’ becomes ever more recognized by the person’s growing compassionate awareness. One of the ‘characteristics’ of the ‘point-instant’ reality is ‘isness’ and Buddhism has no problem with this Christian articulation of the true nature of reality as ‘isness’, where ‘isness’ is equated with God. The Sufi paradigm of perpetual transformation (*ma’rifa*) is also consistent with the ‘point-instant’ ‘characteristic’ of reality as perpetual change. The necessity of a passing away of ego (*fanā*) to achieve a greater simplicity and openness proposed by the Sufi teachings is not only consistent with the ‘point-instant’ view it is also consistent with the Early Christian view of transformation being achieved through ‘willing nothing’, ‘wanting nothing’, and ‘knowing nothing’. In the passing away of ego a person can be transformed into a ‘fluid transparency’. Buddhist focus, informed by compassion, seeks not converts but greater healing for the person through whichever spiritual path suits their personality. Buddhism as a ‘science of the mind’ is also open to sharing its insights with psychologists and psychotherapists in the shared work of relieving suffering.

By staying close to the ‘characteristics’ of Buddhist reality my project discusses the spiritual journey under such themes as *referenclessness, travelling in the darkness of non-knowing, failure, re-experiencing the first moment of pure awareness, nowness is thinking that which is closes, the tension between boundedness and un-boundedness, and non-conceptual as a somatic experience*. These themes are the elements that make up the spiritual journey that leads back to seeing the true nature of reality. Buddhist practitioners are somewhat confined to knowing only what their school emphasizes. My exposition of the lesser known

‘point-instant’ reality and its attendant ‘characteristics’ will be of interest, as it helps them to understand the source of many of the basic and more advanced teachings of Buddhism. This is one of the original contributions of my work as it not only opens doors to understanding many Buddhist insights, but it also shows how conversations with other spiritual paradigms can be undertaken, without contradicting its own principles. Also, my work on the journey that arises from the ‘point-instant’ view makes a broader contribution to understanding the drama that happens in a person’s life. It is my hope that what I have outlined will bring understanding and encouragement to those travellers who like Dante have themselves ‘awoke in a dark wood where the true way is wholly lost’. These are the people who frequently arrive in therapy having encountered a major ‘failure’ which has left them in a darkness without the old references. The good news that my work may bring to them is that though they are experiencing darkness, despair and loss, these experiences though painful are valuable, in the context of the journey to understand the meaning of one’s life.

My work because it deals with unbinding energies will be of interest to psychotherapists who wish to add a spiritual dimension or understanding to their practice. It will be of interest to transpersonal psychologists and body oriented psychotherapists specifically who feel they are working in a spiritual way but have not been able to clarify how or why that is. My thesis shows how working on the body is an enactment of a ‘non-conceptual’ enlightenment experience and thus an encounter with the ‘point-instant’ reality in the form of ‘flashing energy’. Psychology in Buddhism is important but not the end. Buddhist psychology exposes the many ways that a person habitually constructs their thoughts, which keep them bound to unrealities. It exposes these patterns to show what the path is that will overcome such a limited understanding of reality. Self-transformation in Buddhism, as opposed to therapy, is ‘radical self- transcendence’ where compassion is a mindful awareness that arises from seeing the ‘empty’ nature of all phenomena including the self.

While using Buddhist techniques in therapy has become fashionable, my thesis highlights that how they are used may not be quite the same. The difference between meditation as used in the therapeutic setting and meditation in the purely Buddhist context might serve to illustrate the difference. In meditation practice a

person is not seeking to understand the unconscious meaning of whatever is arising in the mind. By being present to the *process* of whatever is arising, noting the pattern of rising and falling away a meditator comes to realize that it is through grasping that the constructed nature of the self-view and all phenomena arises. This is the beginning of the realization of ‘non-conceptual awareness’.

The thesis shows how it is possible to incorporate spiritual dimensions into a psychotherapeutic approach. This practice can be carried out in working on the body, while still maintaining connection with the Buddhist view of reality and the spiritual path. By working with openness, referenclessness and inquisitive unknowing a welcoming space is created for the ‘shadow’ parts, that block awareness, to arise. Working with the body can create more inner freedom and clear the inner psychological space for greater realization of the true ‘empty’ nature of things. In contrast to western psychotherapy that has imported Buddhist techniques into its practice and cut it from its spiritual roots, the unique contribution of my working with the body is that by maintaining the original connection to the Buddhist foundational view of reality, the body oriented journey becomes a spiritual journey.

The spiritual dilemma as outlined by Buddhism, and other spiritual traditions, can be dynamically summarized, as the pull between internal forces that seek to bind a person, to the old neurotic path and the forces that seek to unbind them. Taylor shows that the Christian travelling without a plan works on appropriation and domination where ‘self-truth’ and ‘self-certainty’ overtake the plan of redemption. This is a feature of the mind seeking ‘boundedness’. St Augustine shows that the self is mostly a narrative construct and likewise Early Buddhism shows that the self is predominantly made up of mental constructs. *Khenchen Rinpoche* shows how the grasping *klesha*-mind grasps at what is arising from the ‘all base consciousness’. Kelly’s Personal Construct Psychology shows how the mind is channelled in the name of Predictability and Certainty. These are the various ways the mind seeks ‘boundedness’. In contrast, unbounded *Nirvāṇa* is said to be the highest empty thing and the end of constructing activities. How the conditioned ‘bounded’ mind comes to know its own unconditioned nature is discussed by Miri Albahari who shows that Nirvanic awareness is in the perceiving mind stream. *Bon Dzogchen* shows that the nature of mind is

‘Unbounded Wholeness’ and ‘Open Awareness’ where there is no purifying or moving a mind from a deluded to a wisdom state is necessary as wisdom is reality itself. Similarly, Eckhart calls God ‘isness’ and echoes the ‘point instant’ view where ‘isness’ is a fundamental characteristic. To understand the psychic tension as a struggle between binding and unbinding forces, gives those interested in healing the mind, another way to frame the conflicts that a person may be suffering from. This is in line with the Buddhist view that sees that healing the mind is in turn healing the spirit or soul of the person.

The search for the ‘unbounded’ is built on the premise that all matter is redemptive, that the spiritual and physical meet in the body, and that ‘non-conceptual awareness’ is essentially somatic. To have a first moment experience the early meditators left the predictable and entered the forest and caves to experience the unpredictable or referenclessness. The body is the home of the unplanned and the place where the unpredictable arises. If the unbounded is a feature of reality and enlightenment then the more unpredictable ‘shadow’ elements we reclaim the more unbounded we become. Through Vegeto therapy we are touching non-conceptually the ‘flashing energy’ of the ‘point-instant’ reality beyond mind. Touching mindfully is the ‘un-concealment of truth’ according to Heidegger as thinking is not abstract knowing but rather ‘a handy craft’. Therefore, what a person touches mindfully reveals what is true.

Buddhism is focused on healing all dimensions of the person and this includes, body, speech and mind. My thesis shows how transformation is an interwoven path which crosses spirituality, psychology and theology. Thus, it will be of interest to Buddhist practitioners from various schools, as I show and explain various Buddhist insights that they may not be aware of. It will be of interest to students of comparative religion who wish to understand some of the dimensions of other spiritual paths. As much of Buddhist insights are based on the mind’s processes, it will be of value to psychotherapists who are interested in the spiritual dimensions of healing. Finally, it may be inspiring for those, who on their own journeys, have fallen into the darkness of despair and are in search of a new way forward.

Studstill has investigated the transformation of consciousness by exploring Tibetan and German mysticism (2005). His work has a decidedly systems theory approach through which mystical experiences are analysed to show how consciousness viewed as a system is expanded to accommodate the new information. Other writers on Buddhism such as Joanna Macy (1991), also use systems theory to show a commonality between causality, in the Buddhist 'dependent origination' teaching, and systems theory. My work, while it incorporates how psychological transformation happens, is more concerned with the dynamics that bring it about and what a transformation process demands from a person's life. What does 'point-instant' reality, 'not-self', 'unbounded wholeness' and 'objectless awareness' mean in a person's life and if followed where might they lead? To explore the possible answers, I look at other contemplative traditions from the early Christian church to Sufi writers. I explore what these writers say about the path to and definitions of the real. In my exploration, I am concerned with the Buddhist definition of mind as *citta* heart/mind, which implies an emotional and feeling element. My work differs from these others in so far as I am concerned with the journey that a person might have to take on the road to realization. In this I am looking at what the road is made of, where it might end and what the spiritual path demands from a person. My study is influenced by Heidegger's phrase that '...thinking the truth of being is to think what is closest' (Heidegger,1966b, in Dalle Pezze,2006). I also investigate what part a person's difficulties, *karmic* inheritance and disowned shadow parts play in the transformative process. If spiritual transformation has something to do with encountering the real, then it must begin with encountering what is real in oneself. My work explores what those difficult, often hidden and disowned realities might be and how that reclaiming them is a binding-back (Latin: *religare*), a religious and spiritual experience.

To explore the truth of being is to explore what is closest according to Heidegger and thus my work shows how the body, that which is very close, can be a vehicle for transformation itself. Reggie Ray in his work also shows how the body can be a pathway to enlightenment (2008). While Ray suggests various ways, the body is pathway to a more spiritual self my work, while agreeing with his, takes it further by giving concrete examples of how the body can speak its spiritual

mind drawing on my work as a body oriented psychotherapist. Also, it goes beyond his in discussing how such experiences of woundedness failure and suffering themselves, in the body experiences, can be agents of transformation. My thesis fleshes out the background to Ray's insights such as how the view of reality as 'flashing energy' arises and how that energy can be accessed in the body.

While much has been written on how the mind is transformed in spiritual practices, the other areas of body and speech have been somewhat neglected. My work looks again at what Buddhism says concerning the cognitive structures, pre- and post-enlightenment. My investigation begins by looking, in chapter one at the lesser known 'point-instant' view of Early Indian Buddhism. This view of reality suggests dynamic immediacy whereby every moment is a moment of transformation. Together with highlighting reality as a dynamic display 'point instant' reality restates the first moment of pure awareness as the true nature of reality, a view shared by *Zen* in its teaching on first *Nen* moment of pure awareness. This is also the pure moment that William Desmond sees the transformed 'erotic-mind' returns to (in Simpson,2009).

To broaden the discussion, I include Caputo's view of staying in the flux as a transformative experience (in Simpson,2009). Also as the 'point-instant' view of reality is the quintessential teaching that undermines all views, it suggests that the spiritual path must be travelled openly without old references and that a person so doing must have what Caputo calls a 'passion for the impossible'. If transformation is a journey to enlightenment the 'point-instant' view says that transformation is constantly in the now of things.

Chapter two is devoted to investigating the self as this is the central component in the discussion of transformation. This chapter discusses how the self is seen to be a narrative construct per St. Augustine and how the self is seen in early *Theravāda* Buddhism as mainly composed of conditioned mental factors that are 'not self'. *Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche* (2002) shows how the grasping *klesha* mind attempts to solidify the self into a concrete concept by grasping what is stored in the 'all base consciousness' and thus is not relating to reality. I look at George Kelly's paradigm of 'Personal Construct Psychology' (in Thirakoul,1996-1997),

which shows how inner constructs such as the self-channel behaviour in the name of predictability which of itself is contrary to transformation. *Nibbāna /Nirvāṇa*, seen as the highest empty thing is said to be the ultimate rest for all constructing activities. Without definable characteristics *Nibbāna /Nirvāṇa* is objectless and boundless, but how can a mind given to creating a bounded self-recognize that which is empty and infinitely unbounded? In contrast to the conditioned mind that seeks to establish a bounded self this chapter looks at *Bon Dzogchen*'s definition of reality as an all-encompassing 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness'. If transformation is thought of as a movement from a deluded mind to a wisdom mind *Bon Dzogchen* says that 'open awareness' is a wisdom present in the mind-stream from the beginning.

Chapter three explores what the conditions, experiences and possible agents of transformation might be on the spiritual journey. Is there an in-between liminal time when a person is no longer what he was but is not yet what he is becoming? Is what a person is to be, arriving from a not yet future or is it here now? What happen if a crisis arises in the person or the spiritual path stops? I look at *Han Shan*'s (trans. Klein, 2006) poem of the journey to 'Cold Mountain' to see what advice he gives about coping with such difficulties. Where the constructed predictable road ends travelling in the dark of unknowing arises and this parallels the Buddha's journey to enlightenment when he was said to have crossed the flood 'without support'. Darkness is a metaphor which the early Christian writers used as a metaphor for God. I compare some of the medieval writings on God as a darkness or a nothingness (*das nicht*), that similar to Buddhist language, is a language that keeps the ultimate continuously open. This comparison naturally arises as Buddhism, in remaining faithful to an apophatic language, concerning the ultimate reality never speaks about the concept of God. This chapter also looks at what might set a spiritual journey in motion, from the experiences of failure to wounding on an emotional and psychological level to having a personal question; these are some of the experiences that can ignite the journey. As outside agents, I look at the Buddha himself who, like Hermes, is an agent of transformation that disturbs the habitual patterns and opens new territories in the mind.

Chapter four continues with looking at the spiritual path as a journey into the darkness of unknowing. It was such a need to practice meeting the unpredictable that led the early Buddhist forest dwellers into remote places. Having discussed such terms as ‘non-conceptual or objectless awareness’ as features of enlightenment, I show how these can be practiced when being engaged with the body. All that has been rejected as unacceptable, all that did not support the self-view of the time, resides in the darkness of the body, awaiting recovery. The more the discarded is reclaimed the more space there is for transformation, as repression blocks openness. When a person realizes how much they have had to repress to keep a view of the self-alive the more they realize how flimsy the ground is that the self is built on. This chapter explores how everything is moving us towards enlightenment including all our *karmic* inheritances buried in the body.

Mahatma Gandhi in his autobiography called ‘My experiments with Truth’, outlines how he lived guided by the principles of the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* and Christ’s ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (discussed in Dunne,1973). His willingness to pass over to the truth of another spiritual tradition and bring it to fruition in his life could be called an act of turning truth into the poetry of one’s life. My work, in bringing several schools of Buddhism into conversation with meditative Christian thought, Sufi and Bhakti mystical writings and modern philosophical reflections shows that there is much to inspire mutual understanding and respect. While my work is a conversation and an exposition it is simultaneously an enactment of that ‘passing over’ to others’ viewpoint and returning enriched. The thesis essentially investigates what the truth of being and identity is and I have used many references from different traditions to prosecute this question. All my reference material is in translation and I recognise may have a bias towards the spiritual view from which it is drawn. My background as a *Dzogchen* practitioner may also have an influence in how I try to answer the question of transformation.

My work is titled ‘towards understanding transformation’ because the area is so deep and rich that I could not deal with all the dimensions of the subject. One future dimension of investigation might be to consider whether the principles of understanding the mind heart and body that I explored here could be framed more fully in a psychotherapeutic frame. Secondly, social scientists and psychologists

might look at how religious radicalization has taken away the adventure and the courage of a spiritual path and turned it into an adventure in terrorism. Can deeper and broader conversations ignite the courage to bring back a *jihad* of the heart and re-establish a *caliphate* of loving kindness and compassion for all?

# Chapter 1 - From Erotic Mind to Agapeic Mind

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the structure of reality from the Buddhist perspective by looking at the early Indian Buddhist view of ‘point-instant’ reality. In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation as a journey this chapter investigates to what extent a ‘point-instant’ view of reality will affect the idea of a journey as a movement from a non-realized state to a realized one? Also as the ‘point-instant’ vision is contained within its very title a dynamic trajectory, I want to see how an insight based on momentariness could play a part in a spiritual transformation process. The momentariness of the ‘point-instant’ vision seems to suggest that existence itself is underscored by change and that transformation is a dynamic built into the fabric of existence itself. If the ‘point-instant’ view is correct then one feature of a spiritual transformative dynamic must happen through becoming aware of the immediate ‘nowness’ of things. As there is such an insistence on ‘nowness’ by the ‘point-instant’ view it eliminates connections to past and future in its desire to get to a first pure moment of experience. Some light is shed on this past and future question in the discussion on ‘point-instant’ reality and its insistence that there are no static ultimate realities beyond itself and Caputo’s deconstructionist view that speculative metaphysical concepts are of little importance (1987). Further discussion on the significance of a person’s past and future will take place in chapter two. The ‘point instant’ view continuously insists on nowness and would seem to suggest that understanding the true nature of things comes from staying in the unbounded pure momentariness of things. If a person comes to know the ‘point-instant’ vision as the true nature of things I wish to see what transformative effect that knowledge might have on the person and how they might relate to the world from then on. If the ‘point instant’ view is the supreme deconstructionist view that might reveal the true nature of things and the person, I wish also to explore the contemporary insights of a deconstructionist philosophy to see what insights might arise from the dialogue. To explore the contemporary view of a deconstructionist spirituality I look at the work of J. D. Caputo. I look at the contemporary metaphysical view of William Desmond

which provides a more contrasting positive way of seeing the ‘true nature of things’.

Buddhism through its ‘point-instant’ view could be seen to have a ‘deconstructive’ mission only. But this is only half the story, as its deconstructive energy is employed in the service of unbinding or liberating the person from suffering. Its energy cuts away all delusive mental constructs that might prevent a person seeing the true nature of things. It does not allow for any elaborate constructs to be built, not even the highest spiritual teachings. It radically deconstructs in order that the person not be deluded into thinking that teachings, no matter how profound are an end in themselves. Thus, Buddhism has developed teachings such as the ‘emptiness of emptiness’ to prevent the instruction from becoming a reified concept. Also, the Buddha himself encourages that a person not hold on tightly to views but surrender them easily. ‘.....Mind should be inclined thus. Others will adhere to their own views, hold onto them tenaciously, and relinquish them with difficulty; we shall however not adhere to our own views or hold onto them tenaciously, we shall relinquish them easily’ (*Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi*, 1995, 127). These teachings on emptiness and surrendering one’s views are enacted to prevent a person from mistaking the finger for the thing it is pointing to. In this way, Buddhism is beyond Buddhism and the radical cutting nature of the ‘point-instant’ understanding keeps faith with the view of reality as a dynamic open and unbounded reality.

Sufi mysticism characterizes reality as dynamic and an everchanging energy, which is comparable to the Buddhist intent on maintaining the unbounded nature of reality. The unbounded nature of the spiritual journey is expressed as a journey that never arrives at a definitive end, because the terminus is a ‘station of no station’. Similarly, Eriugena Eckhart and other Christian mystical writers keep faith with the unbounded nature of reality by using a language that preserves an open unbounded view. They characterize the ultimate reality as a ‘beyond being’ or a ‘super-essential darkness’. Simplicity is one of the ‘characteristics’ that the ‘point-instant’ view emphasises and any journey to experience that reality necessitates a simplification of the person. In the Christian mystical setting, the journey to experience the ultimate reality also requires a radical simplification of ‘wanting’, ‘willing’ and ‘knowing nothing’.

The energy of radical simplification, in the quest of absolute openness is highlighted in the works of John D. Caputo. Caputo by using deconstructive paradigms of a 'metaphysics without metaphysics' 'ethics without ethics' and a 'religion without a religion', in his writings about God and religion represents one way of discussing God and religion in contemporary continental philosophy. Caputo rejects metaphysics and any *idea* of God that would serve as an absolute knowing. I see Caputo's efforts in this regard to be within the same apophatic tradition that attempts to keep talk about the absolute open and unbounded. In the mystical Christian tradition, Eckhart (of whom Caputo has written on in *Mysticism and Transgression*; Derrida and Meister Eckhart) likewise employs a certain kind of deconstructive strategy in his efforts to keep references to the transcendent absolute open and unbound, 'God is nothing. No thing. God is nothingness'.....; (Eckhart in Fox 1983,41), later he prays 'I pray God rid me of God' (Eckhart in Fox 1983,50). Caputo's deconstructions include the mystery of 'undecidableness,' which stems from ethical situations that he sees to be more genuinely traversed without reference to prescribed ethical laws. Travelling without reference to the old defensive ways of thinking is encouraged by the Buddha who said he too had crossed the flood 'without support'. Referencless situations give rise to authentic un-prescribed choices in relation to the other where the guiding principle is Augustine's dictum *Dilige, et quod vis fac*. For Caputo, this dictum is an open principle giving rise to an unbounded idea of the good. Other deconstructions include a 'passion for the impossible' and 'repetition' which highlights the heroic element of the spiritual traveller who even though he knows his mission is impossible, like the *Bodhisattva* who vows to save all sentient beings, he nevertheless stays in the territory of defeat. This is the spiritual experience that arises from staying in the transformative flux of failure that moves a person towards 'what we were meant to be'. In its attempts to bring a person's being and identity closer Buddhism likewise believes in the transformative power of reality. Caputo's axioms have many echoes of the Buddhist 'point-instant' view which itself is the unbinding law of no law that preserves absolute openness and the model that has defeat inbuilt into its very fabric.

The Buddhist ‘point-instant’ view, Caputo’s negations and Eckhart’s apophatic theology of nothingness, are each a *via negativa* that promote a stripping away to expose the ultimate unbounded nature of the real. Regarding spiritual transformation, the path of deconstruction is the path that is travelled into the darkness by way of a transformed knowing which, as Eckhart says, is a ‘non-knowing’ and a way that leads to ‘simplicity’ and ‘transparency’. From the Buddhist ‘point-instant’ view, ‘non-knowing’, ‘simplicity’ and ‘transparency’ are ‘characteristics’ that it shares with, what I would call, spiritual deconstructionists and it is only when these are enacted that the road to the ultimate reality becomes illuminated. In contrast to the deconstructionist methodology William Desmond ponders metaphysics and the nature of being from within metaphysics itself. He asks such questions as what is it ‘to be’ and why ‘being and not nothing’ (Simpson 2009, 22). Of interest to my mapping of the many roads that might lead to a spiritual transformative experience is Desmond’s thoughts concerning the possibility of a return to the first moment of astonished awareness at the givenness of being. This is seen to occur when the ‘erotic’ grasping mind finally let’s go of its avaricious plan and becomes an open ‘posthumous mind’. Desmond’s phenomenology is concerned with how being is revealed in relation to thought and this ‘phenomenology of mind’ outlines how an individual consciousness progresses from the ‘erotic’ grasping (*klesha*)mind to an agapeic mind that is astonished at “‘the sheer being there of the world’” (Simpson 2009,35). Desmond outlines a more positive cataphatic relationship to being, a *via positiva* that arises when initial astonishment at the original ‘plenitude’ of being is restored before ‘all cognitive thematizations and objective determinations’ (2009,36) of the ‘erotic’ mind get to work and transforms the experience of ‘plenitude’ to the experience of lack. There is a binding unbinding dynamic at play in Desmond’s description of how we can relate to being, either through appreciation of the giftedness of things or through ‘erotic’ unawareness seeking possession. Buddhist ‘point-instant’ reality is the ever-constant voice that proclaims the first moment of continuous openness. This ‘point-instant’ moment is returned to in Buddhist terminology through the experience of the ‘posthumous mind’ of ‘objectless awareness’. This is the experience of a return to first principles, a pure ‘point-instant’ *Nen* principle.

If we become estranged from the true 'point-instant' nature of reality 'elaborate' emotional and mental constructs come into being. With the loss of original intimacy with being or 'point-instant' 'isness', original unboundedness gets narrowed into self-binding strategies that are driven by the three poisons of 'greed(*lobha*)', 'hate(*dosa*)' and 'delusion(*moha*)'. The deluded mind is driven by energies of appropriation and domination where the pursuit of self-truth and self-certainty overtake the realization of the first pure moment of awareness. The mind seeking more boundedness is the mind that St. Augustine shows supports the self-narrative. From the psychological perspective of Kelly's personal construct psychology, boundedness is constructed through repetitive 'channelling' of the mind in the name of 'predictability' and 'certainty' and the healing work of unbinding is helping the person to see how their thoughts are binding them. With the failure of 'erotic' mind's possessive plan there is, with the advent of the 'posthumous mind', a recognition of the 'gift' of being and a subsequent arising of gratitude.

In the spirit of the deep-ecumenism of 'passing-over' that I am practising throughout this work there is space for seeing and understanding 'point-instant' 'isness', as it is outlined in other spiritual traditions. In the Early Christian view of Meister Eckhart 'isness' is equated with God, where God possesses 'isness' and all else is a nothing; '.....For you ask me who is God? What is God? I reply: Isness. Isness is God.' (Eckhart in Fox 1983,12). 'Only God has isness. Therefore, everything that is created, is in itself nothing.' (36). Transformation on the early Christian or Sufi path is the realization that 'isness', (a feature of the 'point-instant view) is the ultimate reality, a reality that continuously changes and creates anew. In this way of understanding dialogue and respect for other traditions can be brought about.

The insight into Eckhart's '..... everything that is created is in itself nothing' is the end of all binding constructs from the Buddhist perspective where the 'ultimate' reality *Nirvāna* is said to be the highest nothingness or empty thing. Understanding 'point-instant' reality as a spiritual path is to understand a path that radically undermines all constructions to reveal the true nature of things. Its spiritual dynamic is one of 'is and is not' as it flashes in and out of existence. In this way, it is both a *via positiva* and a *via negativa*. Its spiritual and religious

dimension stems from its intention to bind back (Latin; *religare*, -From which the word *religion* is derived) a person to the reality of the first moment of untainted awareness. In the Buddhist *Dzogchen* view the implicit intention of the ‘point-instant’ view is a binding back to what is uncontrived and simple, that which is perfect in its ‘isness’, as it is. For Desmond recognizing ‘isness’ or the pure fact of ‘being and not nothing’ gives rise to seeing the giftedness of things. A transformative return to the first moment of pure awareness, (what *Zen* calls the first *Nen* moment), is for Desmond a return to respect and value the goodness of being, the place where thought begins to become aware of its own blessing consciousness. It is such a blessing consciousness that Buddhism also seeks to promote, through practices which are designed to access the ‘Buddha nature’ potential in the person, whom it recognizes as being ‘capable of the universe’.

If the person is to become Caputo’s that which ‘they were meant to be’, it raises the question just what the inherent nature of the person might be that ‘repetition’ uncovers. A ‘point-instant’ and deconstructive view both point to each moment being important and decisive where existence cannot be known in advance of experience. There must be then a risk factor to a journey that stays in the flux without advanced knowledge of the outcome. Any journey brings with it the risk and possibility of failure. In thinking about the dynamics of a spiritual transformation as a journey I wish to see what part the experience of failure might play in the transformative process. Both the ‘point instant’ understanding and the deconstructionist view promote a risky state of constant revolution. I wish to investigate what that might mean for the idea of a spiritual journey which conventionally is thought of as having a beginning and an end, while constant revolution suggests that it is endless. My analysis of the deconstructionist view and the ‘point-instant’ understanding highlights that both are implying that we are living in a fullness, in that in the here and now momentariness or flux of things is to be found all that we need to realize the truth of things as they are. If the single momentariness of things can lead to uncovering the absolute truth I will investigate how the singular and absolute are seen to relate in Buddhism. I look at the views of *Hua yen* Buddhism which deals with the relationship between the totality and the singular to understand how the one and the many are seen to relate. In looking at *Hua yen* Buddhism I want to see if the unique ‘point-instant’ and the

absolute are two distinct orders of reality or are they seen to have a more intimate connection. *Hua yen* suggests that the absolute and relative interpenetrate because their empty identities are the same and this interpenetration is the highest good. If *Hua yen* is correct, that the absolute is to be experienced in the relative because their empty natures are the same, this implies that one is always within the realm of spiritual truth. If this vision is correct what is it that prevents a person from seeing reality in this way? What is it that clouds the mind and prevents it from experiencing the first pure moment? This is a theme that recurs in different ways throughout my discussion but I begin my search for the answer to this question by looking firstly into the nature of mind as outlined by the contemporary philosopher William Desmond (in Simpson,2009). He outlines a dynamic transformation of mind as a progression from not seeing to seeing clearly. He calls this progression a movement from the ‘erotic’ possessive mind to an open ‘posthumous’ mind that can re-connect with the original first pure moment and thus begin to appreciate and value reality as goodness and the other as gift. From the Buddhist side regarding the nature of mind I allude to the fact the mind was said to have always been ‘brightly shining’. If this is correct then a spiritual journey in the Buddhist view must have something to do with uncovering that light filled nature of mind.

Both ‘point-instant’ reality and Caputo’s deconstructionist ‘repetition’, see reality as non-stop revolution, which undermines spiritual structures or maps as abstract and unrelated to the structure of reality. Can a spiritual journey be made without reassuring structures; will we not simply be lost in a world we do not recognize? Can we make a journey in the spirit of non-knowing, in the spirit of faith and finding our way as we travel? These are some of the themes I keep in mind when thinking about spiritual transformation as a journey. The principle of spiritual transformation that I have in mind is that ‘it is in the direction of the fullest that truth lies’ (De Chardin in Gallagher,1988,48). Thus, the chapter explores how that fullness expresses itself in the world and how a person can access it. If fullness is the direction of truth I wish to see what it gives rise to in the mind that comes to recognize original fullness. Both ‘point instant’ reality and deconstructionist views together with the *Hua yen* interpenetrative view have an action imperative which suggests that more is required than just seeing the truth of things, there

must be a becoming dimension to the truth that is uncovered. In looking at the dynamics of transformation I have focused on how the absolute and relative interact to uncover the truth. What happens if one of these components is seen to be absent or dead? I look at Mark Taylor whose sketch of the contemporary Christian situation of the person who is bereft of a divine plan since the death of God, seeks truth and certainty through domination and appropriation (1987). This is of interest because it reveals what might happen if there is no plan to follow on the spiritual journey. After discussing Taylor's view, I examine what is that truth that is uncovered and what kind of a mind can uncover it? Also, sketched in this section is the nature of the mind of an enlightened being who is said to have become the truth, to see just what exactly he has become. If he has expanded infinitely has he become infinitely more or infinitely less himself and is that expansion an expansion of mind only? The answers will give an insight to what becoming the truth really means.

## 1.2 Everything is now

In the Early Indian Buddhist view cognition is confined to the first instant of awareness before the object is branded or categorized. When cognition is repeated after this initial moment it becomes re-cognition and this is not a basis for knowledge in Early Indian Buddhism (Stcherbatsky,1962,64). Minds cognition is confined to the moment of first being aware of the object's existence. After what might be called the first 'pure' moment (*Nen* moment in *Zen*) other manufacturing functions of the intellect fashion further images of the object. This is a construct of the imagination and not a source of cognition according to Indian Buddhist logic (1962,64). To cognize something is not to judge, not to elaborate or project qualities such as good or bad but to accept things as they are in the first moment of knowing. In this there is newness, and a freshness to be seen. Cognition of this momentary event is produced in the present moment, not in the past or future moments of existence, where cognition as opposed to re-cognition, is only one moment and is the real source of knowledge that can penetrate to the ultimate reality of the thing. To be on the spiritual path of transformation it follows that awareness of how things arise as an initial pure moment both in the mind and in existence is of importance. When we refer to ourselves in relation to

change or transformation, we think of changing something about me or my life from a way of being in the past to a way of being now or in the future. The ‘point-instant’ (1962,70) view is a challenge to our linear view which stretches into the past and towards a future.

In assessing whether spiritual transformation is built into the nature of the person and the fabric of existence itself, ‘point-instant reality’ quickly answers that firstly the true nature of things is the now. The nature of the person and the nature of reality from the ‘point instant’ view is the same. Therefore, we do not become changed but are quite literally the change at every moment of nowness. We do not step into Heraclitus’s river even once as we too are part of the continuous change, part of the river. From the Indian Buddhist perspective, it is only the here, the now, the present that is seen to be real and the past and future unreal. That which is imagined, that which is not present, and is conceptual is unreal. Pure reality in short is without any imaginative structure. The ultimate pure reality is composed of “point-instants” which have no position in time or space or any sensible qualities. Only entities without parts are seen to exist and they have no endurance and no extension. The trajectory of a spiritual journey is to the ultimate reality and from the ‘point instant’ teaching that ultimate reality is the first pure moment of cognition. If the first moment is pure then a pure mind must be recognizing it and that moment cannot be occurring in a separated mind.

### 1.3 Momentary reality implies dynamic reality

Knowledge in Early Indian Buddhist logic can be either direct or indirect, direct source of knowledge is perceptual awareness, which is defined as a “passive reflex” (Stcherbatsky,1962,71) and the other is conception an indirect source, and referred to as a “conditioned reflex” (1962,71). The first pure direct moment occurs before the sequence of sense, sense object and sense consciousness which gets elaborated into contact, promoting craving and all the conditioned world of *samsāra* gets spun out. The first moment is something exclusive, it has no parallel with other objects it is therefore said to be ‘... un-representable and unutterable’ (1962,71). A title, a label a term, the self being constructed as a title a label and a term, is a constructed assembly made into a unity that is composed of

characteristics of time place and quality brought together by a ‘non-passive reflex’(craving) of the mind. To understand directly the true nature of things a non-conceptual ‘passive’ response rather than a conditioned response is needed. This could be called the way of allowing or letting be through which not only the pure awareness of things arises but in conjunction the pure awareness of a person’s mind also arises.

From the Indian Buddhist point of view the sensible world is composed of that which can be sensed, and that is ‘...momentary flashes of energy’ (Stcherbatsky,1962,79). All things are said to be a necklace of momentary happenings. Things are instantaneous where they disappear as soon as they appear, without a trace left after. If the true nature of reality is conjoined to the true nature of the person, then what arises in the person should disappear as soon as it appears? The person is, however, given to constructing. The more a person constructs his reality, the more thoughts and images are held onto, the further away he is getting from the true instantaneous nature of reality according to the ‘point-instant view. A cornerstone of Indian Buddhist philosophy is therefore that there is no other ultimate reality beyond discreet instantaneous pieces of existence. Assumed eternal entities like God, are refused reality and the ordinary assumed stability of empirical objects is seen to be a construction of our imagination. ‘Ultimate reality is instantaneous’ (1962,80). Everything usually considered as solid and by extension stable, is in fact instantaneous, having only momentary existence. In considering transformation and reflecting on the above, it appears that it is occurring all the time at every moment instantly, but it is too quick for a person to apprehend in one’s usual distracted and conditioned way of being. Yet one might ask how can something which is an instantaneous moment of energy give rise to anything? Are these discreet instantaneous moments isolated and stranded within themselves without reference to anything else? This would seem to contradict the view that what is real is the causally efficient. So, the instantaneousness does not imply not causally effective, but that its efficiency must be momentary. Causal efficiency is just another way of saying that a thing is real. Regarding my original question, in thinking whether the truth of existence is the truth of the person also, the truth of momentariness implies that each moment opens a new possibility for transformation to occur.

If reality is momentary then it must be a dynamic reality where every moment is continuously followed by the next moment. However, as each moment is discrete it cannot overlap the next moment. Then an object can only produce something when it has arrived at its last moment, the other moments are non-efficient. A seed begins to sprout through the last moment of the seed. Could the preceding moments of the seed be considered indirect causes of the sprout? No! The seed is considered to change every moment, and its last moment produces the sprout (Stcherbatsky,1962,81).

The implication resulting from this understanding for a person's life when considering spiritual transformation are, that what has happened to the person prior to this moment is of no great importance. It also implies that there is an opportunity at every moment to change and that change, which is sometimes seen as daunting due to past baggage, can be achieved in recognizing that the past does not have to be a determining factor, while *karma* is real it is not changeless. This present moment, the one considered as real, is the moment when an action is completed. What a person refers to as reality is a perceived break in that motion of momentariness, where for practical reasons he or she takes notice of something new that impresses and addresses the person. According to the Buddhist view a person takes note of these exceptional moments and freezes them. Identity is attributed to an object by disregarding the continuous change of moments. Reality is motion, where the impression of stability is given due to the infinitely small gap between moments. If reality is motion, then a person's reality must also be motion. What is seen to be stable and enduring is in fact '...flashes of energy...' (Stcherbatsky,1962,83) without any lasting substance. The mind in its pre-transformed or 'pre-Nirvanic' state is creating qualities of endurance and reality and attributing them to things which grab it or which are grabbed out of the river of flux and change to set on the river bank of solidity, time and space. I discuss later how the pre-Nirvanic' mind is importing the qualities of endurance, unbroken presence and unity through looking at the work of Miri Albahari.

#### 1.4 Repetition – Recollection - Memory

This ‘theory of universal momentariness’(Stcherbatsky,1962,119) also implies that time and all-time periods are made up of ‘point-instants’ which follow one after another, each extension in space is a ‘point-instant’ that has proximity to each other, and every motion is a ‘point-instant’ also in proximity. There is no time no space or motion apart from the ‘point-instant’. Surfaces extended in space, enduring entities changing over time are fictions. There is not seen to exist a linear cause effect sequence here, there is momentary association but no cause effect view. The ‘point-instant’ freed from imaginative projections has no qualities, are timeless and invisible and are above all the ultimate reality. ‘...it is a mathematical point-instant, the moment of an actions efficiency’ (Stcherbatsky,1962,87). The momentary character of life is to be found in the direct perception experience. The present moment alone is grasped by sensation in and through the body; it cannot grasp what goes before or comes after. Since all external things can be reduced to sense-data and sensation is a momentary flash, it follows that all things that affect us are momentary. Perceived duration beyond this momentary sensation is an imaginative construct ‘...pure sensation, points to an instantaneous object...’ (1962,87). What is present to the body in this moment is sensation and that is real, that which has passed continues in imagination and memory and is unreal. This is the transformative insight, that a person creates neurotic suffering through holding on to and extending those ‘momentary flashes of energy’ beyond this first moment of perceptual awareness. When this moment has passed, we are living in recollection, in our imaginative impression but not in direct and first awareness. Spiritual insight is not then an accumulation of repeated experiences held in the pool of memory; it is the experience of the momentariness of things. Spiritual transformation in the Buddhist view, highlighted by the ‘point-instant’ teaching, is built on direct rather than second hand experience of reality. Recollection and imagination are seen to be constructs or obstacles to that direct awareness. We recognize things from memory, but memory is a product of constructed thoughts and not a ‘...direct reflex of reality’. (1962,89). What we remember and relate to is the associations and feelings about the thing but rarely are we truly seeing the thing itself. It follows from this that if we are thinking that spiritual transformation is to do with

changing something from the past we are incorrect; it is very much focused on the present moment. In the Indian Buddhist context to exist is to change and whatever does not change or transform does not exist. In seeking to understand change we are by extension seeking to understand what the ontological truth of reality is, epistemology is very much ontology in Buddhism. In thinking about spiritual transformation, from the 'point instant' perspective, we need to be thinking of something not just arising in the person as an outcome to a journey but rather something that is continuously knitted into the fabric of existence also. What is changeless produces no effect and therefore does not exist. 'Existence, real existence, means efficiency, and efficiency means change' (1962,89). A person's 'real existence' therefore must have to do with his ability to change or transform and thus be in tune with 'real existence'. On an individual and soteriological level when this is understood a person's transformed view emanating from the 'point-instant' teaching becomes the realization that he is at each moment the change he wants. It is available with the end of the last moment. In parallel there is a realization that he can be effective and efficient and what he does; the choices he makes matter because of their potential to affect himself and others.

Regarding the dynamics of spiritual transformation, the 'point-instant' teaching highlights that epistemology is ontology, that 'real' knowing is not different from 'real' existence in its momentary character. Transformation is then the realization that the momentary ground of existence is also the momentary ground of the self.

The questions and difficulties in the modern context surrounding the possibility or impossibility of movement and transformation are sketched in John Caputo's book *Radical Hermeneutics* (1987). For Caputo 'Repetition is an existential version of kinesis, the Aristotelian counterpoint to Eleaticism, a movement which occurs in the existing individual' (1987,11). With Caputo's 'repetition' there is no attempt to escape the flux but rather to stay with it, without smoothing it over or domesticating it, to take away our fears of change. Towards what is the individual moving? Through '...repetition the individual becomes himself, circling back on the being which he himself has been all along. Repetition facilitates the individual becoming '...what he was to be (*to ti en einai*) (1987,12). Caputo is suggesting two things here, firstly that we tend to abstract ourselves

from reality into the comfort of imagination or ‘nostalgia’, which are unreal concepts according to the ‘point-instant’ view, and secondly there is an inbuilt something that we were meant to be all along. Transformation is then a process facilitated by repetition that uncovers what a person was to be all along. There is a fundamental trust that what is at the core of the person is something valuable and worth uncovering. Increased abstract knowledge is not a realization that facilitates real moving forward but rather ‘...a recollection, which recoups a lost cognition (1987,13). Movement in the Platonic sense is a fall and there is a counter-movement to recover and re-establish the soul in its Primordial Being. As Caputo remarks, this is not movement but a ‘nostalgia’ in which movement is defeated (1987,14). Both repetition and recollection share the same aspect of recollection but for Kierkegaard ‘... what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward’ (from SVIII173-74/R131 in Caputo,1987,14). In recollection, what has been is favoured over what is, and with repetition what one was to be comes into existence. Recollection is a longing for a Paradise lost and with this comes displacement and a kind of melancholic homelessness that hampers a person’s ability to fully participate and develop true relationship. Repetition is a willingness to take up the challenges of the flux, of change and impermanence and proceed to realize and win ‘...that which one was to be...’ (*to ti en einai*) (1987,12). Both ‘repetition’ and recollection are routs from ‘...time to eternity...’ (1987,14) but one tries to escape time while the other engages with and proceeds in time. ‘Repetition’ is more hopeful as it does not focus on eternity that has been lost but proceeds in the hope of gaining it. Eternity is not something to be recaptured but rather something towards which a person advances. Moving towards eternity is very much the Christian view, where eternity awaits those who have lived according to church precepts. The ‘point-instant’ view of reality disagrees that there are any eternal entities, the only reality being the ‘point-instant’ reality, eternal entities are fictions but would accordingly agree that it is not something to be re-captured. While recollection is concerned with reproducing something repetition is focused on creating something at every moment of choice in the river of change and suffering. The ‘point-instant’ reality of early Indian Buddhism continually emphasises that every moment is a moment of choice, a momentous moment of

‘...momentous choice...’ (1987,15) where one is continually questioned as to the stability of that choice.

‘Repetition’ and the ‘point-instant view’ both say that what one professes or brings into being, must be done again and again without stopping. From this spiritual transformation, which seeks to be in harmony with the truth of things, is a continuous revolution. In the ‘point-instant’ moment the only certainty is that there is change but nevertheless a person must step into the stream and immerse themselves in that life of constant change or is doomed to freezing on the shore. This is the direct experience that the ‘point-instant’ view wishes to open, both as the nature of reality itself and the nature of the mind that cognizes it. If the ‘point-instant’ view of reality is correct it also implies that the mind’s reality is also ‘point-instant’. A ‘point-instant’ reality of mind is a mind that has no contents, it is not a circle that has psychic material stored in it, it is a dynamic energy represented by a point. In the Christian view, this moment is crucial because it is a soteriological moment, and demands a decision, it is a moment as Kierkegaard said ‘...in which time and eternity touch each other ...’ whereby ‘time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time’ (SV IV 359/CA89 in Caputo,1987,15). For the Christian, one’s eternal state is at stake in every moment, not the reclamation of a past pristine eternal state. In Buddhism in general while there are schools that support both repetition and recollection, the overall trajectory is more towards revelation through the deconstruction of illusory constructs to reveal ‘what a person was to be all along’ (1987,12), that is the brightly shining mind of Buddha nature. When deconstruction is accomplished what is revealed is the ‘brightly shining mind’ *Aṅguttara-nikāya* ‘The mind is o *bhikkhus*, is radiant but is stained by stains which arrive’ (Cousins, Trans. 1973,117). The ‘point-instant’ teaching is the spiritual tool which keeps all illusions and constructs at bay to create the space for the ‘brightly shining mind’ to reveal itself. Liberation is achieved for Caputo by staying in the flux and by so doing moving forward toward what the person ‘was to be’ all along. In the ‘point-instant’ understanding it is the realization of reality as instantaneous ‘flashes of energy’ that one is freed from a constructed, second hand experience of ‘real existence’ and the ‘brightly shining mind’ gets an opportunity to shine forth.

## 1.5 Bringing identity and being together

‘Point-instance’ reality reveals the truth of change to the ‘brightly shining mind’ that apprehends it as ‘flashes of energy’. This suggests that the spiritual path must have something to do with bringing identity and being as close as possible, so close that they are indistinguishable. Bringing a person’s real identity closer to the true nature of things is a recurring focus in Buddhism, as highlighted by the ‘point instant’ insight which of itself as a spiritual tool both shows the true nature of things and by so doing cuts through a person’s constructs with its flashing energy. Identity for Caputo must be founded and produced over and over and in fact is the outcome of the process of ‘repetition’. ‘Repetition’, however, can also have a negative connotation whereby rather than being the process of change and transformation it becomes a defensive reiteration of a frozen self. Psychologically by going over the same ground repeatedly, making rut tracks in the mind as it were, a sense of identity is formed, but this narrow circling is an attempt to bring fearful elements of life under control. ‘Repetition’ in this sense is not an opening up to life or a real moving forward, it is an attempt to escape the demands and difficulties by constructing an elevated bridge over the river of flux to escape the suffering and failures. This is not bringing identity and being together rather they are being driven apart by this repetitive process. The great symbol of Buddhism is the lotus plant and it has become so because it represents how the Buddhist teachings are rooted in the ordinary mud and grit of life, in the dark pools of the body-mind where real difficulties are played out. But just as the lotus blossoms into a beautiful flower though rooted in the mud, one has the same potential through the teachings on Buddha nature, to blossom into what we have always been. The teaching on suffering, where Buddhism begins, highlights how we all inevitably experience losses and this is a ‘Noble Truth’ by which it means that by going through and standing in that experience, in Caputo’s flux, and not trying to escape we become ennobled. Buddhism does not advocate a rejection of life, quite the opposite, it advocates a letting go of neurotic patterns, such as desire for the things we cannot have, trying to insulate ourselves and make ourselves safe by adhering to viewpoints and compulsive avoidance strategies, to open the person to have ‘...more contact with the world as we encounter it in each moment’

(Brazier,2003,11). While Buddhism and Caputo both support staying in the direct experience of reality they have a different understanding of what is experienced. The 'point-instant' teaching sees reality as 'flashes of energy' and nothing more. Caputo advocates staying in the flux as a way of recollecting forward what one was to be. Both however see encountering the world as a coming face to face with our suffering and through that meeting becoming less a frozen observer and more a full participant. Echoing the Buddhist teaching on 'Dependent Origination', which sees all things as coming to be through being dependent on other things and thus is referred to as being empty of own nature. Kierkegaard too sees that all arisings happen contingently since, first it did not exist and then later it did. Thus '...coming to be is ipso facto historical'

(Caputo,1987,19). Contingency implies that the past does not have a necessity, the outcome could have been different and 'point-instant' reality is an extreme example of how contingent things are. The 'point-instant' view resists any attempt at solidification, any attempts at thought constructions, not to reduce everything to rubble, but rather to break open the self-centred seeing that keeps the true nature of things hidden. In this way, the 'point-instant' teaching itself has the characteristic of being a dynamic understanding of reality; it is also a dynamic tool which assists in the transformation process. 'Dependent origination' or 'emptiness' in its most positive reading means simply that everything is open and free of all that we attempt to project onto it. 'Point-instant' reality, as a spiritual tool, highlights that we do not know the true nature of ourselves or reality, that anything we think we know as a construct of imagination, is instantly questioned. The person is consistently plumbed, continuously invited to go deeper and deeper whereby they come to recognize the truth of reality and by extension the truth of oneself as a process of continuous transformation. 'Point instant' reality is a reality that is open at every moment, therefore in traveling a spiritual path from a closed self to a more open one that realizes universal 'emptiness' or openness, it is necessary to travel in the knowledge of ignorance. Without preconceived notions of knowing in advance of experiencing, we must ask where we are and what it is that we are encountering. The 'not-self' teaching seen from the side of the person says all things outside are not me and taken as a statement of reality says all things arise dependently. These are not negative statements that the

person does not exist but rather, everything in existence is other and by implication open and free.

How a person encounters that otherness of existence, with openness or preconceptions matters in every moment. To proceed with openness and without false conceptions of knowing is to proceed with an attitude of meditative inquiry. This attitude is beautifully expressed in the poem *Lost* from the American Indian tradition and is the advice a wise person might give to a young person inquiring about what he should do when lost in the forest. 'Standstill the trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost, wherever you are, is called here, and you must greet it as a powerful stranger, must ask to know it and be known...Standstill the forest knows where you are you must let it find you' (Whyte,1994,259/260). As the poem says we must ask each time taking nothing for granted where we are, we must relate to the other as other and in that co-relation come to know the true nature of reality which is the same as the nature of the self. This paying close attention is promoted by the 'point-instant' understanding and is of itself an introduction to the practice of mindfulness which helps us be in the world more fully and less distractedly. When we are abstracted from the true nature of things we do not understand the true nature of reality in all its particularity and then we are truly lost, '...if what a tree or a branch is lost on you then you are surely lost...' (Whyte,1994,259/260).

An element of spiritual transformation is standing still in the flux or in the heat of living because as Michelangelo says, it is there that we are transformed '...Thus turned to smoke and dust I still may live, if I can stand the fire eternally' (Michelangelo,1970,40). 'Repetition' is for Caputo the 'task' of forging one's 'identity' by staying in the river of flux. This is the spiritual task for the Christian as Caputo sees it. In the Buddhist view staying within the Noble truth of suffering is not seen to be the experience that forges a new identity, rather it is the experience that helps open the person to the 'not-self' identity of things. The religious expression of movement in the Christian sense is from 'sin to atonement,' in the Buddhist sense it is from ignorance to enlightenment, from the blindness of not seeing (*avidyā*) to seeing clearly and deeply (*vidyā*). In the Christian view, this movement is a transcendent moment, a moment of transformation '...in which something new and transcendent is produced'

(Caputo,1987,20). The Christian transcendent moment is the experience of God's forgiveness and love and for the Buddhist it is a glimpse, a momentary experience of the always present Buddha nature. In the Buddhist sense then it is not so much something new being produced but rather a re-connection to what one is fundamentally. The 'point-instant' view constantly asks a person to choose either repetition or recollection; by choosing neither we are thrown back into the Heraclitan river where our aspiration for real growth and transformation is liable to be drowned.

## 1.6 Point-instant vision is apocalyptic

If 'point-instant' reality is a view of reality which says that self -annihilation is inbuilt into the very fabric of existence and if the real nature of existence is the same as the real nature of the person, then the person must be an expression of that flashing apocalyptic energy. This highlights that in recognizing the 'point-instant' nature of reality a person recognizes that transformation is an inbuilt characteristic within reality and within the self. 'Point-instant' is a relationship with the now of actuality, which demands that in each moment a person must choose the life they are living. In Buddhism, one is brought to see that the consistency and the constancy we are seeking is in fact the flux itself through recognizing the immutable mutability of reality. This however is not a message of despair where everything is brought to ruin for no reason; rather it is a message of possibility. A 'Point instant' is non-historic, it is not constrained by the past or future, it is unbounded, without limits, infinite. Through recognizing the 'point-instant' view a person's relationships with things transforms from seeing them as finite useful or useless things to recognizing their infinite open dimension. There are infinite possibilities and ramifications for the choices we make in this moment, and that is why through constant repetition the 'point-instant' view asks us repeatedly to re-affirm our choices. We must constantly reiterate our choices constantly win and uphold our position and beliefs against the anarchic apocalyptic energy of the 'point-instant' that will continue to challenge them, but in so doing thereby make the real ones more firm and stronger. 'I do not create

myself, I choose myself' (Caputo,1987,29) says Kierkegaard underlining how important choice is in the life we live.

'Point-instant' is the quintessential 'not-self' teaching which constantly cuts our attachment to restrictive and limiting phenomena through repeating its mantra of not that! not that! It slowly, imperceptibly cuts away all the entangled vines that covered over our true nature, and helps reveal 'what we have been all along' to us. The unbounded infinite 'point-instant' is continuously laying siege to a person's protective edifices that abstract them from living fully in the world, tearing down what does not serve them in the realization of the unbounded infinite Buddha nature (the potential for realization) in ourselves. The dual nature of 'point-instant' reality is visually portrayed in Buddhist iconography where a deity is depicted as carrying a sword in one hand to cut through delusion, while the other is open in a gesture (*mudrā*) of blessing. It is a succinct visual statement of the Buddha's 'Noble Truths' that suffering is real and cannot be escaped but that blessings can be won in its midst when we cut through restrictive emotional and psychological negativity. The blessing is not that of a better self that one needs to 'win' by staying in the flux, but rather the blessing comes with seeing the true empty 'point-instant' (flux) nature of things and by so doing the true 'not-self' nature of the self and the mind is also uncovered.

### 1.7 Promoting knowledge of the authentic and original

'Repeating is the producing-of the self' (1987,30) says Caputo through the choices a person makes facing up to suffering, but it is not a creation '*ex nihilo*'. We do not create ourselves but rather we bring about '...what has been there all along (*to ti en einai*) in the life we live with all its challenges. Repetition and the 'point-instant' view are both concerned not with some abstract transcendent freedom but rather with the freedom we can experience in every aspect of our actual lives as lived. 'Point-instant' in cutting through self-constructed delusion does so to expose the possibility of bringing innate 'Buddha nature' to fruition. The repetition that the 'point-instant' view is engaged in is a repeated deconstructing, while the repetition of self-making that Caputo highlights is a repeated constructing activity. While both are engaged in bringing what has been

there all along to the fore, their methods and view of what that potential is are different. Caputo proposes a radical hermeneutic, a ‘metaphysics without metaphysics’ that does not provide any escapist unifying ground and where recollection of an original pure presence immune to the flux of life is a fantasy.

Buddhism, however, uses the repetition of the ‘point-instant’ technology to clear the way so that we can recall who we have been all along. Actualization of the possible is what both are attempting to bring about, and in so doing they must shatter all that keeps a person suspended in the realms of pure potential. When Buddhism says that the impermanence of the ‘point-instant’ is a fundamental factor of existence, it is highlighting that the reliability and continuity we seek in phenomena is not to be found. However, there is continuity and a consistency to be experienced in making the choices that repetition and ‘point-instant’ moment continually calls the person to make. We must re-affirm again and again, whether we are *Lost* in the forest or standing still, and this re-affirmation of the truth of the momentariness of reality becomes the mantra that guides our ethical and moral choices.

The ground we stand on at any given moment is made sacred in the Christian view because the moment is crucial, it is a soteriological moment, and demands a decision, it is a moment as Kierkegaard said ‘...in which time and eternity touch each other... whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time’ (SV IV 359/CA89 in Caputo,1987,15). The unbounded infinite ‘point-instant’ intersects our finite lives at every moment calling for mindfulness and awareness at every moment. We come to realize that our conventional delusions are the wood where the infinite unbounded ‘point-instant’ continuously sparks until it burns away delusion and ignites us into new ways of seeing, understanding and being. ‘Point-instant’ is the messenger of both becoming and being, of the never changing constant change, it is also a constant invitation to the person to participate ever more fully in life. It promotes mindfulness as each choice and decision is taking place in the realm of the unbounded infinite and as such due care and attention is necessary. Balance in a person’s spiritual or ordinary life is not achieved by artificially trying to immobilize or distance oneself from the constant flux of life. A person must learn from the ‘point-instant’ insight the art of being with stillness in motion and motion in stillness, of

participating in one's life wholeheartedly. Teilhard De Chardin expresses why we need to stay in the flux of Michelangelo's fire, is because 'to understand the world, knowledge is not enough, you must see it, touch it, live in its presence and drink the vital heat of existence in the very heart of reality' (De Chardin, in Gallagher,1988,20). In both repetition and 'point-instant' we are not creating ourselves in the sense of *ex nihilo* but rather by our choices and responses to the invitation that they both carry, we open ourselves and allow the space for transformation to happen in us. 'Point-instant' realization brings a person to be mindful that we are living in an authentic original moment, not just this moment but every moment. Caputo's repetition makes a person aware that he must stand in the impermanent flux and allow the vicissitudes of life to burn away the false, as Michelangelo imagines, and make him new, because as Kierkegaard highlights, the self is founded in the closest thing amid the flux. Spiritual transformation is not something that occurs in isolation abstracted from life, spiritual realization is built into the very fabric of the momentariness of existence and the flux that focuses a person on mindful consideration of this and every moment.

### 1.8 How to stay true to lived experience

Early Indian Buddhism attempts to create a Metaphysics that, using the words of John Caputo are 'faithful to life' (Caputo in Simpson,2009,7) and the demands of our existence. For Caputo a Metaphysics of propositions, speculative thought, and laws that have become universalised, are the definite indicators that we have become lost in abstract systems, to give life an unchanging foundation. Stability employs a static unity to underline its stable foundation and by so doing provides an avenue out of the flux itself. Caputo finds this Metaphysics to be 'dishonest to the finite situation' (Caputo in Simpson,2009,7) because a system composed of 'universal and necessary propositions' (2009,8), gives a structure that evens out and even disregards the singular and the individual. In the Early Indian Buddhist view, there is no reality to be found beyond the discrete 'point-instant' moments of existence. Eternal entities have no reality and perceived stability is an imaginative construct.

‘Point-instant’ reality is seen in Buddhism to be a law that is true, but it is not a static monolithic ‘truth’ its very nature is momentary pulsation and annihilation. Being an insight of momentary presence, it undermines any attempts to solidify it into a stable proposition. Its law is that there is no law, including the statement that there is no law. From a psychological point of view this is a razor-sharp method which cut through our attempts to weave unreal imaginative tapestries about how the world is and about who we are in it. It is a view that continuously brings us to ground and keeps us there, earthed in our own life and struggles. How to be true to life and our active engagement in it, without displacing that lived experience, by raising our knowledge of reality to an absolute knowledge, is Caputo’s central question. ‘Point-instant’ understanding continuously undermines absolutizing any knowledge including its own to stay true to the true nature of existence and to keep us grounded in and mindfully participating in the life we are living.

The ‘Way’ of participation in life is outlined most comprehensively in the Buddhist context by the *Hua-yen* philosophy. *Hua-yen* outlines how the individual plays a dynamic and singularly creative role in the creation of the whole. How to stay in the middle of life is also the question for Indian Buddhism which for them begins with right knowing. To know correctly is to be in touch with the least mediated direct form of knowing, an open perceptual awareness that is a ‘passive reflex’ (See Stcherbatsky 1962, 59/78 for in-depth discussion on reality and knowledge.) The ‘point-instant’ fact of reality is the insight that brings a person to the cognition of the first pure moment of knowing, a cognition without strategic intent or elaborate mental constructions. This is a cognition and not a recognition as each moment is exclusive, unrepeatable. Caputo also sees reality as being composed of individuals that are among others, ‘idiosyncratic’, ‘idiomatic’, ‘unique’ and ‘unrepeatable’ (Caputo in Simpson,2009,11). The answer to the question of staying true to life for Caputo demands a radical hermeneutic, a way of thinking about life that is embedded in life’s struggles, that operates in the middle of things and not above or beyond it. It is ‘metaphysics without metaphysics’ (2009, 9) that directs one towards life’s difficult experiences and not away from them. ‘Point-instant’ reality is directly comparable to Caputo’s idea of a metaphysics without metaphysics as its metaphysical principle or law is

a self-undermining one, a law which says there is no law to be grasped, nothing to be understood above (meta) the arising and ceasing of phenomena. The 'point instant' view is an understanding that says that the momentary nature of things is not an abstract metaphysical principle but rather is at once a statement and an enactment of our reality in this very moment and in every moment of our lives. It is the mantra of openness and by extension a mantra of possibility that arises from life itself.

### 1.9 The 'point-instant' view ... leaves other as other

These radical hermeneutics provides no unifying stability or foundation and emphasises the necessity for 'interpretation' (Caputo in Simpson,2009,9) over fixed laws that can be applied to a life situation. Like Derrida Caputo is interested in articulating the flux and the futility of trying to enclose that which cannot be enclosed. Recollection is seen by Caputo to be one of the central features of orthodox metaphysics where recollection is that which seeks 'original and pure presence uncontaminated by the arbitrariness of fluid existence' (2009,10). The 'point-instant' reality of Buddhism, however, being very much rooted in 'fluid existence' can bring the person to the recognition of an original pure moment without moving outside of the impermanent feature of existence. 'Point-instant' reality of Buddhism would agree that there is no recollection or re-cognition, but that it is possible to have a first pure moment in cognition, an un-strategized moment which leaves the other as other, respects its uniqueness and in general leads to better ethical relationships.

Caputo's 'radical hermeneutics' is energetically represented by what it refers to as 'repetition' and this 'repetition' 'sees every presence' as the result of 'repetition' and not as replicas or inferior copies that have to be traced back to their original source (Caputo in Simpson,2009,10). This is the essence of the 'point-instant' view also. As Caputo highlights 'repetition' points out that any kind of identity or perceived unity is not really to be found but merely an attribution that comforts and abstracts a person from living a life without orthodox metaphysical certainties. Like the 'point-instant' reality of Early Buddhism, radical hermeneutics acts as a disillusioning tool that opens a person up to the fact

that the truth is not static or concrete or firm. To truly live then is not to be abstracted from the challenges that the realization of the flux brings, but rather to live '*in medias res*' in the midst or middle of things. This is a positive endorsement of the fact that in the difficulties and circumstances of a person's life, properly understood, there is present the dynamics that will shape and weather a person into what they have always been. Caputo and the 'point-instant' view both stress staying in the present moment because it is there that the spiritual transformative 'Noble Truths' of suffering will be experienced. But what direction might this transformation take? Aware of the human situation as being among things, 'radical hermeneutics' underlines multiplicity in contrast to metaphysics need to incorporate everything into a unifying system. With its focus on difference it naturally concentrates on otherness and 'alterity'. Being a philosophy of difference, it does not focus on correspondence between parts, '... it is a heterology' (Caputo in Simpson,2009,11).

Reality, for Caputo is then seen as unique unrepeatable occurrences '...without there being any deeper structure' (2009,12). It embraces multiplicity and the unexpected and is open to finding answers within each situation. How does a person then make decisions against this unstable background? For Caputo, this is part of the human situation, we must make judgements in a milieu of 'undecidability' (2009,12) which is a result of being in the flux without metaphysical or ethical guides. Without any certainties to guide a person he is firmly placed in the middle of existence, not as something to know, but as something to experience. Caputo's 'undecidability' principle implies that the transformative journey is to be undertaken travelling in the darkness of unknowing. (See 3.21&3.23 for my discussion on travelling in the darkness of unknowing).

From the 'point-instant' view of reality there are no certainties save the immutable certainty of mutability. In the living of our lives the Buddha's teaching of the 'Three Marks of Existence (that life has the characteristics of 'impermanence', 'suffering' and 'not self') are spiritual weathering agents that challenge a person to decide at every moment whether we recognize the truth of suffering or try to escape it. Yet it might be argued that the Buddha proposes a path which leads to the end of suffering (*Nirvāṇa / Nibbāna*) and that is an escape from the immediacy

of life and its difficulties. *Nirvāṇa*, however, is not seen as an escape per se but more a state of realization of the truth of the ‘not-self’ or the empty nature things which is no different than one’s own true empty nature. While in Buddhism the ‘point-instant’ teaching agrees that every moment we are asked to reaffirm our choice, it also provides the ‘Eight-Fold Path’ to guide the choices towards living the best possible enlightened life. For Caputo ‘undecidability’ is a spiritual perplexity that gives rise to being on the spiritual journey without knowing the answers in advance and this gives rise to ‘real’ understanding and choice as opposed to prescribed ones. Caputo highlights that the journey must be from within the matrix of life and experiences as they present. For real knowledge to be gained the journey must be undertaken in ‘undecidability’ which I see as just another word for openness. The insistence of the ‘point-instant’ view also is that by staying exactly where one is in mindful awareness and openness one can come to true realization of how things are.

Buddhism agrees that the situations of our lives and what decisions we make have a profound effect not only on our own lives and future but the lives of all those we relate to. Our connections are not confined to family or friends but to all of humanity through the interconnectedness of *Hua yen*, so what we decide has global consequences. To help build a more positive force (merit), Buddhism offers the Eight-Fold Path of ‘right view’, ‘right action’, right livelihood etc. to help the individual make decisions that have the greatest possibility of a positive outcome. For Caputo, each situation is unique and must be decided on its own merits, and therefore what becomes most important is our relationship to the situation. Through this emphasis on relatedness a person is moved away from the domain of metaphysics to that of ethical relating. The ethical relating that Caputo has in mind is not a ‘metaphysics of morals’ which attempts to make ‘obligation safe’ (Caputo in Simpson,2009,13) but rather a riskier relating that stems from life and relationships.

The momentariness of the ‘point-instant’ reality continuously brings a person back to the instant that is unsupported by past or future, to the continuously novel and original moment; to a moment that feels risky to step into. A risky life is one that is lived without fixed reference points. Caputo sees ethical systems and rules as attempts, like metaphysics itself, to give a fixed stable foundation of universal

ethical laws, a ready reference that can be consulted, but for him fails the individual, in his dilemma. The judgements we make are far more hazardous without an absolute guide and as such should be made with humility recognizing the limits of our knowledge. Early Indian Buddhism has a strong ethical dimension also as the purpose of right knowing is right action, where the recognition of impermanence leads to less grasping and respect. To travel a spiritual journey without knowing, or openly from the 'point-instant' view, leaves a dynamic space for existence itself to reveal its true transformative nature. The Buddha shows also that the way to transformation is to step into the risk '... Friend without support, unstriving (*appatiṭṭham anāyūham*) I crossed the flood' (Harvey1995,202-3)

#### 1.10 'Thinking the truth of being'

That existence itself is revelatory and that it is accessed by staying in the flux, is the background to Caputo's deconstruction of metaphysics and metaphysical ethics which highlight and puts forward a way of relating to existence as, a '*Gelassenheit*' '...a meditative thinking the thinks the truth of being...' For Heidegger 'meditative thinking' as opposed to 'calculative thinking' does not mean being detached, it is to '...dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest, upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now, here on this patch of home ground...' (1966b,47, in Barbara Dalle Pezze's paper Heidegger on *Gelassenheit*,2006). In the same way, the 'point-instant' reality highlights that to know correctly is to be in touch with the least mediated direct form of knowing, an open perceptual awareness that is a 'passive reflex' (Stcherbatsky,1962,59-78). Spiritual transformation can be seen to arise from a process that dwells not on the far reaches of metaphysics but rather on what is the closest thing. Heidegger encourages connecting with things as they are in the immediacy of our lives and situations, and to connect with the other with openness, in this only-present moment. For Caputo, Heidegger and the 'point-instant' view, the truth of being and relatedness is to be discovered in our 'home ground' in our own lives, in our own back yards as it were. How do we relate to what is in our 'home ground'? The principle of 'Post Metaphysical Ethics', one shared by 'point-

instant' reality, is that there is no highest principle and this as such leads to an unbounded or '...non-constraining notion of the Good' (Caputo in Simpson 2009,15). 'Point-instant' reality is a principle of no principle that keeps every situation dynamically open. Thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation as a possible journey and as built into the nature of the person and existence, both Heidegger and the 'point instant' view maintain that it is in thinking about what is happening closest in our lives at this moment that we gain insight into the 'truth of being'.

Caputo sums up his heterological ethics by using Augustine's phrase '*Dilige et quod vis fac*' (Love and do what you will) (Caputo in Simpson,2009,15). Caputo has a confidence that while being directed by love a person will travel openly allowing space to meet others openly with compassion. In the Buddhist view to live in the cognition of the first pure moment of awareness is to grow in respect for, and the ability to leave the other in the other. 'Point instant' reality is a fundamental dynamic energy of existence and the spiritual journey and once encountered a person's way of relating and interacting with all that is other takes on a new and more ethical approach.

Caputo's and the 'point-instant's' aim is to preserve the lived experience of religious faith as opposed to absolute knowledge of God or the ultimate as an unchanging or '...ultimate static unity ...' (Simpson,2009,17). What he suggests is a 'religion without religion' which denies a significance to our absolute knowledge about God or the ultimate and promotes a humbler not-knowing or a willingness to travel in the knowledge of ignorance. To not know, in the sense of not raising what we know to an absolute knowing about God, is to have a religion without a theology. Buddhism through its teachings of 'not-self', 'point-instant' and emptiness, also work to prevent static knowledge edifices from being constructed.

The Buddhist *Zen* tradition promotes a not knowing in favour of experiencing, summing up its view in the analogy of a never-ending journey; 'To travel is to be alive, to get somewhere is to be dead' (Watts,1962,216). A dynamic of the spiritual transformative journey requires surrendering the idea that one knows where one is going; there is no end. The transformative dynamic is a willingness to meet the truth walking along the path. *Zen* promotes a 'no-mind, mind' a

purposeless growth and an aimless life, (1962,216) as a radical hermeneutic to undermine our assumed absolute knowing. Deliberately living a life of non-knowing Caputo sees as a ‘...passion for the impossible’ (in Simpson,2009,18). The spiritual transformative dynamic comes from travelling the road completely openly and this impossible passion will result in a transformative experience. The mission that will inevitably fail and in so doing become a true religious or spiritual experience is also to be seen in the in the *Zen* tradition of *Kōans*, poetic conundrums that are unanswerable, and in the Bodhisattva tradition where one’s vow is a determination to save beings who are as numberless as the stars. Despite this a person is encouraged to enter the ‘Way’ wholeheartedly and indeed a wholehearted entry is the very accomplishment of the path, because getting to the end is not the goal of a spiritual journey (Watts,1962,216).

To uncover the dynamics of spiritual transformation, an essential experience is firstly an engagement through ‘meditative thinking’ on that which is closest, to reveal the ‘truth of being’ which can be an experience of ‘...life lived at the limits of the possible on the verge of the impossible’ (Caputo in Simpson,2009,18). This ‘passion for the impossible’ is for Caputo is a ‘religious structure’ in everyone (2009,18). The passion of the Bodhisattva to save all beings and the impossible answer to the *Zen Kōan* are dynamic instruments that facilitate transformation by the person’s wholehearted intention, even if ultimately, they fail.

### 1.11 ‘A Passion for the impossible’ – instrument of transformation

In attempting the extraordinary the *Bodhisattva* comes to recognize the impossibility, the ultimate failure, through which he encounters his own limits, but he does not give up his vow. The vast aspiration of Buddhism together with ‘repetition’ is also impossible, but these are the dynamic instruments that open one up for genuine spiritual transformation. Buddhism combines the impossible aspiration, and the subsequent sure defeat, with its focus on relationship as not-self, as a way of opening the person to greater transformative possibility. The possible impossible tension is a liminal transformative space that gives rise to new understanding and ways of being. Recognizing this creative potential also, Rumi the Sufi poet encourages us to ‘Start a huge foolish project like Noah...’ why?

Because in being defeated we are wounded and 'The wound is the place where the Light enters you' (Rumi quotes). Spiritual transformation is aided by the 'limits of the possible on the verge of the impossible' tension because it generates experiences of failure and wounding of ego that allows the light of real knowing to enter. Spiritual transformation from the foregoing is assisted by the experiences of failure and wounding that arise from a global aspiration.

In the Buddhist context, the 'point-instant' teaching could be seen to be the instrument that undermines everything, thus failure and consequently transformation is inbuilt into the structure of existence itself. If that is so, then it suggests that spiritual transformation is inbuilt into the fabric of existence. Failure of the impossible aspiration becomes the self-transcending experience that in both Caputo's and the Buddhist view promotes a self- forgetting openness.

Neither Caputo's 'post metaphysical heterological' principle, or Indian 'point-instant' reality allow a person to live in a predictable self- absorbed sameness. It calls a person to focus attention on the individual and the singular each unique time it calls to him.

Religion, according to Caputo is the 'obligation to a singularity that is higher than the universal' (Caputo in Simpson, 2009,19). In the 'point instant' view also every arising is an arising of the uniquely other. For Caputo, it is in recognising the truth of flux that

'undecidability' calls for 'faith' even if the ultimate truth is that 'flux rules all' (2009,20). The Buddhist 'point-instant' view is an insight which strips everything back to a continuous flux level, because it knows that it is a spiritual transformative experience. 'Undecidability' implies non-knowing but not inaction, without knowing a person proceed with faith in his decisions and to some extent trusting in the goodness of the life situation he is in. This is travelling in the awareness of one's ignorance and making discoveries as the path is travelled. Actions have *karmic* consequences, where even the thought of doing something is seen to carry the same *karmic* valence as doing it. Reality of the 'point-instant' when we cognize it, we come to see that there is no certainty, that impermanence is the truth and that any static absolutes is a mental construct. There is obvious symmetry between this action orientation of Buddhism and Caputo who stresses further the action dimension of spiritual insight by saying

that it does not matter which is ultimate God or love and in fact it is this ‘undecidability’ that brings forth ‘...loving actions and deeds’ (2009,21). ‘Undecidability’ or not-knowing is the instrument that calls up a person’s innate goodness in responding to others. The ‘point instant’ reality is an instrument that creates the space for innate compassion to arise through its stripping back of fantasies and the exposure to the real sufferings of the other. In this way both suggest that spiritual transformation occurs in a relationship between the truth of the person and the truth of existence.

God for Caputo is not so much a ‘what’ but more a ‘how’, ‘an invitation to action’, ‘the name of a deed’ (Caputo,2009,21). Meister Eckhart, the fourteenth century Christian philosopher, echoes the action dimension of God when he says, ‘You may call God love, you may call God goodness. But the best name for God is compassion’ (in Fox,1983,111). If the epitome of Christian devotion is ‘an invitation to action’ (compassion) or ‘the name of a deed’ (compassion) then the Buddhist ‘point instant’ reality focused on continuous action, is an insight that says we are fundamentally, from the very religious structure of how things are in our ‘passion for the impossible’ and the dynamic ‘point-instant’ world, living in an infinite sacred matrix of consistent transformative failure. The dynamics of spiritual transformation, includes being aware of the continuous invitation to action built into the infinite action dimension of the ‘point instant’ view of Buddhism. In the Christian view of God as the activity of compassion, it is the transcendent that invites loving actions in each ‘undecidable’ moment. The creative action dimension and sacredness of the now moment is echoed by Eckhart when he speaks of God’s creativity as continuous in every moment, ‘Every action of God is new ... God is the newest thing there is’ (1983,32). Those who recognize God’s eternal ‘...birthing...’ ‘...dwell in God and dwell in the eternal now’ (1983,32).

#### 1.12 No distinction between parts and whole

‘Point instance’ having no ties with past or future is an original occurrence at every moment. The original is the authentic moment, which cannot be grasped cannot be manipulated and cannot be owned. It arises as a gift outside of our

control and when recognized stimulates not ownership but appreciation. That which arises and ceases in a moment has no copies, it is a one true and real thing at every moment. It is radically deconstructive in its insistence of 'hereness', but what it deconstructs is a person's escapist habits, their fearful retreating from life. Surrendering or opening ourselves to transformation is difficult, changing our ways of being and thinking is hard but, as has come to light already, failure is a necessary condition of change. Speaking as a therapist, there is a sense that our unconscious knows the necessity of failure or annihilation, and creates certain circumstances so that when we encounter it, we grow more deeply. Goethe, in his poem the *Holy Longing* echoing this, equates being alive, with willingness and a desire even to be burnt '...I praise what is truly alive what longs to be burnt to death' (in Dunn,2001,20-21). In Goethe's poem, it is desire for a higher union that propels a person towards greater and, what seems to the defensive self-structure, more dangerous sources of enlightenment, until finally what a person was has been consumed, like the moth who is overcome by desire for the light '...and finally insane for the light you are the butterfly and you are gone' (2001,20-21). The experience of being defeated or burnt comes with Caputo's 'passion for the impossible' (Caputo in Simpson,2009,18) and is an essential initiatory experience that brings a person into deeper connection and understanding with oneself and the nature of how things are. Without experiencing this, focusing our energies in trying to stay safe, a person remains on the periphery, an isolated observer. 'And so long as you haven't experienced this, to die and so to grow, you are only a troubled guest on the dark earth' (2001, 20-21).

The 'point-instant' teaching is the teaching that asserts continuous openness. Together with the Buddha nature teaching, which asserts unbounded compassion, both are instruments that avow we are living in a plenum, an ever-present fullness that we are never outside. How we are embedded in this totality in this fullness (plenum) is outlined in the principles of *Hua yen* Buddhism. These teachings of 'inter-being', 'inter-penetration' and participation are the basis for the *Hua -yen* school of Buddhism founded by *Tu Shun* during the *T'ang* Dynasty (618-907). *Hua-yen* uses the image of a great net stretching infinitely in every direction as a metaphor of interconnection. On each eye of the net there is a jewel, which reflects

all other jewels infinitely. Thus, *Huayen* through this metaphor shows how it considers the universe to be an infinitely recurring interrelationship between its members. ‘The relationship is said to be one of simultaneous mutual identity and mutual inter-causality’ (Cook,1977,2). If this is so then the dynamic of spiritual transformation is not something that comes about from a person’s own side or own efforts alone, the transformative process is intimately connected with everything else. The example that Francis Cook gives to illustrate this mutual identity and inter-causality is that of ten coins of differing denominations and metals etc. From the *Hua-yen* perspective coin one is identical to the other nine coins and coin two is also identical to the other nine coins etc. Though the coins maybe of different sizes and metals etc. *Hua-yen* sees them as being totally identical and this identity is referred to as ‘...the static relationship of the coins’ (Cook,1977,2). The more dynamic dimension of the coins is seen to be their relationship of total interdependence or inter-causality. The totality or whole cannot exist without the first coin; as such it is seen to be the single cause of the whole. The reciprocal is also seen to hold, where the whole is seen to be a cause for the one to exist and have a function within the total. Every individual is a cause and in turn is caused by the whole, life is then a limitless number of individuals supporting and influencing each other. The universe itself is one of identity and inter-dependence ‘... a self-creating, self-maintaining, and self-defining organism’ (Cook,1977,3). In a universe of total identity, there is no central reference point, no centre, as the centre is located everywhere. In this intercausal world everything is of central importance. Spiritual transformation does not come about by seeking a new centre; it is to be found in the recognition that oneself has been at the centre all along. Rumi the Sufi poet and mystic sum this up when he says, ‘You wander from room to room hunting for the diamond necklace that is already around your neck’ (Rumi quotes).

The spiritual journey is not a journey outside of oneself but rather a journey into oneself. *The Hua-yen* vision of relationship between what we normally consider diverse detached entities shows they believe, at a fundamental level there is not just isolated separate material units, but rather mutual participation. The *Hua yen* philosophy is that nothing exists in and of itself; it needs everything to be what it is. The self- construct is busy trying to create a centre around which to hang its

identity, when all along its centre and identity lay, not in accumulating anything, but rather in recognising its own central place in the great scheme of things. As the interconnected totality is the reality for *Hua-yen*, it does not make a distinction between any part and the whole. A part acts as a condition for the whole and is the whole. To view a part in isolation is to succumb to the incorrect view that the whole is an independently existing thing to which part belongs. This seeming eradication of distinctions, is said to be not the case by *Hua yen* who paradoxically hold that ‘...things are both identical and different, but also paradoxically they are identical because they are different’ (Cook,1977,10). Each individual ‘point-instant’ thing is needed in its own unique way together with its unique purpose to act as a condition for the totality. Identity between these unique parts is that of being a condition for the totality. Differences are subsumed into the greater vision of the whole. Therefore, if we understand any part for what is, we understand the whole. There is no distinction between the parts and the whole they are identical and different and identical because different. The ‘point-instant’ view emphasizes uniqueness which *Hua yen* maintains and says that each unique thing with its unique qualities is identical in that they are a condition for the totality. If the *Hua yen* vision of existence is correct then a dynamic component of spiritual transformation must be by playing a part in that web of infinite interconnectedness that a person comes to as a vision of existence and by implication a person is one of those ‘jewels’ that reflect the infinite inter-relationship. In this way, the person is very much embedded within the dynamics of the transformative energy of existence itself, indeed the person has never been outside of it. The spiritual transformative insight from *Hua yen* is the realization that one is never outside the interconnected whole and thus one is in fullness all the time.

### 1.13 Participation

*Hua-yen* wishes to highlight infinite interdependence as the structure of existence and as such does not interpret a cause as a chronological sequence of prior events giving rise to a following event. For example, if a supporting pole is removed from a tent it falls, but *Hua-yen* focuses on the dependent nature of the whole, not on the fact that it falls. If any of the poles are removed, from that pole’s

perspective it is the total cause of the whole. In this way, an individual is both cause and result as all the poles together are the result of that which is supported. Cause then is the sum of the conditions present. The *Hua-yen* view serves to highlight that everything has an important place in the overall scheme of things. The parts and the whole express each other, things are defined by what participates with them in ‘... the dance, but the dance has no existence apart from the dancer’ (Cook,1977,15). A similar holistic vision is expressed more poetically by the Irish poet W.B. Yeats when calling into question distinctions of parts and whole in relation to a chestnut tree ‘...O chestnut-tree, great rooted blossomer, Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bowl? O body swayed to music, O brightening glance. How can we tell the dancer from the dance?’ (Yeats in Martin, 2010,180). It is through realizing emptiness, i.e. that things lack ‘...self-essence (*svabhāva*) ...’ (Cook,1977,15) and because of this emptiness there is no ultimate difference between the dancer and the dance, they are expressions of emptiness. The ‘point-instant’ view is a sword that cuts through delusion to show that each arising is an empty unique occurrence that of itself cannot be solidified into anything; trying to do so is essentially trying to link emptiness to emptiness or water to water.

Outside of the totality (if that is possible) ‘...there is only nonentity’ (Cook, 1977, 3). Eckhart, from the Christian mystical experience also speaks of this nonentity in relation to God when he says, ‘Outside of God there is nothing but nothing’ (Eckhart in Fox, 1983, 39). A similar realization strikes the poet Mary Oliver in her poem *A dream of Trees*; while longing for the quiet of a country retreat away from all the common noise of factories and schools etc. she would have time she contemplates to fashion her life as she wished, but then she writes ‘...And then it came to me, that so was death, A little way away from everything’ (Oliver,1992,247). To choose to live in participation rather than ‘a little way away from everything’ is to open to the dynamic laws of continuous transformation and continuous relationship. *Hua yen* highlights that the dynamics of spiritual transformation includes a heightened awareness of the value of each (‘point-instant’) thing as it plays a unique role with everything else as a cause. If the ‘point-instant’ view emphasized momentariness and uniqueness *Hua yen* shows how these play a role within the totality of things. From the *Hua yen* analysis, the dynamics of spiritual transformation is both within the unique individual who

reflects and is part of the totality from the start and whose unique contribution is needed to maintain the fabric of the whole. Each unique thing is seen to be an identical cause because from the Buddhist view each thing expresses emptiness and makes the totality of empty things.

All things are empty or have Buddha nature (the realization of emptiness) is a view developed from the apocryphal teaching composed in China called *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. In this text, the ultimate is called ‘One Mind’ which has a twofold form depending on the conditions. First is the One Mind in its pure mode, and second is One Mind in its impure form of *samsāra*. The Real, the Absolute is everywhere. A person is at once part of and participant in this Absolute reality as he goes about his ordinary life. As Cook points out *Fa’tsang* drew extensively from this text to support his view of the ‘...identity of all things...’ (Cook,1977,52). His argument being that things are ultimately identical in their basic absolute reality (1977,52). Earlier the ‘point-instant’ view was seen to be a dynamic view of the absolute paralleling Caputo description of God as an invitation to an action and Eckhart’s description of the action dimension as compassion. If we have not been abandoned by God or the Buddha, then we are living in a compassionate matrix. All phenomena are seen to be identical in *Hua yen*, all things are the realm of truth (*Dharma-dhātu*) all things are of one taste, and thus the *Dharma-dhātu Buddha* is to be encountered in everything. Nothing is outside the infinite circumference of emptiness, where the ‘...interpenetration in identity and interdependence of things (is seen) as the supreme good, the very body of the *Tathāgata*’ (Cook,1977,55). Everything shares in the interpenetrative identity of emptiness (openness) which itself expresses the nature of the Buddha, the supreme good. The ‘point-instant’ view and Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ principle both promote an ‘unbounded’ idea of the good. This unboundedness is emphasized in the Bon Dzogchen principles of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ which I discuss later.

If we are thinking of spiritual transformation as a journey at the end of which the truth of existence is uncovered, *Hua yen* would say from the above that the Absolute is everywhere and if this is so everything is encompassed within the truth and is identical to it in their empty nature. Thus, if spiritual transformation includes understanding the truth of things, it is not just understanding the external

truth of existence or an internal truth of the person. The truth is the compassionate ground that is everywhere where the dynamics of interdependence and interpenetration is the 'supreme good'. Everything being within the realm of absolute reality (*Dharma-dhātu*) also implies that we are being constantly drawn towards the good because it 'is in the direction of the fullest that truth lies' (De Chardin in Gallagher,1988,48) and is constantly expressing that fullness, that goodness even if in a confused way.

#### 1.14 'To see emptiness is to become emptiness'

What then is the nature of the absolute reality that all things participate in? As Cook points out, it is this dynamic process itself, by which things come into being and cease, that is immutable, it is in fact '... the immutability of mutability...' (Cook,1977,104), the law which states that everything changes due to conditions. Our failure to recognize the immutable law of mutability and our failure to see (*avidyā*) the empty nature of phenomena is how the absolute becomes conditioned on a personal level.

When one fails to see clearly the absolute manifests as ignorance and the 'as it isness' or 'thusness' quality of things is buried under a blanket of incorrect views. It is due to 'ignorance' or not seeing clearly that the absolute appears as the relative world of things. What is the transformative effect of truly encountering the empty nature of all things? It is, says Cook '...an act of absolute encompassing where one's own boundaries expand to include everything. To see emptiness is to become emptiness' (Cook,1977,107). This becoming the truth (*Dhamma/Dharma*) sets the insight gained beyond that of mere intellectual understanding. There is an inbuilt imperative to embody in one's life the insight that has been uncovered. The absolute and the relative are not in fact two different moments of reality, it is a person's inability to see properly (*avidyā*) that keeps them separated. Each moment is crucial because it is a soteriological moment, and demands a decision, it is a moment as Kierkegaard said '...in which time and eternity touch each other ...whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time' (SV IV 359/CA89 in Caputo, 1987,15).

That boundless infinite empty encompassing nature of things *Hua yen* re-emphasizes by its view that there is not a rigid separation of what is true from what is false 'the true embraces the false and derivative, and the false penetrates the true source' (Cook,1977,60). The truth encompasses the false, and therefore there is nothing which is outside of the truth. This is his restatement of the *Heart Sutra* doctrine that form and emptiness are identical. They cannot be separated because form is the way emptiness expresses itself. The absolute takes on a phenomenal conditioned appearance, while remaining itself, and obeys conditions by taking on pure and impure forms. What is present, in whatever state, is the immutable absolute expressing itself. *In Hua-yen* all *dharma*s are identical based on two factors; common emptiness and any *dharma* without reference can be a sole causal agent of the total. *Hua-yen's* focus just as in the tent example, is to emphasise the co-operation and need for the help of other conditions. The example of a seed is used to show that of itself the seed lacks the sun's nature of heat or the water's nature of wetness and needs these different natures to produce the plant. This need for the support of other causal entities '...results in universal intercausality which is interpenetration of *dharma* and *dharm*' (1977,68). Thus, everything is engaged and nothing is powerless, everything is a cause and cause is everywhere. Everything is fluid in this moving and interweaving of cause conditions, results, which continuously change positions. Cause is not separate from result and entities are given their causal power and distinctiveness by the result. A rafter is given its rafterness, its causal power as a distinct and different part of the barn, by the barn (1977,72).

Spiritual transformation in the *Hua yen* view is seeing there is nothing outside the truth even the false, the false is simply the conditioned expression of the true. The dynamics of spiritual transformation from the *Hua yen* perspective cannot be conceived as a movement from a disengaged state to an engaged one, intercausality and interpenetration is occurring all the time and therefore a person is within the transformative process all along.

### 1.15 Original fullness

The *Hua-yen* view essentially shows how the absolute and relative express the same truth of emptiness and how all things intersect and support each other because of this truth. William Desmond the contemporary philosopher explores the different ways being can manifest itself. His work discusses how transformed thinking is a movement from an erotic possessive mind to an ‘agapeic’ mind that is open and appreciative of the givenness, the original first pure, ‘point-instant’ (*Nen*) moment or blessedness of being (in Simpson, 2009, 35). Self-transcending in *Hua yen* is a coming to recognize that because of the true empty nature of things the absolute and relative are identical, thereby promoting a mind that once it sees the truth has the potential to become that truth *Dhamma*. In contrast to this a mind that seeks to integrate all otherness into itself is for Desmond an ‘erotic mind’ that seeks greater self-understanding and self-consciousness but in so doing gets caught in thinking it is the actual centre of everything (2009, 37). Buddhism would see this as a good description of what happens to the misguided-mind that is focused on building an illusory self-structure. Driven by fear and a belief in lack the ‘erotic’ mind, tries to incorporate and subsume the other into itself. In contrast, the ‘agapeic’ mind is a mind which is altruistic and selfless and sees the other as a blessing. The ‘erotic’ mind is a mind that in the Buddhist terms is the deluded mind given over to ‘incorporating’ in contrast to the enlightened mind that has expanded to infinity by letting go of everything. It is, I think, worth noting here that Desmond sees the ‘erotic’ mind bent on integrating otherness into itself, as driven to do so in its attempts to achieve greater self-perfection and greater self-consciousness. A fundamental dynamic of mind for Desmond is that even in its deluded ‘erotic’ state that mind is seeking greater awareness. It raises the question as to whether there is an inherent enlightenment trajectory that mind has innately and strives to accomplish even if sometimes it is misguided? In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation it seems that the movement towards it is going on all the time even in the pursuit of illusions.

The experiencing of the momentary ‘point-instant’ reality of Indian Buddhism opens naturally into seeing external phenomena as if for the first moment, in an open pure awareness. Desmond also outlines, in some detail, how that first

moment of awareness of the ‘...givenness of being in its otherness astonishes us’ (in Simpson, 2009,35). This initial ‘astonishment’ arises from a recognition of beings’ abundance ‘...prior to and exceeding all determinate facts and definitions’ (2009,35). This initial ‘astonishment’ or wonder denotes a respect for the value and goodness of being and is for Desmond the very beginning of thought itself (2009,35) This is an experience of mindfulness and respect for the otherness of the other beyond self-determined thinking, where this otherness elicits a self-transcending of consciousness (2009,35). In this way, what might be called deep-mindfulness of the other becomes an agent of self-transcendence and transformation. This initial pure moment gives rise to the *Hua yen* mind in community, it is a ‘being with’ in which we too participate. The initial experience of astonishment is a jubilant celebration ‘... prior to cognitive thematization and objective determination’ (2009,36) that is before the grasping mind comes into play.

This is reminiscent of the ‘point-instant’ and the first *Nen* moment, which sees the first moment of cognition as being valid and subsequent moments as elaborate constructs. Just as in the Buddhist view this awareness of being is clouded over by the three poisons (*klesha*) of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) and in Desmond’s view is that diming occurs when initial intimacy and astonishment fades into the background and a perplexing strangeness of being arises as the centre of attention. With the loss of original intimacy with being, or the first *Nen* moment, original fullness or ‘rapture’ is overtaken by a perceived lack and becomes desire for ‘...self- development, self-determination, and wholeness’ (2009,36). The desire to overcome a perceived lack is an ‘erotic perplexity’ (2009,37) that has a self-transcending dimension on the one hand and an openness to otherness on the other, in attempting to achieve wholeness. The deluded mind is trying in its limited way to achieve wholeness but its method is to subsume the other. However, in this erotic state one is driven towards the other in the search for completion where the other is viewed as something to own. Forgotten is the original astonishment at the ‘generous givenness of being’, without its original source, erotic perplexity ‘...takes itself as its own source, as an indeterminate lack seeking determinacy’ (2009,38). Driven by lack, erotic

mind develops a utilitarian bent and becomes an 'instrumental mind' that strives for power over otherness and a desire to manipulate (2009,39).

The *Hua-yen* answer to the possible deterioration of the first moment of astonishment is to state that all things share the same basic absolute identity of emptiness and as all things are identical we are continuously living in the realm of truth and of fullness (*Dharma dathu*) and not of lack. That is not to say that this knowing cannot be lost or clouded over in Buddhism also due to conditioning tendencies. To an 'instrumental' mind the world lacks inherent value and this lack of value invites a projection of value to make the valueless world useful '...as an instrument unto the self...' (Simpson,2009,39). The inevitable failure to fully possess the other leads to a breakdown of 'instrumental mind'. The failure of the search for 'univocal meaning' (2009,40) can lead to scepticism or nihilism or in a more positive direction where the failure becomes a readiness to open to others. The breakdown of the strategic mind becomes a 'breakthrough' to a recollection of original '...agapeic astonishment...'

(2009,41). Caputo's 'passion for the impossible' and the 'point-instant' view have a redemptive failure built into them also.

The *Hua-yen* teachings outline how we are permanently and irrevocably part of and an expression of the original pure moment of awareness. From the foregoing Desmond shows how the first moments of original 'astonishment', at the inherent goodness and value of being, gives rise to thought itself. Original thinking then, (first moment awareness, 'point-instant' openness) begins with seeing value and goodness everywhere. This resembles the *Hua yen* view which sees all things to be in the realm of truth. Thinking the truth of being in terms of spiritual transformation as a return to the original first moment is to think the goodness and the truth of things and consequently be lead in that direction as De Chardin suggests.

Failure in the Buddhist context is one of not seeing (*avidyā*) the true nature of things. The *Hua-yen* perspective reassures that we are living in abundance and as such there is no need to attempt to possess that which we already have and are. In Desmond's exegeses, it is when 'instrumental mind' comes up against limitations to its possessiveness that breakdown becomes a breakthrough to 'agapeic'

awareness and that original wonder or ‘astonishment’ can re-appear. When the ‘erotic mind’ breaks down, what emerges in the aftermath according to Desmond is ‘posthumous mind’ (in Simpson,2009,42). With the advent of ‘posthumous mind’ comes a reawakening of original vision (*vidyā*) and a seeing of the inherent value and worth of being, that does not need to be possessed, it is a mind that has let go of all desires ‘...as one dead’ (2009,44). With the failure of the ‘univocal’ and ‘erotic’ minds, there is space for ‘...our affirmation, our consent, our trust, our gratitude.... (2009,42). Meister Eckhart the medieval Christian writer echoes this when he says, ‘If the only prayer you say in your entire life is ‘Thank You’ that would suffice’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,34). ‘Posthumous mind’ like the mind of the enlightened person has let go of all accumulating efforts driven by the fear of lacking and with that the restoration of agapeic first moment, or first mind thinking, is brought about. The spiritual dynamic to be seen here is the movement from the possessive dynamic of the ‘erotic mind’ which through failure has become a ‘posthumous mind’ that has let go of all craving and in that retrospective space recalls the first pure moments and original goodness of being.

The breakthrough that arises from the breakdown of erotic instrumental mind is a ‘gift’, it is a reversal, from perceived lack or absence to fullness and presence, from Eros to agape (in Simpson,2009,42). The erotic desire that sought self-transcendence in seeking to possess the other and thus gain a wholeness for the self is transformed into agapeic self-transcending that is authentic because it comes from a recognised fullness that ‘...affirms the other as good in itself’ (2009,42). ‘Point-instant’ reality in seeking the first pure moment of awareness is seeking the good, for Caputo it is the ‘undecidable’ moment that leads to authentic good actions and in *Hua yen* it is the interpenetration in identity that is the supreme good. Thus, the experience or recognition of the good as an experience of the first undistorted moment or as residing in the other, arising from a unique ‘undecidable’ situations or present as part of the web of things is a common factor uncovered in the transformative journey. Both *Huayen* and Desmond’s metaphysics recognise that it is the awareness of the fullness of being, that we are immersed and embedded in, that leads to self-transcending vision. The re-awakening of original ‘astonishment’ is to see the original giftedness of being.

This is a spiritual transformed vision that gives rise to gratitude for the gifts of the other.

The Buddhist emptiness teaching says that all phenomena arise dependently and nothing arises otherwise. The re-awakening of agapeic consciousness, similar to the *Hua yen* view, shows how we depend on the otherness and ‘...that we are not our own ground’ (in Simpson,2009,43). ‘Agapeic self-transcendence is expressed in service to others, this comes from a realization of intrinsic worth and value of the other apart from (my) project of erotic self-recovery’ (2009,44). Desmond and *Hua yen* both suggest that one of the answers to my question concerning spiritual transformation is that even in its deluded state the erotic mind seeks, through possessing the other, self-transcendence and greater wholeness for itself. Authentic spiritual transformation, however, stems from ‘agapeic’ self-transcendence because like *Hua yen* it sees fullness not lack, and affirms the other as other and good in and of itself. If De Chardin is correct and ‘it is in the direction of the fullest that truth lies’ (De Chardin in Gallagher 1988, 48) and if that realization of fullness brings with it the recognition of indwelling goodness in the person per Caputo or in existence per *Hua yen* or ‘point-instant’ reality and Desmond, then that recognition is also a recognition of goodness. Indeed, for Desmond it is the original ‘astonishment’ which is a wonder at the value goodness of being, that is the beginning of thought itself. In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation as Desmond outlines it, failure is again highlighted as a part of the transformative experience. Earlier Caputo highlights how the ‘passion for the impossible’, was a dynamic that had failure built into its very structure, but itself was a religious structure in everyone. Going further back to the ‘point-instant’ view, this could be viewed as the supreme instrument that reduces everything to failure by its flashing energy, but in so doing it lights up the mind and opens everything to infinite possibility.

#### 1.16 Lighting up the mind

How one fares living outside fullness, without a plan, living with an ‘erotic’ darkened or unlit mind is discussed in a western context by Mark Taylor in his book *Erring, A Modern A/theology* (1987). Taylor discusses what happens in the

Christian psyche when the absolute (God) is seen to be dead and the person is no longer part of the divine plan, no longer playing a valuable role in the construction of the whole in *Hua yen* terms. In his analysis, a culture of control and domination has emerged driven by a psychology of deficit, where there are no real engagements with what is other as other; rather all encounters are a meeting with the self that is projected and related to everywhere. The death of God heralds the death of a core principle, the death of the absolute other, and with it the death of the ground of selfhood. The divine or absolute plan is replaced by the relative self-plan championed by Descartes who ‘...identifies truth and certainty’ (Taylor,1987,26) which becomes a fusion of self-truth with self -certainty. The once absolute value of being part of the divine plan is replaced by a self-value which measures actions in terms of usefulness to the self. Objects lose their separate identity and become useful-things-for-a-subject and thus promote an attitude of wanting and owning to establish the self. The equation becomes, the more I consume the more I establish and solidify myself. The territory of the self is insecure and needs constant re-establishing and where possible expansion as a reassurance that what it perceives is valuable is worth pursuing and having. The consuming-mind driven by a perceived lack, attempts to make the self more present to itself by asserting that perfection and total satisfaction can be found in the most useful thing. Total satisfaction and perfection once seen to reside in the transcendent otherness of God and available to those created in his image who participated in his divine plan, now become appropriated to create a solid ground for the self. *Longchenpa* speaks of ‘pure and total presence’ as a ‘transparency’ as opposed to setting up a solidity. Also, a transparency allows everything to be seen clearly without anything being hidden (Longchenpa in Lipman & Peterson 2000).

‘Point-instant’ reality and Caputo’s deconstructionist views from the beginning say that no such plan exists and it is by travelling in the here and now momentariness of things, sometimes in the dilemma of ‘undecidability’ that a person sees the plan retrospectively as they encounter life in the lived experience. *Hua yen*, because it does not see the relative and absolute as two separate entities, does not run into this difficulty. The early Buddhist view would very much agree

with Taylor's analysis of how the deluded mind operates. It sees the need to consume to be based on craving (*tanhā*) which is driven by the need to form a support for the self. The drive to consume what is other, to assimilate it and make it into a-self-same, is based on a belief in a fundamental lack, earlier Desmond has called this energy to consume the 'erotic' mind. Buddhism also does not see this deluded-mind to be the only possibility. Karmay discusses how in *Nyingma Dzogchen* there is seen to be an absolute aspect of mind which is an innate non-compounded fundamentally pure mind that is 'luminous' from the beginning. A mind pure from the beginning is not a mind that perceives a fundamental lack, being pure from the beginning, it perceives all phenomena as a display of that primordial clarity (Karmay,2007,119). The mind that is driven to fill its perceived lack is the dualistic mind (*sems*) '...which creates ... the world of illusions and through its activities obscures its real nature...' (2007,175). *Sems* real nature however is '...immaculate (*dri bral*) and luminous (*'od gsal ba*) and is from the beginning completely pure (*ye nas dag pa*)' (2007, 175). The consuming-mind thinks of itself as needing to establish the legitimacy of the self. *Dzogchen*, aware of mind's cumulative processes to build a self, does not use mind per se to attempt to release the person from 'unwholesome' constructing activities. Rather by giving the mind space it believes it will settle back into its true 'luminous immaculate nature'. The resultant transformative experience is to see all appearances to be a display of mind's 'luminous nature'. The consuming desiring 'erotic' mind sees the deficit problem as an external one and goes about solving it by trying to dominate the external. The *Dzogchen* transformative view is to see all as firmly originating, by with and from mind, and thus mastery is not mastery of externals but rather a recognition of the mind's true 'immaculate' nature. The mind wandering and lost in externals is a self, lost to itself in a desire not for satisfaction but rather in a desire to perpetuate an unquenchable desire. This suffering can only be transformed when the mind is brought back to its true 'luminous immaculate' 'clear' nature. In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation with *Nyingma Dzogchen* in mind the true nature of mind is seen to be that aspect which recognizes and sees clearly its own primordial perfection and this is called *rigpa*. *Rigpa* '... is the dynamic knowing part of the mind. It is the quality of knowing and seeing clearly' (Duffy,2010, xv). What it sees clearly is its own true empty unbounded nature.

Previously *Hua yen* puts forward the idea that though we think there are two truths, relative and absolute, there is in fact only one, the absolute to be encountered everywhere. The relative is a display of that absolute truth. Desmond in outlining the motivation of the ‘erotic’ mind says that even in its deluded relative state it is seeking greater self- knowledge or fuller understanding and is being led in that direction because truth lies there. Taylor’s person through his appropriation is attempting to fill a perceived lack. The ‘erotic’ mind also in its quest for the perpetual unquenchable is a mind that is seeking the absolute. In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation one of the dynamics to be considered is that the true nature of mind is continuously attempting to move the person towards the best situation and therefore any attempts to move in the ‘...direction of the fullest’ (even deluded ones), are attempts to find where ‘... truth lies’ (De Chardin in Gallagher, 1988, 48).

### 1.17 Original mind has always been pure

The true nature of mind gets shrouded over in the ‘erotic’ mind’s activity to establish total satisfaction for itself in the hunt for the most useful thing. The transformative understanding however is that this is not the true story. Minds true nature is actively and continuously seeking not the most useful thing but rather the truest thing. Cousins discusses the true luminous nature of mind, drawing from the early Buddhist texts, in his paper ‘Buddhist *Jhāna*’, where he highlights that the original pure stainless aspect of mind is outlined in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* ‘The mind is o *bhikkhus*, radiant but is stained by stains which arrive’ (Cousins,1973,117). Fundamentally the mind is pure and radiant but covered with adventitious stains. Other instances of original pure-mind arise regarding meditation, the results of which can be a penetration to one’s original pure state ‘The mind which is wholly given to a single perception of a salutary kind becomes purely radiant and illuminant in its original state’ (1973, 117). This is further supported by a simile from the fourth *jhāna* where just as a monk’s body is entirely covered by the white cloth he wears so too there is no part of his whole body that is not suffused by a mind that is utterly pure, utterly clean. ‘Monks as a monk might be sitting down, who has clothed himself including his head with a

white cloth, no part of his whole body would not be suffused with the white cloth.....a monk having suffused this very body with a mind that is utterly pure utterly clean ... there is no part of his whole body that is not suffused by a mind that is utterly pure, utterly clean' (1973,117). This might be called a doctrine of original purity.

Namkhai Norbu discusses how mind energy and light manifests in the individual in his book *The Crystal and the Way of Light*. In the *Dzogchen* view we are encountering mind-energy displays of our own mind continuously in the here and now and in the after-death state, therefore understanding how energy manifests in a person is of great importance. Energy as outlined by Norbu manifests in three aspects called, *dang*, *rolpa* and *tsal*. Energy at the *dang* level is the original, '...infinite and formless...' (Norbu,2000,99) but just like the mirror it can adopt forms placed in front of it. These forms in the individual are *karmic* traces and they result in the delusion of seeing '...the "world around us" as absolute self-existing realities' (2000,99). The analogy of an object appearing to exist inside a crystal ball is used to explain *rolpa* energy. In the same way, one's energy can appear as a seemingly weighty and 'real' internal image. *Tsal* is defined as energy manifesting 'as apparently "external" world' (2000,100). A crystal prism, which reflects and refracts light, gives the appearance that colours are separate from the crystal but are in fact a function '...of the crystals own nature' (2009,101). Working with one's energies through meditative practices is a preparation for recognising and understanding that all arisings are a display of one's own energy manifesting either in the here and now or in the Bardo states.

Edward Conze in his book *Buddhist Thought in India*, highlights that there exists in the Canon of the *Sthaviras* a sutra called *Saddhātusūtra* which says Conze takes for granted an '...eternal consciousness and the Absolute or *Nirvāṇa*, is identified with an 'invisible infinite consciousness, which shines everywhere'. This '... absolute thought which is perfectly pure and translucent (*prabhāsvara*) in its own nature, its own being, its own substance, and which remains forever...' (Conze1962, 196).

Mathew Kapstein in his essay 'Indian Buddhist discourses of Light and their Tibetan Legacy' traces the use of light imagery in the *Mahāyāna* and Tantric

schools of Buddhism. He shows how the early *Hīnayāna* views of light as a metaphor grew and deepened in the *Mahāyāna* where several Buddhas themselves such as ‘...*Amitābha* (Limitless Light) and *Varocana* (Radiant Splendor)’ (Kapstein, 2004, 124) were strongly associated with light imagery. In the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra* it is said that the ‘...Mind is not mind. The nature of mind is clear light’ (Kapstein, 2004, 124). The experiencing of this ‘clear light’ became of prime importance in the Kagyu school, sometimes as Kapstein highlights ‘...it was identified with the fundamental ground of being’ (2004, 125). In the Garland of Gems text, a demented demoness asks for a cure for her suffering and is told that it is by not recognizing her own nature that she is suffering. When she asks what her nature is she is told ‘It is luminous gnosis in which the continuum of mundane reality comes to end’ (2004, 126). Luminous gnosis is to be found when all conceptual activity ends, when the twelve links of dependent origination are broken. *Nāgārjuna* comments that her tormented condition could be transformed to ‘...bliss if she had the power to realize the nature of her mind to be a mass of light, a solar orb’ (2004, 128). Light in the Garland of Gems text refers to both ‘transcendent gnosis’ and to the experience of light that comes with tantric meditation practice.

Cousins, Norbu, Conz and Kapstein collectively highlight a doctrine that says the mind is originally pure and luminous. Its radiant character when identified with the true nature of mind is said to be a ‘luminous gnosis’ (Kapstein, 2004, 126) while when identified with the absolute ‘*Nirvāṇa*’ reality it is ‘translucent Thought consciousness’ (Conz, 1962, 196).

If the true nature of mind is luminosity and the true nature of the absolute is ‘translucent’ or luminous then spiritual transformation must have something to do with the mind when recognizing the absolute nature of things is simultaneously recognizing its own nature. Because the ground is the same luminous ground to recognize one is to recognize the other. The discussion on luminous nature shows that knowing cannot be separated from the knower or known. Realization is not separate from being; one’s identity is not separate from true nature of existence. This is not just an abstract knowing as seeing the truth in *Hua yen* is an act of recognizing the empty nature of things and is simultaneously ‘.... an act of absolute encompassing where one’s own boundaries expand to include

everything. To see emptiness is to become emptiness.’ (Cook,1987,107). Harvey shows that the enlightened person’s relationship to the truth of things is one of having become the truth,’...the *tathāgata*’s relationship with *Dhamma* is one of having become *Dhamma*’ (Harvey,1995,233). Becoming the truth of luminous emptiness is not a static understanding of some esoteric insight, luminosity has a dynamic aspect of radiance. What is radiated outward in the Buddhist understanding is ‘lovingkindness’ which suggests that the locus of this transformation is seen to take place in the heart because it is here that the knower the process of knowing and the known are truly realized. Peter Harvey sheds light on why the heart is a fundamental adjunct to the light of consciousness. In the Early Suttas, as discussed by him, a central quality of mind (*citta*) is that it is ‘brightly shining’ and a fundamental quality of its bright display is loving kindness (*mettā*). The brightly shining mind is ‘...endowed with loving kindness’ (1995,167). A transformed mind is a light filled mind that sees into the transparent empty heart of things and radiates out love and compassion towards those who suffer in the darkness of not seeing clearly. In the dynamics of spiritual transformation, it is not just the mind that is transformed, as mind in early Buddhism is called *citta*, which Peter Harvey translates as ‘heart/mind’ (1995,111). Thus, any expansion of mind is simultaneously an expansion of the heart. A dynamic of the transformative realization must then be that seeing the true luminous empty nature of things and becoming that truth manifests as a radiation of loving kindness.

### 1.18 The enlightened mind

What are the characteristics of one who has become more real, more fully present, more of the truth (*Dhamma*)? Peter Harvey outlines what the Early texts say about a spiritually transformed person, one who has ‘become emptiness’ in the *Hua yen* sense, in the chapter ‘Seeking the *Tathāgata*’. An enlightened or a ‘thus-gone’ one, who is ‘attained-to-truth’ through recognising the causes and path that leads to the cessation of suffering, his ‘...nature is from truth’ (Harvey,1995,227). He cannot be measured or calculated as he is beyond attachment to any one of the personality factors and has let go of craving for the existence of conditioned

things. Conditioned things are measurable having been brought into being by attachment, revulsion, and ignorance. Living without a concept of I or Self ‘he does not conceive that he is anything, or anywhere, or in anything’ (1995,41). He is all-one-ness having let go of all the limiting factors that might define him and in so doing his consciousness/awareness (*citta*) has become infinite. ‘When a person lets go of everything such that his identity shrinks to zero his *citta* expands to infinity’ (1995,62). Through wisdom (*pañña*), of seeing the ‘not-self’ nature of phenomena he is no longer tethered to anything that is measurable and so he is said to dwell ‘...with a mind made to be without boundaries’ (1995,229).

Constructing, judging and discriminating mind states, limit the mind’s horizons and possibilities and tie it to the objects it is attaching to, like a dog would be tied to a post, moving continuously around the central obsession. Seeing everything internally and externally as not self he has ‘become *Dhamma*’ a reflection of the way everything truly is, i.e. dependently arising and not self. To see and become *Dhamma* is a point where identity and being merge and this requires not constructing a self- edifice but rather dismantling all that stands in the way of really understanding how things are. *Samsāra* can be defined as the painful process of being tied to and thus conditioned by, the never changing mental and physical attachments, and never moving beyond them. *Nibbāna* on the other hand is the ending of such suffering (*dukkha*) through the wisdom of seeing the empty self-nature of all things including *Nibbāna* itself. Though it is empty of self it is said to be ‘...the highest of all empty things’ (1995,52). When the links in conditioned arising are broken, becoming ceases and *Nibbāna* ‘...the signless freedom of mind (*ceto-vimutti*) is said to be attained...’ (1995,194).

Conditioned phenomena that we pay attention to and focus on are delimiting objects or ‘signs’ whereas *Nibbāna* is the sign-less state, that is without objects. When, in contemplation, the transitory nature of delimiting conditioned phenomena is apprehended, their true signless nature is uncovered, and this naturally leads to the contemplation of *Nibbāna* which is beyond constructing activities, beyond anything ‘graspable’ and beyond the impermanent cycle of ‘arising and ceasing’ (Harvey,1995,196). Just as the true nature of mind is brightly shining the true nature of phenomena is translucent.

The Early Suttas see *Nibbāna* during life as the stopping of the personality factors and a type of discernment (*viññāṇa*) is seen to be the attainment of and being *Nibbāna* (Harvey,1995,198). Contemplating everything as ‘not-self’ leads to being without objects as support, and without any constructing activities, there is nothing to discern, and this ‘objectless discernment’ is the attainment of *Nibbāna* during life. ‘Thus, friend, without support, unstriving ...I crossed the flood’ (1995,202) says the Buddha, to emphasize that it is only in letting go of all that binds one to the shore of *Samsāra* that one can cross the flood of attachments to get to the shore of liberation. Both the *tathāgata* (*Buddha, Arhat*) and the *Dhamma* (true unconstructed nature of things /liberating doctrine) are said to be ‘deep’, they are both hard to fathom but when one is seen so also is the other. To see *Dhamma* is in fact to see the nature of the *tathāgata*. In experiencing *Nibbāna* both Buddhas and Arhats have become that which they experience. This can be seen in the Buddha’s discourse in the *Vakkali Sutta* (Online excerpt translated from the Pali by Maurice O’Connell Walsh) ‘...He who sees *Dhamma* *Vakkali* sees me; he who sees me sees *Dhamma*. The nature of the ‘thus gone one’, the *tathāgata* is *Nibbāna* and the *tathāgata*’s relationship with *Dhamma* is one of having become *Dhamma*’ (Harvey,1995,233). The Arhat has become the truth and expresses what he has become through the experience of ‘objectless discernment’. The spiritual transformative effect is that in seeing the truth of emptiness (*Dhamma*) one also sees the truth of the Buddha, and becomes that inseparable truth.

Regarding the dynamics of spiritual transformation, it is possible to see Harvey’s description as a description of the mind of the enlightened person only. However, the enlightenment characteristics of having a mind expanded to infinity, of being measureless, of being nowhere, nothing or in anything arise in him when he sees the dependent empty nature of things. Indeed, *Nibbāna*, the highest state of attainment, is the attainment of a mind without contents a mind free of signs, ‘the highest of empty things’. The enlightened person has become the truth of emptiness, the very fabric-less translucent fabric of existence itself. The spiritual transformative method he uses to penetrate the nature of existence is ‘objectless discernment’ which frees him from the conditioned measurable world of objects expanding his mind and heart/mind (*citta*) to the infinite dimensions of the empty

nature of all things. The enlightened person not only expands his mind but simultaneously his heart is expanded infinitely also, this implies that as before realization of the nature of truth is not an abstract realization it carries within it a compassionate action dimension. The identity of the enlightened person then must be infinite compassion itself. In thinking about the dynamics of spiritual transformation then compassion must play a significant role in the process of realization. In the dynamics of spiritual transformation to 'become the truth' is to become infinitely more compassionate.

### 1.19 Conclusion

In this chapter, I set out to look at how Buddhism sees the fundamental nature of reality to discern what effect that view might have on how we think about transformation as a process from an unenlightened state to an enlightened one. From the investigation the following emerged, if one is thinking of an enlightened state as a never changing static ultimate, the 'point-instant' view would say that we need to rethink that idea. Ultimate reality is instantaneous, 'existence real existence means...change' (Stcherbatsky,62,89), and not a separate realization apart from existence. The transformative realization is the realization that change is occurring at every 'point-instant' moment. If things are instantaneous and disappear as soon as they appear the effect is to cut any kind of speculative conditioned thinking, that would move the person away from the first moment of awareness. The awareness that apprehends the 'point-instant' structure is a perceptual awareness, which is a 'passive reflex'. It is through this 'passive reflex' that a direct knowing of the nature of reality is seen to be achieved. The first moment is seen to be a pure moment untarnished by elaborate abstract thinking and thus the 'point-instant' view is the vehicle which penetrates the pure nature of reality. As the 'point-instant' understanding has an inbuilt view of reality as dynamic, it questions all static views that come about through a person freezing moments, to which endurance and reality is then attributed. The transformative understanding that emerges from the discussion on the 'point-instant' view is that the true nature of reality cannot be grasped by a mind given to conceptual thoughts or imaginative abstract thinking. The pure moment is not grasped by

understanding; it arises in a mind that is free of conditioned constructing activities. This suggests that the mind that can penetrate to the true structure of reality, said to be 'momentary flashes of energy', is the mind that is free of grasping. If the nature of reality is the dynamic 'point-instant' reality that penetrates to the true pure nature of things, then the mind that perceives its pure aspect must have a dynamic quality. A mind that is not static apprehends a dynamic 'point-instant' reality which reveals the pure momentariness of things. Thus, the true nature of the mind that perceives 'momentary flashes of energy' must itself have a luminous quality, thus the true nature of mind is seen to be 'brightly shining'. From the perspective of the 'point instant' view existence itself is change and therefore to understand transformation is to understand that it is already built into the fabric of existence itself.

The 'point-instant' view is the supreme deconstructionist view that penetrated to the heart of the pure momentariness of existence. The 'point-instant' deconstructionist approach keeps a focus in the immediate here and now present moment of things where knowing the true nature of things has nothing to do with accumulated history. Neither does it have anything to do with eternal ultimate or abstract knowing outside of its own ultimacy of momentary change. Though a deconstructing tool the 'point instant' view as an understanding is not a demolishing for no reason, as a way of understanding it serves to recover a connection to the true nature of reality. In contemporary thinking John Caputo puts forward the view that it is by staying in the flux of life that real moving forward is achieved. This moving forward is facilitated by 'repetition' which has the power to uncover what a person 'was to be'. It is 'repetition' as opposed to a 'recollection' of a lost primordial state, that Caputo sees as a genuine recollection forward to what one was to be. Staying in the immediate momentariness of the flux produces something new at every moment. So, important is that moment to the Christian on the road to eternal salvation that Kierkegaard sees it as a moment when time and eternity cross each other. Both Caputo's 'repetition' and the 'point instant' promote a view where spiritual transformation is a state of continuous revolution. I will explore the view that spiritual transformation necessitates continuous revolution later (3.25). The task of 'repetition' is the task of 'forging identity' through staying in the flux, an identity that Caputo sees as being

‘authentic and original’ because it arises from the flux. The ‘point-instant’ view is not so concerned with creating an identity per se however it does reveal a ‘brightly shining mind’ that apprehends the ‘authentic and original’ moment as it flashes in and out of existence. If the ‘point-instant’ suggests anything about an identity, from its own nature, it suggests that it must be unbounded and immeasurable. This unbounded immeasurable aspect can be seen in the description of the enlightened person (*Arhat*) who is said to be immeasurable because he is not bound to any measurable thing and whose mind has expanded to infinity because he has let go of all identifying phenomena. The enlightened person thus has embodied the dynamic unbounded immeasurable aspects of the ‘point-instant’ reality, Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ which leads to an ‘unbounded idea of the good’ and has ‘become the truth’.

Caputo sees reality as a ‘heterology’, a reality that is made up of unique unrepeatable moments without there being any deeper structure. ‘Point-instant’ reality sees no moment being carried forward into the next and thus both views promote multiplicity and the unexpected as opposed to the pre-planned or pre-known. Caputo encapsulates this unplanned nature of things in his doctrine of ‘undecidability’. This doctrine of ‘undecidability’ promotes entering into existence openly without certainties not as something to know in advance but rather as something to experience. This suggestion that real understanding stems from undertaking a journey in ‘undecidability’ or in the knowledge of ignorance Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ suggests that entering the path of change has a risky element to it. For Caputo, it is in travelling without a prescription in ‘undecidability’ that facilitates real understanding and real decision making. I investigate travelling without prescription as a method of realization in later chapters.

Both Caputo and the ‘point-instant’ view want to bring us as close as possible to what is real indeed with the ‘point-instant’ view our noses are pressed against the real at every moment. In trying to find the truth of being both the ‘point-instant and ‘undecidable’ approach say that it is in what is closest.

Heidegger calls ‘meditative thinking’ a thinking which thinks the ‘truth of being’ and suggests that the object of meditative thinking is what is in our ‘patch of home ground’. What is closest and concerns us in the here and now moment of things

accordingly can reveal the true nature of things. I will investigate the suggestion that closeness is a revelation of the real, particularly when I discuss the body as the closest thing that is a means of accessing the real. Also, it raises the question as to whether there is an actual spiritual journey outside of oneself necessary at all; I will take up this theme again in (4.14).

For Caputo to choose to live a life in the uncertainty of not knowing signifies that there is a 'passion for the impossible' that motivates a person, indeed it is through this very 'passion for the impossible' that a person comes to the true structure of experience. Caputo sees the 'passion for the impossible' as the religious structure in every person. This 'passion for the impossible' he sees both as the structure of experience in that it leads to direct experience and 'a religious structure' in that it is the factor which motivates real spiritual insight. However, its reference is the 'impossible' and as such failure is inbuilt into the experience. The 'point-instant' view is the ultimate description of failure in so far as nothing lasts from one moment to the next. Failure as a 'passion for the impossible' Caputo sees as being a structure in the person and 'point-instant' reality sees failure as being in the structure of existence itself. Thus, failure is of dynamic significance in relation to spiritual insight and if it is that case that it is a 'religious structure' in experience and in the person then it suggests that there is constant transformative failure occurring in every moment. I investigate the transformative dynamics of failure in (3.12).

Both the dynamics of 'point-instant' insight and Caputo's insight of a 'passion for the impossible' leading to failure, suggest that we are never outside the spiritually transformative matrix. *Hua yen* Buddhism, in seeing the universe as an infinitely recurring inter-relationship of mutual identity and inter-causality also agrees that there is fullness within the structure of existence itself. In a universe of total identity, there is not seen to be a central reference, the centre is everywhere. In this understanding transformation is not concerned with seeking a new or better centre. Having no central reference would agree with Caputo's travelling in 'undecidability' and if transformation is not seeking a new centre in oneself then it suggests that that centreless centre has a part to play in the transformative process. What the centreless centre might be, I investigate later through the Buddhist teaching of 'not-self'. From the *Hua yen* view of the structure of reality

as a web of interconnection, of infinite interdependence, arises the view that all things ultimately are 'One Mind' and the nature of the Buddha and thus all things are seen to be residing within the 'realm of truth'. The view of interpenetration in identity is the 'supreme good'. Caputo's 'undecidability' he believes gives rise to authentic un-prescribed good actions. This would suggest that goodness is innate in the person. Early Buddhism sees the perfection of merit or goodness power through 'loving kindness' and 'mindfulness' as practices that develop and expand the ability of the person to see and encompass the true nature of things. Like Caputo there is the suggestion that goodness is innate in the person. The dynamics of spiritual transformation suggested from the *Hua yen* understanding, penetrating the heart of the interpenetrative truth is to penetrate the good. This suggests that it is in accessing the true interpenetrative understanding of reality that the good is to be seen.

The transformative effect on a person who sees the true nature of things, is according to *Hua yen* an absolute expansion that includes everything. In this way, the person becomes the truth of interpenetration which includes everything. An enlightened person who has become the truth has expanded to such a degree that he cannot be bounded or measured or found, his being and identity have become one. What expands infinitely is not just the person's mind. In early Buddhism mind is called *citta* which is heart/mind. As I mentioned earlier the heart of the truth of existence and the person is goodness so therefore the expansion that the person experiences is in infinite goodness. The dynamic expression of that infinite goodness accessed at the heart of things is compassion. In the contemporary discussion of the nature of being William Desmond outlines how the first moment of 'agapeic astonishment' at the value and goodness of being is the very beginning of thought itself. This is to suggest that transformative thinking, 'thinking the truth of being', using Heidegger's phrase, is in the first pure moment to think the good. As original 'agapeic' mind gets overtaken by 'erotic' possessive mind, value gets overtaken by usefulness. However, this 'instrumental' intention eventually breaks down and there is a realization that the other cannot in fact be possessed. Here again the transformative dynamic of failure is to be seen. With the failure of the 'instrumental' mind comes a return to a first moment thinking which thinks the truth of the other as good. For Desmond, non-realized aspects of the driven mind

are fundamentally seeking greater and deeper understanding. Even deluded thinking is attempting to bring about what it deems as good. This true nature of the deluded mind I will return to again later when discussing *Dzogchen* insights.

What happens when a person lives outside a spiritual structure is outlined by Mark Taylor who discusses what happens to the Christian left without a divine plan to follow post the death of God. With the death of God, the absolute centre, there is a death in the ground of the self. Unlike the *Hua yen* vision which sees and values the centre as being everywhere, the post- modern Christian now sees the self everywhere. Truth and certainty once found in the divine plan become self-truth and self -certainty with the advent of Descartes. The once total satisfaction and perfection found in God's universal plan is replaced by pursuing that which is the most useful thing. Thus, in this psychology of deficit, the structure of existence itself becomes a mirror in which the self sees itself. The mind that turns to dominating and controlling is not the true nature of mind according to Buddhist *Dzogchen*. Mind's true nature is pure and luminous from the beginning and this is called *yeshe*. Mind, in its more unenlightened and limited state is called *sems*, and *sems* is that which creates the illusory world, which obscures its real nature, which is the immaculate and luminous from the very beginning.

Cousins, Norbu, Conz and Kapstein collectively highlight a doctrine that says the mind is originally pure and luminous. Its radiant character is said to be a 'luminous gnosis' (Kapstein,2004,126) while when identified with the absolute (*Nirvāṇa*) reality it is 'translucent Thought consciousness' (Conz,1962,196). Desmond and *Dzogchen* share a view that the true nature of mind is always present and always pushing towards the real and the true nature of things. *Hua yen* by seeing all things as being in the 'realms of truth' is not afraid to say the good penetrates the evil and evil the good. There is in this a suggestion that everything is attempting to move the person forward towards greater and greater understanding even the deluded actions, which results in failure, are instruments which open the person towards a more wisdom oriented mind that sees life and all lives as participating in an ever-present fullness.

## Chapter 2 - The Self: Real or Imaginary

### 2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Mark Taylor shows how the Christian self has become all pervasive, since the death of the divine plan left it without a spiritual structure (1987). Without a divine plan, the world itself has become a mirror in which the self sees itself pursuing its self-plan, with confidence in its truth and certainty. Total satisfaction, once found in God's plan, is now transferred to pursuing the most useful thing. Central to a discussion concerning transformation is the self that undergoes the transformative process and therefore this chapter continues looking at the self. In the previous chapter, it became clear that the 'point-instant' energy allows no time or space for a self to be constructed in its view of non-stop continuous revolution and therefore I particularly explore what Buddhism says about the self, how our ideas of a self are formed, what 'mind-energies' are involved in the formation and if the result falls short of a person's spiritual aspirations and capability.

In early Buddhism, the mind or 'mind-energies' was seen to be an interaction between the five senses (*vijñanas*) and mental activity (*mano-vijñana*). In this early view of the mind, *mano-vijñana* was a kind of sense organ (minds-eye) that perceived visions. Those things that we think of today as being inside the mind such as 'imagination, memory, intuition...', (Amida Trust Learning Programme 4 1998,6), were seen under this model as visitors who bore messages. The mind's task was to converse with the visitors and learn their wisdom or hidden messages. The five sense consciousnesses were said to be thought free and as such perceived their objects directly. Mind consciousness being an indirect medium of apprehension, only perceives its own mental image of the object. The senses, however, under the influence of the dualistic mind become conditioned and thus the eye and ear search out pleasant sights or sounds and thus 'there is a self in every one of the senses' (1998,7). Enlightenment under this model means looking, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling '... in a way which is empty of self-consciousness' (1998,7). Later developments of this model saw more interest in the psychological process as being internal and less in terms of external visitors.

The questions of re-birth and ‘... psychological consistency’ (1998,9) became more prominent. *Asanga* one of the founders of the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, introduced the idea of mental contents or a ‘store’ (*alayā*), and *alayā-vijñāna* became the store of the mind. Originally meant to highlight the things stored that made the mind resistant to change i.e. ‘it’s stickiness’, it became over time the place where unconscious things were stored in the mind. As Brazier highlights, what became stored in the *alayā* according to the *Yogācāra* school was ‘...all traces of past volitional action. It is therefore a store of *karma*’ (1998,10). The trace of past action is called a ‘*bija*’ meaning seed. The teaching on *karma* says that the seed will grow into a future action like the original action that initiated it. In this way, future actions become conditioned by past actions, thus the karmic round is set up. In Buddhism, we are seen to live in the world and to engage with and be energized by what has pride of place in the *alayā*. What seeds we cultivate have great significance in the type of person we are and life we live. Liberation is breaking out of the habitual round of negative and limiting attitudes and actions that keep a person locked in *samsaric* suffering by cultivating more positive seeds. To show how the *alayā* interacted with the six senses *Asanga* introduced the idea of a processing function or mental activity called *manas*. It functioned as a processor of fleeting thoughts and “‘defiled thinking...yoked to the four passions of belief in selfhood, self-pride, self-love, and primal ignorance.’” (*Asanga; Summary of the Great Vehicle* .16 as quoted by Brazier 1998 11/12). Driven by an inward-looking ego and its concerns to establish the truth of its being, *manas* ‘thinks the *alayā* is the self (1998,12). Thus, the deluded ego-mind thinks these thoughts, feelings and impulses are a self.

The early discourses of the Buddha from the *Theravāda* tradition have a focus on how the mind(*citta*) operates. In this tradition, the mind’s characteristics of thinking, intending and willing predominate. It also has the meaning of ‘train of thoughts’ or total ‘mind-set’, where a ‘mind-set’ focuses thoughts and emotions towards a particular end. A ‘mind-set’ once set up, carries on with a will of its own, co-ordinating and operating other aspects of mind’ (Harvey, 2004,113). The co-ordinating and organizing aspects of *citta* can be compared to the characteristics of *karma* which is also said to collect and organize. What a person recognizes is thus conditioned by the ‘activities of will’ (123) where will is seen

to be equivalent to karma ‘I say *cetanā* is karma; having willed, one performs actions by body speech and mind.’ (From A.III,415 as quoted by Harvey ,123). Activities driven by willing or craving condition discernment and channel it towards objects that are deemed meaningful, the self being deemed the most meaningful.

In the *Gelug* tradition attempts to hold ‘...onto the self of the person and holding on to the self of phenomena ‘, are thought to be characteristics of the ‘*klesha*-mind’ (*Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche* 2002,32). A *klesha* mind is a mind that is afflicted by mental activity that clouds the mind’s true nature. Rinpoche outlines four qualities of the *klesha*-mind; conception of an ‘I’, attachment to an I, ignorance and pride. These four together constitute the ‘afflictions’ of mind. According to Rinpoche they also function as the foundation for mind-consciousness to construct a self (32). The ‘*klesha*-mind’ is that mind which grasps at a self, tries to reify it and make it a concrete thing. When there is realization of the truth of ‘not-self’, the ‘*klesha*-mind’ ceases operating for as long as the realization can be maintained. When karmic forces re-assert themselves the connection with the truth of the ‘not-self’ teaching is lost and the ‘*klesha*-mind’ starts up again. In this tradition, the ‘storehouse consciousness’ is seen to be the place where karmic energies from sense perceptions and all mental activities are filed. The ‘storehouse consciousness’ or ‘all base consciousness’ is said to ‘seize the karmic imprints’ (35) that arise from thoughts and actions and files them away in the mental storehouse. These karmic imprints are said to re-appear in the form of the mental image to be perceived. What appears, according to Rinpoche, is the ‘...all base consciousness itself that appears in the form of these objects, which are then perceived through the perspective of the sense consciousness’ (36).

From the above the following comments can be made regarding mind in Buddhism. Firstly, the earliest understanding highlights that mind has no contents, it is like a mirror simply reflecting what passes in front of it. It is mental consciousness (*manas*) that begets mental activity and sets the process of ‘defiled’ thinking, based on ‘ignorance’ of the true nature of things, in motion. This is how the mind becomes deluded and thinks what is in the ‘storehouse consciousness’ is a self. Once belief in a self has been established the self organizes and co-

ordinates what it desires for the self by using its will. This action of willing results in the actions of body, speech and mind. Holding onto an idea of a permanent self-existing self or the concept of, and attachment to an I, are characteristics of a 'klesha-mind' that clouds the mind's original true empty nature.

These various maps of the mind show how the original clear, empty and open mind becomes progressively more clouded, narrowed and channelled by repeated actions that result in 'mind-sets' which in turn build a false picture of reality. This is how the mind becomes 'afflicted'. However, in the Buddhist view 'deluded' thinking and the 'mind-sets' it creates are seen to be adventitious afflictive occurrences and not part of the inherent nature of mind. What then is the 'true nature of mind' according to Buddhism.? The early view of *Asanga* was that of a mind free of contents. This view arises from the Buddhist view of reality as a 'point-instant' reality which undermines the establishment of contents. If the truth of reality is openness then it is true of the mind also.

Buddhism has two ways of speaking about mind, one is to refer to its 'afflicted' nature and the other to refer to its 'true nature'. When Buddhism speaks about the true 'stainless' nature of mind it uses light imagery to highlight its original purity. Cousins, drawing from the early Buddhist texts, in his paper 'Buddhist *Jhāna*', highlights that the original pure stainless aspect of mind is outlined in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* "The mind is o *bhikkhus*, radiant but is stained by stains which arrive" (1973,117). Fundamentally the mind is pure and radiant but covered with adventitious stains. Other instances of original 'pure-mind' arise regarding meditation, the results of which can be a penetration to one's original pure state. "The mind which is wholly given to a single perception of a salutary kind becomes purely radiant and illuminant in its original state" (117). This is further supported by a simile for the fourth *jhāna* where just as a monk's body is entirely covered by the white cloth he wears so too there is no part of his whole body that is not covered by a mind that is utterly pure, utterly clean. "Monks as a monk might be sitting down, who has clothed himself including his head with a white cloth, no part of his whole body would not be suffused with the white cloth.....a monk having suffused this very body with a mind that is utterly pure utterly clean ..... there is no part of his whole body that is not suffused by a mind that is

utterly pure, utterly clean” (117). This is what Cousins calls the ‘Doctrine of Original Sinlessness’. Likewise, Harvey shows how once the adventitious stains of ‘greed’ ‘hatred’ and ‘delusion’ are no longer attached to, what is revealed is a mind (*citta*) which is ‘brightly shining’ (Harvey, 2004,166). The true nature of mind as a ‘brightly shining mind’ is the mental equivalent of the ‘flashing energy’ that characterizes the ‘point-instant’ view of reality. A ‘luminous mind’ knows the light-filled nature of reality.

*Dzogchen* Buddhism takes mind’s perfection as its starting point. *Dzogchen* refers to this aspect of mind as ‘*ye shes*’. On the other hand, the dualistic view that gives rise to the phenomenal world is called ‘*sems*’ in *Dzogchen*. ‘*Ye shes*’ is said to be the absolute aspect of ‘*sems*’ and it is by re-connecting with this true nature of mind that we achieve enlightenment. *Dzogchen* is concerned with mind (*sems*). ‘*Sems*’ creates the illusory world, which obscures our real nature ‘*sems nyid*’ (the noumenal aspect of mind). ‘*Sems*’ real nature is ‘...immaculate (*dri bral*) and luminous (*’od gsal ba*) and is from the beginning completely pure (*ye nas dag pa*)’ (Karmay 2007,175). *Dzogchen* does not try to use mind to release itself from its illusory constructions, that would be seen to be just feeding mental ‘...conceptualisation (*rtog pa*)’ (176) and strengthening its illusion making. *Dzogchen* relying on the wisdom or ‘luminous nature’ of mind believes, that if given a chance to look directly at itself, the mind can rid itself of all conceptualisation and experience its own primordial reality again.

When discussing the Buddhist views on mind and mind nature the following questions might arise. Firstly, is it possible to have a mind without contents, would that not be the mind of a person who has dementia or who is dead? Interestingly, Desmond calls the mind that has given up its ‘erotic’ possessiveness a ‘posthumous mind’. Secondly, how can a deluded, conditioned mind come to recognize its own true brightly shining or luminous wisdom nature? Thirdly what is the point of returning to a mind without contents? The Buddhist view of mind is not proposing that the mind in its true nature is a blankness and nothing else. The mind is always seen to be aware. *Theravāda* Buddhism highlights ‘objectless awareness’ as a feature of the enlightened mind. This view is based on the ‘not-self’ or ‘dependent arising’ nature of reality. ‘Objectless awareness’ is the

awareness of the true nature of objects, that is that they are ‘empty’ of self-existing nature. They are objectless in the sense that they are not static, unchanging objects as we like to imagine them to be. ‘Objectless awareness’ at the enlightened stage is an awareness which is infinitely open and not fixed on any particular phenomenon, rather it is aware of their underlying ‘not-self’ nature. *Bon Dzogchen* expresses its insight into the nature of reality and mind as an ‘open awareness’ that knows itself as an ‘unbounded wholeness’. It is ‘unbounded’ because it knows the true ‘empty’ or open nature of reality.

In *Nyingma Dzogchen*, the single object of meditation is the mind's own original pure nature which when accessed and maintained envelops the body with ‘the pure light of gnosis’. Again, the true nature of mind has two characteristics that of ‘awareness’ and ‘emptiness’. A mind resting in-itself, from the *Dzogchen* perspective is a mind that knows its own empty clarity, its own immaculate nature. By resting in that immaculate clarity all thoughts and concepts are said to ‘self-liberate’. This is how the true nature of mind operates once it has been liberated from its delusions.

What becomes clear from the various descriptions is that liberation of mind is seen to be a return to, or an uncovering of, the mind's original luminous nature, highlighted by the ‘point-instant’ understanding as a ‘flashing energy’. This spiritual journey can be accomplished either through following the path of renunciation outlined in the *Sūtra* literature which proposes that the way to stop suffering is to refrain from the actions that cause it. *Zen* Buddhism characterizes the return to an ‘original mind’ as a return to the first pure moment (*Nen*) of awareness before the mind gathers contents. Alternatively, there is the path of transformation associated with *Tantra* literature and practices which is based on transforming oneself and one's impure thoughts into the nature of the divinity. The *Dzogchen* method is to rest the ‘deluded’ mind in the ‘immaculate clarity’ of mind where all concepts ‘self-liberate’. The deluded mind comes to know its own true nature because though it may be covered over it is never lost. Also, each person has the capacity to achieve this liberating gnosis because of possessing ‘Buddha nature’.

Do we then possess two minds, one deluded seeking maximum boundedness and another, with the potential of being enlightened, seeking un-boundedness? Secondly, are we importing something from outside which facilitates the enlightenment process? I think not, enlightened knowing or ‘wisdom mind’ can be perfected because it is understood to be inherent in the ‘mind-stream’ from the beginning. What can be uncovered is only that which exists from the beginning. No amount of digging for gold will yield anything, unless the gold is buried in the earth from the start. Liberation is not a separate thing from the mind that perceives the ‘truth of things as they are’. Liberation or *Nibbāna* in the *Theravāda* tradition must be implanted in the ‘awareness’ aspect of mind. Progress towards liberation or a *Nibbānic* awareness is a progressive uncovering of the mind’s true nature. Enlightenment being inbuilt into the ‘mind-stream’ means we are already enlightened, we just don’t know that we are. Thus, I agree with Heidegger when he says that it is possible to ‘think the truth of being’ by thinking ‘that which is closest’. Liberation, the uncovering of the true nature of mind, is to be found within the fabric of that which is closest; in the mind, itself.

This chapter begins the exploration of the self by looking at what St. Augustine says about the self. He shows through his discussion on memory that the self is largely a narrative construct, gathered together from thoughts (1973). In this the self becomes a cohering function in the narrative of becoming itself, by providing the centre for its story to revolve around. The need for a proper subject is continued by Mark Taylor who sees a proper subject as being close to what a person is. This has echoes from the previous chapter where Caputo sees the self as that which he was to be and Heidegger’s meditative thinking which thinks the truth of being ‘dwells on that which lies closest. For Taylor, a subject cannot possess itself fully without being fully present, where self-presence is equated with self-consciousness. Later in the chapter I discuss the *Dzogchen* view of ‘pure and total presence’ as the freedom inherent in the uncontrived mind’s ‘pristine awareness’, which perceives things perfect and complete as they are. I continue my exploration of the self in Buddhism by exploring what early *Theravāda* Buddhism says through looking at Peter Harvey’s book the *Selfless Mind* (1995). Harvey shows how the self in early Buddhism is seen to be made up of predominantly mental factors of, feeling, cognition, constructing activities and

consciousness, with only one physical factor that of form. These are the factors that early Buddhism sees one attaches to create the self and make it present. However, these factors are seen to be conditioned and so arise dependently and are thus seen in Buddhism as ‘not self’. A person’s clinging to these factors in the vain hope of creating a permanent self will be disappointed and suffer accordingly. However, if the ‘not self’ dependent nature of things is apprehended a person can move beyond the constructing activity of mind and its need to construct a permanent self.

How we continue to hold onto the view of the self for ourselves and phenomena is continued in the discussion on the afflicted *klesha* mind by *Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche* (2002). He shows how the *klesha* mind attempts to solidify the self into a concrete concept. Rinpoche show how the ‘all base consciousness’ is a storehouse of memories, not unlike Augustine’s but different in that it predominantly contains *karmic* imprints. Rinpoche goes on to show how what we normally consider as external objects and an internal consciousness perceiving them is in fact mistaken as forms are mental images and in fact are internal. This has ramifications in the way we think about spiritual transformation, especially if we think of it as a separate mind coming to understand the true nature of external objects. As the *klesha* mind grasps at the *karmic* contents of the ‘all base consciousness’ and external objects are the appearance of the ‘all base consciousness’ all patterns internal and external are ‘not self’. This leaves consciousness in a conditioned state that does not see clearly.

What we are or what we become is influenced in the Buddhist context by *karma*. It is said that if you want to know your past life, look at your present condition and that if you want to know your future life, look at your present action. This ‘formula’ succinctly summarizes how past actions influence the present and how mindfulness of present actions influences the future. Everything a person does from the smallest thought to the largest action has a result, either positively (*kusala*) or negatively (*akusala*). The determining factor as to whether the action will yield a positive or negative outcome is determined by the ‘intention’ governing the action. ‘It is will (*cetanā*), O monks, that I call *karma*; having willed, one acts through body, speech or mind’ (A.III,415 as quoted by

Harvey,2004,40). Thoughts play a central role in *karma* because whatever actions we carry out with body, speech and mind, begin first as thoughts. From the Tantric Buddhist perspective, it is seen that every action leaves a karmic trace or residue on the mind. These seeds (*bija*) are said to be stored in the *alayā* the universal ‘storehouse consciousness’. The accumulation of all past *karma* is planted in that storehouse consciousness, from where it influences our experiences and how we react and internally process them. Though there is no ‘self’ per se there is a ‘life stream’ of linked moments, where one karmic moment transfers its karmic inheritance to the next moment. These *karmic* moments are held together by our mistaken belief in a self. The type of self, its character, how and what it perceives and how it reacts is constructed along karmic lines and passes from life to life.

*Karma*, however, is not an abstract mechanical law of the universe like magnetic attraction or repulsion or the law of gravity. If it were such an absolute law change would be impossible. *Karma* comes under the umbrella of the ‘dependent origination’ teaching, which is summarized as ‘if this is that is, if this arises that arises; but ‘if this is not that is not and if this ceases that ceases’. Thus, *karma* is dependent on the environment as a seed is dependent on the sun, water, and earth to grow into a plant. In Tibetan *karma* is translated as *las. rgyu. abras*’ which translates ‘as action-seed-result’ (McLeod, Unfettered Mind 2015,1). This gives the suggestion that *karma* is that which grows out of, rather than being a mechanical result of something. A seed does not cause a plant, it grows into a plant by taking on new characteristics of stem and leaves and flowers. ‘Actions don’t cause our world of experience they grow into our world of experience’ (McLeod, 2015,1). In the Tibetan tradition as McLeod highlights, an action is said to have four possible results each of which colours our experiences and interaction with the world. Firstly, there is an action with what is called the ‘result of full ripening’. The ‘full ripening’ of negative actions such as stealing or lying is to experience a world where people are viewed as ‘stupid and easily deceived’. The result of our action on others is called ‘the ‘result of what happened’ Negative actions such as lying and stealing result in not being listened to or taken seriously by others. The result of an action on the person themselves is called ‘the result from what acted’. This describes how actions create a pre-disposition or pattern to repeat the action to keep alive the particular view of the world. How our world

view is affected is referred to as the ‘environmental result’ whereby negative actions create a world of mistrust and anxiety. ‘*Karma* then describes how our actions evolve into experience both internally and externally. Each action is a seed which grows or evolves into our experience of the world’ (McLeod, 2015,2) Thus, the world we are living in and the responses to that world arise from our actions.

*Karma* can be transformed if a person practices the ‘four immeasurables’ of ‘compassion’, ‘loving kindness’, ‘joy’ and ‘equanimity’. These practices effect how the person sees the world and can change his character. The choice (an intentional action) to practice these ‘immeasurables’ shapes how the person interacts with the world and how he deals with present and future situations. His choices and actions can strengthen his character and thereby support his ability to deal with the various experiences of life in the best way possible. Repeated intentional actions form an avenue along which future choices and actions are likely to run. These repeated actions also form the type of person we become and what is likely to happen to us. *Karma* is intentional action that we perform and what happens to us grows out of what we have chosen and how we have acted in the past. However, it is not determinism; if we are unhappy with the person we have become, the life we are living and the choices we have made, we can change them by practising more ‘wholesome’ choices which will affect the type of person we become.

What we will generates an action that in turn generates *karma*. However, willing is something that can be conditioned. Through awareness one can change what one wishes and in that way negative actions and consequences can be transformed into positive ones. A person is not a victim, he can exercise some ‘control’ over his actions. A negative pattern can change in a life by being influenced by more positive patterns. While there is a tendency or a pull to repeat old habits and mistakes, it is not pre-determined that there is an eternal repetition of them. The ultimate freedom is the experience of *Nibbāna* in the *Theravāda* tradition where past and future *karma* are stopped.

Lynken Ghose in his article, *Karma and the Possibility of Purification* sets out to answer three questions; firstly, is one’s previous karma solely responsible for one’s present mind state, present physical state and one’s material state?

Secondly, can the results of karmic actions be purified? Thirdly, are there any actions which do not lead to the accumulation of *karma*? Beginning by quoting from the *Visuddhimagga* text he highlights again that volitional (*cetanā*) is the nature of *karma*. This text goes on to define other aspects of *karma* as follows; ‘...it collects, is its meaning. Its characteristics is a state of willing. Its function is to accumulate. It is manifested as coordinating’ (Ghose,2007,263). From this description, there is highlighted that *karma* implies ‘...being moved in a certain direction towards a particular course of action’ (264). We are moved by some mental impulse towards or away from an internal or external object. The predominance of mind is repeated in the Pali context where the *Anguttara Nikāya* “‘Well monks the world is led by mind. By mind it is drawn along. When mind has arisen, it goes under its sway’” (in Ghose,2007,265). This quotation seems to imply that there is always a mental feeling or ‘volitional impulse’ of being pulled in a direction. Are all actions of body speech and mind accompanied by such a pulling? Those of a Buddha or an *Arhat* who have eradicated greed, hatred and delusion do not leave any traces or produce *karma*. In the Pali canon this type of action which does not have karmic traces “‘...is called action that is neither dark nor bright with neither dark–nor-bright results, action that leads to the destruction of action’” (in Ghose,2007,266). What are the actions that lead to the destruction of action? In *Mahāyāna* Buddhism ‘Non-dual’ actions beyond the thoughts of good or evil leave no mental physical or external residue. What is the action that eradicates all other actions? It is the realization (mental action) of ‘not-self’ or ‘emptiness (*anāṭṭa*)’. In this realization, all the effects of action are purified. In the Pure Land Buddhist context, the strategic planning mind is left behind in ‘...the realization of true or real mind (*shinjin*)...’ (268). When the ‘real mind’ is realized according to *Shinran* the twelfth century founder of the *Jōdo Shinshū* school “‘.....without his calculating (*hakarai*) in any way, all his past, present, and future *karma* is transformed into good’” (From Hirota and Ueda 1989, 153,157-in Ghose, 268).

As we have seen, intention governs our relationship to phenomena. Whether a person reacts with ‘greed’, ‘hate’ or ‘delusion’ (unskillfully) or with ‘non-greed’, ‘non-hate’, ‘non-delusion’ is governed by intention. Skillful (*kusala*) and unskillful (*akusala*) actions reflect the mind’s orientation, its state (clear or clouded) and the

*karmic* dust that has been accumulated. What then is the effect of choosing good acts over evil ones? P.A. Payutto points out in his writings on the Problem of Good and Evil that *Kusala* actions are said to be actions, which indicate an untroubled or stable mind. *Akusala* actions result of course in the opposite of these beneficial effects and cause the mind to de-generate. *Akusala* activity is highlighted as being driven by sexual desire, ill will, sloth, anxiety and jealousy, which cloud and confuse the mind and promote unskilfulness in the choices a person makes. Intentions, which are guided with skilfulness result in good outcomes for oneself, while intentions, infused with *akusala* energies tend towards bad outcomes. When a person acts mindfully, free of ‘greed’, ‘hate’ and ‘delusion’, with a clear understanding of how things are, they are acting in accordance with the truth (the good). Good actions in turn promote and strengthen positive *kusala* characteristics in the person thereby changing his character.

There are said to be four types of actions, bright, dark, both bright and dark (which is a wholesome action that has been tainted), and neither bright nor dark, which destroys the long-lasting effects of actions. The fourth type of action does not accumulate future *karmic* effects and destroys or purifies ‘... past and present *karmic* effects ...’ (Ghose, 2007,275). This, however, is not the universal view. Bhikkhu Bodhi reiterates the view that there are clear lines between what is *samsaric* action and what is *nirvānic* action and these should not be blurred. “I declare monks, that of intentional deeds done and accumulated there can be no wiping out without experiencing the result thereof...’ (WAN v292 in Ghose, 2007,275). There is no shortcutting *karma*, the results of our actions come to fruition and we must bear the results as we are ‘owners and ‘heirs ‘and have our origins in our actions. This is a rather literal interpretation where a person’s fate is seen to be determined by their actions. The straight-line view of *karma* as a cause and effect fatalistic sequence can be used to justify such things as racism, all manners of oppression and social injustice. If a person’s fate is built into the ‘moral fabric’ of the universe then there is no point trying to change their individual situation or that of the society in which they live. Everything that happens is deserved and all suffering is deserved. ‘In fact, there is no undeserved suffering, really there is no evil we need struggle against. You were born crippled or to a poor family. Well, who but you are responsible for that? (Loy,2007,5). Loy

highlights that while there are within the Pali canon *Sutras* that support this kind of fatalistic or deterministic interpretation such as the *Culakammavibhanga Sutra* where *karma* is used to explain the differences between people ‘... including physical appearance and economic inequality’. However, there are other texts where the Buddha clearly denies moral determinism. In the *Tittha Sutra* the Buddha says that such a deterministic view precludes following a spiritual path.

‘..... When one falls back on what was done in the past as being essential, monks, there is no desire, no effort [at the thought], ‘This should be done. This shouldn’t be done.’ When one can’t pin down as a truth or reality what should and shouldn’t be done, one dwells bewildered and unprotected. One cannot righteously refer to oneself as a contemplative’ (Loy,2007,5/6).

*Karma* used as the sole reason for what is happening to us now and in the future, is a limited deterministic way to interpret *karma*. It must be remembered that not all that befalls a person is due to *karma*. The Buddha’s revolutionary insight was to take the earlier external mechanical and ritualistic view of *karma* that was current under Brahmanistic teaching, where the making of a sacrifice in the prescribed way would yield the desired outcome. By bringing the focus inward and internalizing action the Buddha thereby made it an ethical principle. The Buddha transformed the ritualistic approach ‘.....into a moral principle by focusing on *cetana*, “motivations, intentions” (Loy,2007,4). Thus, transformation or spiritual development became possible, by transforming one’s motivation for action in the present, past and future *karma* could be purified. In this way *karma* is not creating a person’s life rather through the choices the person makes their life takes on a specific trajectory. The choices a person makes changes the kind of person they become and in this way, they are the outcome of their choices. ‘.....*karma* is not something I *have*, it is what ‘I’ am and what ‘I’ am changes according to my conscious choices.....’ (Loy,2007,6). The story of *karma* is the story of how transformation is possible. Transformation arises from being mindful of our actions and the motivations behind them. When a person changes their mind and how they respond to the world, the world changes also. The once ‘dark’ actions are transformed by the ‘brightly shining’ nature of mind that becomes revealed through the experiences that changing one’s mind brings about.

*Karma* is not a fatalistic law it is a teaching which says that transformation of one’s life and character is possible through transforming one’s motivations right

now. This is summed up in the opening verses of the *Dhammapada*; “‘Well monks the world is led by mind. By mind it is drawn along. When mind has arisen, it goes under its sway’” (in Ghose,2007,265). Thus, changing how one thinks changes the experiences one is having and in turn changes the type of person one becomes. Previous ‘dark’ actions can be transformed into ‘bright’ actions and have the cumulative effect of leading the person towards a brightly shining *Nirvāṇic* mind, where *Nirvāṇa* is equated with the good. *Nirvāṇa* is equated with the good and actions are right if they promote *Nirvāṇic* goodness. Rightness and goodness are inseparably intertwined and an action is said to be ‘wholesome to the extent that it is harmonious with *Nirvāṇic* values’ (Keown,2001,177). A *Nirvāṇic* mind also is a mind that is focused on goodness. An action then is right or wrong, not only because of its consequence but from the very moment of its inception ‘its nature is fixed with reference to *Nirvāṇic* qualities’ (177). If *Nirvāṇa* is the good, then good actions are those that participate in *Nirvāṇic* goodness. A mind that uncovers its own primordial purity, its own ‘brightly shining’ unbounded luminous nature, has gone beyond the bounds of *karma* and become *Dhamma*.

George Kelly outlines from a psychologist point of view how psychological conditioning of patterns and habits affects how a person approaches life (in Thirakoul,2008). He calls his theory ‘Personal Construct Psychology’ and shows how a person is forced to behave in compliance with the inner constructs in the name of predictability. Predictability does not lead to transformation, it leads to going around in circles and it is that very going around in circles getting ever deeper that Buddhism sees as creating mind-sets and a reassuring belief in the self through repetition.

How the self might liberate itself through developing a ‘non-conceptual wisdom’ that contemplates pure being I discuss firstly by showing in early Buddhism there was a view of the ‘great self’. This was the self that knows the selfless nature of things and thus did not grasp at them. Through the perfection of wholesome states of lovingkindness and mindfulness this ‘great self’ accessed ‘goodness power’ or positive force. As much of early Buddhism focuses on how the mind is conditioned this chapter explores how *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa* is the ultimate rest for the constructing mind. Having no definable characteristics, being the highest

empty thing, it is where all construction stops. Being without objects it is limitless and the enlightened mind that perceives *Nibbāna* is also limitless and cannot be found. What kind of a mind can discern emptiness is outlined in the discussion on objectless awareness? This sets up the need to investigate how an object oriented and bounded seeking self can recognize that which is empty and infinitely unbounded. Miri Albahari discusses such a question and concludes firstly that *Nibbāna* is not separate from the mind that perceives it so it must be embedded in the perceiving aspects of mind (2006). Secondly, she shows how witness consciousness imports *Nibbānic* features into the illusory self-structure which are not themselves illusory. From her analysis of the early Buddhist position liberation is already built into the mind stream. This view is compared with Caputo and the ‘point instant’ view to highlight that they may not be as far apart as one would think. *Tsoknyi Rinpoche* also highlights that the point of all the teachings in both *Dzogchen* and *Mahāmudrā* is to show us that in our mind stream we have present what is called the ‘...actual basis of everything...’ (Duffy,2010,8).

Stephen Collins cautions that all views enquiring into the self can be ‘fettters’ or shackles, even the ‘not-self’ view can become a way of defining the self (2004). The tension between a mind that creates a binding contrived self-structure and the spiritual trajectory to unbind such structures I discuss in my discourse on *Bon Dzogchen*. In *Bon Dzogchen*, the nature of mind is explained as ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’. Their explanation is of the uncontrived mind beyond concepts beyond the intellect that limits and binds the experience of the ultimate.

In *Bon Dzogchen* reality is an ‘unbounded wholeness’ and therefore there is nothing outside of it, no separate subject validating it as an object, subject and object are not separated. All phenomena are seen to arise within unboundedness and thus are a display of emptiness or wisdom. Within this all-encompassing unboundedness there is not the transformative movement, as is seen in other schools of Buddhism, from an invalid to a valid knowing whereby an enlightened consciousness comes to apprehend emptiness. There is no separate ultimate that can or needs to be reached. ‘Open awareness’ is not seen to be a consciousness

aware of an object, being without objects it is 'clear' and empty. 'Open awareness' does not know emptiness but rather is emptiness as it arises in 'unbounded wholeness'. If we think of spiritual transformation as the movement from a deluded mind to a wisdom mind that can then apprehend the true nature of reality, *Bon Dzogchen* says that 'open awareness' is a primordial wisdom present from the beginning. In *Dzogchen*, spiritual transformation is not searching for and finding a new and better centre, as in *Hua yen* the centre is everywhere in what is closest. 'Open awareness' or what we might call the wisdom of emptiness, does not apprehend reality as an object. Reality is not an object of wisdom it is wisdom itself. There is no road to enlightenment in *Dzogchen*, enlightenment is effortless, accomplished by staying; where 'all things are complete within the sphere of reality'; that is Dzogchen (Duffy,2010,15).

The *klesha* mind, like the mind of Taylor's person bereft of the divine plan, is the karmic laden mind trying to bring the self into presence. Recalling that according to Mark Taylor a subject cannot be in possession of himself without being fully present, I look at what *Longchenpa* calls 'pure and total presence' to see how it is achieved (2010). In a state of total presence there is nowhere else to be, everything is uncontrived natural and simple, perfect as it is where it is. Total presence, like 'unbounded wholeness' is fully present to whatever arises and whatever arises is freed within open pristine awareness. Transformation is not, according to *Dzogchen*, found anywhere that a person can journey to nor is it a new position that a person takes up. *Dzogchen* is rootless and positionless.

## 2.2 The Self

St. Augustine was the first in the West to set down an autobiographical account of the self in a spiritual context and thus his account can give an insight into how that self is constituted as it focuses on the person coming to realize itself through memory (1973). It is significant also because it outlines that a person coming to consciousness is part of a spiritual journey. When thinking about spiritual transformation as a journey to discover the truth, Augustine sets down what that journey might consist of. His account of how the self comes to know itself through recollection is a point of contrast with Caputo's views and the Buddhist 'point

instant' view. Caputo does not see recollection as a moving forward and the 'point instant' view is not focused on a past or a future. As Augustine charts the journey by which a self comes to know itself and establish itself, it is in sharp contrast to the 'point-instant' view which refuses anything establishing itself as a ground or a foundation or a self. It is not so much anti-self as pro-absolute openness and anti-false constructs. It is revolutionary and its anti-establishment mantra that counters all attempts to solidify and reify things is: 'not that, not that, not that', to every attempt to establish a false edifice. Regarding the self, it would say also: 'not that self or that other self, or that other self'. I will look in more detail later at the Buddhist 'not self' teaching to understand what its transformative dynamic may be. I begin by looking at what Augustine says about the nature of the self, how like the Buddhist view, he sees the self as a necessary 'narrative construct' created to support the story of the person becoming itself and how like the Buddhist view the self is built on limited (conditioned) memories drawn from the vast filing cabinet of memories (*ālayavijñāna*).

In Book X of his Confessions Augustine explores both the true nature of the self and who or what is animating it (1973). Augustine in trying to understand his own makeup asks of himself 'Who are you?' and goes on to explore the answer firstly by making a basic distinction between outer and inner self, a self of body and a self of soul. Of the two Augustine sees the inner self as '...the better of the two' (Augustine,1973, 212) because all that the outer parts experiences are brought back to the inner part that through reason can '...sift the evidence relayed to them by their senses' (Augustine, 1973,213). If a person gives over to the sensual, he loses the ability to make judgements on what the outer part of the self presents. What the senses convey is to the individual is to be judged and understood by comparing the messages they deliver '... with the truth that is in themselves' (Augustine,1973,213). For Augustine, there is an inner knowing and inner truth that all messages from the senses must be compared to. And what is this knowing? That 'Your God is not heaven or earth or any bodily thing' (1973,213). The inner self, 'the better part', knows the truth of how God is to be found, and responds not to the sensual inputs but rather to what resonates with its inner truth. Spiritual transformation from Augustine's account is a revealing of this inner part that

knows the truth. Previously Caputo's methodology of affecting a moving forward was to stay in the flux to experience 'what one was to be'.

Desmond's analysis shows that the deluded 'erotic' mind is seeking greater understanding. *Dzogchen* and many other schools of Buddhism highlight that the true nature of mind is 'brightly shining' and despite our delusions we have the potential for enlightenment at every moment. This is called Buddha nature. These together suggest, as in Augustine, that there is an innate wisdom aspect of mind that knows the truth though it may be obscured at this moment.

For Augustine being self-aware is not a self-knowing but rather the reflection of separation from God, consciousness is consciousness of separation. '...as long as I am away from you, during my pilgrimage, I am more aware of myself than of you' (Saint Augustine Confessions,1973,211). What Augustine knows about himself, is only because God's 'light shines upon him'. Only God knows all things relating to the self and therefore there are limits to what we can know about ourselves, there are things about the self that our own 'spirit within' even does not know, and those things will only be revealed at a 'face to face' meeting with God at the end of life. Spiritual understanding comes at the end of the journey where a Christian is re-united with God, only then will he know all things. Augustine's person is limited in understanding in contrast to the enlightened person described earlier as one whose 'mind has expanded to infinity'.

On his explorative journey to the transcendent Augustine finds the senses wanting and unreliable and explores the possibility that *memory* may be more reliable as a means of knowing both God and himself. For him memory is '... the storehouse for countless images ...' (Augustine,1973,214). Like some massive filing cabinet, it stores away the '...perceptions at which we arrive...' (1973,214). What is presented to memory through the senses are not the things themselves but rather their images and it is these images that '... are there ready to present themselves to our thoughts when we recall them' (1973,215). Not only images but all sights, sounds, colours of the entire world and everything that he has ever perceived in these things are ready in that vast filing cabinet of memory '...ready at my summons...' (1973,215). In this recollecting says Augustine '...I meet myself as well' (1973,215). It is possible to remember what one has done when where and

what the feeling at that time was. In the memory are events that occurred and those that have been heard from others. From this vast store of images, it is possible to contemplate those images from one's own experience or those that are credible when compared to one's own experience. These are the store of the past from which one can draw to assess present actions and possible future outcomes. To Augustine the memory '... is a vast immeasurable sanctuary' (1973,216) and because it is immeasurable who then can fathom it? It is not then possible to understand all that we are. This means then that the mind is too narrow to understand itself entirely. In contrast, it was the Buddha's ability to recollect his entire past that played a vital role in his transformation journey. An enlightened *Arhat* is said to have an infinitely expanded mind and thus his mental embrace is vast. Augustine's dilemma is that if the mind is too limited to know itself entirely, then where are those parts which it is unable to know, where do they reside? There is then some unfathomable aspect that the mind in its limited capacity cannot know. It needs something beyond the limits of mind to plumb those unknown depths, for him only God knows all. There are, for Augustine, things which lie dormant and fragmented in the memory and it is through a '...process of thought by which we gather together .... things already contained in the memory' (1973,218) that they are brought back to mind. By paying attention we realize that these dispersed facts are 'ready to hand'. When we are not paying attention, these drop out of our present awareness into deeper recesses of the memory and need to be collected again and this is the meaning '... of the word *cogitare*, which means *to think* or *collect one's thoughts*' (1973,218). The self becomes a product of what a person is thinking at any given moment, it is a dependant thing arising and ceasing depending on thoughts and is thus more fluid than the static idea we normally have of ourselves.

As memory is seen to play a significant part in the definition of the self is it possible to forget the self also and to bring about the necessity to re-assemble the forgotten and re-make the self. For Augustine, this is possible as what a person has in mind at any one time is not all that is in the memory, but mind can re-collect, or recall, from the vast filing cabinet of memory that which it needs. Powerful though recollection is, it must be gone beyond for him to reach the transcendent and attain true happiness according to Augustine. In the Buddhist context while there is a certain going

beyond memory, it is memory's repetitive, habitual, conditioned and conditioning narrow form that prevents access to one's Buddha nature and that must be abandoned. Even for Augustine going beyond memory brings with it a logical problem of how to know something that one has no memory of? For Augustine, only God can know the full depth of a person's memory, as he is the creator and foundation of all lives. The 'point-instant' view is not concerned with a past that can be recollected or a future that will reveal all, its focus is that in this moment is all that one needs for full understanding of the true nature of things.

Memory is selecting, bringing together and creating at any one time a narrative or a story of the self. A coherent narrative requires a centre around which events are organized. Self-realization and self-presentation arise through a process of narration which creates coherence around a constructed centre. The self emerges as a function of the narrative and as such is a narrative construct. The self presents itself to itself as a character in its own story. Being a self requires telling one's story repeatedly. The process of self-realization for Augustine is very much connected with the autobiographical account, where self-appropriation depends on recollection. In the autobiographical process, the road to self-realization is charted by recollection, where to remember is to create the '...story of its own becoming to the self-conscious subject' (Taylor,1987,44). To achieve a coherent narrative, the various individual experiences must be put in the context of the total life experiences. Therefore, as Taylor highlights; a 'meaningful totality is not immediately present but must be constructed' (1987,44). The autobiography is not then just a mere narration of experiences but creates a coherent 'story of the self becoming itself' (1987,44). In Augustine's case, the story is addressed to God as he is the basis for all presence. Since 'God is the name of names, the source of names, the self cannot name itself without at the same time speaking the name of God' (1987,46). Naming is by its nature a process of differentiation and as such names both what is present and what is absent or what is different. 'There is always difference *within* identity and absence *within* presence' (1987,49). This is the dynamic of the 'point instant' view of early Buddhism also 'Selving is unselving'.

Mark Taylor further discusses what constitutes a self or what constitutes a proper subjectivity, where being and identity are inseparable. He begins by outlining

some of the properties of being a self, from the Christian perspective, as follows: A proper subject is one who is closest to being what he is. A subject cannot be in possession of himself without being fully present. One realizes self-presence through self-consciousness, as it is through self-consciousness that the self becomes present to itself (Taylor,1987,42). The self-conscious individual in being self-present mirrors the absolute self-presence of God (1987,40).

From the discussion in the previous chapter the following can be drawn regarding Taylor's definition of a self. The 'point-instant' view is a view of absolute immediacy; nothing is closer than the moment that flashes in and out of existence so quickly that we think it is one continuous line. A fully present spiritual being is a being that has become the truth and expanded infinitely to encompass the truth which he expresses dynamically as compassion. The 'point-instant' understanding stresses that reality, which includes the self, is a continuous open process, the self is not something which one moment is unconscious and the next moment conscious. Every moment is a moment of consciousness where the named and unnamed, time and eternity or the absolute and relative cross each other. In *Hua yen* the naming, un-naming, 'selving is unselving' problem does not arise. It arises because a self is seeking a centre around which to build its narrative. In *Hua yen*, the centre is everywhere and the narrative is not the story of a separate self playing a part in a separate whole, the self is the part and the whole simultaneously. In the *Hua yen* view to name the part is to name the whole, nothing is outside the all- encompassing 'realm of truth'.

### 2.3 Constructed things are subject to suffering

The story of the self-becoming itself, constructing a centre around which to write its own story on the face of it seems legitimate from the existential philosophical and psychological point of view. In the Buddhist view constructing a centre around which the self-construct orbits is being tethered to a stake that limits one's life and vision. Confined to travelling only a limited distance from the self-constructed centre, one is forced to travel over the same ground repeatedly. Travelling the same ground multiple times creates conditioned rut tracks in the mind and this very repetitive process is the definition of *samsara*. Peter Harvey

comprehensively studies the Self in Early Buddhism in his book the *Selfless Mind* and shows how the mental process creating a self-centre works. If Taylor's book is a book about showing how the Self attempts to establish itself, then Harvey's book shows how that self is a fiction by disestablishing the idea of a permanent self-centre around which a narrative is constructible. From his study of the texts of Early Buddhist *Suttas* the following points concerning the self emerge: The first concerns the existence or not of the self and quite clearly Buddhism agrees that the empirical self exists and this self is characterized as the '...changing flow of mental and physical states, which neither unchangingly exist nor does not exist...' (Harvey,2004,33). The empirical self is seen to have mental and physical states that make up its 'personality-factors', and these are: *rūpa*/form, *vedanā*/feeling, *saññā*/cognition, *sañkhāras*/constructing activities, *viññāṇa*/consciousness or discernment. These predominantly mental processes are what we we cultivate to establish an 'I' or a 'me'. Augustine's processes of 'inwardization', re-membering and recollecting, Buddhism sees as *sañkhāras*, constructing activities that are employed to create the idea of a permanent self.

In the Buddhist view the self arises by clinging to these personality factors, which are themselves conditioned by other factors in an ongoing dependent sequence, and so they are 'not-self'. Craving (*tanhā*) is the driving force underlying the desire for a permanent self in the Buddhist view. It is the energy that brings a person into being in a new birth whose personality features are composed and linked together by the energy of past craving. Each of these personality features is seen to be impermanent and thus grasping at them results in *dukkha*, suffering or dissatisfaction. Imprisonment is to be mindlessly driven by craving and attachment to these factors and liberation is to be free of such attachment to the causes of suffering. From a psychological perspective, the drive to adhere to a self, to identify with 'I really am this ', will lead to frustration and suffering as it is built on impermanent ever-changing foundations. The 'not-self' teaching however is a skilful means (*upāya*) or method of dis-identification. The 'not self' teaching does not deny the actual existence of a self, as that would be annihilationism and Buddhism is the middle ground between eternalism and annihilationism. The 'not-self' teaching encourages dis-identifying with those unstable factors because they are impermanent and changeable and cause

frustration by becoming other than what one craves. Seeing phenomena as ‘not-self’ or ‘empty’ has a soteriological function in that it helps undermine craving and attachment and thus facilitates liberation and the realization of *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa*. As Harvey points out there is a deep-rooted idea of the self that is permanent and which is truly me that I want to identify with and it is this ‘ideal’ that the ‘not-self’ uses to measure the impermanent *dukkha* generating factors against. If a ‘self’ existed in the ways we desired it to, we would want it to be permanent and not subject to change and suffering. We would want it to be outside conditioning effects and so permanently happy. Thus, we would desire to have total control over ourselves, and by observing that this is not possible on a simple body level, we can realize that no permanent stable self essence exists. What we attempt to lock down as permanent and unchanging is unable ‘... to stay the same and not become other’ (Harvey,2004,49). In attempting to establish that, ‘this is me’, and ‘this is mine’ and ‘this is myself’, we attach to the personality features which are impermanent and ‘not-self’ and thus frustrate our efforts. These are constructions, whether as memories drawn from the past or desires projected into the future, they are attempts to create a single unifying permanent self that orchestrates them. *Karma* is said to have the characteristics of collecting and orchestrating and therefore from the Buddhist perspective it is not a self-centre that is emerging but a *karma*-centre. From the Buddhist perspective when things are clearly seen as ‘not-self’ there is the realization that things are the ‘...the arising of *dharmas* in oneself and simply the continuity of constructed things’ (Harvey, 2004, 48). Recalling that ‘all constructed things (*saṅkhārā*), the self-created narrative centre being a constructed thing, are impermanent, all constructed things are *dukkha*, all basic patterns (*dhammā*) are not-Self’ (A.I.286 in Harvey,2004,23). When these are grasped at and attached to there is, in the Buddhist view, inevitable arising of suffering.

In considering the dynamics of spiritual transformation Harvey in highlighting that all ‘patterns are not-self’ he is essentially stressing that all forms, designs, shapes or arrangements arise dependently and as such are other than what we think them to be. A transformative insight is the insight that sees the dependent nature of things and sees beyond the mind’s tendency to construct *saṅkhāras*.

Having moved beyond a limited understanding a transformed understanding penetrates to the ‘not-self’ nature of things.

#### 2.4 ‘Story’ of the Self - A construct

Attempts to hold ‘...onto the self of the person and holding on to the self of phenomena’, are characteristics of the *klesha-mind* the mind that is afflicted by mental activity that clouds the mind’s ability to see the true nature of things. (Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, 2002,32). The *klesha-mind* is that mind which grasps at a self, tries to reify it and make it a concrete thing. When there is realization of the truth of ‘not self’, the *klesha-mind* ceases operating for as long as the realization can be maintained. When *karmic* forces re-assert themselves the connection with ‘not-self’ is lost and the *klesha-mind* starts up again. When *Arhatship* is achieved then the *klesha-mind* is totally abandoned as *karma* does not re-assert itself in the post meditation stage.

Rinpoche outlines how Buddhism divides consciousness into six classes; there is the five sense consciousnesses and mind. The five senses consciousnesses being thought free perceive their objects directly, ‘...without any kind of perceptual association’ (*Thrangu*,2002,22). Rinpoche agrees with Augustine that the mind consciousness creates an indirect mental image of the object. Because of its second-hand way of perceiving, it is said not to see clearly. Mind consciousness then is not as dependable as we like to think it is, being an indirect apprehension of objects it in fact ‘...perceives its own self-created mental image of apprehended objects’ (2002,27). The six consciousnesses are said to be unstable because they arise and cease depending on whether they are active or not. There are two categories of clear and stable consciousness of mind, the *klesha-mind* (because it persists) and the ‘all-base consciousness’ (2002,31). The ‘all-base consciousness’ (*ālaya vijñāna*/ store house consciousness) is the place where *karmic* energies from sense perceptions and all mental activities are filed, in Augustine’s great filing cabinet. In this way, a store of memories is created. The self-appropriation that Augustine speaks of is based on recollection and drawing on memory from the vast store of memories in the storehouse, is a process of remembering that creates the ‘story’ of the self.

From the above analysis, it is clear that Buddhism sees that what is being drawn on, from memory, is *karmically* fashioned and conditioned, and thus the ‘story’ of the self is not real, it is a construct. This conditioned story is an obstruction to the process that brings authentic identity and being closer together. There is an element of grasping at the *karmic* traces resulting from thoughts and actions, associated with the all-base; ‘...the all base consciousness is called the ‘all base that seizes *karmic* imprints’ (Thrangu,2002,35). The second aspect of the ‘all-base’ is the possibility of the re-appearance of the *karmic*-imprints. The mind that grasps at *karmic* imprints that arise is a mind is not apprehending the real. We normally think of objects as being external and consciousness that perceives them internal. From the Buddhist view this is not so, ‘...the eye consciousness merely perceives a mental image of the form to be perceived’ (2002,36). The form then is a mental perception and thus internal. How do objects appear externally then? Rinpoche answers ‘...that it is the all-base consciousness itself that appears in the form of these objects, which are then perceived through the perspective of the sense consciousness’ (2002,36). Simply then the all base consciousness (conditioned *karmic* imprints) in the form of objects appear as images to the mind. This description of how the ‘all base consciousness’ works by seizing imprints is not too far from Augustine’s view of how the self at any one time depends on what is being recollected. From the above if we are thinking of spiritual transformation as a separate mind coming to understand the true nature of separate objects, then we need to look again at that paradigm.

What is being emphasized in the Buddhist context is the *karmic* conditioned nature of what is been apprehended, it is not the thing itself, it is an image of the thing. When that image is charged with negative feelings and emotions and coloured by *karma* the thing itself is not being perceived. Previously in relation to the ‘point-instant’ view the direct experience of the true nature of the object was facilitated by a ‘passive reflex’ that did not move beyond the immediate moment perception of the first moment of pure awareness, where what is perceived is momentary ‘flashes of energy’. The ‘point instant’ view is of a mind that is infinitely open and does not have any contents (not unlike *Nibbanā/Nirvāṇa*); nothing can be stored in a mind that undermines itself at every moment. When considering the dynamics of spiritual transformation from the

‘point-instant’ perspective a factor that is emphasized again and again is of non-stop revolution. *Thrangu Rinpoche* highlights how what we think of as external and by extension solid and fixed is in fact internal and in so doing highlights that transformation is very possible because thoughts are changeable and as the mind is always flexible.

#### 2.4 ‘Personal Construct Psychology’

The ‘all base consciousness’ as outlined by *Thrangu Rinpoche* is a description of how what is stored in that consciousness affects what a person is relating to or not in the external world. This outside in, inside out view highlights how what is stored in the ‘all base’ conditions what the person sees and relates to. In the Western context, the psychologist George Kelly developed an understanding of how psychological conditioning happens in his theory of what he called ‘Personal Construct Psychology’ (in Thirakoul,2008). His theory outlines how an individual is caught in psychological patterns and habits and cannot see the world as it is. He points out that for something to be true it must be in line with our psychological constructions and the actions we perform must be those which attest to and support the veracity of the psychological construct. Knowing or experiencing becomes doing that which the inner construct predicts. One’s inner psychological constructions anticipate events and by so doing ‘channel’ our mental processes. According to Kelly and most Buddhists, I would think, we have and are continuously building up theories, concepts or models to enhance predictability and thus reduce fear and anxiety of the unknown. As we create constructs we create the world. The basis of his theory is that mental constructs are formed which become the basis of a framework or a grid that one imposes on experience for organizing and predicting the future. One tries to fit this grid of personal constructs over the real world. A major driving force in making constructs is predictability; we want to know and control what might arise. In doing this we are psychologically ‘channelized’ (in Thirakoul,2008,8). Kelly saw the person as a flowing process directed by constructs in the name of predictability. Behaviour and action he sees as being a product of the need to predict. Individuality was seen to reflect the difference of individual constructions and not the reality. The

number of constructs he saw to be finite, made up of two similar and one dissimilar element e.g.: person A is good; person B is bad. I am like A and different to B or like B and different to A. It is with this kind of framework that one interprets experience. Freedom is seen to be confined to freedom to choose which of the variables that best suits the predicting need. What may appear as growth and change is only a realignment of the construct to take in new experiences that either affirm or contradict the already existing construct. The construct can reformulate itself to absorb new experience and thus enhance its predictableness. In Kelly's view a person does not transcend '...their subjective constructs to experience objective reality' (in Thirakoul,2008,11). In this model, a person is seen to be merely a flow of everchanging constructs and his personality just a reflection of the consistent way he constructs experience.

Buddhism would see Kelly's description of the 'channelled' mind as a rather good description of how the deluded mind is not able to see things as they really are. We are isolated in our personal constructs (*samskāras*) operating in a very restricted and rigid way with only the semblance of freedom, movement and growth, as we are forever limited to our grid. Buddhism does not see these constructs as inevitable and irrevocable, while being quite powerful it is possible to step out of the defensive constructs and to embrace that which is beyond self-making. A person can take up a strategic and tactical position relative to the significant events in their lives and thus channel the angles of perception, to 'circumambulate' (as one might a *stūpa*) the significant objects in their lives, going around in circles. It is this going around in circles that a construct psychology generates. Predictableness is the antithesis of a transformative dynamic; its dynamic is circular and thus there is no moving outside of the ever-deeper ruts it is creating in the mind.

## 2.5 Discriminating primordial awareness

How then is transformation possible if the 'all base consciousness' is all pervasive and distorting? The classic way to compare the relationship of mind-consciousness to the 'all-base' is by using the analogy of the waves on the ocean, where the waves are the mind consciousness and the all-base is the ocean. The

waves emerge from the ocean, as the mind consciousness emerges from the all-base. When the waves are still, as in meditation, thoughts are calmed. However, as *Thrangu Rinpoche* emphasises, as has been previously outlined ‘...the clarity aspect of mind that knows and understands everything is never interrupted...the mind is clear and radiant even when it rests in the all base’ (*Thrangu,2002,39*). Transformation is possible because all appearances do not occur externally but are internal. Appearances, from the Buddhist point of view, are based on delusion, and the all-base stores the *karmic* imprint of these appearances. ‘The variety of appearances and the multitude of thoughts are due to the re-appearance of these imprints. It is a stream of *karmic* imprints that arises within ourselves’ (2002,47). In the formation of the self around a centre, one’s mental focus is to harness that which supports the construction and therefore one sets out with a specific intention and interest in finding those supporting experiences. In so doing the underlying parameter is recollection which compares and discriminates based on past experiences. In this way recollection in Buddhism is seen to be part of a re-appearance of *karmic* seeds from the past coming to fruition.

Transformation of conditioned *karmic* mental events is said to happen through uncovering primordial awareness, where that awareness is defined as seeing the empty ‘not-self’ nature of things. Seeing emptiness says Rinpoche is to see the vastness of emptiness (*dharmadhatu-expanse of emptiness*) and this becomes the foundation upon which enlightenment is built. It is the foundation which transforms the miss-perceptions (*samsaric* view) of the ‘all-base’, which miss-perceives objects as external and consciousness internal. Objects of all the various consciousnesses are internal ‘...merely mental appearances’ (*Thrangu,2002,60*), that appear because of the all base. When the all-base is transformed and insight gained into the true empty nature of things, insight into the pure character of the once delusion based appearances is attained.

Not to attach to any appearances is to see the equality of all appearances and this is ‘...due to the primordial awareness of equality, which is the transformation of the *klesha-mind*’ (*Thrangu,2002,62*). The *klesha-mind* which sees and grasps at self has little time to take others into consideration. With the arising of the primordial equality mind, the distinctions between self and not-self fade. Though

everything is primordially equal it does not mean that there is confusion between what is good or bad.

‘Discriminating primordial awareness’ does not get confused or lose sight of the specifics of each situation, it is the mind consciousness transformed into its pure aspect. With the precision that discriminating awareness gives, there is the accomplishment of ‘enlightened activity’ which is called ‘the primordial awareness that accomplishes all actions’ (2002,63/7). When ‘deluded’ dualistic thinking ceases, the true empty nature of things is experienced, the primordial nature of the *dharmadhatu*, is attained and this is the essence of all the consciousnesses.

From Rinpoche’s explanation of the workings of mind consciousness the following can be extracted as further elements in understanding the origins of the dynamics of spiritual transformation. In relation to the self, Rinpoche says that the self is essentially a stream of *karmic* imprints which come together through a process of recollection which brings *karmic* imprints from the past to fruition in the present. Like Caputo’s negative view of recollection, this type of recollection is not a moving forward. Transformation or enlightenment is founded in accessing ‘primordial awareness’ which knows the true empty nature of things. This is achieved through the purification of impure mental events. Emptiness being all pervasive, the same fundamental empty nature is seen in consciousness as in objects, therefore dualistic divisions are seen to be constructs. Seeing emptiness is the antidote to the grasping minds (*klesha-mind*) needs to possess and construct false internal structures. Transformation is possible because all appearances are seen to be internal and thus all objects are mental appearances also. Complete transformation is seen to occur when innate ‘nonconceptual wisdom’ which is a pure awareness, an ‘original wisdom’, that is without appearances is achieved. ‘Original wisdom’ is luminous and clear and not a separate thing from pure being. Previously in discussing the *Hua yen* view it became clear that knowing the truth was not enough that becoming the truth was also necessary. The description of the enlightened person also shows what becoming the truth looks like. Similarly, the luminous clarity of ‘original wisdom’ recognizes and is always contemplating pure being and thus being and identity are not separated.

## 2.6 *Karma* as centre

How can a person develop their ‘original non-conceptual wisdom’ that knows and contemplates pure being? Does it necessitate abandoning the self completely? The early writings of Buddhism that Harvey studies shows that they viewed ‘...the enlightened person as one whose empirical self is highly developed.’ (Harvey,2004,54). The paradox would seem to be that to develop a ‘great self’ (*mahattā*) (2004,56), an advanced empirical self, having the ideal characteristics of *Nibbāna* is to know and live the insight that everything is Selfless (2004,54).

However, *Nibbāna* is not a thing it is ‘the ultimate empty thing’ (2004,52). Though *Nibbāna* is empty of self, it is the highest of all empty things. In the *Theravāda* tradition the highest exponent of an advanced self or a ‘great self’ is the *Arhat*. Through self-reliance and by cultivating an inner centre of calm the *Arhat* ‘...fares along contemplating feelings as feelings.... (living) with *Dhamma* as an island...*Dhamma* as refuge, it is because of ..... undertaking wholesome states, monks that this goodness power grows’ (D.III.58. in Harvey,2004,54). ‘Goodness power’ or what might be called positive force is built up through practising non-attachment by leaving things arise and be as they are. Earlier it was the practice of ‘undecidability’ for Caputo that facilitated the arising of the good in each situation. In Desmond’s case, it was ‘agapeic’ mind’s original astonishment at the goodness of being. In *Hua yen* the supreme good, is the interpenetration in identity of phenomena. The advanced ‘great self’ cultivates a centre of calm in contrast to ‘insignificant self’ which is attempting to create a fixed centre to build a permanent self. There is no rest or calm for the conditioned-mind, as constant re-affirming and appropriation of phenomena which comply with the self view must be undertaken. The ‘Holy Eight-Fold Path’ is the road that helps to develop a ‘great self’ and the way one with a ‘great self’ travels, though it is itself a construct it is seen to be the ‘best of all constructed things’ (2004,55). Just as a ‘great self’ is possible so to a limited self is also possible. These, however, are not fixed and immutable as it is possible for one with an insignificant self to transform himself to being one with a ‘great self’ through the practices of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and mindfulness (*sati*). Through these

practices, one's mind is said to grow from being 'limited (*parittam*)' to being 'immeasurable (*appamāṇam*)' (2004,57).

The mind fixed on appropriating confirming phenomena that builds and maintains a self-image is not approaching external phenomena with loving-kindness. Phenomena are divided into good or bad, useful or not based on what self-image the person wants to maintain. This fixity of purpose is not mindful of the larger implications of what it is doing. It is a mind which has been narrowed; it is the measuring and measurable mind in contrast to the immeasurable mind of the *Arhat*. In the case of one who achieves *Arhatship* (as discussed earlier) he 'dwells with a mind that is immeasurable' (Harvey,2004,57). That immeasurable mind however arises out of a *citta* that is contained and not given to reacting to outside seductions of the senses. Paradoxically through this self-containment his *citta* becomes so great that it cannot be measured, he has no boundaries. He has destroyed craving that would fragment him and impede progress towards a 'great self'. With the destroying of craving, attachment to the personality features is also destroyed and this letting go is seen by the Buddha as an indication of one '... who dwells alone' (2004,59). To be alone is to be without, and he is without attachment or craving and thus his aloneness is all-oneness. Though he is self-contained, 'he is a man of nothing' (2004,62). He has let go of all attachments whereby he can be measured, thus he '...cannot be found anywhere' (2004,62). Without attachment to or craving for inner or outer phenomena there is no difference between inner and outer; no self is seen to reside in either and thus a non-dual infinitely open perspective is maintained. Is this enlightened perspective of the *Arhat* a numbing withdrawal from the cares and responsibilities of living in the world? Made from loving-kindness and mindfulness the *Arhat* is forever aware of the suffering of others and through letting go of craving and attachment he has created an immeasurable heart/mind (*citta*) for others to take refuge in. The confused person is also seeking a refuge in the self he is constructing and working so hard to maintain. This construct is not working, however, because his vision is too small, too limited and limiting. When the original wisdom is accessed the craving, mind is replaced by loving-kindness and mindfulness.

In Augustine recollection is the centralizing and cohering force around which the self is constructed. To understand the constructing activities of the mind and how

it operates is to understand how conditioned and limited a person's view of the self and the external world has become. Early Buddhism focuses a great deal of attention on the operation of the mind (*citta*) in the early *Suttas* to show how the deluded mind through repetition becomes a mind-set and carries on following the same mental tracks over and over. Harvey gives a detailed account of mind (*citta*) and its various operations (Harvey,2004,113-144). The word *citta* can mean to think, intend or will, it is to act on something in a directed way. In the early *Suttas* it can mean thought or train of thoughts or total mind-set. A mind set can be hard to change, it is however changeable as thoughts and emotions change. A mind-set is not a disconnected abstracted thing it is intimately connected to feelings and emotional states. It may at times either help or hinder the best interests of the person so it is seen to need purifying and directing, through meditative concentration, to fulfil the highest aspirations of the person. As a mind-set once set up it '...carries on with a will of its own, co-ordinating and operating other aspects of mind' (2004,113). What one cognizes and feels are said to depend on *citta*, it is the driving energy underlying willing and wilful thoughts. Johansson characterizes the *citta* as '...the organizing centre, the conscious core of personality' (Johansson,1969,131 in Harvey,2004,114).

The co-ordination organizing characteristics of the *citta* are in line with the characteristics of *karma* which is said to collect and organize. We recognize and are attached to the self-construct we have created and through persistent focused attention have willed into existence. This conscious, organizing centre organizes the ever-changing mental states and co-ordinating the multitude of competing selves or mindsets. It is through the repetition of these mind-sets that the personal character traits persist, and give rise to a feeling of consistency in the person. As driving energy of wilful thoughts, it is said to produce the five personality factors and in so doing is like *karma*. As *citta* is that which thinks on an object it discerns and so is closely related to discernment. Discernment is closely related to feeling and cognition because '...what one feels, one cognizes and what one cognizes one discerns (*vijānāti*)' (2004,118). Discernment itself is conditioned most by '...activities of will' (2004,123). In the *Suttas* will is seen to be equivalent to *karma*; 'I say *cetanā* is *karma*; having willed, one performs an action by body, speech or mind' (From A.III.415 in Harvey,2004,123).

Spiritual transformation can be characterized as advancement towards a ‘great self’ that can be perfected through practising loving-kindness and mindfulness. An enlightened person, who has outstripped the need for practices and is not attached to either outer or inner phenomena, is infinitely open or empty and has become the truth of emptiness itself. The unenlightened person continues to be conditioned by *citta* which collects and organizes thoughts (an activity of *karma*) and feelings (from the all-base) into a mindset to give substance to the image of the self it is promoting, which in turn limits its judgements. Further *karmic* conditioning takes place as willing confines a person’s discernments to the narrow ground of usefulness to the self. Spiritual transformation is possible in the early Buddhist view when the mind is focused on wholesome activities of loving-kindness and mindfulness which together build a positive force and give the *citta* a goodness trajectory to contemplate. Contemplating and building positive forces helps to uncouple the person from the ‘three poisons’ of greed hate and delusion which cloud the true nature of mind.

## 2.7 Uncovering wisdom-mind

Constructing activities of an unenlightened person, driven by willing or craving, condition discernment and channel it towards objects that are deemed ‘meaningful’, the self being deemed the most meaningful. Before constructing activities begin to operate there must first be attention. What is contemplated and thought about, draws the *citta* mind/heart, and so too attention is a selecting process. Amidst all this constructing activity is it possible to really know anything? Early Buddhism outlines three kinds or ‘states’ of knowing namely; ‘cognition’, ‘discernment’ and ‘wisdom’. Each of these is a progressively deeper penetration into the nature of phenomena. Wisdom-mind which sees into the nature of things and as such can direct cognition and discernment on a more beneficial course. Cognizing, willing and discerning that the deluded *citta* might engage in is an attempt to coordinate and bring closer that which it deems proper to the person. However, as Taylor highlights and Buddhism supports in its definition of the ‘great self’ that which is proper and authentic to the person, is not that which is driven by craving or will but rather uncovering that which is

innately present in the original wisdom mind. Wisdom mind is that which contemplates not the useful measure of things but rather the pure being of things.

Augustine's transformation happens through his realization that happiness was not to be found externally in sensuous pleasure, and he received what might be called a confirmation message from God or the universe, when St. Paul's letter to the Romans falls open at the page he most needs to help him see the way forward. In the Buddhist context, also non-attachment is a feature and it is the way to deeper understanding, such that when the defilements of, attachment, hatred, delusion, greed and desire are abandoned there is to be found a *citta* (mind) that is 'brightly shining' (Harvey,2004,166). Much of the analysis of the *citta* in early Buddhism highlights that while it is subject to change and is subject to many influences that condition it, the mind is flexible and can be developed and deepened. A developed mind has insight and wisdom developed in meditation. One of the qualities of the 'brightly shining mind' is that of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and it is said that when a mind is liberated (from attachments/defilements) through the practice of loving-kindness that it '...shines (*bhāsate*) and glows and radiates and is like the radiance (*pabhā*) of the moon. (From It.19-20 in Harvey,2004,167).

An open mind generates an open heart, and vice a versa. In Buddhism, no matter how obscured the 'brightly shining *citta*' is, it is still the foundation of spiritual growth. When the mind is at rest, having abandoned the cycle of attachment or becoming, it is in its natural purity. *Nibbāna* is the ultimate rest from constructing activities, is the experience where nothing constructed or conditioned comes to be. *Nibbāna* is characterized as the 'unborn', 'un-become', 'unmade', 'unconstructed' (Albahari,2006,79), is everything opposite to that which fuels the samsaric cycle of attempting to construct and hold onto a centre around which to construct a self. It is the stopping (*nirodha*) of all conditionedness and a breaking of the links in the personality features, so that the idea of a self that is limited and suffering in samsara is destroyed. Each 'thought-moment' that is constructed and driven by desire is another link in the chain that keeps the illusion of a permanent self alive. *Nibbāna* as 'unborn' and 'un-become' is not part of the cycle of becoming and suffering; *Nibbāna* is not compounded and so is 'one'. Being non-aligned, non-attached, *Nibbāna* is said to be 'signless'. Being signless (not-

Self/empty) it is beyond anything that is solid and graspable, beyond delimiting phenomena which are subject to change. Signless liberation is achieved by seeing through the constructing tendency of mind and the ‘not-self’ empty, impermanent nature of phenomena. The *Arhat* who has become the truth (*Dhamma*) of emptiness and therefore cannot be measured or found; he too is ‘signless’.

Spiritual transformation or liberation from the painful constructing activities of willing a narrow form of self into existence, is accomplished when one penetrates to that which is ‘unborn’ ‘un-become’ and ‘unmade’ (Albahari,2006,79), the very characteristics that the conditioned *citta* was seeking in its attempts to create a ‘self’ centre. Below the surface strategies of mind there is the ‘brightly shining mind’ that is accessed by mind’s wisdom nature. Though ordinary or surface mind is susceptible to conditioning, mind is flexible and will respond to positive objects also. The ultimate rest from the mind’s need to construct is to be found in *Nibbāna*, the ultimate empty thing. In contemplating the dynamics of spiritual transformation, the above highlights that it is through, ironically what could be called ‘self-power’ practices that the state of realizing ‘not-self’ or emptiness is achieved.

## 2.8 Uncovering the mind’s luminous knowing

*Nibbāna* is the stopping of all constructing activities, and thus is the stopping of the personality features that are busy constructing a self. A central component of the constructing personality features is discernment (*viññāna*) and though given as a feature of the ‘unliberated state, a form of discernment is regarded as attaining and actually being *Nibbāna*’ (Harvey,2004,198). As *Nibbānic* discernment is objectless, it is beyond arising and ceasing, and having no limiting objects it is infinite. Harvey suggests that though it is without an object, and thus there is nothing to discern that perhaps it is a discernment in the sense of a knowing, where *viññāna* can be broken down as *ñāna*, Knowledge and *vi*, Apart from all else (Harvey,2004,207). It is a knowing that needs no objects to support it, it is apart from every object that would limit it. It is said to be like space which is empty but not nothing, ‘... and so *Nibbāna* is a mental void but not nothing, it is infinite discernment with no object to limit it’ (2004,208). An enlightened mind has no

internal or external contents that bind it, it is beyond all constructing, limiting, activities that self-constructing might be engaged in. A mind that is not bound by the energy of craving for objects is not an indifferent mind; it is a mind that encompasses everything it encounters as gift. Beyond the dual consciousness of I and other there is blessing consciousness an open loving-kindness awareness that everything that arises is a blessing.

In our everyday thinking we consider ourselves to be a consistent and ‘bounded’ person that persists un-interruptedly. We see ourselves as owners of our experiences and thoughts, and the person or entity that carries out actions that are decided on. Buddhism sees this as an illusion being kept in place by the energy of desire, which fuels a belief in the person that they are exclusive and bounded persons. How then does a mind which is focused on establishing and maintaining its boundedness come to recognise its own unboundedness, or ‘non-conceptual wisdom’ contemplating pure being? Miri Albahari’s book *Analytical Buddhism* sets out to answer such a question. Her argument put simply is that ‘witness consciousness, imports certain features into the overall self-illusion features that are not themselves illusory’ (Albahari,2006,2). We normally think of witnessing (all phenomenal perception) as having a time and space dimension and that it is coming from an individual point of view. This ‘spatiotemporal perspective’ she sees as going together to form a ‘psychologically basic unit’ (2006,9). Early Buddhism says that witnessing without a space time dimension and without objects (objectless-awareness) is possible for those who have perfected a *Nibbānic*-mind and reflects the ‘real unconditioned nature of witness consciousness (2006,9). A liberated mind is a mind that has gone beyond craving (*taṇhā*) and, suffering (*dukkha*). *Nibbāna* denotes a mind that is free and beyond conditioning, beyond co-dependent origination and beyond being limited by time and space. *Nibbāna* is unconditioned and thus shares this unconditionedness with the luminous *Nibbānic* mind of the *Arhat*. Is it possible then that there are two minds? Or one mind the true nature of which is infinite openness, emptiness or ‘not-self’. As the inherent nature of mind includes witnessing, and as this witnessing dimension is found in the deluded as well as the liberated state then the same mind is evident in both states she argues. Liberation is not a melting into some heavenly *Nibbānic* state, rather what melts away are all the limiting

phenomena that up to that point craving sees as being necessary. When the mind is free from defilements, its natural luminosity shines forth. The binding defilements are not intrinsic; they are adventitious taints that cover the mind's natural luminous nature. Progress towards mental liberation or *Nibbānic* consciousness is the progressive uncovering of the mind's luminous knowing. 'The event of *Nibbāna* is the unbinding of the mind' (2006,36) from its craven driven attention to establish the permanency of a self.

Spiritual transformation is the recognition that *Nibbāna* is not a separate thing from the mind that perceives it, it is the expression of a pure or great mind. Therefore, *Nibbāna* must be implanted in the perceiving aspect of mind itself. '*Nibbāna* must be embedded in the principle of percipience itself' (Albahari,2006,37). It is this embedded and clouded *Nibbāna* that is responsible in the ordinary mind for the feelings of unity, unbroken presence and happiness seeking (2006,69). These qualities of '*Nibbanic* consciousness are expressed negatively in the self's identification with the *skandhas* and this in turn clouds the 'brightly shining' nature of mind. If we think of spiritual transformation as the movement from an unhappy state to a happy one Albahari shows that even if driven by craving (*taṇhā*) and identifying with the qualities of a 'lesser self', the deluded mind is in the pursuit of happiness. The greatest of all happiness is said to be *Nibbāna* and thus Albahari sees it as being imported into the idea of the self through the witnessing elements of the *skandhas*. Craving misleads the mind into thinking that real happiness can be found outside. The same is true for the ordinary mind's belief in its '.... unbroken presence and invariability' (2006,71). Albahari's contention that the mind is importing features of *Nibbāna* into itself is because it has within its makeup a *Nibbanic* consciousness, that when uncovered see its own true nature.

As discussed in the first chapter, Desmond shows how the 'erotic mind' even in its delusion is seeking greater understanding. From the dynamics of spiritual transformation point of view from Albahari's analysis, ultimate freedom is inbuilt into the structure of the mind; it is in the mind-stream. In the previous chapter, what is in the mind stream from Caputo's point of view is a religious structure which he defines as 'a passion for the impossible'. Caputo's structure does not import anything rather it is a dynamic that encourages risk in the face of failure,

but the result is growth in compassion. The ‘point-instant’ view however would emphasize over and over that there is nothing at all in the mind stream. To stop the habit of conceptualizing and absolutizing Caputo wants the religious experience to be one that has ‘metaphysics without a metaphysics’ and a ‘religion without a theology’. Both Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ and the ‘point-instant’ view are promoting an unbounded openness and Albahari’s importation of *Nibbānic* features (‘unbecome’, ‘unmade’, ‘uncompounded’) suggest, together with the fact that *Nibbāna* is the ‘highest empty thing, that openness is also what the confused mind is really seeking.

## 2.9 Beyond boundedness and definition

Albahari’s view is that while the Self is mostly ‘unreal’ the features of witnessing unity, unbroken presence, endurance, invariability, unconstructedness, and sought-after happiness, in so far as they are not distorted by identification and craving, are ‘not considered to lack reality’ (Albahari,2006,74). Thus, Albahari views the illusory Self as being supported by two tiers, a *taṇhā* driven one and a non-illusory one. ‘The self is an illusion fed by two tiers, a tier of non-illusory witness-consciousness and a tier of *taṇhā* driven thoughts and emotions’ (2006,79). The ‘pre-*Nibbānic* Self’ seems then to be not consciously aware of and thus miss-applies these *Nibbānic* qualities to underpin itself by seeing *itself* as having and being the various *Nibbānic* qualities which echoes Taylor’s view that the person post the death of God appropriates divine qualities to the self.

Through a process of identification and appropriation, similar to that outlined by Taylor, the pre *Nibbānic* mind identifies with and becomes that which it assimilates, and thus a separate subjective perspective is created. One identifies with certain things, internal and external, as self and moves to then engage the world as other than self. The pre-*Nibbānic* mind creates a sense of ‘boundedness’ by what one identifies with.

When ‘careful attention’ is not being paid by ordinary individuals, to what they are identifying with, and being unaware of the Buddha’s teachings, a certain kind of misguided thinking is said to arise and increase, which causes further and

deeper binding. This type of ‘illusory’ or binding-thinking is outlined by Steven Collins in his book *Selfless Persons*. It is the type of speculation that asks ‘...Did I exist (or not) in the past? What was I in the past? Will I exist (or not) in the future?’ Collins shows how the text outlines that any one of the following six views arises, if careful attention is not paid; ‘I have a self ... I do not have a self ...by self I know the self ... by the self I know the not-self ... by the not-self I know the self ...’ (*Sabbāsava Sutta* in Collins,2004,118/9). These are binding viewpoints or fetters. Caught in this way the unaware person is subject to the round of birth, suffering, old age and death. The belief in ‘I’ is a necessary part of the belief system before enlightenment, at which point the ‘I am’ belief disappears. The text highlights those subtle deceptions possible, where even knowing the ‘not-self’ becomes an instrument to define the self. This is an example where even a negation is turned to become a positive restatement of the existence of the self.

Spiritual transformation is the overcoming of the tenacious self-referencing by letting go of all objects that a person might cling to. So, important is letting go to the spiritual transformation process that the Buddha gave the teaching concerning the letting go of all views, which included his own teaching. Later developments saw the introduction of the ‘emptiness of emptiness’ teaching, which encourages letting go of the concept of emptiness. Even advanced meditative experiences are not to be clung to as this would be to mistake the path for the goal. All the teachings then are tools that support transformation and once achieved are no longer required. These are all conditioned bridges that help move the person towards the unconditioned open empty state of *Nibbāna*. Nothing has ‘own-being’ including related spiritual insights or experiences that Buddhism outlines. Everything is empty including *Nibbāna*, the ‘highest empty thing’. If spiritual transformation is being in harmony with the highest and the fullest, then it is seen to be achieved by being empty of attachments that would limit the infinite emptiness. *Nibbāna* being beyond all constructs is empty and thus is infinitely full but not limited to anything. In the spiritual search for truth a person is led in the direction of the fullest, as De Chardin pointed out earlier. The *Nibbānic* path is then the path that promotes infinite openness or unboundedness. Spiritual transformation would seem to take place in the tension between the aspect of mind

striving for boundedness through trying to solidify a permanent self and the more deeply knowing part which moves in the direction of *Nirvanic* unboundedness aided by the ‘point-instant’ view and Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ principle which promotes an unboundedness.

## 2.10 Thoughts are thinking us

Albahari highlights that even in our delusion and miss-appropriation one is still aware of the highest qualities and want them for ourselves, to be the best one can possibly be. Might it not also be then that craving itself is simply the limited, abused *klesha-mind* ‘s attempt to bring about the best possible outcomes in its efforts to create what it sees as a ‘great self’? Buddhism points out that the ‘great self’ that we want to be is to be found most satisfactorily in perfecting a true understanding and true way of living in the world based on how things really are. The ‘great self’ works at and perfects deep understanding, the deepest understanding possible, is modelled by an *Arhat* who because of the expanse of his mind like that of *Nibbāna* is said to be unfathomable. Then us ordinary beings still on the ‘Way’ to realization or still caught in *samsāra*’s grip of the *klesha-mind*, are those who are seeking to be the best they can possibly be but have not yet found the true way to liberation.

Albahari’s thesis suggests that though clouded and driven by a craving-mind the ‘deluded’ person is seeking to establish those qualities best found in the description of *Nibbāna* i.e. ‘unity’, ‘unbroken presence’, ‘endurance’, ‘invariability’, ‘unconstructedness’, and ‘happiness’ (Albahari,2006,79). In Western psychology terms, this person is said to be seeking to ‘self-actualize’ where self-actualization denotes each person’s drive to fulfil his or her potential to the maximum. However, if this drive is being orchestrated by a *karmic* mind which ‘collects and organizes’ to suit its agenda, and driven by a mind which misunderstands what that potential is, then its drive is not for the highest good (*summum bonum*), but for a lesser good, one that benefits the self-strategies only. We perform actions to achieve happiness, which according to Aristotle is the highest good, and an end itself. Happiness is for Aristotle the principle of action and the cause of all good things (Irwin,1990,133/4). Many of our actions,

however, are intermediary actions in the service of getting us somewhere closer, somewhere further towards the centre of what we desire. The highest good however is not an action aimed at a specific end, it is an end itself and self-sufficient. For Aristotle happiness could be achieved by living a life guided by virtue where virtue was understood as actions performed in accordance with one's nature and not brought about by external forces. This is the circumstance that Caputo supports in his 'undecidability' principle, where 'undecidability' undermines the idea of a highest principle and thus promotes an 'unbounded idea of the good'. Actions which are not prescribed, solicit actions that accord with a person's nature. The driving force for that decision or any decision in the Buddhist view is the nature of mind, the true nature of which is seen to be 'the brightly shining mind'. 'The brightly shining mind' will accomplish good deeds and as its nature is based on loving-kindness and compassion, it will 'think the truth of being' (in Pezze,2006) also. The *klesha-mind* seeking happiness, performs actions which it thinks are in accordance with its nature and in its conditioned state 'thinks' will bring it the greatest happiness. The mind could be said to be trying to accomplish what the psychologist Carl Jung might call its 'teleological' or forward-thinking mission. The person for Jung is seeking harmony through the greatest self-definition and the greatest integration and this is done by fulfilling his unique calling. However, in our confused state we tend to identify our calling as that function of thinking, feeling, sensation or intuition, whichever is most developed in us. It becomes, in Jung's words, our 'superior-function' while the others become 'inferior-functions' and drop back into the unconscious to reside in the dark. These dark forces, however, have a major role to play in helping one achieve liberation and I will take this up later in chapter 3.

We think of ourselves as agents because we seem to construct ideas and thoughts, and can show these thoughts and ideas externally when needed to in an external construction; we seem to make things or make things happen. The self is dependent on thoughts, emotions and sensations for its existence. We think we own these thoughts and emotions and that it is ourselves thinking these thoughts, whereas they are thinking us. 'Rather than the self thinking thoughts, thoughts are helping to think the self (Albahari,2006,130). The feeling of being a personal owner of thoughts, emotions and feelings creates a sense of boundedness.

Awareness itself is narrowed to that which it identifies with and pursues, thus awareness becomes bounded also. Awareness, however, in its highest sense is completely open and accessible in signless meditation and as the *Nibbānic* realization of the *Arhat* as ‘objectless awareness’.

Spiritual transformation recognizes that there is a tension in the person between the forces that seek to restrict a person’s life to the pursuit of a limited idea of the good life and the force that pushes for the unbounded limitless all-encompassing idea of goodness. The limiting forces are driven by the mind’s aspects that collect and organizes itself into mind-sets which eventually work on automatic pilot until ‘superior function’ thought chains are thinking the person into being a replica of the mind-set. However, the ‘brightly shining mind’ is always active and attempting to encourage the person out of confusion and into the true nature of things as they are.

#### 2.11 Undermining-dualistic conceptual thinking.

The ‘brightly shining’ *Nibbānic* mind of an *Arhat* is said to be unlimited, indeed his mind is said to expand to infinity. Those who have perfected a ‘great self’ have become *Dhamma*, and live the truth of ‘objectless awareness’. Is this then the ‘Greatest’ or deepest ‘truth’ that a ‘great self’ can achieve? If all this misplaced ‘selving’ process results in a restricted awareness and ‘bounded’ life, then ‘unboundedness’ and ‘open awareness’ must be the antidote that helps free a person to live the greatest realization. *Bon Dzogchen* focuses on ‘objectless awareness’, also referring to it as ‘open awareness’ and couples it with ‘unbounded wholeness’ (in contrast to a bounded self) to articulate its insight into the nature of things. Anne C. Klein and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche together outline this ancient *Bon Dzogchen* view in their book *Unbounded Wholeness (Dzogchen Bon and the Logic of the Nonconceptual, 2006)*.

This book outlines the principles behind the non-conceptual view or the ‘non-bounded view’ of self-constructing activity. Particularly it gives an insight as to how the mind is defined from the view of wholeness rather than the view of the individual, which however is not different from wholeness. It is the view from

inside the brightly shining mirror of mind as it were. The book is based on an ancient text called 'Authenticity of Open Awareness' which sets out to define open awareness and how 'authentic open awareness' and 'unbounded wholeness' cannot be accessed by conventional conceptual thinking. 'Open awareness' and 'unbounded wholeness' being the nature of mind itself, as opposed to the limited pursuits of the self-project, can only be accessed directly. The intellect being limited cannot engage with '...an authentic experience of the ultimate' (Klein et al, 2006.VII). Like the *Zen* view it does not see conceptual thinking as a path to achieving enlightenment. In exploring 'unbounded wholeness', language and logic falter and prove secondary to direct experience.

In *Dzogchen* 'mind nature' is said to be uncontrived (or uncompounded; one of the features of *Nibbāna*) and cannot be made better or worse by the achievement of enlightenment or the delusions of *samsāra*, it is the permanent condition of all minds. Open awareness '...is not a subject that takes proper measure of its object' (Klein et al,2006,4) it cannot be split into a duality of subject and object. What then is open awareness? 'It is an objectless subject, non-conceptual and non-dual...' (Klein et al,2006,4), In the *Dzogchen* view reality is unbounded wholeness, and open awareness '...is the knowing of it' (Klein et al,2006,6). It is not the case that open awareness knows unbounded wholeness as a separate thing or object, they are a knowing union where '...open awareness knows itself as unbounded wholeness' (Klein et al,2006,6). The central point stressed repeatedly is that, unlike the logic of *Madhyamaka*, no amount of conceptual or non-conceptual ways of knowing will afford access to 'unbounded wholeness' or 'open awareness'. The self-project that the *klesha-mind* engages in is a conceptual construct which keeps the idea of being bounded alive. This bounding achieves only a partial wholeness and limited awareness, the landscape of awareness being confined to self-interest only.

The *Bon Dzogchen* principles may seem quite abstract themselves and a challenge to realize, when our normal subject object perspective is undermined continuously. Our normal dualistic conceptual thinking is continuously undermined when for instance we ask, what is, or where might 'open awareness' and 'unbounded wholeness' be found? We begin to see that the questions cannot really apply as for instance 'unbounded wholeness' must originate everywhere.

‘Naked reality, unbounded wholeness, is utterly simple at its point of origin, which is everywhere’ (Klein et al,2006,19). Open awareness is not seen to validly cognize anything it is ‘...an emptiness naturally rich in potential’ (2006,26). Open awareness or ‘non-conceptual’ thinking is the realization of ‘unbounded wholeness’. What might be called bounded questions lead to bounded answers and thus not to unboundedness. *Bon Dzogchen* says we cannot think our way into the realization of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’, then from the dynamics of spiritual transformation point of view how do we gain this? A ‘non-conceptual’, objectless *Nibbānic* mind is the mind that knows itself as boundless wholeness. It is the mind of the enlightened *Arhat* that has expanded to infinity and embraces everything.

## 2.12 ‘Unbounded Mind’

‘Unbounded wholeness’ is not fathomable with a bounded mind that enquires of it with bounded questions. Is access then impossible or is there a category of unbounded questions that when asked, tunes in to unbounded wholeness? *Zen* Buddhism has developed a genre of conundrums called Kōans that are designed to scramble conceptual thinking and put the reader more in the true nature of mind. A classic question concerning the nature of the self, from this genre, that a teacher might ask a student, runs like this; ‘What is your real self, the self that existed before you came out of your mother’s womb, before you knew east from west’ (Katsuki Sekida (Trans) *Two Zen Classics* 2005,39). The question is designed to be as open as possible so that a conceptual representational answer cannot be given. It is designed to break into the chain of thoughts that form ‘consciousness’ to bring the student back to the first pure moment or first pure ‘unit of thought’ (Katsuki, Sekida,2005,32). The ‘point instant’ view and Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ principle promote an unbounded first pure moment. This moment Desmond sees as a moment of recognition of goodness and the beginning of thought itself. This first pure moment or ‘unit of thought’ is called the first *Nen* and this is a ‘direct pure cognition of the object’ (Katsuki Sekida,2005,32). Delusion is built on successive *Nen* moments joining the

previous moments to become a chain that finally forms a self-consciousness and an ego.

*Zen* sees consciousness as the interaction of *Nen* moments that give the impression of a constant Self. The first *Nen* moment is the moment of pure cognition and the second *Nen* moment reflects on this moment and in the process, makes it its object. Through this process of reflection, one becomes conscious of one's own thoughts. The third *Nen* moment assimilated and joins the preceding *Nen* moments into a continuous chain of thoughts, and this introspection gives rise to ego based mind-set reasoning. The first moment of pure cognition is the moment of supreme realization where 'this moment's thought sees through eternal time (and) eternal time is just this moment' (Katsuki Sekida,2005,131). This first moment of pure cognition is as mentioned earlier by Kierkegaard a moment '...in which time and eternity touch each other...whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time' (SV IV 359/CA89 in Caputo,1987,15). Unbounded eternity intersects time in every moment. This 'point instant' moment is eternal because it is not bounded by past or future. 'Point-instant' reality does not allow any conceptual thinking to develop and so is the instrument that gives access to 'non-conceptual' 'open awareness' that sees 'unbounded wholeness' and recognizes itself. These *Nen* thoughts are not able to reflect on themselves, as subjectivity cannot reflect on itself, as soon as it does it has become an object, therefore consciousness which is the outcome of this *Nen* chain works unconsciously. 'Therefore, every action of consciousness is unconscious of itself' (Katsuki Sekida,2005,132/133). As Mark Dotson points out in his online paper, Thinking and *Nen*-Action; '*Nen* actions make their appearance before we are aware of them. A thought impulse occurs without our being aware of it' (Dotson, 1996). This is an example of how thoughts are thinking the self. When this *Nen* process is, ego bounded the first *Nen* will look outward the second will reflect on these actions and the third 'synthesizing' the other two will '...recognize them as oneself and produce self- consciousness' (Katsuki Sekida,2005,133). None of these three egos can recognize themselves and once the synthesis of the third ego has taken place originality (first 'point-instant' moment of direct pure cognition) has been lost.

What has been created is not original or in the *Dzogchen* vocabulary ‘authentic’, it is a synthetic and thus an artificial self, literally created or remembered from the process. In this way, *Zen* highlights that there is no constant self only ego moments appearing in sequence. This moment by moment vision of things is also reminiscent of the Early Indian Buddhist insight of ‘point-instant’ reality. *Zen* reiterates that the dynamics of spiritual transformation concerns a returning to the first moment of pure awareness. It highlights how the self-conscious self is made up of linked moments that eventually forms a synthetic non-authentic self, the self being made up of ego moments in a sequence. However, when the first pure moment is accessed time is penetrated by eternity. Time and consciousness come together from linked moments but fade when eternity penetrates them. Transformation is the realization of the ‘point moment’ reality which is a non-conceptual open awareness that recognizes itself as unbounded and eternal goodness. In thinking about transformation as an energy or dynamic inherent in the person it’s clear that they are not separate in the above description of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’. The process of separating them begins when the first moment gets connected to second and third and so on.

The *Bon Dzogchen* ‘Path’ begins and ends at the same point of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’. There is no ‘Path’ to purify the mind because in *Dzogchen* the nature of mind and reality are the same ‘unbounded openness’. When the mind is returned from its fragmented wanderings, it can settle into its natural ‘uncontrived’ state, its natural unbound wholeness shines forth. ‘Mind of mine dwelling in the present. Uncontrived, un-coarsened and untouched. Heart essence of all that is. Dwells solely as wholeness unbound’ (From Profound Great Bliss Sutra. In Klein et al,2006,31). This is a radically different way of understanding. Up to this point it has been sufficient to understand the definition of impermanence for instance as that which is subject to causes and conditions. However, in *Dzogchen* such ‘syllogistic reasoning’ does not afford insight into the ‘reality’ of unbounded wholeness (2006,34). This is so because there can be nothing outside unbounded wholeness that might act as a subject to validate it as an object. True knowing is heart-knowing, it is the ‘uncontrived’, ‘un-coarsened’ and ‘untouched’ mind that expresses itself as lovingkindness and compassion.

In *Dzogchen* authenticity or validity must be found within ‘open awareness’ and ‘unbounded wholeness’ themselves. Again, there being nothing outside ‘unbounded wholeness’ all phenomena that arise are the ‘... dynamic display of the unbounded wholeness’. These dynamic displays of unbounded wholeness are recognised by open awareness ‘...as its own nature’ (Klein et al,2006,34). Thus, seen in this way what arises in the *klesha-mind*, though driven by a belief that it lacks what it seeks, when seen correctly, is a display of ‘unbounded wholeness’. An ‘unbounded wholeness’ mind has no deficiencies; there is no need to create avenues by which to appropriate anything in an ‘open awareness’. The dynamic display recognizes its inherent empty nature and thus recognizes itself in the displays. Consciousness or ‘open awareness’ in this *Bon Dzogchen* text is not seen to be a thing that recognises impermanence or emptiness ‘... authentic open awareness is an emptiness’ (2006,35). A measuring *klesha-* mind cannot validate or authenticate ‘unbounded wholeness’. No amount of enquiry or analysis will bring about the experience of ‘unbounded wholeness’ or ‘open awareness’, in fact quite the opposite is required. *Dzogchen* is the effortless way where ‘.....in uncontrived mind nature. No effort, no thought, clear. No reflection, no analysis. Naturally placed there’ (From Excellent Essential Precepts, (in Klein et al,2006,40). In the question of the transformative dynamics its clear *Bon Dzogchen* sees the nature of mind to be that same as the nature of reality.

Transformation in *Bon Dzogchen* is not brought about by a subject enquiring into a separate object to uncover its true nature, there being nothing that can stand outside ‘unbounded wholeness’. Everything is included in the unbounded so everything is a display of unbounded empty wholeness. Unbounded wholeness is not a thing it is the very opposite it is an emptiness just as *Nibbāna* earlier was seen to be the highest empty thing. The transformative dynamic is not confined; it is everywhere in every moment a display of ‘unbounded wholeness’. Transformation has no single centre to be achieved, its centre is every other than the ‘uncontrived’ mind naturally reaches out to with loving-kindness and compassion.

### 2.13 'Unbounded Wholeness'

There is no outside in 'unbounded wholeness' and therefore there cannot be any movement from invalid relative to valid absolute knowing. '.... I do not make twofold discriminations among *bon* phenomena....' (Klein et al,2006,46). *Dzogchen* does not articulate its principles in terms of a dual structure or any path built on causality. It does not support the 'antidotes' system that attempts to transform perceived negative conditions to positive ones. Klein highlights that causality as outlined by *Dharmakīrti* which stressed the functional ability to produce an effect, such as when an object produces an effect on a subject, and thus the subject is caused to perceive it, is not for *Dzogchen* '... a central epistemological or ontological principle' (2006,46). *Dzogchen* sees objects as '.... dynamic displays of wisdom,' (2006,47) and as such causes are very much secondary. *Dzogchen* does not spend a great deal of time unearthing causes or reasons why our minds are clouded as it sees all arisings as a display of wisdom itself, where wisdom and emptiness are inseparable.

In an unbounded wholeness, *Dzogchen* sees everything to be of 'one taste' (2006,48). If a cause and effect are of one taste then is there any movement from here to there, from one state of mind to another? *Dzogchen*, like *Zen*, does not see a movement but rather '...a dynamic stillness' (2006,48). It is a stillness because it never moves outside 'unbounded wholeness'. A mind without objects is reminiscent of 'objectless awareness' and this natural simplicity of mind, in terms of not being contrived, is the true nature of mind in *Bon Dzogchen*. '... *Bon*-nature, not an object, is your own mind. Your uncontrived mind is the *bon*-dimension' (2006,50). The *klesha-mind*, busy creating the self-structure, is contriving and being contrived by thoughts and emotions, to bring together the best circumstances for the self-structure to flourish in. As Klein highlights 'unbounded wholeness' encompasses diversity and as such is constantly changing, though being part of the 'unbounded wholeness' it is not changing, as it remains within 'unbounded wholeness'. 'Unbounded wholeness' because of its all-encompassing nature does not have a '...defining characteristic or stable identity....it is indefinite and unspeakable' (2006,54). *Nibbāna* and the one whose mind becomes *Dhamma* are also indefinite and unspeakable.

The word wholeness conjures up the idea of oneness but here it is seen to be indefinite and indefinable it embraces multiplicity. That which is not definable or bounded cannot be referenced and this prevents it from becoming a static concept. ‘Unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ like emptiness continuously resist and undermines conceptual attempts to define them as this or that or anything that might limit them within boundaries. That which cannot be reduced to an object cannot be ‘... grasped by reason...’ (Klein et al 2006,56) and bounded. The unbound is indefinite and the indefinite suggests the many-sided dimensions of reality. With unbounded wholeness, there is no separate enlightened consciousness that apprehends emptiness for instance as an ultimate truth, because the *Bon Dzogchen* view is not based on the two truths of conventional and ultimate reality. There is no separate ultimate that through practice a person reaches as that would be a dualistic view that seems to unite a separate object with a subject. The *Bon Dzogchen* view is that there is from the beginning no separation. ‘No ultimate exists apart from the immediacy of unbounded everything...’ (2006,61-2) which has echoes of Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ principle and the ‘point-instant view which strive to create the maximum openness. If everything is unbounded then everything is inherently liberated, and despite our projections unto phenomena, in our attempts to bring them within the orbit of our self-project, they remain pure.

Within ‘unbounded wholeness’ there is no partitioning and therefore no reasoning, which by its nature analyses and divides, which is not included, but rather is a ‘... dynamic display (*rtsal*), arises in and through unbounded wholeness.’ (Klein et al,2006,66). Though the *klesha-mind* may reason poorly, the focus of its reasoning is the achievement of wholeness through its dualistic investigation. The mind that manifests as unbounded wholeness is a mind that is free, that has uncovered liberation within its own dimensionless nature. In contrast, the appropriating mind is fixated on externals and the drive to add more and more to its self-construction. In so doing it attempts to create a bounded edifice from which to survey the boundary of the self that is under the control of its ‘superior-function’.

Regarding the question of the dynamics of spiritual transformation the following can be extracted from the *Bon Dzogchen* Buddhist position: Transformation is not

seen to be a movement from an invalid knowing to a valid knowing, nor is it seen to be brought about through the application of antidotes that transform the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion to their opposites. Transformation is not seen to be caused per se by a separate object effecting a separate subject, nor is it seen to be a separate consciousness apprehending the true empty nature of things. Transformation is not the journey to a separate ultimate that is reachable by spiritual practice, nor can it be found through the reasoning mind that analyses and revises, but reasoning itself is a dynamic display of ‘unbounded wholeness’. As everything is seen to arise within the dimensions of ‘unbounded wholeness’ there is no movement, yet as a display of ‘unbounded wholeness’ there is movement and thus there is a ‘dynamic stillness’ at play. ‘Unbounded wholeness’ encompasses diversity but itself is without references that would make it a static rigid concept. Transformation occurs when the liberated mind, through accessing its own dimensionless empty nature, apprehends all arisings as a display of the wisdom of emptiness.

#### 2.14 ‘Open-Awareness’

All arisings as a display of wisdom is apprehended by ‘open awareness’ that knows itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’, but it is not seen to be a consciousness per se, as consciousness implies a subject focused on an object. In so far as it is completely open it is the non-stick-mind that encompasses everything but is fixated on nothing. If it is not a consciousness, it suggests that this type of awareness is not encompassed by what we normally call consciousness. Albahari earlier refers to it as ‘witness consciousness’. It is not a consciousness in *Bon Dzogchen* related to any cause, as it is not conditioned nor is it associated with any impermanent phenomena.

It ‘is a self-arisen primordial wisdom’ (Klein et al,2006,80) beyond categorization. It is not trying to reason anything into existence or work on any projects, including the self- project. ‘Open awareness’ is not aware of objects as such and is more ‘... equated with unconditioned emptiness...’ (2006,81), it is aware of itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’. Not being within the bounds of consciousness re-emphasizes that it is empty, indeed it is emptiness itself, where

emptiness implies in this tradition ‘...a special kind of clarity and ... objectless awareness’ (2006,81). ‘Open awareness’ is empty of any objects to be aware of and without any discriminating it is clear. ‘Open awareness’ is thus said to be the union of the clear and the empty. Again, to be remembered is that ‘open awareness’ is not that which knows the emptiness of reality, it is emptiness as it manifests ‘within’ the reality of ‘unbounded wholeness’.

In *Dzogchen*, open awareness is equated with ‘primordial wisdom’. A wisdom that unlike the other schools of Buddhism, is not a wisdom which comes about through the overcoming of ignorance/delusion or unawareness. Being a primordial wisdom, it is present all the time, though it may not be recognized, it cannot be something ‘newly produced’ (Klein et al,2006,88). Its argument in favour of ‘self-arisen primordial wisdom’ is that like digging for gold, no amount of effort at digging will produce it unless it is there present from the beginning, and so too with wisdom. Failure to recognize ‘unbounded wholeness’ can be due to ‘inborn unawareness’ and the accumulation of *karmic* predispositions that makes it difficult to recognize the primordial wisdom mind. As ‘open awareness’ is all inclusive anything can arise from it spontaneously including unawareness and while not its cause, ‘unbounded wholeness’ is the environment of its existence. The ‘unbounded wholeness’ base being empty does not have either delusion or wisdom as part of its own essence, they are said to occur spontaneously. Therefore, enlightenment or delusion takes place in the ‘nature of mind’ which arises as a dynamic display of wisdom’s ‘open awareness’ and ‘unbounded wholeness’ or if not recognized as delusion. Wisdom does not apprehend reality as an object; being open and unbounded it is objectless. ‘Thus, reality is not the object of wisdom, but wisdom itself’ (2006,82). Understanding the true nature of reality leads to uncovering the inherent wisdom therein. However, once ‘unawareness’ is present it alters the base, promoting the conditions for the dynamic displays of wisdom to appear as a display of *samsara*. Wisdom or unawareness are not two separate things appearing but rather ‘open awareness’ is non-dual. Thus appearances, whatever they may be, appear that is their nature and in *Dzogchen* they are said to appear spontaneously. Spontaneously means they are not caused so they need not be attached to. Delusion unawareness or ignorance are not seen to be ‘dissolved’ by any practice

that is built on a subject object dichotomy. It can only be dissolved by ‘...open awareness recognizing its own unbounded wholeness’ (2006,96) and appearances or manifestations are recognized as the ‘...self-dawning play of primordial wisdom’ (2006,100).

If we consider the dynamics of spiritual transformation as that which begins when a separate mind penetrates the true nature of things *Bon Dzogchen* would say that is not the case. ‘Open awareness’ is not a knowing which knows the empty nature of things it is emptiness as it manifests. ‘Open awareness’ is a ‘primordial wisdom’ and as such is present in the mind stream all along. ‘Open awareness’ is a space in which both wisdom and ignorance spontaneously arise and like a mirror it is empty and not the cause of that which appears spontaneously. *Bon Dzogchen* does not see transformation as the movement of a deluded mind transformed into a wisdom mind which then apprehends reality as an object; reality is open and unbounded and has no objects. Reality is not uncovered by a wisdom mind; reality is wisdom itself. Previously *Hua yen* has expressed this understanding, as all things are in the realm of truth (*Dharma-dhatu*). The wisdom of transformation is embedded in the true nature of the mind stream which is no different than the nature of reality.

## 2.15 Thoughts are a barrier to experience

To show how the unaware *klesha*- mind can be differentiated from the nature of mind *Bon Dzogchen* differentiates between ‘nature of the mind or ‘...mind as such’ (*sems nyid*, synonymous in *Bon Dzogchen* thought with *Kunzhi* ‘...ground of everything) and mind (*sems*)’ (Tenzin Wangyal,2000, 65). Defilements are not found in the nature of mind but are to be found in the ‘...moving mind (*sems*)’ (2000,65). It is through the essential practice of observing how thoughts arise, where they stay and how they dissolve in the empty essence of mind that one begins to experience the difference between mind and nature of mind. It is through understanding thoughts and how they are produced that a person comes to realize that thoughts by their nature are not a problem, ‘...they are the manifestation of the natural state’ (2000,88). Thoughts without attachment, naturally arise, stay

and return to the natural state, and are said to '...self-liberate in the natural state' (2000,88), they are an embellishment of the natural state.

How and what thoughts we think has a strong bearing on what and how we understand. Thoughts at the level of mind cannot be freed by other thoughts; thoughts are the barrier to the direct experience of the nature of mind. This direct experience of the nature of mind cannot be facilitated by thoughts, '...it is the empty nature of the mind understanding itself' (Tenzin Wangyal,2000,89) or the 'immaculate looking at itself'

(Ven Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje 'Letter in praise of emptiness'). In *Dzogchen* the principle, is that at the base or ground of everything is empty and primordially pure or immaculate, while the nature of the base is clarity, that is 'spontaneously perfected' and the union of both is the 'flow of energy or compassion' (2000,51). Compassion is not a perfected thing it is an innate energy that naturally arises in 'the nature of mind', when all barriers are removed. Indeed, the six perfections, that other Buddhist schools strive to cultivate: generosity, ethics, patience, joyful effort, concentration and wisdom, are already perfected in 'the nature of mind'.

'Unbounded wholeness', like the enlightened *Arhat* or the man 'gone down', cannot be limited and measured and so presents a difficulty for reasoning to get to grips with it. In attempting to encompass it, reason runs up against its own limitations. Reality being an open 'unbounded wholeness' reiterates that there is no Archimedean point outside 'unbounded wholeness', no hidden territory, to be found outside that will allow knowing separate from being because in *Dzogchen* 'epistemology is ontology'. If there is nowhere to go in the cognitive sense, then the only thing to do is to relax into wholeness.

Enlightenment is effortless it is being and staying in touch with the great completeness that is here and now and stop chasing after an elusive wholeness to be found in the future. Unboundedness continuously resists the attempts a self makes to limit, corral or bind the infinite nature of reality that is no different from the true nature of mind. The self project with its narrow perspective, with its feelings of guilt, shame or failure; with its feelings of being inadequate; with its feelings of being an imperfect something needing to perfect itself gets swept away

like tumbleweed before the vastness of the Great Perfection of Unbounded Wholeness. *Dzogchen* says that there is no road to enlightenment no road to liberation, the door of the self- imposed prison has always been open, but our institutionalized self does not recognize it. *Dzogchen* by deemphasizing ‘Paths’ and ‘Ways’ and ‘Roads’ to a ‘better self’, encourages us out of hiding, it gives back the freedom to be the ‘extraordinary selves’ that one is and to recognize that it is in the life lived here and now, in every perfect ‘point-instant’ moment that we express ourselves as a dynamic light filled energetic display of Great Perfection. This is not becoming *Dhamma*, this is being *Dhamma*; there is no arriving from anywhere to anywhere, we have been home all along, but not recognizing it we have gone off wandering. Intellectually, conceptually *Dzogchen* is difficult to understand and precisely because of its difficulties we are being invited not to stay in the realm of understanding but rather we are being invited to let go of our stock ways of knowing and understanding and participate in the Great Completion that we are and that everything is in every ‘point-instant’ moment ‘within the sphere of reality’. (Duffy,2010,15)

If transformation is defined as a movement within thought where through spiritual practice unwholesome thoughts get transformed or liberated into wholesome better thoughts, *Dzogchen* says that this is not so. Thoughts themselves are the manifestation of the natural state and are ‘self- liberated’ in that state. We could be forgiven for thinking that ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ form a kind of solipsistic circle, like a mirror looking at itself. ‘Unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ or emptiness and clarity together express themselves as compassionate energy. If advancements in compassion is being measured by an accumulation of good deeds, then *Dzogchen* says that compassion cannot be perfected it is innate in ‘the nature of mind’. The immaculate doesn’t just contemplate itself solely, in ‘open awareness’ realizing ‘unbounded wholeness’ there is a flowing of compassionate energy set in motion. In terms of a path that transforms a non-realized state to a realized one, *Dzogchen* says there is nowhere to go. The unbounded cannot be encompassed by reason or intellect as that suggests that there is something incomplete that knowing will complete, which is contradictory to *Dzogchen* which is the great completion. Transformation is effortless; it is accomplished by staying in the great completion of the here and

now moment within the ‘sphere of reality’. Previously I discussed transformation as not just understanding the truth but being the truth, in *Dzogchen* there is no becoming, one is a manifestation, a dynamic display of the truth of the great perfection.

## 2.16 Nature of mind is uncontrived

At a ground level, we are all Buddhas, we have Buddha-nature in our ‘...mind streams...’(Duffy,2010,15) right now, however, we are obscured from this knowledge by confusion. Confusion arises when the luminous/clarity aspect of mind (a luminous mind being one which knows empty nature of its own content), fails to realize that it itself is the cause of the confusion. The clarity or knowing aspects fails to recognize itself as the source of the confusion and ultimate suffering. This is the *Mahāmudrā* explanation for how a person becomes confused. *Dzogchen* has a slightly different way of explaining confusion; the once inwardly directed luminosity becomes disturbed by winds (energies) and becomes turned outward and lost in the ‘superficies’ (*mam pa*) or superficial appearances (2010,7). There is then a pivotal point of recognizing or not recognizing ‘...our own appearances, as our own appearances...’ (2010,8). Failure to recognize them leads to suffering and unhappiness. Recognizing the true nature of appearances leads to Buddhahood. The differentiation between a Buddha and a sentient being is then a problem of ‘...original self-recognition’ (2010,8). This is precisely the failure of the *klesha-mind* it does not know its original self and is lost in trying to create a self.

*Tsoknyi Rinpoche* highlights that the point of all the teachings in both *Dzogchen* and *Mahāmudrā* is to show us that in our mind stream we have present what is called the ‘...actual basis of everything...’(Duffy,2010,8). This basis of everything is the original situation, before confusion dawned, it is the ‘point-instant’ *Nen* empty unbounded moment, it is the essence of mind itself, it is the place where Buddhas become enlightened. It is called ‘...ground *Mahāmudrā* or ground *Dzogchen*’ (2010,8). Because of our failure to recognize the unbounded basis of everything in our mind stream we become bounded determinate beings driven by *karma* and obscuration that hinder us from recognizing the true nature

of mind. Being in this obscured and confused situation is referred to as the Path. It is the situation here and now we find ourselves in. A confused, obscured mind acting out its confusions is not to be abandoned and papered over in favour of a pretend 'pure' mind, it is to be embraced and understood as where we are now and later the pure awareness of nowness will become enlightenment itself.

Rinpoche points out that because we are still connected, though at this moment in an obscured way, with the fundamental reality in the ground of our being, we are always trying to get ourselves out of confusion, but just in the wrong way. Albahari, as shown earlier, has a similar view in her explanation of how the deluded mind imports non-delusion features in its efforts to overcome its own confusion, 'witness consciousness, imports certain features into the overall self-illusion features that are not themselves illusory' (Albahari,2006,2). Desmond previously highlights that even in its confused state the 'erotic' mind is seeking greater understanding. The original ground of our being, (like *Nibbāna*), has no obscurations and according to *Dzogchen* and *Mahāmudrā* has existed in the mind-stream of beings from beginningless time '...as a pure undefiled nature of their mind streams and when uncovered manifests as 'innate wisdom'. In its original state, the nature of mind is 'uncontrived' and this original mind nature exists in every person as 'indwelling wisdom' (Duffy,2010,15). The 'uncontrived-mind' is the true nature of mind. It is by staying in touch with this 'uncontrivedness' that the View is accomplished. The View of uncontrivedness allows the seeing of *Dzogchen*, which is not, as is commonly translated 'The Great Perfection', but rather that '...all things are complete within the sphere of reality' (Duffy,2010,15). An uncontrived mind is in the *Mahāmudrā* tradition called 'ordinary mind' (*tha mal gyi shes pa*) and refers to the completely enlightened natural state of mind that has always existed. The self-project based on a perceived lack driven by desire to fulfil its desire for permanence and control feeds on contrivance and thus blocks access to the true nature of completely enlightened mind.

If we consider spiritual transformation as a movement of mind from confusion to clarity *Dzogchen* sees the mind as always possessing clarity. However, the 'brightly shining' mind gets confused when the clarity aspect of mind fails to recognize itself and grasps at the clarity as something other than itself, thereby not recognizing its

own thoughts as the dynamic display of ‘unbounded wholeness’. Confusion stems from a problem with original self-recognition, not recognizing unboundness and consequently the person becomes a bounded and determined being. *Dzogchen* however does not see the path of spiritual transformation as overcoming confusion, the path itself is confusion. As a person is always connected to the true ground of his being and thus there is always a push to get out of confusion, as Desmond and Albahari also show. *Dzogchen* is translated above as ‘all things are complete within the sphere of reality’ (Duffy, 2010,15), and as such *Dzogchen* has a focus on the here and now, on what is occurring in a person’s life now because in ‘...the pure awareness of nowness is the real Buddha...’ (Wallace, (Trans.), 2016, xv) to be found. To think the truth of our lives as Heidegger suggests is to think that which is happening now and the pure awareness of what is happening reveals the compassionate loving-kindness of our real Buddha nature. How does confusion melt away ‘...by simply relaxing in this uncontrived open and natural state, we obtain the blessings of aimless self-liberation of whatever arises’ (2016, xv).

### 2.17 Clear-Light Awareness

The *Dzogchen* approach is designed to uncover our primordial state our ‘*Nibbānic* consciousness’ Buddha-mind or ‘open-awareness’ before the craving-*klesha* mind obscured it. It does not see itself as creating anything new, but like Caputo merely uncovering what has been there all along, ‘i.e. the uncontrived state, that allows the complete unfolding of self-knowledge and awareness’. (Longchenpa, Lipman & Peterson (Trans),2010,57). In the modern context, Caputo also sees the spiritual path as an uncovering of ‘.... what he was to be (*to ti en einai*)’ (Caputo,1987,12). Longchenpa, the fourteenth century *Nyingma* scholar in his text titled *The Jewel Ship* uses the phrase ‘the state of pure and total presence’ (Lipman et al,2010,33) to express the clear light, non-conceptual awareness. We recall that according to Mark Taylor a subject that cannot be in possession of himself without being fully present. According to Buddhism a mind given over to establishing the self-construct, though it appears to be solidifying the ground of the self and thus making it as present and as visible as possible, is in fact caught in an obscuring activity which blocks access to ‘total presence’ and full

realization. In this ‘state of pure and total presence’ there is no subject object and no mental events. Mind is that which takes an object, ‘pure and total presence does not’. All events including mental events are arising within the ‘state of pure and total presence’ and so are seen to be the originally pure state. In *Dzogchen*, the nature of mind and what appears to it, are primordially pure and therefore no adjustments are necessary. In the ‘non-dual’ state there is equality and nothing need be manufactured. When the mind is relaxed in the bare state of presence, which is there when there is no grasping at appearances or concepts ‘...there arises....an ongoing lucidity... This is the deep experience of creativity, the primordial freedom of mind itself’ (Lipman et al.,2010,36). In open awareness, there is nothing to latch onto, nothing to manipulate, we are encouraged to relax into the self-generating pure open awareness.

The *klesha*-mind seeks through its constructions to bring a version of itself into total presence. However, because this is a narrative and not the deepest truth that the person is there is a constant need and anxiety to keep creating and maintaining the self- narrative. *Longchenpa* outlines a way of resting into ‘a state of pure and total presence’ through the realization of ‘non-dual’ equality which undermines the reason for grasping at thoughts and manufacturing a self- concept (Lipman et al 2010). If a person can manage this the mind relaxes into its inherent nature that has no reason to manipulate anything. To be totally present is not to be constantly following the thoughts that arise, that is to be somewhere else. In the state of ‘total presence’ there is nowhere else one needs to go; therefore, the thoughts will liberate themselves in the non-grasping open space of total presence. Thoughts continue to arise that is their nature but in the ‘state of pure and total presence’ there is the awareness that these thoughts are not bound to me they are inherently free and arise naturally of themselves.

That which is uncontrived is that which is ‘natural (ordinary)’ or simple and *Dzogchen* wants to promote this natural un-manipulated state because when a person is in this natural state, he is right there firmly and openly with Caputo in ‘the midst of things’. That which is not manipulated arises complete as it is, perfect as it is in the ‘...state of pure and total presence, the universal creative intelligence’ (Lipman et al,2010,39). In this way ‘pure and total presence’ leads to ‘wisdom-mind’. There is nothing which is not complete or perfect outside of

‘unbounded wholeness’ therefore as the text says ‘In this there is nothing which is not complete. One perfect, two perfect, all perfect’ (2010,39).

Spiritual transformation in *Dzogchen* is not seen to be creating something new; it is an uncovering of what has been there all along. If we are thinking of spiritual transformation as an increase in knowledge and awareness *Dzogchen* agrees, but this is accomplished through accessing an ‘uncontrived’ state, which is free of all conditioned thinking constructs. If spiritual transformation is a movement in understanding from a partial to a more total understanding, *Dzogchen* says that this is a conceptual mind made objective to achieve and that it is clear light *non-conceptual awareness* which gives rise to a ‘state of pure and total presence’. The grasping *klesha* mind is trying to bring its contrived version of a self into full presence. Transformation as a letting go of endless task of creating and maintaining a self-construct, that inevitably fails because it is always partial and not total. However, it is achieved in the recognition of ‘non-dual’ equality of all events that arise. The state of ‘pure and total presence’ like the ‘point-instant’ view insists that there is nowhere else to be but here and now. Transformation in *Dzogchen* is not seen to occur through conceptual thinking as it is based on the belief that thoughts are bound to the person. In ‘pure and total presence’ there is the realization that thoughts are free and not bound and arise themselves. In *Dzogchen*, spiritual transformation is not the gaining of some high esoteric complicated understanding; the uncontrived un-manipulated state is natural and simple and places one ‘in the midst’ of things, not in an abstracted state. The simple is complete and perfect as it is where it is in its own place.

## 2.18 Pristine Awareness

The *Dzogchen* approach is not concerned with suppressing or transforming anything, by realizing mind as an ‘open dimension’ and that all forms are empty, then it’s possible to look ‘nakedly’ (without investment) at whatever arises non-dualistically and see its inherent freedom. It is by recognizing the ‘inner energy’ of things as a display of open pristine awareness, that whatever arises becomes a ‘...pure presence freed in its own place without being eliminated’ (Lipman et al 2010,41). The various passions are not, eliminated as in Early Buddhism or

refined as in the *Bodhisattva*, nor transformed as in the Tantric path. These passions are said to be ‘...pure and transparent in their own place’ (2010,42) which is a distinguishing feature of the *Dzogchen* path of self-liberation, compared to the other paths. Things are not made perfect they are perfectly complete, spontaneously of themselves, and of themselves are a creative self-generating pure presence. (2010,42). It is by being right here right now in full and open presence to whatever arises that liberation is experienced. Nothing is to be rejected in unbounded wholeness and pure presence of open awareness because all arisings ‘Are present as ornaments of one’s own state of being’ (2010,42). Liberation in *Dzogchen* is not concerned with choosing a side and suppressing the rejected other side, it is about the realization of openness itself. It is taking the teachings on emptiness and applying them in a way that liberates the mind into a non-grasping realization that emptiness means everything is of itself open or free and it is a person’s obsessive conditioned contrived thought patterns that are trying to limit and reify things into a bounded knowable something that can be controlled.

Liberation or freedom is not a position or place or a ground that one wins or achieves, it ‘... is rootless and groundless....’ (Lipman et al 2010,47) in that it is not planted or buried anywhere else, save in ‘the nature of mind’, and is groundless in so far as it is not a substantial position one takes up. The self-narrative is by its nature full of positions that suit its strategy of making the self fully real and fully present in the way of my choosing. The logical mind sees the *Dzogchen* method of groundless nature as being a recipe for standing for nothing. In practice, however, the contrary is being suggested. It is the dogged adherence to views, be they political, spiritual, or personal that gives rise to limited insular thinking which obscures our inherent compassionate understanding. *Longchenpa* points out that seeking the Buddha outside of oneself is a mistake ‘Seek for the Buddha nowhere else than in the primordial freedom itself, which is rootless and groundless-the pure fact of being aware right now’ (2010,47). Everything, one’s past, present and future are pure, nothing of our lives should be negated, it is all part of the unceasing continuous display. ‘The three worlds are primordially pure. Ultimately there is nothing more to understand. Not negation, unceasing

continuity. Unchanging, such is the view' (*Life of Marpa the Translator* (Trans) *Chögyam Trungpa* and Nalanda Translation Committee 1995, 60-1).

We are brought back again and again to the here and now reality in *Dzogchen*, to the truth of being where 'all things are complete within the sphere of reality' (Duffy,2010,15), to the present 'point-instant' moment, with its difficulties and to ourselves with our constant thoughts which are a display of 'pure and total presence'. We resist anything that would threaten our freedom yet *Dzogchen* and Buddhism in general re-iterate that we are obstructing the dynamic flow of our true freedom. How do we get in touch with or become part of that great Heraclitan flow, how do we step into the river with confidence even though we know it is all fleeting? *Dzogchen* says just realize you are no different than the nature of your mind and the nature of appearances, it is you and you are it. The great mystical experience is that you like an *Arhat* are the great immeasurable mystery. Enlightenment is not some esoteric realization, it is found nowhere but in the ever pure primordial, mirror like, nature of mind. Once, it is said, a confused and frustrated monk, went to his teacher and asked what the realization of *Dzogchen* was; the master replied; 'do you see the stars in the heaven and do you hear the dog barking? Yes, replied the monk; well said the teacher that is the realization of *Dzogchen*. It is not out there or in here, that is delusion, it is everywhere' (*Sogyal Rinpoche, Retreat at Dzogchen Beara 1999*).

If the *Dzogchen* message could be essentialized it would be, stop making yourself small, you are far greater than you know. All the things you cling to are 'not-self', like the *Arhat*, your true nature is immeasurable, unfathomable, and your mind is a boundless openness stretching to infinity. You are the *Dhamma*-become, the ultimate empty thing, experienced in 'unbounded wholeness' and open objectless discernment/ awareness, the 'unborn', 'un-become' deathless radiant nature of mind itself. *Dzogchen* offers freedom in the here and now and the desire for freedom has energized many rebellions and the Buddha must be included as one of those who in offering freedom from delusion and self- imposed imprisonment, is a revolutionary of the mind. We trust in the external, until it fails us, and fail to see the true nature of things and our minds. As Dzogchen Penlop says in his book *Rebel Buddha* 'According to the Buddha, our freedom is never in question. We have always been free and our minds have been ...brilliantly awake and aware'

(Dzogchen Penlop,2010,1). Enlightenment is to wake up and remain awake, and in the *Dzogchen* context it is literally to allow the primordial luminous mind to light up.

Contemplating spiritual transformation as a movement from a complicated painful life of not understanding the true nature of things to a simpler one of peaceful contemplative existence *Dzogchen* would respond that there is nothing to transform, there is only to realize the inherent freedom in the open dimension of ‘non-duality’. Spiritual transformation for *Dzogchen* is not concerned with transforming or refining passions, it is more focused on recognizing the inner energy of things (‘point-instant’ ‘flashes of energy’) as a display of ‘open pristine awareness’. Like Heidegger’s view on meditative thinking which thinks ‘the truth of being’ discussed earlier, things are liberated in their own place because they are seen to be self-arising pure displays of wisdom. The *klesha-mind* is working hard to establish the self’s presence as fully as possible, it is trying to establish its hereness. Spiritual transformation is not for *Dzogchen* an abstraction from hereness or presence to life, full presence is being able to stay in the middle of things and this is achieved in *Dzogchen* through being fully present to whatever arises because things are freed where they are, as an aspect of pristine awareness. Is transformation a movement from an old ground or perspective to a new ground or position? *Dzogchen* says that liberation is groundless and rootless in so far as freedom is not buried anywhere to be uncovered and it is not found in any new position, no matter how profound. *Dzogchen* says that if you are on a journey and seeking the Buddha, look no further than this moment’s awareness and see that there is nothing to negate and that everything is a display of open pristine awareness recognizing itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’. If you are seeking where the truth may be *Dzogchen* says you are it, the great completion right here and now and enlightenment is to be experienced in every pure ‘point-instant’ moment that arises in ‘the nature of your mind’. Mind is always luminous and aware and *Dzogchen* points out that we are standing in the way of experiencing our own luminous clarity which is also the true nature of everything.

## 2.19 Conclusion

The Spiritual transformative question that Caputo and Buddhism asks is, if what we are doing is bringing us closer to being fully present to ‘that which one was to be’ (*to ti en einai*) (Caputo,1987,12). To be present is to be real and if De Chardin is correct and we are led in the direction of the fullest, then we are attracted to being fully present, fully real. Real existence is change, according to the ‘point-instant’ view and therefore transformation begins with recognition of, and a willingness to step into that change.

In Augustine’s story of the self becoming itself, self-realization is self-appropriation based on recollections that fits the story of the self’s becoming. Transformation cannot be just a new chapter that adds to the constructing of a coherent centre to create a meaningful totality; it must reveal what is the deepest truth of things beyond the self that arises from and is dependent on the narrative construct. The self in seeking a centre becomes self-conscious because of being a character in its own story and thus because it is the story teller it is at the same time outside the narrative it is relaying.

To open a person to a new and deeper understanding Buddhism stops the story telling with its teaching on ‘not self’, ‘emptiness’ or ‘dependent origination’. According to Buddhism what we are aware of or conscious of is strongly influenced by the story we are telling and how, the *karmic* imprints from the past are stored in the ‘all base consciousness’, are affecting what we remember. If the story is based to a large extent on recollection from the past and *karmic* imprints are arising also from past actions, then what supports the self view is mainly historical that the ‘all base consciousness’ grasps at and attempts to make real. Transformation is coming to recognize how conditioned one’s thoughts and the actions which follow are. The transformative realization is to realize that what is appearing is not the present but the seeds of past delusional activity stored in the ‘all base consciousness coming to fruition’. *Thrangu Rinpoche* in highlighting that what consciousness is conscious of is an image of the thing it is apprehending, highlights that mind relates to form as internal. Hence what is really appearing is the all base in the form of objects. Transformation is the purification of a mind that is driven by conditioned concepts, that sees and relates to the world as

external separate phenomena, to a mind that is ‘non-conceptually’ open and aware. In the Buddhist view we are not living in the real or in the here and now because what we are encountering most of the time is conditioned psychic material we have been ‘channelled’ to reconstruct to fit the self narrative. Transformation is the realization of the ‘empty’ nature of things which transforms the misperception that objects are external and consciousness internal. Kelly’s personal construct psychology highlights how inner constructions are made in the name of ‘predictability’ or safety. Caputo apprehends that a safe life does not encompass a ‘passion for the impossible’ which he sees as a religious structure motivating and inspiring a person to stay in the transformative experiences of inevitable failure. Transformation is possible because all appearances are internal and thus it is within the person’s control to purify the ‘impure mental events’ that arises as the re-appearance of *karmic* seeds. Through purification practice ‘primordial awareness’ which knows the truth of the ‘expanse of emptiness’ (*Dharma-dhatu*) as reality, is uncovered. Transformation is achieved when dualistic thinking ceases, due to recognizing the equality of all appearances and the primordial awareness of the expanse of emptiness, the essence of all consciousness, is attained. Transformation is the attainment of the primordial awareness of ‘non-duality’ or equality which undermines the selective activity of the *klesha* mind.

In the previous chapter, Caputo’s paradigm for transformation centres on the person encountering and staying in the flux to experience the transformation that comes through engagement without metaphysical aids. In this direct experience of travelling in the dark, in the knowledge of ignorance, there is the experience of standing openly in in the stream of life’s flashing energy. Because the truth of ‘emptiness’ is universal; one is always in the flow of being. Thus, the struggle that the *klesha* mind is engaged in, in trying to construct an illusory identity, is a futile attempt to force an idea of identity together with an idea being. It is in the realization of emptiness that being and identity arise as one.

The mind (*citta*) in *Early Theravāda* Buddhism is associated with intending or willing through which mind-sets and frames of mind are set up. Repeated mind-sets generate persisting character traits and the feeling of continuity. *Citta* is said to be the organizing centre through its willing activity. The mind driven by will

to perform actions is a mind that is being channelled in the same way that *karma* is directing it. In the *Theravāda* tradition transformation is a process of dis-identifying with the *klesha* mind, this process is aided by building positive force through engaging in wholesome activities of loving kindness and compassion from which ‘goodness power’ grows. Breaking free of the limiting *klesha* mind that believes in deficit and an insignificant self is possible through loving kindness practice by which the limited mind can be transformed to being the immeasurable mind of the ‘great self’.

Albahari suggests that the mind is best understood in Early *Theravāda* Buddhism as a two-tiered process in which delusion and liberation are features of the same mind.

Desmond highlights how the ‘erotic’ grasping mind is seeking in its way a greater understanding. *Tsokni Rinpoche* has commented that the mind is always trying to get out of confusion. *Dzogchen* has outlined that there is ordinary grasping mind (*sem*) and the true nature of mind (*yeshe*), but this is not a two-tier system as the pure nature of mind is (*yeshe*) has always been present. Transformation or liberation, for Albahari, is to be found in *Nirvāṇa*, which is not separate from the mind that perceives it, it is imbedded in the perception process itself. The *klesha* mind seeks, happiness, unity unbroken presence and a unique identity, in its attempts to create a bounded unique self. There is a tension between the energies of the ‘erotic’ craving (*tanhā*) driven mind that seeks greater boundedness and the ‘posthumous-mind’ of the *Arhat* that has let attachment go to such an extent that his mind has expanded to infinity. A transformative insight is the recognition that the *klesha* mind, though not understanding its own motivation, is trying to import essentially *Nirvānic* ‘qualities’ in the service of a self-structure. However, we might ask where are these qualities being imported from? As part of the perceiving process itself they are inbuilt into the mind-stream itself. *Thrangu Rinpoche* in his exposition shows that consciousness is relating to images of the forms to be apprehended and thus what we think of as external is in fact internal. His outside inside model is the model which says that transformation is possible because changing one’s mind revolutionizes what one sees and how one relates to what one is thinking or more precisely what is it that a person has stored in the

‘all base consciousness’ that is thinking the person, channelling them into a particular way of being and acting in the world.

The *klesha* mind’s drive is to create a ‘bounded’ self centre is too small a vision for *Bon Dzogchen*’s vision of ‘unbounded wholeness’. The transformative realization is the realization that there is nothing outside ‘unbounded wholeness’ as such all phenomena is seen to be a dynamic display (‘flashes of energy’) of ‘unbounded wholeness’ which is ‘open awareness’ recognizing its own nature. The transformed mind of an enlightened being realizes ‘open awareness’ is a realization of ‘objectless awareness’ thus it is said to be without hindrances and therefore ‘clear’. It is objectless wisdom, a union of the clear and the empty that does not relate to reality as an object. The transformed insight recognizes that reality is not the object of wisdom but rather wisdom itself. In the external world and inside the mind of the enlightened person appearances are said to be a spontaneous display of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and if these ‘ownerless appearances’ are not attached to, they are said to ‘self-liberate’. Transformation seen as a moving from attachment to non-attachment is not the *Dzogchen* view, it sees liberation as inbuilt within all spontaneous appearances that appear as a display of the wisdom of emptiness.

The transformative gospel of *Dzogchen* is that everything is fundamentally pure and open. Fundamentally everything is open and empty, thus there is equality and inherent freedom in everything and nothing need be negated. In *Dzogchen* transformation is not a new position, or new ground, that one discovers, it has no definable ground or roots, not being planted anywhere except in ‘the nature of mind’. It is groundless in so far as it is not a position one takes up. We have always been free and our minds have always been luminously awake and aware.

The vehicle or ‘ground’ of transformation is ‘non-conceptual wisdom’, the ‘non-dual’ pure awareness of this moment. Wisdom, free of appearances, is non-conceptual *original* wisdom which is seen to be beyond consciousness. Original wisdom is not a type of an appearance ‘...it is not distinct from pure being, but is its intrinsic luminous clarity’ (Scott,2004,155). Non-conceptual wisdom sees the suchness of all phenomena and as such all appearances become ‘... the self-manifestation of original wisdom contemplating pure being’ (2004,155). All

appearances are an expression of wisdom mind contemplating pure being or 'open awareness' contemplating 'unbounded wholeness'.

## Chapter 3 - Mystery and Manifestation

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores what are the possible conditions, experiences and agents that might assist transformation. With regard to conditions I explore if there is a liminal or in-between state that a person might occupy when they set out on a transformative journey but have not arrived at the end. However, if there is no end to the journey, as the ‘point-instant’ ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘objectless awareness’ would suggest, is the person always in an in-between ‘referencless’ state perpetually underway? Is this structureless in-between state that matrix of transformation? The tension between the ‘*klesha*’ mind seeking to create abiding references through making the self construct as visible as possible and the spiritual mind that seeks surrendering to the deepest truth is explored in this chapter. What is the path that is to be followed to ‘find’ the deepest truth? Is it Heidegger’s path that is always arriving from the future that the person is not yet, or is it rather than being a path of future ‘thereness’, is in fact a path of ‘hereness’, as the ‘point-instant’ teaching would uphold? What happens if the path abruptly stops and a person is lost on the trail, what is there that might be relied on then? I look at Han Shan’s poem ‘*Cold Mountain*’ (Kline (trans.),2006) to see what he suggests that we might do when we have, like Dante, ‘awoke in a dark wood where the true way is wholly lost’ (in Whyte,1994,1). If the spiritual path is defined by being underway to a future of revelation, is a person subsequently displaced from the present?

Is there the experience of revelation on a spiritual journey and if so does it reveal something new? Or has it as Buddhism, through its Buddha nature teaching, would say been present all along? Is a person revealed to themselves through the ‘gift’ of things as Marion suggests (in Harvey,2012), which echoes a return to what Desmond calls original ‘astonishment’ at the ‘...givenness of being’? (in Simpson,2009,36). Given that the true nature of the deluded mind has been seen in *Dzogchen* and others to be the ‘brightly shining mind’, is there really two truths or two minds of absolute and relative at ‘strife’ with each other and working in different directions. Buddhism sees this and all ‘strife’ as a battle between self

and other. It deflates the battle through its 'non-dual' emptiness or 'not self' teaching. The suffering that Buddhism wishes to address is the suffering that trying to create certainty, for the self, brings. Taylor discusses how for the Christian the old certainties of 'creation incarnation and redemption' no longer apply since the death of God. The resultant uncertain mind tries to bring certainty to the self through domination and appropriation. Descartes's fusion of truth and certainty in his *cogito ergo sum* formula, means a person is now certain in the self and that things exist because he thinks them.

The Buddhist approach is slightly different in that it investigates and shows how uncertain and unreliable are the things the *klesha* mind is trying to establish. Is the establishment of certainty an agent that will bring a person to the other shore of realization? Caputo has suggested that transformation occurs when a 'passion for the impossible' is active in the person; therefore, the pursuit of referential certainty would seem to hinder progress. *Han Shan's* answer as to what a person should do when the path abruptly and unexpectedly ends, is that body should ask 'shadow which way home' (Kline(trans.),2006xx). This is an indication that travelling in the dark of unknowing might be necessary as a dynamic in the transformative process. Travelling in the dark of unknowing challenges practitioners to let go of constructed certainties and travel in the knowledge of ignorance to cross to the other shore of realization as the Buddha was said to have done 'unsupported'. A mind without limiting neurotic boundaries is the mind that Buddhism fosters. This is the 'wisdom mind' that lives free of conditioned objects and is equated with the experience of *Nirvana* itself. Buddhism cultivates travelling in the knowledge of ignorance or travelling in the dark, by encouraging a 'passion for the impossible' and permission to be our extraordinary Buddha selves. It encourages a fearless life because it knows what is seen and unseen, known and unknown arise from the same darkness, they are as the Tao says, 'darkness within darkness, the gateway to all understanding' (Feng and English, (trans.),1989,3). To understand that the darkness of mystery and the darkness of manifestation arise together is to understand the 'non-dual' nature of things. All referential seeking of the *klesha* mind is undermined in the 'non-dual' perspective.

Advanced meditators in Tibet undertake what is called a dark retreat where they are walled up in a cave in the dark for three years. They have gone dark to find that, as

Wendell Berry says, ‘the dark too blooms and sings’ (from the poem ‘To know the Dark’ 1998,68). A person can have a dark experience also in their lives through intense suffering or woundedness. A ‘passion for the impossible’ (Caputo in Simpson,2009) and the ‘point-instant’ view have failure built in as part of its growth teaching. Failure can be a wounding experience; therefore, is wounding an adjunct of failure and necessary in the transformative process? Without the wounding the failure and the suffering, we would be only as Goethe highlights ‘a troubled guest on the dark earth’ (in Dunn,2001,20-21). A person does not suffer aimlessly, however, it is a testament to the impossibility of nothingness, because suffering directly reveals the truth of being to the person.

A journey of discovery has many things that set it in motion, in this chapter I look at some of them and the letting go processes that they demand. A crisis, being inspired, a defiant need to change one’s life whatever the reason there is an inner question that a person is trying to answer. For John Dunne, the question is ‘does becoming end in being or nothingness’ (1975,1). This is a central question for any one undertaking a transformative journey. A spiritual journey according to Dunne asks a person to ‘pass over’ to another point of view. Passing over and returning is for Dunne the dynamic transformative energy and a significant spiritual paradigm mirroring Christ’s death and resurrection. Vincent Shen uses the term ‘strangification’ (in Shen 2003) for the process of ‘passing over’ to the stranger’s position. Passing over and returning transformed is for Dunne a compassionate engagement or, like Gandhi, an ‘*Experiment with Truth*’ (1921). This compassionate engagement for Dunne is to be ‘doing what God is doing’ (Dunne,1973,85). Passing over to new perspectives necessitates a willingness to travel in the darkness of the knowledge of ignorance. Traveling in the knowledge of ignorance leads to a wisdom oriented mind, a mind that seeks understanding, not just confirmation of a position. The central spine of Dunne’s work is the question ‘Am I doing what God is doing’ (1973,85). This is more than simply following the old plan of incarnation and redemption, as per Taylor, transformation requires personal responsibility to be taken for the life one is living

and the trajectory of the path one is on. A life of ‘passing over’ or travelling in the ‘knowledge of ignorance’(Dunne,1975,18-19) is a life of discovering what is unknown or a mystery. Travelling in the dark is an experience in a person’s life when the road they are on unexpectedly ends. This is the experience that *Han Shan* outlines when ‘... the path is lost, now it is time for body to ask shadow which way home (Kline(trans.),2006xx). In the Tao mystery and manifestation, the seen and the hidden, the known and unknown, arise from darkness and together are said to be ‘the gateway to all understanding’ (Feng and English (trans.) 1989,3). Mystery for Dunne is not ‘unintelligibility’ but rather ‘inexhaustible intelligibility’ (Dunne,1975,7).

If a dynamic of transformation is travelling in the darkness of unknowing I investigate what that darkness might be and how it is transformative. The darkness of unknowing is a metaphor that arises in the early Christian church also. Plotinus and Eriugena describes God as the ‘beyond being’, that is beyond thoughts words and description, and once a person recognizes this one is free to ‘plunge into the truly mysterious darkness of unknowing’ (Sells,1994,35-36). The deeper a person travels into the ‘darkness of unknowing’, that which is beyond words becomes more and more visible, though never fully seen. To preserve the mystery of God or the ‘nothingness’ Eriugena’s language, like the ‘point-instant language and Caputo’s ‘undecidability’ principle never arrives at a definitive conclusion to keep the ‘unboundedness of God as open as possible. To preserve ‘unboundedness’ his language is always moving just beyond reach, thus carrying the mind beyond its rational borders into the nothing, non-being, the darkness, the abyss. In the Buddhist context *Zen* promotes the ‘no mind, mind’ through its use of *Kōans* and *Haiku*’s that push beyond the rational mind. The ‘emptiness of emptiness’ teaching is also an effort to stop the rational mind spinning out its usual conditioned thinking. A language of constant motion is promoted by such teachings as ‘point-instant’ reality and ‘unbounded wholeness’. These teachings promote constant openness and in terms of transformation are proposing what the Sufi mystics call ‘perpetual transformation’ (*ma’rifa* – Sells,1994,91). For the Sufi, the heart is the location where a continuous transformative knowing happens.

Compassion is the vehicle by which there is a 'passing over' for Dunne to another and for Eckhart compassion is 'the best name for God' (in Fox,1983,111). In *Dzogchen* compassion naturally arises when the blocks to realizing 'unbounded wholeness and open awareness are removed. Being compassionate is transformative for the Christian as it is to be doing what God is doing and for the Sufi it is the heart of transformation itself. Continuous transformation takes place at every 'point-instant' moment; never stopping because it is the 'station of no station' (Sells,1994,105). For the Sufi, the real and the true manifests through change, the static is unreal echoing the view of the early Indian Buddhist view of reality as change. Eckhart agrees and says that God creates the entire universe fully in this present moment (in Fox,1983,2) while in *Hua yen* the entire universe is being recreated in every interpenetrating moment.

What happens when a person lets go and enters the path of unknowing darkness where language itself strains to describe the experience? In Buddhism, the sound of *mantra* is one vehicle that is used to give a flavour of the language beyond language whose sound is said to express the inherent nature of things. I investigate if the person themselves has a unique sound. In the Sufi tradition transformation requires a passing away (*fanā*) (Sells,1994,106) of ego and in the contemplative writings of the Christian church, Hadwijch speaks of the necessity for a 'simplification' and 'annihilation' (in McGinn,2001,35) that makes all things a 'transparency' (2001,75). When something is transparent they are in what Longchenpa called 'pure and total presence' (Lipman et al 2010,33) where one can see through them and as they are without artificiality one can see their true unbounded 'no-thinged' (Lichtmann,2001,75) nature. To travel in the knowledge of ignorance is to enter the boundless and limitless. The way to the 'unknowable God' for Mechthild of Magdeburg is to love the nothingness (*das nicht*) (Tobin,2001,49). Through the practices of wanting, willing and knowing nothing one is transformed into the heart of God's nothingness, where God's constant compassionate birthing transforms one's opaqueness (*avidyā*) into a 'fluid transparency' (Lichtmann,2001,77). The transformative energy arises from the tension created between the cataphatic need to establish positive references and the apophatic need to continuously empty the reference of all positive contents.

In this chapter, I look at what it might take to deconstruct and provoke cognitive transformation in what Studstill calls the psychological system (2005), What are the possible agents that pushes out the boundaries of the cognitive system creating more internal psychic space for transformation to occur. I compare the Buddha himself to Hermes and show how he too is a transformative agent that disrupt habitual patterns and open new ways of thinking.

### 3.2 Liminality

To begin this discussion, it is helpful to reflect on the recurring theme of structureless-ness as a matrix of a transformative journey that has arisen in the previous chapters. Previously structure-less-ness arises with the ‘point-instant’ view that keeps every moment open by preventing anything settling into a solid concept. In the same way, the early Buddhist teaching of ‘not-self’ is the insight that undermines grasping possessiveness and attempts at solidification that the craving (*tanhā*) driven mind makes to identify and solidify a self. ‘Non-conceptual wisdom’ is a wisdom that is without preconceptions, that is open and willing to meet whatever arises as it is. In the modern context, Caputo’s paradigm of ‘metaphysics without metaphysics’ or ‘religion without a theology’, is suggesting that a transformative experience happens, when a person has stopped raising what they know to an ‘absolute knowing’ and is willing to travel in ‘undecidability’. Desmond’s picture of referencless openness is expressed in his ‘posthumous-mind image, this is a mind that has let go completely of its’ ‘erotic’ campaign and is now open and receptive. The *Bon Dzogchen* view of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ suggests that neurotic structuring to establish an illusory self is not needed. If all arisings are a self-arising display of ‘unbounded wholeness’ then there is nothing to hold onto, nothing to structure, there is only freedom.

This section explores what a transformative structure-less-ness or reference-less-ness matrix might look like and what it might yield. Liminality defined as an in between or on the way state is a good place to begin the exploration of referenclessness. Liminality, in the anthropological description, defines a time or

space where the person undergoing a transformative experience or journey, such as an initiation ceremony and is said to be in-between his past state and his new future state. It is this transitional phase that is said to make transformation possible. It is a phase where the old certainties are dying or have died away and as such it is outside the known structure of things. Indeed, the structureless nature of this phase is such that the person is said to be ‘...invisible, he is at once no longer classified and not yet classified’ (Turner,1967,96, in Gilhus, 1984,107). The early Buddhist description the enlightened *Arhat*, is he who is the embodiment of structure-less-ness and invisibility, being that he cannot be ‘found or measured’. It is in this marginal (*limen*) phase, according to Turner, that the person achieves ‘gnosis’. In an initiation, the old structures are dismantled and the ‘true’ structures of ‘things as they are’ are revealed. There is an obvious connection here to the Buddhist path and practices which work towards dismantling old retarding structures and the enlightened person who has let go of the measurable, and the findable to such a degree that he cannot be found or classified. He has become the truth of things (*dharma*) he has been introduced to, and having fully embraced the truth of emptiness to such an extent he is invisible to minds still clinging to the reality of conditioned objects. While there are parallels between the enlightened person’s condition and the liminal person, there is one subtle difference between them. The invisibility or unfindability of the liminal person is due to the collapse of the old personality structures of *rūpa*/form, *vedanā*/ feeling, *saññā*/cognition, *saṅkhāras*/constructing activities, *viññāṇa*/consciousness or discernment that have formed the self-concept up to that point. The person is invisible until he gains some new identity and thereby structural definition. The enlightened person by contrast is invisible and unfindable because he has become the truth of dependent arising, emptiness and ‘not self, he is now the manifestation of the open ‘unbounded’ structures itself. This is the ultimate coming together of identity and being, where one becomes the truth of the structureless, empty, ‘not-self’, infinitely repeating ‘point-instant’ reality.

Liminality suggests being in a space which is outside, on the margins, it is an undefined area suggested by metaphors of swamps, forests and deserts. It is that space or state that is not encompassed by the common order of things. ‘It is an

otherness ...outside binary divisions...' (Mølbaek,2010,15). What is other or outside is not reducible to dualistic dissection, it is '...a pure state of being ...' (2010,16). The enlightened *Arhat* is the embodiment of 'a pure state of being' and as such is a radical otherness to those with less pure vision. In the medieval Christian writings of Meister Eckhart, God the nameless and irreducible 'nothingness' can only be accessed by a transformed 'unknowing knowledge' that through 'unselfconsciousness' has come to know and see the truth of things 'transparently'. 'God is the pure clear One who is separate from all twoness' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,45). A person is closed off from experiencing this irreducible otherness however when they assume the dualistic perspective of the 'erotic-mind'. Secondly liminality can be defined as '...a "borderline" or "threshold" between two spaces or identities' (Mølbaek,2010,16). This definition resting in the middle or between is an 'inter-structural' definition. The threshold is full of possibility but needs to be crossed to bring them into being. Staying on the borders and not crossing is the experience of being stuck. There is the growth possibility of going beyond the line to the other and returning with the new experiences. Liminality is also defined 'As a temporal transition or passage from an earlier state of being to a later state of being' (2010,18), and implies that liminality defines the process of transition or of being underway. The present moment is defined by 'underwayness' and '...corresponds... to an existential understanding of *ec-static* or always on the way...' (2010,18). 'Point-instant' reality, 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open objectless awareness' together point to a continuous underwayness dynamic that meets everything openly and freshly each time.

### 3.3 'Dependent Origination'

Liminality implies a perpetual dynamic of 'underwayness' an extended overtime-ness that suggests a continuous present. In the Early Indian Buddhist view this continuous present is refined into the view of 'point-instant' reality. In the Buddhist view the structures that keep a person 'visible', the projections and roles that we reify, are not fundamentally real, they are empty of an inherent self. It describes this structuring as 'Dependent Origination' which is composed of twelve links to emphasise that this and in fact all structured things are inherently

subject to dissolution once one of these links is broken. The foundation of a person's structuring in the dependent origination scheme is *avidyā*, not seeing clearly. Being ignorant of the self-less nature of the self and phenomena a person lacks the wisdom to see the empty nature of things and thus reifies the self and phenomena. Not seeing clearly generates actions of body speech and mind which produce *karmic* constructions and from these constructions follow consciousness, and the remainder of the twelve links, which results in re-birth in the physical sense but also could indicate a continuous giving birth to the same misguided interpretations. The dependent origination scheme also highlights that because of the dependent nature of things any intervention that breaks the chain will result in the collapse of the whole. Succinctly summarized in the dependent origination formula; 'If this is that is..., this arising that arises...., this is not that is not...., this ceasing that ceases....' (Plamintr,1994,77).

As Buddhism sees everyone as capable of achieving enlightenment, through their Buddha-nature, or energy of enlightenment potential, there is a sense of the possibility of being on the Path, of being in 'transition' (underway) from an earlier state of *avidyā* to a future state of Buddhahood. This under-way-ness Mølbaek compares to Heidegger's idea that '...who I am always arrives at me from the future that I am not yet' (Heidegger,1927 in Mølbaek,2010,18). Following from this is his idea that the existential experience is both ec-static (underway) and eccentric (without centre). Being defined by the future the present has no central core itself and is continuously underway. *Hua yen* would say that the centre is everywhere; everyone has the power to create the whole. The present achieves validity and a distinctive character through being 'underway'. While all schools of Buddhism share the idea of a path to

Enlightenment, 'underwayness' as it were, 'point-instant' reality being one, *Dzogchen* for instance sees no difference between our fundamental nature (ground) the path or the final realization. There is a distinct difference here between this *Dzogchen* view and the 'underway' view. The difference might be summed up as the difference between becoming and being. In the *Dzogchen* view we are 'it' already, we don't become 'it' 'we are 'it' now and always. This is reinforced by the 'point-instant' view which each moment, and every conceivable part of that moment, re-iterates 'nowness' as opposed to 'futureness'. *Hua yen* in

its 'non-dual' emphasis also underlines 'nowness', in so far as the building (the whole) is continuously completed by the rafter that supports it, while it also continuously gets its definition as a rafter from its constant ongoing participation in the whole. The *Dzogchen* and 'point-instant' view is that at a fundamental level, there is a correspondence between our fundamental nature or identity and the present moment. *Hua yen* emphasizing the 'non-dual' perspective sees that what is commonly called the two truths, of relative and absolute, being in fact only one truth, the truth of the absolute. From this it follows that, like *Dzogchen*, we are not underway we are arrived.

Liminality and the existential understanding that are based on ec-static 'underwayness' and eccentric 'centrelessness' sees a '...non-correspondence' as the basis for momentary existence. Each present being defined by a future horizon means, 'I am thus never simply a self-corresponding entity in the present, for the meaning of each present is always defined by means of a future horizon of being ahead of myself' (Mølbaek,2010,18). Earlier Caputo describes the future ahead for a person, as a recollection forward towards '...what he was to be (*to ti en einai*)' (Caputo,1987,12) and thus not unlike the teaching on Buddha-nature, that what is ahead has been present and the journey is one of uncovering, in the present moment, rather than in a future.

There is no horizon to be found in 'unbounded wholeness' or a 'point-instant' reality, thus the present is always being defined by the present. A liminal experience undermines the old self-structures and throwing a person out of centre sets them in motion.

In reflecting on the dynamics of spiritual transformation the experience of centrelessness is not so much the lack of centre, now that the old centre has crumbled, but rather it is the experience of the centre being everywhere as *Hua yen* highlights.

The 'point-instant' view says that underwayness is perpetual in every moment, not a transition from a former to a newer state of being. The spiritual 'journey' is a journey that is to be undertaken openly without preconceived structuring activities (*samskāra*) or for Caputo without references to an absolute knowing.

The Buddha himself when asked how he crossed the flood (*samsara*) to get to the other shore (*Nirvāṇa*) responded ‘.... Friend without support, unstriving (*appatiṭṭham anāyūham*) I crossed the flood’. It is only when a person has divested themselves of all constructed supports that might weigh him down ‘.... can discernment freely swim in the “deep” to safety’ (Harvey,1995,202-3).

### 3.4 Being in the present moment

Favouring a ‘non-correspondence’ future, undermines the present moment and thus like the advertisement for the Xbox game which said, ‘wherever you are be somewhere else’ it favours not just simply being in the car but rather where you are going, not the moments of the journey but the destination. Buddhism promotes the visible, being here in the ‘midst of things’, and being in this moment, as opposed to the invisible being somewhere else. The teachings on impermanence and ‘point-instant’ reality are instruments that are designed to show how flimsy and dependent the links in our psychic constructions are. These teachings may seem to promote ‘invisibility’ through the ‘not self’ and ‘point-instant’ teachings, but paradoxically they promote being visible and totally present by undermining *avidyā*. These teachings bring a person in touch with the real, in this very moment. Just as earlier there is seen to be a tension between energies working towards a bounded self and energies working towards unboundedness, there is here a tension between energies that seek visibility and those that seek invisibility.

Liminality is seen to be the ‘event’ that gives rise to identity. It is a ‘happening’ of the between through which a person is revealed to himself as something different. It is defined in the Heidegger sense as the ‘strife’ between subject and object that occasions ‘...every un-concealment of present experience’ (in Mølbaek, 2010, 36). A liminal ontology focuses on how the subject and object arises. In the Buddhist ‘Dependent

Origination’ view there is a deconstruction of how we relate to the ‘other’. An essential link in this scheme is craving (*tanhā*) giving rise to clinging (*upadana*) which in turn gives rise to becoming (*bhava*) or existence and once in existence the inevitability of decay. ‘Dependent Origination’ teachings are a showing of how the unknowing, unaware, unconscious, *klesha-mind* relates to what is other.

Through attachment and grasping the desire for completion in the other is built. It is only when our unconscious habits are exposed, is the 'other' un-concealed and revealed as 'not-self'. The emptiness teaching like liminality, stresses the middle, and is focused on the process, from the point of view of what is being brought into existence. While liminality is defined as the 'strife' between subject and object resulting in an 'unconcealment', the dependent origination view defines the relationship with the other as motivated by craving, a craving that in fact clouds seeing the other as other. From the 'point-instant' point of view what we see as stable enduring objects that we can appropriate into the self-project are in fact only momentary 'flashes of energy'. As bursts of energy there is nothing that is substantial enough or lasts long enough to grasp onto. 'Dependent Origination' is the matrix of concealment and in turn the process whereby that which is concealed is revealed clearly in and of itself devoid of attachments and projections, when the links are broken. Seeing the other clearly, non-graspingly, allows both the subject and object to arise in a milieu of mutual recognition and respect. The 'Dependent Origination' scheme breaks through our 'economic' connection with phenomena, when realized it uncouples a person from the circular thinking that holds them locked and distant from the true infinite 'sky like nature of mind'.

One of the dynamics of spiritual transformation that has arisen already is the dynamic of how spiritual transformation seeks to bring a person's identity closer to being, to the truth of things as they are. The 'Dependent Origination' process shows how identity is dependent on a conclave of dependent phenomena and as such is empty in and of itself. Identity itself is dependent and does not reside in the person or others but arises in the confluence of the elements that are at play at a given time. Identity is that which arises from a process and is not something which exists prior to it. In Augustin's process view one's history is not a reliable base as with each situation certain memories will come to the fore as more important than others. History is determined by the type of encounters a person has and determines which past they connect with. Identity is variable it is a 'narrative construct' as Augustine pointed out earlier. Liminality is based on the principle that identity is created in the betwixt and between space and while 'Dependent Origination' shows that identity is situational or a variable construct,

a person's Buddha nature that emerges when all clinging has ceased, is beyond variability as it is unconstructed. However, Buddha nature is not seen to be a self. The nature of Buddha is the nature of *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa* 'unbecome' 'unmade' 'unconstructed', which is the nature of emptiness.

### 3.5 The path to enlightenment is object related

There is a Path to Enlightenment; in early Buddhism, it is laid out in eight steps or wholesome ways of living called the 'eight-fold path'. The eight-fold path is a recipe of how to relate to objects with a 'wholesome' understanding. However, from the 'not self' 'emptiness' and 'point-instant' perspective there is no movement towards something different but rather, as in Caputo's view, there is an uncovering of that which we have always been (*to ti en einai*), and timelessly continue to be. Earlier it became clear that even in delusion the 'erotic' mind is attempting to move a person towards the fullest where truth lies and where being and identity converge. Therefore, we might ask if a person is transforming himself or is transformation happening to him. Transformation to a 'great self' was seen to be assisted by the cultivation of

'goodness power' or positive force' built up in the practice of 'loving-kindness' and 'mindfulness' towards all that is other. From the Buddhist view if the engagement with the other is based on craving then a person is not having an experience that does any more than re-affirm their view of the self. The transformative experience is the recognition of how the other is being used to strengthen the self -system and recognition that freedom and liberation rests in allowing the other to be as it is. In this the presence of the other, uncoupled from craving becomes a gift or a restoration of primordial or 'original blessings'.

How a person relates to other in the form of objects is also discussed in phenomenology by Marion. From the phenomenological object relations point of view of Marion, it is through the 'gift' of things that we are called into being and it is through them that a person discovers themselves (in Harvey, 2012 in E.R. Severson, ed). Heidegger as discussed earlier saw the relationship with objects that were close as revealing the truth of being. Desmond sees the return to the experience of original 'giftedness' as the beginning of thinking. From the

Buddhist perspective giftedness of things cannot arise within a system that is driven by craving and a need to possess or own that which is other. Levinas makes a similar point when he says that our motivation to possess the other is a motivation to possess the transcendence of the other, to have it for ourselves, but if achieved the other would no longer be desirable. It is this paradox of wanting and not wanting that Buddhism recognises and offers the alternative ‘not-self’ and ‘dependent nature’ teachings, as compassionate insights to alleviate the suffering.

The objects a person craves are those they value but are they merely lifeless external things? In the phenomenal view of Heidegger, the object is not seen to be passive but is that which connects a person and makes their relationship to the world. We are intentional beings-in-the-world always addressing or perceiving something. We are embedded in and never outside an experience as a thinking observer. We are called or invited by things, ‘it “claims” us, ...we are bethinged’ (Heidegger, in Mølbaek,2010,52). For Heidegger, a thing has agency and we are gathered into its possibility; ‘Thinking in this way, we are called by the thing as the thing. In the strict sense of the German word *bedingt*, we are the bethinged, the conditioned ones’ (2010,52). Being the ‘conditioned ones’ is the very situation that ‘Dependent Origination’ highlights and freedom from this conditioning is what Buddhism offers. That which results in conditioning and perpetuating ‘ignorance’ of how things really are is not seen to be a gift. We are conditioned by what we focus on and pay repeated attention to and Buddhism recognising this mental propensity offers the ‘eight-fold path’ of wholesome living, meditation and ‘deity’ visualization as a ‘skilful’ (*upāya*) method of implanting more positive non-grasping images. The Buddhist view questions what it is that is ‘bethinging’ us. Often it is not a true realization or appreciation for the thing but rather some projection of our own given to the thing to carry that we are responding to. *Thrangu Rinpoche* pointed this out when he says that what we normally consider as outside is in fact inside, given that it is the image of the thing that we are always responding to. Is there such a thing as a ‘pure’ experience if a person is being ‘bethinged’ are they having a ‘pure’ experience or is the experience having them? A pure experience from the Buddhist point view is the ‘point-instant’ experience which captures the first pure moment of awareness.

The dynamics of spiritual transformation relate to how we relate to objects. We are as Marion highlights brought into relationship through the ‘gift’ of things. How that relationship plays out however, is not always with respect for the ‘gift’. The objects we pay attention to and foster have a deep effect on how a person sees and engages with the world. *Thrangu Rinpoche* shows how the perceived barrier between outside and inside is not seen to persist and therefore we are always in pursuit of an inner image projected outward onto objects. Transformation in the Buddhist view entails seeing the inherent ‘not-self’ empty nature of objects and thus not attaching to them as real. The *Dzogchen* enlightened mind is ‘non-conceptual pristine awareness’, which sees thoughts (objects) as self-arisen manifestations of the natural state. Liberation from the round of attachment and disappointment in objects is the recognition that ‘non-conceptual awareness’ is objectless and thus objective reality is not an object of wisdom but wisdom itself.

### 3.6 Understanding transformation

In an analysis of transformation there is a need to understand what is driving a person towards a new horizon or possibility. Is the drive stemming from repeated conditioning, as in Kelly’s grid system, whereby connections are driven by a need for reassurance, repeatability and control? The struggle to change or transform may in fact be a simpler and yet equally as profound a struggle of trying to be in the present moment fully. If the past through *karma* and repeated conditioning is continuously influencing a person’s present expectations of the future, then can he be said to be in the present? If the person is tuned in to future expectations by a past which continues to underlie and influence the present is anything arising in the now. ‘Point-instant’ reality is the Buddhist mechanism that cuts past and future and brings a person to a continuous now where everything is open unbounded and free of conditioning, the journey and the destination concertina into this moment. In so far as a person relies on the past to make the present intelligible, is this achievable? Would a moment without the influence of the past or future be a moment a person could not understand, as it would be without reference? This is the very experience that Buddhism supports, a referenclessness that is truly open, truly empty, truly ‘not-self’, that takes the mind out of its usual self-centred narrow orbit into the experience of the *Arhats* infinitely expanded

mind. Structure-less-ness, referenclessness, is a dynamic that arises through 'point-instant' reality, Caputo's 'metaphysics without metaphysics' Desmond's view of the 'posthumous-mind', the 'not-self' teaching and the insights into 'non-conceptual awareness', 'open awareness, and 'unbounded wholeness'. As the embodiment of truth, the *Arhat* is the very embodiment of structurelessness, he is said to be so far outside of limiting structures that he cannot be found or measured.

Early Buddhism emphasises a stopping of the personality factors or the self-project, to allow being to manifest. It is the very projections, surface interpretations, and the doing that cloud our abilities to 'be' in the present. To interpret and to project, as the 'erotic-mind' does, is to make the future the instrument that determines the present.

In that case, I am living a 'future-present' not a 'present-present.' I thus receive myself in the present always from a future that precedes the present or from which the present is always arriving' (Mølbaek,2010,85). The thrust of Buddhist meditation practice is to help get to the present moment by highlighting the very projections and controlling manipulations the mind makes. To re-affirm who and what a person is, the person's attempt to control the future through Kelly's grid system which is a re-assurance through predictability that the person is in control. If projection is the *modus operandi* of the 'erotic-mind', a person is never who or what he is in the present'... but always beyond myself in a worldly horizon of what I am not yet' (2010, 86). There is a seeming potentiality and a moving towards something in projection, as it seems to involve a future potential and can give the illusion that the person is moving towards something new. This is not the case, however, as it displaces the person from the present into a 'future-present' which they have projected and in that way, are only meeting that which they anticipated and planned, nothing that is surprising and new is being encountered. *Longchenpa* earlier in referring to being in the present speaks of 'pure and total presence' which arises from a 'non-conceptual awareness' that recognizes that liberation is 'rootless' and 'groundless' and thus is not to be looked for in any place, position or time dimension.

This tension between projection as an anticipation of the future and the future which comes about unwanted outside of a person's control is the 'suffering' that Buddhism addresses. Buddhism works on the principle of 'attraction', 'allure' but sees these as not residing in the external objects but in the person's state of being. It is too simplistic to say that a positive state of being attracts only positive things and a negative state only attracts negativity. What is true is that the more the mind is purified of its projective interpretations the more it can cope with both positive and negative circumstances without needing to retreat into old neurotic patterns. The analogy of a glass of muddy water is used in *Dzogchen* Buddhism to illustrate that simply by not agitating the water the mud will settle. The mind will become clear if its negative binding thoughts (mud) settle. In a future focused existence how does a person know themselves in the here and now? A person can only know themselves in the present if the future becomes a completed thing or they run out of futures. Also, if the present arises from the future then knowing myself in the present is impossible as just when I think I do I am already in a different future. 'At the very moment when I think I have grasped myself, I am already elsewhere in a different future...' (Mølbaek,2010,86). The future present escapes and I am continuously trying to find and bring myself, back from the future into the present.

Buddhist meditation combines stillness and being present together with focusing on the breath (as we are always breathing in the present) as methods that are specifically designed to help bring the mind 'home' to its original pure 'point-instant' nature. These practices help bring a person to the here and now. Interpretation commits a person to the process of trying to find themselves 'retroactively' (Mølbaek,2010,92). In Buddhism, this is the very definition of being lost to 'attachment' whereby our infatuation with things has completely displaced the person from knowing themselves in the present. In *Dzogchen*, our primordial or 'natural state' is found when we are not lost to attachments. Attachments obscure recognizing the true nature of our minds, which is a 'primordial purity' that is empty. Emptiness like space has no obstructions, no limitations or constraints, it is boundless. By staying in the 'natural state' the clearer our awareness becomes and the more attachment can be let go of. We come to recognize that there is an ever-present state of 'clarity and emptiness'.

The presupposition of subject and object, viewer and viewed, reciprocally giving rise to each other dissolves in the Buddhist recognition of emptiness. If both viewer and viewed are empty then they both dissolve in a state of clear emptiness, where there is no projecting or interpreting. This is the experience of the ‘natural state’ beyond thoughts and concepts. The outcome of *Dzogchen* practice is recognition that what we call ‘I’ is composed of different states of consciousness with a variety of mental contents. It is the recognition that both subject and object are fluid, empty, ‘point instant’ realities that are a ‘self-arising display’ of the ‘open awareness’ and ‘unbounded wholeness’.

The dynamics of spiritual transformation helps to bring a person to full and open presence. Nowness or hereness is that which ‘point-instant’ reality continuously emphasizes. Understanding insight or enlightenment is to be found in the here and now not in the anticipated or projected future, but rather by engaging with things ‘non-conceptually’. To have no concepts is to journey without references or preconceived structures, including spiritual ones. A referenclessness way allows all otherness to be themselves, just as they are, which of itself creates a space to appreciate the ‘giftedness’ of things.

### 3.7 The quest for a referential certainty

A transformative letting go, or letting be, in the Buddhist sense is achieved through exposing the psychological house of cards we have been constructing, but this is not to uncover a deeper better self. It is fiercely uncompromising in its view for the ‘empty’ truth of things ‘as they are’ is also true of the person. Wallace compares the similarities and differences between surrender, sacrifice and submission. Buddhism does not ask a person to submit to a superior force or surrender to a transcendent theory but rather that transformation can arise by seeing the ‘Noble Truth’ of life itself. A sacrifice is to make something holy which ‘can be understood as an act of sanctifying or consecrating an object’ (Wallace,2001,27). A sacrifice is deemed necessary in a world that is divided into sacred and profane. *Dzogchen* Buddhism through its various insights, teachings

and practices continuously announces that we are, and have been from the beginning, living in the sacred, therefore no sacrificing is needed.

Mark Taylor discusses the sacred and the profane, the quest for reference and certainty, as opposed to Wallace's need to surrender. Describing the Western post-modern referencless world we inhabit, now that God is dead, as a world where a sense of loss is irrevocable. Without the transcendent reference that God is, the Christian sense of time and place has become distorted, according to Taylor. The once dependable and comforting linear sequence of beginning (creation) middle (incarnation) and end (redemption) no longer plays itself out. Without this '...purposeful process...' (Taylor, 1984, 7) meaning and coherence become difficult to articulate. We are now '...in a time between times and a place which is no place' (1984, 6) in other words a liminal space. Classical theism portrays God as One and the ultimate creator who creates the world and directs its course. God is the origin and the final goal, 'absolutely transcendent' and eternal; he is totally present to himself. He is the ever-present ground and '...the uncaused cause of presence itself' (1984, 7). Since the self is said to be made in the image of God the disappearance of God also signals the disappearance of the self. The struggle of how to come to terms with these losses is outlined by Taylor. Buddhism, it could be said, does not experience the same dilemma of the loss of a transcendent reference as it does not begin with a view that posits an ultimate cause or prime mover.

Buddhism never articulates a God in the Christian sense, and therefore has been living in, and dealing with, a world without that kind of reference for over two thousand years and as such may have something positive to share with Taylor and Caputo and the Deconstruction view about the ways of living without a transcendent reference. The recurring theme of structure-less-ness as a matrix of transformation has arisen earlier. Previously structure-less-ness arises with the 'point-instant' Buddhist view that keeps every moment open by preventing anything settling into a solid concept. The early Buddhist teaching of 'not-self' is the insight that undermines grasping possessiveness and attempts at solidification that the craving (*tanhā*) driven mind makes to identify and solidify a self. Likewise, 'non-conceptual wisdom' is a wisdom that is without preconceptions, that is open and willing to meet whatever arises as it is. In the modern context,

Caputo's paradigm of 'metaphysics without metaphysics' or 'religion without a theology', is suggesting that a transformative experience happens, when a person has divested themselves of absolute certainty. Desmond's picture of a referencless openness is expressed in his 'posthumous-mind' image, this is a mind that has let go completely of its 'erotic' campaign and is now open and receptive. The *Bon Dzogchen* view of 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness' suggests that neurotic structuring to establish an illusory self is not needed. If all arisings are a self- arising display of 'unbounded wholeness' then there is nothing to hold onto, nothing to structure, there is only openness and freedom.

The dilemma presented by the death of God, and as such the disappearance of the traditional spiritual path Taylor sees as being answered in a negative way by humanistic atheism's attempts to appropriate divine qualities in and for the self. Humanistic atheism does not refuse to accept the death of God but rather refuses to accept death itself and fosters '... a psychology of mastery and an economy of domination...' (Taylor,1984,14). The shift to the self as centre brings with it a theology of perfection, where moral philosophers such as Luther attempted to restore 'certainty' through a personal relationship with God. The restoration of 'certainty' was also a driving force underlying the work of Descartes who doubted everything until he found that which could not be doubted. The quest for 'certainty' brings with it the search for security to fill the void of transcendent referenclessness. Descartes '*cogito ergo sum*', as Taylor points out, blends truth with certainty. There is now an absolute certainty in the self and subsequently that things exist for me because I think them (Taylor,1984,22).

Buddhism would agree that thinking is an important factor but its focus is to consider the mechanisms of thought, to highlight its motivations and its shortcomings. Driven by desire to support and underpin self-definition, Buddhism sees most of the thinking that we do as being very limited, being confined as it is to the self-project. Yes, it would agree that we are bringing things into being by our thoughts, but it asks if what we are bringing into being is that which is in harmony with the truth of things as they are? In the Buddhist view one can have a real thought arising from a context but that thought is not necessarily reflective of the truth of things. Solipsistic thinking doubts everything but the truth of its own existence and thus is living in a rather isolated world. Buddhism, on the other

hand, by showing that there is no difference between the truth of the person and the truth of existence, they are both empty of inherent nature themselves, brings the person into the milieu of universal unbounded truth. However, its paradigm does not stop with just understanding the truth, it has an imperative to become the truth also. Thus, an enlightened being is one whose nature is from truth, he has overcome all conditioned thinking that would serve to define him. He has abandoned clinging to 'discriminative' thinking and sees the 'perfect' nature of 'dependent' entities. His awareness is not confined to thinking as a confirmation of being; his *citta* has expanded to infinity and with that newly opened awareness he sees the 'unbounded wholeness' of being, and Desmond's 'original givenness of being'. He is re-awakened into 'original astonishment' that sees everything as gift and an 'original blessing'. In Buddhism epistemology is ontology, there is no knowing as an abstract static principle, there is knowing as an invitation to participate openly without references in the universal unbounded truth of emptiness.

### 3.8 Staying in the flux

In his teaching on '*Dzogchen Practice in Everyday*' Life, *Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche* in referring to how we should not withdraw or hide from life but should 'experience everything totally' goes on to say that 'Referentiality is the process by which we retreat from the direct experience of everyday life' (Khyentse,2005,1). It is our constructing activity or emotional patterning that causes this withdrawal from experiencing.

However, in the infinite 'self-perfected' emptiness, constructing reference seeking discernment cannot manifest. When a person comes to this experience, says Peter

Harvey 'a timeless unconstructed space takes over in place of '... "where" the "person" was'. The transcendental stopping of constructing reference seeking activity leads to identity '...with the timeless unique unconstructed *Dhamma*' (Harvey 1995,224,12.42). Becoming the truth necessitates a giving up of references and a willingness to be and travel in the dark of unknowing openness.

The courage to stay in the flux, to allow oneself to be carried down-stream, as the Buddha did ‘unsupported’, to new territories without planning every moment, without bringing to bear the old conditioned and neurotic patterns, is the type of courage that Caputo was encouraging earlier in the discussion of the differences between ‘repetition’ and ‘recollection’. To live in the world with minimum strategies and mental constructions is to encourage an open perceptual awareness. As Caputo highlights, ‘repetition’ is a moving forward, it’s a recollection forward. It is a moving back towards what the person has been all along (*to ti en einai*). This moving back towards what one was to be all along is paralleled in the Buddhist sense with its view on Buddha-nature, which is uncovered more and more the more we rid ourselves of that which obscures truly seeing how things are. In sharp contrast to Descartes, knowing is not seen to be that which will in the end lead to real understanding or transformation. Knowing in the purely intellectual sense is not seen to be as valuable as the knowledge that arises from direct experience. The motivation in Buddhist practice is to diminish what might be called second-hand knowing so that a direct experience of the true nature of things arises. Caputo saw that ‘metaphysics without metaphysics’ based on ‘undecidability’ anchors the person ‘in the midst’ of their own life and difficulties. Without fixed absolute laws driven by not-seeing clearly (*avidyā*), one cannot fall back on old patterns of interpretation and reactive behaviour. As the ‘point-instant’ teaching highlights there is no law only transformation and that is not a law as the moment it is established it is also undermined. For Caputo where there is no ready reference of fixed laws there is the necessity for ‘interpretation’ that one is faced with and must apply in each life situation as it arises. Buddhism, while recognizing that the direct experience or ‘referenceness’ encounter is, the way to truly understand, it is confident that the necessary ‘interpretations’ needed will be based on a direct experiential understanding of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering

(*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*). There is confidence also that one’s Buddha-nature will itself influence the ‘interpretations’ in a compassionate direction. Repetition as opposed to recollection and paralleling the ‘point-instant’ view sees every ‘now’ not as a replica or inferior copy linked back to an original. This radical-nowness undermines perceived identity and ‘recollection’s’ need for unity. To see

into the true nature of things is to see reality as a unique unrepeatable occurrence. This view also includes seeing each individual as a unique unrepeatable expression, an 'other' who through that uniqueness, is a vital part of the *Hu yen* interlocking whole and who expresses itself and the fundamental nature of everything as it is a self-arisen display of the wisdom of 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness'. Caputo in line with the 'point-instant' view of Buddhism, emphasises this uniqueness, and by extension non-correspondence and referenceness by referring to reality as a 'heterology' a non-correspondence between parts.

It is a person's quest for certainty that supports and confirms one's constructs, that retards them and keeps them sinking down on the bank staring across to the other shore but fearful about entering the turbulent waters. A person can take heart from the Buddha who made the journey without references; 'When friend I am supported (*santiṭṭāmi*) then I sink down; When I strive (*āyūhāmi*), then I am whirled about. Thus friend, without support, unstriving (*appatiṭṭham anāyūham*) I crossed the flood.' (Harvey,1995,202-3).

Descending into the unknown waters without references or support is a Heroic act, a courageous act of letting go. It is an old adage now that we cannot get to the other side without first letting go of the shore on this side. Though easily said as in any transformation process it is difficult to accomplish. As far back as the fifth century this challenge and the associated fears surrounding stepping into the unknown, were graphically painted in the old English poem *Beowulf*. Harassed by a swamp creature named Grendel, Hrothgar King of Denmark needs someone brave enough to descend into the lake to slay the dragon. With as much dramatic foreboding as possible a dark sinister picture of the place where Grendel lives is painted. In this place, there is 'hidden evil' where mist 'steams like black clouds'. The grooves of trees that overhang the lake '...wind down snake like roots that reach as far as the water and help to keep it dark'. One has to enter it completely without references as '...no one knows its bottom; no wisdom reaches its depths'. The fear is so great of this unknown place that a 'stag prefers to die on those shores, refuses to save its life in that water'. Just when we think thank God, we have not had to enter into that place, the poem shocks us out of our complacency by reminding us 'it is not far from here nor is it a pleasant spot' (Whyte,1994,36-

43). In refusing to join in and participate in the ever-changing flux we can freeze on the shore, but in doing so we die to the fullness and freedom that life offers. Being in the flux without the guidance of the old certainties for Caputo means living with ‘undecidability’. To live without measuring things against our preconceived ideas is to live ‘in the middle of things’ where things are to be experienced directly. The ‘undecidable’ or the referencless life does not fall back on what Caputo calls a ‘metaphysics of morals’ but rather the ethical direction arises from within the life situation.

To enact a spiritual transformation requires courage to let go of old certainties and travel in the dark of unknowing referenclessness. The word courage comes from the French *Coeur* meaning heart, thus indicating that such a journey can only be undertaken when the heart is moved. Structurelessness or openness has arisen many times as a necessary transformative dynamic arises as it does in the ‘point-instant’ view, the ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ view, in the view of ‘non-conceptual awareness’ and in the works of Caputo and Desmond. The pursuit of ‘certainty’ leads to a need for domination and mastery and the development of a Kelly psychology focused on predictability in the name of certainty. Truth and certainty that Descartes develops is a narrow one confined within the borders of the self while Buddhism enacts a transformation by bringing the person to awareness of the universal truth of the nobleness of life. A transformed life is one that does not just understand the truth but enacts it embodies it and is it. To undertake a journey in the dark of referenclessness is a Heroic undertaking which mirrors the Buddha’s journey when he crossed the flood without ‘support’. The pursuit of certainty keeps a person stuck in the mud and apart from entering the turbulence that is life. However, as Peter Harvey highlights, all constructing reference seeking dissolves in the ‘self-perfected emptiness’ and in ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘non-conceptual awareness’.

### 3.9 Living an ethical life

While Buddhism would agree that we need to abandon deluded referencing, it has an existing moral path which it outlines as the way to live a moral and ethical life. ‘The Eight-fold Path’ of Early Buddhism highlights how an enlightened person

might live in the world. Living with, ‘Right view’, ‘Right intention’, ‘Right speech’, ‘Right action’, ‘Right livelihood’, ‘Right effort’, ‘Right mindfulness’, and ‘Right concentration’; together these ‘wholesome’ activities will assist in the cessation of suffering, deeper understanding and liberation. These are not ‘laws’ or rules that Caputo fears robs a person of direct first-hand experience and the choices that arise from them. They are the environments of the mind in which the *Arhat* lives and that assist in performing right actions and lead to the cessation of suffering. These are presented as skilful (*upāya*) interrelated factors that assist in wearing away speculative, unskilful views concerning the nature of reality. Right view here does not mean that there is a right and a wrong opinion, the Buddha warned against opinions and saw them like Caputo as contributing to delusion and increasing suffering for oneself and others. The Right view is in fact to have no view that one adheres to and solidifies into a dogma, but to understand deeply how things really are. All other ‘Rightness’ follows from that initial, true understanding, which is a dynamic doing. The sequential nature of the eight-fold path is based on the ‘Dependent Origination’ insight which simply says, ‘if this is then that is, if this arises that arises, if this is not that is not, if this ceases that ceases.’ Adhering to a belief in a permanent unchanging self the Buddha saw as the greatest source of suffering. To make a journey in ‘faith’ is to be open to really meet and engage with what is truly ‘other’. It does not reduce the otherness of the other to a known sameness; it is a humble and respectful way to relate.

For Caputo to forego raising what we know about God to an absolute knowing is to arrive, where Buddhism has been all along, at a religion without a theology. *Zen*, also highlights that spiritual transformation is the journey more than the terminus, as a way of promoting open engagement with life with a ‘no-mind-mind’. Living a life free of speculative views and ego prejudices is to deliberately cultivate a not-knowing. This mission, like the Bodhisattva’s mission to save all sentient beings, will inevitably fail. It is in its failure, that this ‘passion for the impossible’, becomes a true religious or spiritual experience. We descend into the lake in the Old English Saga *Beowulf*, seeking Grendel, the referencless thing that terrorizes and find that the difficulty is deeper still, as no one knows the bottom of the lake, just as there is no answer to the *Zen* Kōan. It is in wrestling with the frightening thing, the riddle of the *Zen* Kōan, or the attempt to carry out

the Bodhisattva vow, that life is pushed to the ‘limits of the possible on the verge of the impossible’. The *Arhat* in letting go of all references is unmeasurable and as his mind has expanded to infinity, like Grendel’s lake, no one knows its depths. The Beowulf story reiterates that the strategic mind, that calculates and measures and ultimately retards will not bring a person into those unfathomable transformative depths; another part of the mind must be relied on. Caputo warns that we will be defeated surely but in that defeat, we will have arrived on new ground as Moses did when he was told to take off his shoes for the ground he now stood on was holy. We must continue to participate and embrace our lives even in the knowledge of our impending defeat, in death, for it is there in that struggle with life that we are made.

‘Point-instant’ understanding asks us each moment where we stand and how we are to live with that understanding. David Whyte in his poem *Self Portrait* asks of himself if he is willing to stay in the flux where he will be defeated ‘...I want to know if you are willing to live day by day with the consequence of love and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat. I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even the gods speak of God’ (Whyte, 1992, 10). Transformation requires a heroic courage to allow oneself to be defeated by the fierceness of life lived on the edge of the impossible. In the biblical story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel Jacob is defeated but the German poet Rilke imagines that defeat as a transformative one which strengthens and kneads him into a new shape. ‘.... Whoever was beaten by this Angel. Went away proud and strengthened and great from the harsh hand, that kneaded him as if to change his shape. ‘Winning does not tempt that man. This is how he grows, by being defeated decisively by constantly greater beings’ (Rilke Trans Bly, *The Man Watching*).

### 3.10 Letting go of references

*Nyingma Dzogchen* is the epitome of referencless living and its early texts are filled with insights and instructions as to how to let go of all conceptual references even those associated with meditation practice. This is pushing the ‘point-instant’ referenclessness ‘undecidability’ insights to the limit, to the point where absolutely everything, all thoughts, ideas, rituals both spiritual and mundane are

to be abandoned. All are delusions, obscuring ‘fixing posts’ that impede the experience of the true nature of one’s innate luminous, wisdom mind. There is a confidence in the process of stripping everything back or down to the fundamentals. There was in the early Buddhist *Theravāda* school the view, that when a person lets go of everything, his identity shrinks to zero but his mind expands to infinity, there is a similar assurance in *Dzogchen* that living without ‘certainty’ or a ‘why’ is the way to experience the profound depths of the mind.

Karmay in his study of early *Dzogchen* texts offers the following translation for the *Tun-huang* text IOL647 Part 1 (2007,50).

‘All the varieties of phenomenal existence as a whole do not in reality differ from one another.  
Abandon all the malady of striving, for one has already acquired it all.  
One leaves it as it is with spontaneity (50-51)’.

Another influential *Dzogchen* document from *Tun-huang* highlighted by Karmay is Document IOL 59:

Line (10) ‘The practice of contemplation and purification of the *samsaric* traces...  
Line (11) ...All are a fixing stake...’ (72)  
Line (23) ‘...The mind has no roots...’,  
Line (24) ...Cannot be searched for and found. It is like space...’ (p.73).

Spiritual practices themselves can become centres around which we create references, mistaking the finger for the thing it is pointing to. The mind is fathomless and thus no post no matter how long can plumb its bottom. We must dive into the bottomless lake where Grendel’s mother resides.

In text, no 5922 the attachment causing aspect of meditation posture is outlined:

Line (13) ...Similarly sitting upright with legs crossed...  
Line (14) ...All these physical modifications...  
Line (15) ...Originate in attachment to the body... (p.84).

From Karmay’s analysis of the texts IOL 594 and No 5922 the following early *Dzogchen* referencless principles emerge: There is no need to go chasing after that which is present all along. In the mind without roots there is no place for

spiritual practice to set up its tent and become a reference. Here is where ‘metaphysics without metaphysics’ and a ‘religion without a theology’ resides.

### 3.11 Dualistic thinking seeks references

In contrast to the search for ‘certainty’ there is in *Nyingma Dzogchen* a confidence in the naturally arising ‘primordial state’. In fact, when the right circumstances are created it will arise spontaneously, therefore there is no need to search for anything. No effort to release the mind from its slavery is necessary; it is free in its ‘primordial purity’. The true nature of mind is ‘non-dual’ from the beginning and spontaneously free. That which is ‘non-dual’ and spontaneous cannot be encompassed in words. ‘The Great Perfection lacks a name’ (Karmay,2007,111), it is ‘signless’ as *Nirvāṇa* is. The Great Perfection is known as the ‘non-active vehicle’. It is the antidote to all spiritual and secular seeking that involves effort. The intellect that experiences itself, sometimes called the ‘self-awareness’ (Karmay 2007,113) does not have an object, it is ‘objectless-awareness’. That which is ‘non-dual’ has no object therefore there is nothing outside to aim at. The principle of the Great Perfection has no object ‘... not even the term itself’ (Karmay,2007,113) therefore there is nothing outside to pursue. Enlightenment is the true nature of all that arises both to Buddhas and humans and this is seen clearly by ‘self-awareness’ the Gnosis without permanence’ (Karmay,2007,114).

From the ‘non-dual’ perspective of Buddhism everything is already sanctified, there is no unholy, no unblessed. Indeed, the transformative experience results in recognising that one is blessed and can bless. It is the realization of ‘blessing consciousness’. These perspectives are summed up in the Buddhist ‘non-dual’ perspective. David Loy in his study of ‘non-duality’ makes the point that we tend to divide things into ‘...two opposing categories...’ we do this ‘... to choose one over the other, we cannot take one without the other since they are interdependent; in affirming one half of the duality we maintain the other as well’ (Loy,1999,18). This reiterates Taylors point earlier that ‘Selving is unselving’ (1987,51). According to *Nāgārjuna* because of their dependent natures neither good nor bad exist;

‘Without relation to “good” there is no “bad”, in dependence on which we form the idea of “good”. Therefore, good is unintelligible. There is no “good” “unrelated to “bad”, yet we form our idea of “bad” in dependence on it. There is therefore no “bad”’ (in Loy,1999,18).

The ‘non-dual’ natures of the good and bad are also emphasized in *Hua yen* where the good is said to interpenetrate the bad and vice versa. Dualistic thinking that splits things into pure and impure is another psychological construct that keeps a person from experiencing things as they are in themselves. When dualistic thinking is abandoned a person comes to the realization that all opposites are empty. If *Nagarjuna*’s paradox of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is said to undermine all philosophical views *Ch’an* is said to go a step further by declaring

‘The fundamental dharma of the dharma is that there is no dharmas, yet that this dharma of no-dharma is in itself a dharma; and now that the no-dharma dharma has been transmitted, how can the dharma of the dharma be a dharma’ (Huang Po, in Loy,1999,20).

Nothing can be taught as every position is undermined. All concepts and inferences will not create a path to one’s ‘essential-nature’, all types of conditioned thinking, all opinions, whether philosophical or the highest religious beliefs and dogmas must be abandoned. ‘...You must melt down your delusions...’ says Yasutani, (in Loy, 1999,20). Conceptual categorization distorts direct experience as they belong to a conceptual network that we place over experience. When the world is seen through a dualistic grid then the world is seen dualistically, a world made of separate objects ‘... interacting in space and time’ (1999,21). When ‘non-duality’ is not negated what is revealed is that ‘...all things “in” the world ‘are not distinct’ from each other but make an ‘integral whole’ (1999,21). This is highlighted in the teachings of the *Ch’an* master Huang Po; ‘All Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but One Mind, beside which nothing exists’ (1999,21-2). There is no outside this One Mind, it encompasses all consciousnesses and all minds. By contrast then it is a person’s dualistic thinking that causes them to experience a world of separate discreet things.

Rather than saying everything is whole, Buddhism prefers to say that everything is empty (*śūnya*). Both subject and object are empty and this is another definition of ‘non-duality’. As emptiness, always has been the true nature of things so our experience ‘... always was ‘non-dual’, and the sense of a subject apart from that which is experienced is an illusion...’ (Loy,1999,27). The *Mahāyāna* Buddhist

path to a large extent is to live the nondual perspective. The not-self (*anātman*) teachings of Early Buddhism as Loy highlights may be another way of stating ‘non-duality’ on the basis that if the subject and object are interdependent then what applies to one also applies to the other.

Spiritual transformation includes coming to realize that all conceptual referencing, even if they refer to the highest spiritual attainments are ‘fixing posts’. All striving is to be abandoned in the already accomplished, it is contradictory. *Dzogchen* sees the mind as being ‘rootless’ and groundless and as such there is nowhere to set up a camp of conceptual references. Nothing can be divided into categories in the ‘non-dual’ non-compounded ‘unbounded wholeness’ of things.

### 3.12 The yoga of defeat

The necessity to defeat or surrender is highlighted as a feature of the spiritual path in but to what are we willing to give into? Goethe also shows how growth emerges from defeat and necessity of this experience to feel grounded, ‘... so long as you haven’t experienced this to die and so to grow, you are only a troubled guest on that dark earth’ (Goethe, *The Holy Longing* in Robert Bly, Trans. 1995,70). Caputo’s ‘passion for the impossible’ and the Bodhisattva’s vow are intentions that have defeat built into them. Indeed, it could be said that the ‘point-instant’ view is the quintessential instrument of defeat. Being defeated can create more openness and expands a person more. A person can be moved from a narrow mental compound to a wider awareness. Buddhism asks a person to surrender, to submit themselves to their true natures and in so doing they will be able to embrace more and more just as the *Arhat* does being expanded to infinity. Surrender then is not loss but rather creating more internal space (emptiness) which in turn allows a person to encompass more of life as it is. We can move ‘...from isolation, competition and separateness to accepting self as part of a larger whole’ (Wallace,2001,58). This is the *Hua yen* view that from the beginning a person is a part of this larger whole and needs to realize just that.

In surrendering are we being asked to take a blind leap of faith or to begin something without knowing what the outcome will be? After all, 'objectless awareness', 'unbounded wholeness', 'point-instant' reality, Caputo's 'metaphysics without metaphysics' or Desmond's 'posthumous mind' are realizations which advocate travelling the spiritual path openly without pre-conceptions. Is a person being asked to travel without knowing, in the darkness without a why? In the Buddhist context, the Buddha's teachings and the teacher's progress to enlightenment are guides and inspirations which show the way to realization. There is a map and many testaments by those who have gone the road that says what is to be found at the end. A person is not in the Buddhist view, however, giving themselves over to a 'transcendent other' (Wallace,2001,60) or re-uniting with the divine, rather they are surrendering or opening themselves to life in all its aspects without fear. For Wallace surrender in the Christian context re-establishes a connection with the transpersonal and he sees it as an '...atonement between man and the transpersonal' (2001,60). From the *Hua yen* view we are already part of an at-one-ment (non-duality), that when realized, all life becomes more valuable as it is, not just when it is seen to reflect a transcendent being. Enlightenment in Buddhism according to Wallace is not a religious discovery, not a mystical encounter with God '...it was a human's .... comprehensive experience of the final nature and total structure of reality' (2001,82). Reality can be painful and the Buddha is often described as a spiritual doctor who set out to find the answer to the end of suffering or wounding. His parable of the man shot with an arrow and the futility of investigating how he was injured, or questions as to the type of arrow or the bow used, testify to his concern for dealing with the immediate situation. It is through doing what is needed in the moment clearly that healing is accomplished.

Being defeated can leave a person wounded psychologically and spiritually. Is wounding also an occasion for spiritual growth? Wounding and healing, both masculine and feminine are discussed by Robert Johnson using the stories of the Fisher King and the Handless Maiden as archetypal. In the Fisher King Story, the king has been injured and cannot answer the question 'whom does the Grail serve?' it takes Parsifal, the innocent to provide the answer. Likewise, the Handless Maiden's hands are restored when she plunges them into the river to save her

drowning baby, the innocent part of herself. In both cases the agents of transformation are pure innocent uncontrived aspects, one in the form of Parsifal the innocent and the other in the form of a baby that needs saving. These healing agents have resonances in the Christian tradition which say that one must become like a child to enter the kingdom and in the Buddhist tradition it is through a 'non-conceptual (innocent) awareness' or an uncontrived awareness, the mind sees 'unbounded wholeness' and experiences 'open awareness'. Parsifal's answer is a simple answer 'the Grail serves the Grail King' (Johnson,1993,46), yet this simple answer the King is unable to find in himself and therefore his life is one of continuous suffering from the wound. A wounding, according to the story, may leave a person with a question that they need to answer, but cannot at that moment. Looking for the answer may propel them on a journey to discover the answer or it may stop a person in their tracks as the Fisher King is. The Buddha's question that set him on his life's journey was, 'what is the end to suffering?' And like the Buddha the person may be set on a journey to discover the transformative answer to their question. On the Buddhist path the question might be, whether what a person is bringing into being is *karmically* adding to their delusion or clarity. John Dunne poses a question that might propel a Christian to examine their life's journey as; 'Is what I am doing what God is doing?' (Dunne,1973,85). The spiritual and psychological structure of Buddhism is based on how we relate to internal objects of mind, and external objects of experience. The Fisher King is overcome with, and only relates to the wound because he is not able to find the answer to the question that the wound asks. The inner dialogue a person has with thoughts even painful ones and the external relationship they have with phenomena determine how they are in the world. The king's complete disablement leaves him isolated and unable to relate to others. He is unable to find healing in communion and to do what Mechthild of Magdeburg suggests; 'When I can no longer bear my loneliness I take it to my friends. "Do you suffer", "So do I"' (in Fox,1983,145) and then to experience the compassionate insight that Kabir found in shared suffering, '...what is inside of me moves inside of you' (Kabir in Bly,1977,7). Unable to find the way to the answer leaves the Fisher King outside the compassionate healing of community. The way to the answer is through a recovery of the primordial purity and original innocence of mind, symbolized in the Parsifal figure.

An important dynamic in the process of spiritual transformation is a question that sets the journey in motion. The Buddha's question was to find the end to suffering. Not a small question by any means and John Dunne's question; 'Is what I am doing what God is doing?' (1973,85) also presents an enormous challenge to answer. Like a *Zen Kōan* that poses a difficult question, the immediate answer is not as important as the inner journey it stimulates. The question a person should set out with then should be one which is open-ended allowing for the maximum potency to pertain over the longest period. I have suggested that all the Buddhist roads that I have explored, 'point-instant' reality' 'objectless awareness', referenclessness etc., point to travelling the spiritual path with maximum openness. An open-ended question is the enactment of maintaining such an openness. The Fisher King is caught in a private suffering not realizing that it is compassion and connection with the suffering of others that would move him out of his private anguish and given him perspective to see his own more clearly. This is the realization of the Bodhisattva who cares for all beings and yet is said to be carefree.

### 3.13 Going over and coming back - 'Experimenting with truth'

An important part of Buddhist compassionate realization is care and concern for the 'other'. In this sense, the 'other' is not impenetrable, knowledge of our shared suffering and a compassionate intention to relieve it ties us. Everyman is the man shot by an arrow and needing assistance. There is a going over to the other and a coming back to oneself and this dynamic is itself a structure of spiritual experience. Vincent Shen in his essay focusing on Chinese Buddhism called; *Appropriating the Other and Transforming Consciousness into Wisdom* uses the term 'strangification' to encompass the '...act of going outside of oneself to the other, or going outside of one's familiarity to the strangeness, to the stranger' (Shen,2003,44). In his book *The Way of All the Earth* John Dunne calls this passing over to another standpoint and returning transformed '...an experiment with Truth' (Dunne,1973, VIII). It is the individual life story that interests Dunne, where the story of mankind itself is played out.

In contemplating the story of mankind in the story of an individual life we are thinking the ‘truth of being’ in what lies closest. The story of mankind enters all lives but ‘... not all enters into consciousness. It only enters into consciousness if he comes to know everything a man can know’ (1973, ix). A Buddha or an *Arhat*, with a mind expanded to infinity, it would appear is such a man. Dunne saw in Gandhi’s efforts to embody the truths of the teaching on the renunciation of action in the Gita and the compassion of the Sermon on the Mount as an attempt at ‘...turning poetry into truth’ (Dunne,1973,3). The Buddha’s ‘experiment with truth’ begins with a question into the origin and end to suffering. His journey ends with his teaching on the ‘Four Noble Truths’ of suffering. The path to liberation the Buddha calls the ‘Eightfold Path’ through which a person can create the necessary positive force to complete the spiritual journey. What he discovered could be said to have turned the truth of his understanding into the poetry of liberation. The meaning of a person’s life can emerge from a journey undertaken that deepens their understanding of the truth of how things are. The Buddha set out to answer a specific question relating to the end of suffering and a person’s own question can become the source that feeds the poetry of that person’s life. We do not progress by re-enacting the story of others, as the story of Don Quixote underlines, but rather by staying close to the truth of one’s life is it possible to turn that story into poetry and simultaneously be thinking the truth of being. Rumi the Sufi poet also saw the value in staying very close to one’s own life when he says ‘Do not be satisfied with the stories that came before you. Unfold your own myth’ (Rumi quotes).

### 3.14 The Journey – ‘Turning truth into poetry’

There are some literary examples of how and why a journey might start; ‘In the middle of the road of my life I awoke in a dark wood where the true way was wholly lost’ (Dante in Whyte,1994, 26), ‘One day you finally knew what you had to do and began though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice’ (Oliver,1992,114). ‘Something ignited in my soul and I went my own way deciphering that burning fire...’ (Neruda in Whyte,1992). A person can one day awake in a darkness where the old ways of being in the world no longer work. A

person can suddenly be inspired on a deep and meaningful level and set out despite all contrary voices to follow that unknown road. It can start also by asking an open-ended question like; ‘Does becoming end in being or in nothingness?’ (Dunne,1975,1). This is a significant question for those on the path of transformation, indeed how that question is answered has determined the psychological health of many a person who has arrived into therapy with this very question. If our becoming ends in being then life is not ‘merely a stage’ and we are not ‘merely players (that) have their exits and their entrances’ (Shakespeare, in Gilman, E.(ed.),1963,77). There is something much more significant happening. However, if nothingness is all then there is only the ‘seven ages of man’ that Shakespeare outlined which ends in ‘...mere oblivion...sans everything’ (1963,78). As our understanding is always limited, further and deeper insights are possible and for Dunne this is the fundamental dynamic of ‘passing over and returning’ which is a ‘... moving from one insight to another’ (Dunne, 1973, ix). This is for him the new spiritual paradigm that demands a continuous shifting of perspectives. Buddhism, in its ‘point-instant’ view undermines all seeing that is built on a conditioned and thus limited perspective. This ‘adventure’ of going and returning is also the structure of mythical adventures stories of a journey an encounter and a transformed hero returning to take his rightful place. The spiritual journey as I mentioned earlier is a heroic one where one is called to let go of all that holds one on the bank of *samsara* and enter the dark waters like the Buddha ‘unsupported’, without previous mental references and structures, to get to the other shore of the heart.

For Dunne, the story of mankind is mirrored in the life of the individual person. Is that too grand a statement however, that would mean that everything fitting the story of mankind comes into ‘each individual’s life’. For the entire story of mankind to enter one’s life it would mean being conscious and coming to know ‘...everything that a man can know’ (Dunne,1973, ix). This is an adventure invitation in the life of the individual, who comes to recognize his lack of real understanding and sets out to find and understand a more all-encompassing truth. The Buddha’s own story fits into the mythical adventure paradigm, where there is a journey in the knowledge of ignorance and a returning with deeper insights

to share, having accumulated the 'knowledge of knowledge'. There is a leaving and a returning, a going out from one's own point of view and a return with a new perspective, a dynamic which is enacted in the Sufi turning dance. How a person views the question of whether 'becoming ends in being or nothingness;' determines a person's willingness to answer the call to the adventure. If there is only 'nothingness' then as Dunne suggests we are on a '... path of doubt and a highway of despair' (Hegel in Dunne,1975,2). On the contrary if we stop dismissing our experiences as '...mere coincidences...' (Dunne,1973,32) the ordinary everyday events of our lives take on a new and deeper significance such as being able to 'think the truth of being' by staying close to our lives. It was such a close encounter with the facts of life and death that inspired Buddha to seek out a new path.

Enrichment comes from seeing the events and experiencing one's life as '...significant and appropriate' (Dunne,1973,32). It was this insight into the significance and appropriate nature of events in his life that led the Buddha to abandon other ways of seeking Enlightenment. His 'middle way' approach came out of his experience of the extremes of asceticism and luxury. This is the ability to live with seeming contradictions of love and hate, desire and repulsion which is contrary to the thirst for the 'un-ambivalent' and 'un-adulterated' (1973,41) or as Caputo defines it a desire for 'recollection'. It is only when the pursuit of certainty is abandoned that understanding and compassion are possible. It is in the pursuit of understanding that a person is moved forward into the adventure of their lives and willing to risk being in unknown territory. The Buddha on seeing the human cycle of life and death no longer could live his life as it had been. That life was no longer appropriate to his life of understanding the nature of suffering. He was not petrified and isolated within his own suffering but through the understanding and insight he had gained on his journey he was able to move beyond his own suffering to a compassionate understanding of others.

The spiritual transformative dynamic can follow on from an experiment with truth. One such experiment is that of 'passing over' to other standpoints and returning more enriched from the experience. The 'point-instant' view the

'objectless awareness' view, the view of 'unbounded wholeness' the *Hua yen* view of infinitely recurring interpenetration, all say that there is no absolute standpoint and that the centre is everywhere. As such the story of mankind can be centred in an individual life. In contemplating the individual story, the events, the poetry as it were, become reflective of 'the truth of being' and when a person comes to know and value these events, the poetry becomes the road that leads him to the truth. A transformative journey can begin with a question, but not a question that is framed to cultivate or promote certainty. It is a question that comes through recognizing one's lack of real understanding but with a determination nevertheless to 'decipher' the call. The journey begins as the Buddha's did, with the pursuit of understanding which transformed his life from one of luxury to one of compassion understanding. The Buddha believed in the significance of his life and journey and thus enrichment and all that was appropriate to his life's journey came to meet him. '... you believed in your own sound so everything you said is still being spoken (Whyte, 1992,85).

### 3.15 Compassionate action

Compassion is that which transforms Sartre's 'hell is other people', into an acceptance of a shared humanity. Compassion, for Dunne, is an instance of passing over and '...positive (self) forgetting' (Dunne,1973,55). There is a rhythm of disappearing in the forgetting of self and a re- appearing when one returns to oneself, mirroring the Christian dynamic of death and resurrection. The 'not-self' teaching, envisioned as a compassionate passing over to others, is not the final truth, through the practice of compassion one returns deepened and broadened. Does Buddhism offer a different version in that having reached the other shore we are encouraged to abandon the vehicle of the teachings. This might suggest that returning is not seen as important to the 'man who is gone down' or who is '*dharma* become'. From the Buddha's story a fully realized or enlightened man is a 'fully recollected man', a man who can recall all his past. This, however, is not the end of the story as it was in recognising the loss and suffering associated with his many lives that he came to have compassion and understanding for all beings in suffering. The fully realized man is not then the man at the top of the

mountain who has gained the 'knowing of knowing' (1973,17) in an abstract intellectual sense; he is the man who has, through his experience of recollection been transformed into an agent of compassionate action. Transformed compassionate action can be seen in *Shantideva's* prayer 'For as long as space exists and sentient beings endure, May I too remain to dispel the misery of the world' (in Sogyal Rinpoche,1992,365). In Christianity, there is the prayer of St. Francis who asks God to make him an agent of compassion 'Lord make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is, hatred let me sow love....' (1992,365). An enlightened being is he who sets himself the task, as a bodhisattva does, to save all sentient beings.

Spiritual transformation has a dynamic of sharing exemplified in the lives of both the Buddha and Jesus who 'passed over' to compassionate care for the suffering and the poor and who came back to share their insights. Relatedness and the sharing of insights marks a significant development in the transformative dynamic. Suffering arises in the pursuit of certainty; the Fisher King is wounded in a battle against the dark forces evil, certain that God was on his side. Certainty is overcome in the energy of compassion which breaks through and transforms that pursuit for certainty into a pursuit of the understanding the larger open-ended spiritual question.

### 3.16 To be in tune with what God is doing

Does the view that a person can 'experiment with truth', by paying attention to the individual happenings in his life, come to know his life as significant and meaningful, conflict with the teaching on 'non-duality' where treating all occurrences with equanimity is stressed? Is Buddhism trying to flatten out all distinctions into sameness, a sameness that takes the sting out of the reality of things? I think not, when Buddhism speaks about 'non-duality' it is referring to and encouraging the experience of not choosing one experience in favour of another but rather seeing things with the equanimity and openness of one who sees everything as being appropriate to his life. Not choosing one experience over another is allowing oneself to pass from self-centred care to care and compassion for others. For Dunne and all Christians, this is to be in tune with what God is

doing and to do what Jesus did in being about his father's business. There is a Christian contentment and 'wholeness' to be experienced when '...working in union with God' (Dunne, 1973, 90). To be tuned in to what God is doing is to experience wholeness and peace and for Dunne this is the '.... only ambition worth having. And this is self-realization' (1973, 95).

For Creation Centred Spirituality, taking its inspiration from Meister Eckhart and other medieval writers, who describes God as he who never stops creating, 'Now God creates all things but does not stop creating' (Eckhart, 1983,17), to be doing what God is doing is to be giving birth to what is happening in one's life and seeing the events of one's life as a creative expression of God's creativity. To do what God is doing demands an extraordinary level of consciousness, together with deep mindfulness and awareness. Not being fully realized a person must act in the knowledge of his ignorance, as the Buddha did in seeking the truth of suffering its causes and what might bring an end to it. A spiritual action according Hindu *Gītā* is an action committed without seeking the fruits of action, '... but work alone is your proper business never the fruit [it may produce]; let not your motive be the fruit of works...' (Zaehner,1973). If a person is unsure what it is he should do, the *Gītā* advises that he should look very closely at the action itself. In doing so he begins '...experimenting with truth...' (Dunne,1973,97). Bringing mindfulness to actions promotes acting ethically, at the very least doing no harm. If a person travels in the dark seeking to know if their actions accord with what God is doing then he is aware, as Socrates was, of the '...knowledge of ignorance....' (Dunne, 1973,100). Action in the knowledge of ignorance can lead to new and deeper understanding and this can inspire a 'more wisdom oriented mind' and that mind encourages new ways of being in the world.

A dynamic of spiritual transformation is the dynamic of compassionate reaching out towards others. Dunne's 'passing over' is a positive enactment of the Buddhist 'not self' teaching. Knowing the truth is to its fullest extent, as the Buddha did, to become the 'fully recollected man'. The spiritual journey may set out with the objective of gaining understanding but the 'fully recollected man' is not the man that stops at the

‘knowing of knowing’ he is the one who becomes the agent of compassion. The transformative Christian question may bring peace and wholeness to the person who feels he is ‘doing what God is doing’. To be working in union with God is for Dunne the only ambition worth having and through this co-working self-realization is to be found. What is that God is doing? Eckhart says that the best name for God is compassion; therefore, compassionate engagement for the Christian also is to be doing, what God is, and is doing. Actions recognizing that a person is travelling essentially in the knowledge of ignorance and not in certainty, is like *Nagarjuna* who is told to act without considering the fruits of action. Paying attention to what we are doing in this moment, is acting with openness and this generates a wisdom oriented mind. Compassion in the Dzogchen view is the natural overflowing energy of the ground of being where ‘open awareness’s’ recognition of the empty and the clear naturally arises as ‘unbounded’ compassion.

### 3.17 Every moment is a call to action

If as Plato said, ‘time is the changing image of eternity’ (Plato in Dunne,1973,137) then the eternal truths are to be found in the here and now, where, as Heidegger said it is possible to ‘think the truth of being’ (in Pezze,2006). If a person stops running from the present time of his life and what is coming to be in it, if he has gained some insight into the meaning and purpose of his life, each moment, each ‘point-instant’ that we are aware of, is a relationship with eternity. Every moment, every ‘point-instant’ reality is a re-enactment of a beginning and ending, appearing and disappearing, a coming to be and a passing away. Each moment is an open invitation to discover new understanding, new ways of being and each moment foreshadowing its own end is also the realization of the necessity to constantly let go and not solidify one’s knowledge or one’s life into a dogma. The Buddha’s teachings underscore that a relationship with time is fundamental. It calls for understanding one’s *karmic* past and what is driving and conditioning a person towards the future, above all it calls for mindfulness in one’s present actions. If the story of the Buddha’s enlightenment highlights anything, it is that withdrawing and attempting to conquer oneself or the circumstances of one’s life

will fail. His own failure, however, was not the end; it was his understanding of the failure that allowed him to seek a middle way. When trying to follow the way of the ascetic and coming to realize that it was not the way the Buddha was said to have remembered a moment under the rose apple tree when he was at peace.

Transformation comes through relationship with time, what a person is doing, why he is doing it, and what is moving him in any direction. A moment of peace remembered was enough to cause the Buddha to see all that he was searching for and working so hard to achieve as an aesthetic was not equal to that moment of peace. He stopped trying to manipulate his future history by trying to conquer himself and instead became

‘...the immediate man who lives from moment to moment’ (Dunne,1973,167). The Buddha’s moment of insights under the Bo-tree became the template for the rest of his life. This moment is crucial as every moment is in the process of transformation. The difficulties associated with transformation can occur if seen as a large and frightening task that demands life altering decisions that feel overwhelming. Transformation on the momentary level is no less crucial; ‘Everything depends on what one can find in the moment’ (1973,168); but seems more manageable. Every moment is a moment of choice where action is called for. Acting with insight and understanding regarding one’s failures as the Buddha did, is a decisive moment where change and acceptance are possible. Every point-instant moment is a middle-way between past and future, an axial point whose ‘.... centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere’ (1973,232). Every moment is a moment where eternity intersects time and ‘this moment’s thought sees through eternal time and eternal time is just this moment’ (Katsuki Sehida, 2005,13).

### 3.18 No absolute view

The moment to moment consciousness, (or ‘point-instant’ awareness in Buddhism), is for Dunne a contrast to Hegel’s ‘absolute standpoint’ (Dunne,1975,5). Dunne’s method of deepening one’s life and understanding is that of ‘passing-over’ to the standpoint of others and returning to oneself enriched

from the experience. From this it follows that he sees no standpoint as ‘absolutely true’ or false of itself echoing

*Dharmakīrti*’s quatrain of ‘is-is not-both is and is not - neither is or is not’ which undermines an absolute standpoint. Hegel’s absolute standpoint is equated with what Aristotle called the ‘knowledge of knowledge...’ (in Dunne,1975,5) and the realization that there are no absolute standpoints ‘the attainment of what Aristotle and Plato called the ‘knowledge of ignorance’ (in Dunne,1975,6). Not knowing in the Buddhist context is (*avidyā*), not seeing or understanding clearly. When a person comes to realize the knowledge of their own ignorance there is an opportunity to get out of the narrow cycle of limited awareness and open to a more all-inclusive view of reality. *Avidyā* is the first link in the twelve links of dependent arising, once the knowledge of its delusive influence is realized the cycle is broken and space is created for life to come to meet us directly. Having knowledge of one’s ignorance makes the path of life a path of discovery. Dunne’s methodology is fuelled not by rigid adherence to absolute views but rather by recognition of how much is unknown and how much there is to be discovered about the unknown other.

Passing over to see and experience things from another viewpoint is the not the self/emptiness gestalt of Buddhism in operation. The not-self/emptiness paradigm is based on openness and on the knowledge of how ignorant we are of who we are and things as they are. The knowledge of ignorance and the Buddha’s teachings both promote openness and a sense of mystery regarding the true nature of what is other. For Dunne, the mystery means ‘... not unintelligibility but inexhaustible intelligibility’ (1975,7). This is so because no standpoint is seen to be absolute then nothing and no one can be reduced to a single standpoint or accumulation of standpoints. Just as there is the ‘emptiness of emptiness’ teaching in Buddhism to prevent the insight solidifying into an absolute and the *Hua yen* view of the centre being everywhere, Dunne keeps hold of the mystery by holding onto to the relativity of all standpoints. ‘Inexhaustible intelligibility’ is also evident in *Hua yen*’s endlessly repeating interpenetrating reality that is an expression of the relativity of all standpoints and an ‘unbounded wholeness’.

### 3.19 Worthiness

Buddhism has many teachings which serve to undermine an adherence to absolute views, from the ‘point-instant’ and ‘unbounded wholeness’ views to the ‘dependent origination’ teaching, the effect is to open the way to mystery. If everything is an ‘inexhaustible’ mystery how do we ever comprehend it or get to the bottom of it? In Dunne’s ‘passing-over’ and returning paradigm, there is the Christian sense of dying to oneself and coming back to oneself as a kind of rising from the dead. Meditatively this is the simple focusing on the breath, the awareness that now I am breathing in and now I am breathing out is the rhythm that becomes the foundation for the philosophical realization of passing over and returning, and the Christian view of dying and rising again. Transformation involves a dying and a rising again in a new way with new understanding and insight. However, it is important to note that feeling worthy is a primary factor in any life journey. Without feeling worthy a journey into the ‘inexhaustible’ mystery is impossible. ‘What am I worthy of’ Is a question that frequently arises in a life, particularly in a crisis? Am I worthy of love and happiness and what should I do to attain them are also frequently asked. Love and happiness are fundamental desires and when alive in our lives the most transformative.

There is a Buddhist adage which says, ‘there is no way to happiness, happiness is the way’. In other words, practice being happy now, don’t wait for it to arrive in some distant future. There is a sense in this in which we are being encouraged to get out of our own way put succinctly by Rumi when he says; ‘Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it’ (Rumi. quotes).

The process of transforming a situation is to deconstruct the barriers as highlighted by Rumi. A person must do all that will help them be worthy of the love and happiness they seek. Worthiness in Buddhism is intimately connected to the teaching of Buddha nature which states that we are inherently worthy, fundamentally happy and capable of great love and compassion. Also, *Hua yen* sees ‘each individual’s’ unique contribution as fundamentally necessary to the making of the whole. Though we are the same in our absolute nature, we are the

same because we are different and it is that difference which is essential to make the whole. Each person is seen to be worthy and valuable in the mystical writings of the early Christian church also ‘... every creature ...is a book about God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,14). A person can grow worthy, just as a person can grow goodness power or positive force. In Dunne’s account, a person can experiment with the truth of compassion and forgiveness and in so doing put themselves in the way of worthiness or value growing stronger both for others and themselves.

### 3.20 Revelation

Where is transformation or enlightenment to be found? In the true nature of our minds or in the experiences of our lives and are these different? If it is the case that ‘time is the changing image of eternity’ then the search for meaning in the details of our lives reveals ‘...timeless truths...’ (Dunne,1975,48). If the experiences of our lives can reveal timeless realities, then that experience must have the effect of determining the kind of life we lead from there on. A direction and a dedication can emerge, for Dunne a ‘vocation’ is to be encountered ‘...an eternal call addressed to oneself’ (1975,48) when the ‘timeless truths’ are encountered. Wordsworth gives an insight into the experience of being called to his vocation in his poem the Prelude;

‘.....Ah, need I say, dear friends, but to the brim my heart was full. I made no vows, but vows were made for me; bond unknown to me was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly, a dedicated Spirit. On I walked in blessedness, which even yet remains’ (Wordsworth, Prelude, Book 4, 333-6).

There is a sense of revelation and that what is revealed creates a new and deeper connection with the purpose and meaning of one’s life. To ignore this new revelation would be as if committing a great sin, but to answer the call makes the journey thereafter a blessed one. This encounter is a kind of mystical experience where Wordsworth is gripped by a power beyond himself yet as he later states there is a ‘confederation’ between all that he experienced and felt and the Soul

‘...Whatever I saw or heard or felt was but a stream that flowed into a kindred Stream; A gale confederate with the current of the Soul to speed my voyage’ (Wordsworth, Prelude, Book 6, 743-47).

Robert Barths points out in his book *Romanticism and the Transcendence* that although ‘...this power - however distinct from him-is not *separate* from him; its life is cognate with his own’ (Barths,2003, 64). We are capable of this resonant connection from the Buddhist perspective because of our inherent Buddha-nature, a capacity which when uncovered is the ‘timeless truth’ that recognises other ‘timeless truths’ and reiterates that we are capable of the universe. On the path to realization however we travel as Socrates did in the knowledge of our ignorance of ourselves, which keeps us open to learning and growing. In *Zen*, this type of openness is encouraged continuously no matter how advanced we are along the path we are encouraged to maintain a ‘beginners mind’. With the realization of emptiness comes openness to the relativity of all points of view and the space and willingness to listen to others. This willingness not to get stuck in ‘views’ and remain constantly open and moving forward is outlined in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha where the Buddha in his instructions to Cunda says;

‘...Mind should be inclined thus. Others will adhere to their own views, hold onto them tenaciously, and relinquish them with difficulty; we shall not adhere to our own views or hold onto them tenaciously, we shall relinquish them easily’ (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995, 127).

Is this possible in our everyday encounters in life to simply give up our views, is this a radical self-undermining that only advanced realized beings can achieve? On the other hand, maybe it is a constant reminder that at the fundamental level there is openness and that in a life’s journey openness is needed to come to a fully transformed realization. In the Christian medieval writings of Eckhart, the path to a transformed knowing is walked by the way of unknowing; ‘Transformed knowledge, which is an unknowing, is the way of transparent knowing, it is the way of unselfconsciousness’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,56). If Dunne’s relativity of all positions, resembles the ‘Dependant Origination’ view and the Buddha’s emptiness teachings and the *Hua yen* view hold up, then one does not uncover the truth but rather a truth. This is echoed in the reflections of Kahlil Gibran in his book the *Prophet* where he says;

‘Say not “I have found the truth” but rather “I have found a truth”. Say not “I have found the path to the soul” Say rather “I have met the soul walking upon my path”’ (Gibran,1980,66).

Transformation is found by being in a matrix of compassionate openness, facilitated by the experience of passing over to other truth standpoints recognizing one's own

'unknowing'. In this continuously open matrix energized by the 'point-instant' view of reality together with 'unbounded wholeness', 'non-conceptual awareness' and all the other Buddhist insights that promote constant openness, it is possible to hear the call to one's vocation. In the circumstances and experiences of one's life, Heidegger is thinking the 'truth of being' and it is here where things are close is to be found the Noble Truths and an 'eternal call' is also to be found '...in such a succession of existential moments or situations....' (Dunne,1975,54). When the eternal call is answered the realization that one is blessed and worthy arises and it is this 'blessing consciousness' that Creation Centred Spirituality seeks to promote in each individual as an expression of the divine energy.

### 3.21 Travelling openly is travelling in the darkness

Is it possible to have such openness adhering to no views and be willing to travel in the knowledge of ignorance? To do so must demand a kind of openness that does not allow anything to solidify. In the Buddhist context, there are many teachings which are designed to keep this from happening; from the teachings on emptiness to impermanence and dependent origination; all are designed to break our hold on old references. Travelling without reference, in the knowledge of ignorance, is outlined in the many mystical writings of the Christian and Islamic faiths where the goal is to keep a '...referential openness....' (Sells,1994,16) when referring to the unlimited. This non-solidifying process that Sells outlines resembles the process in Buddhism of keeping everything open-ended through its 'point-instant', 'not-self', 'non-conceptual awareness,' the 'emptiness of emptiness' and 'unbounded wholeness' teachings. If a person is to travel openly in the 'knowledge of ignorance' then a language that helps in keeping things from solidifying into absolutes and that is indeterminate and open-ended is needed.

Language is for naming and defining but this is the very thing that 'open-endedness' must resist. Language seeks to delimit, to create a 'static reference' (Sells,1994,18) by making symbols into names, and this tendency must be

transformed if open-ended-ness is to be maintained. If the attainment of *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa* is the spiritual goal of early Buddhism it too is characterized as a ‘...signless emptiness...’ (Harvey,2004,196) and not anything ‘graspable’, it is ‘unbecome’ and ‘unmade’. Plotinus as highlighted by Sells, developed an apophatic language to keep the ultimate open-ended, his argument becomes a series of apophatic withdrawals. The ultimate must be beyond the category of being; it is even beyond what it wills itself to be, and is beyond what it projects out into the world, it is a ‘beyond being’. This continuous ‘ungraspability’, this continuous retreating is also evident in the insights and resultant language of Buddhism. It is the ungraspable and ever retreating aspects that Caputo refers to as the principle which animates our ‘passion for the impossible’. The ‘ungraspable’ is also the hidden energy motivating Desmond’s ‘erotic-mind’s desire to possess the otherness of the other. Buddhist insights, based on meditative experiences, have outlined a view of existence itself that is based on apophatic understanding of how things really are. With its ‘point instant’ view, of is and is not, both is and is not, things are not seen to ever settle, they are perpetually in motion, perpetually changing and just when you think you have it, it is gone. This type of ‘...coincidence of opposites...’ (Sells,1994,21) is a dialectical approach that challenges the direct logic of delimited references. Plotinus’s language of twin propositions, according to Sells, resembles Nicholas of Cusa’s ‘*coincidentia oppositorum*’ in its attempt to ‘.... counter the tendency to give independent propositional status to the last sentence’ (Sells,1994,22). There is no definitive answer to the is/is not proposition, any answer would limit the discourse.

Apophatic dual propositions of is and is not, attempt to create a moment free from the limits of reference. At that decisive moment, one must be prepared to ‘... let go of being...’ (Sells,1994,32) which opens the door to wonderment. ‘Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment’ says Rumi in recognition of the limiting nature of knowledge without experience. He encourages travelling in the dark of unknowing in order that a person might experience that which is beyond knowing. Eckhart paints a picture of what happens for the Christian mystic when, through persistent apophatic withdrawals, a person lets go at a decisive moment, he says we ‘... sink eternally from negation to negation into the one’ and in this sinking, we ‘... sink eternally from letting go to letting go into God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983).

Likewise, the ‘not-self’ and ‘emptiness’ approaches keep the open-ended methodology very much alive. Through progressive letting go the Buddhist practitioner sinks deeper and deeper into the true empty nature of the ‘brightly shining mind’ that is an ‘open awareness’ that recognizes itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’, the truth of the limitless empty nature of *Nibbāna*, the truth of the enlightened person and a person’s own Buddha nature.

John Scotus Eriugena in the early Christian church in attempting to keep references as open-ended as possible, developed a theology based on the interplay of cataphatic affirmation, where the divine was known as a ‘goodness being and wisdom’, and apophatic statements which went beyond these names to ‘contemplate the nothingness of God’ (Sells,1994,35). In exploring the ‘unknowability’ ‘ungraspable’ of the deity he uses the phrase *agnosia* which is ‘... an unknowing that goes beyond cataphatic affirmations ...’ (1994,35). This *agnosia* is beyond all meditation or contemplation beyond the seer and the seen where one is ‘plunged into the truly mysterious darkness of unknowing’ (1994,35). In the Buddhist context, this place of unknowing is described in the *prajñāparamita* as ‘...beyond words, beyond thoughts, beyond description. *Prajñāparamita*; unborn, unceasing with nature like the sky’ (Sogyal Rinpoche in Wolter,2007,180). The enlightened *Arhat* who has become the truth (*Dhamma*) cannot be encompassed; he is a ‘man of nothing’, a mystery and thus is ‘beyond words, beyond thoughts, beyond description’. The true nature of mind in Buddhist *Dzogchen*, from the earlier discussion, was seen to be ‘groundless and rootless’ and thus cannot be found anywhere and has no position. These are the experiences that lie beyond the intellect. These are descriptions of the unconditioned and the ‘...unconditional nature of reality, the nature that exists before thought discriminates form’ (Spencer,2006,236), before the ‘point-instant’ *Nen* moment gets linked to a chain of conditioning thoughts that seek to solidify things into static certainties.

Before words and beyond names is the place where the Tao Te Ching begins; ‘The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name’ (Tao Te Ching,1972,3). Particularity begins with naming, what is beyond words is endlessly real. This endless inexhaustible reality is expressed in

Buddhism as 'point-instant' reality, 'objectless awareness' 'unbounded wholeness' and the 'emptiness of emptiness'.

In the Tao desire is the force that keeps a person trapped in the manifestations of subject and object, free of desire the mystery is encountered. 'Yet both manifestation and mystery arise from the same source and '... That source is called darkness'. This, however, is not the darkness of ignorance; it is the darkness of our unknowing merged within the greater unknowable 'super-essential darkness' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,139); 'Darkness within darkness. The gateway to all understanding' (*Tao Te Ching*,1972,3). The entry to all understanding is not by the light, the 'knowing of knowing', but by the darkness, the knowledge of ignorance.

If spiritual transformation in the Buddhist context is coming to understand the true nature of things and if for instance that is a 'point-instant' reality which prevents any references arising thereby keeping everything open-ended or empty. What language can be used to convey this experience that might point the way for others? It must be a language that preserves the empty integrity of the very thing it is trying to describe. In both the Early Christian Church and in Buddhism that language became one of negation and paradox to overcome limiting referencing. The person in letting go of limiting reference thinking is stepping into an experience of travelling in the dark of unknowing to experience what is beyond knowing. Eckhart says that letting go through negation leads into the God and Eriugena says that to contemplate God's nothingness a person must let go of all referencing names to enter the experience of *agnosia*, a knowing beyond all affirmations. In this agnosia experience a person is plunged into the mysterious 'darkness of unknowing' (in Sells,1994,35).

Buddhism, seeing the nature of reality as endlessly open (empty) has developed a language to preserve that openness. This is the language of perfection (*pāramitā*), beyond 'thoughts beyond words beyond description'. Spiritual transformation necessitates stepping into the darkness, into the dark lake of unknowing, where 'no wisdom reaches its depths'. The transformed vision of the *Tao* sees that what arises and what does not, the named and the unnameable, the 'mystery and the manifestation' arise from 'darkness' and the interplay between the mystery and the manifestation is the entry to all understanding. The transformative journey is

the journey taken not in the 'knowing of knowing' but in the darkness of unknowing. Those who step into the lake and travel in the dark enter a fellowship of darkness with all that is unsayable and in so doing find themselves on the other shore standing on the inexhaustibly and endless reality of openness.

### 3.22 The Being of the good

One naturally moves into using a doctrine of darkness to capture the mystery of that which is both immanent and transcendent. We become what we participate in and Sells highlights this in the writings of Eriugena, regarding how participation in the 'good' calls beings into relationship. Participation in the good is for Zen Buddhism a return to the first pure moment (*Nen*) of awareness or the first 'point instant' moment.

For Desmond, it is a return to the original 'astonishment'. This initial 'astonishment' or wonder denotes a respect for the value and goodness of being and is for Desmond the very beginning of thought itself (2009,35). Beings share in the being of the good and so '... beings participate in the being of the good, they are that being or it is their being (Sells,1994,50). Rumi reiterates this belief in the infinite openness of the good which continuously invites the person to participate when he says '...Come ... come. Ours is not a caravan of despair, come even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come, yet again, come' (Rumi quotes). In the Buddhist context practitioners are helped to 'participate in the being of the good' by living according to the Eight-fold Path, a path that increases loving-kindness compassion and the ability to live without placing harmful limitations on others or oneself. Living according to these precepts creates 'goodness power' or positive force. In becoming the truth (*Dhamma*,) the experience of the enlightened *Arhat*, shows that identification and participation are essentially not separate. Its focus is not understanding the 'good' per se but rather being the 'good', because '...We love everything according to our own goodness' (Eckhart in Fox 1983,19). The transcendent 'beyond being' in Eriugena is called 'nothing', for which we might substitute 'emptiness', 'open awareness', 'unbounded wholeness' or 'not-self', yet it goes forward out of nothing into phenomena and therefore that which is beyond all phenomena is seen

in all things ‘... therefore every visible and invisible creature can be called a theophany, that is, a divine apparition’ (Sells,1994,58), or in Eckhart’s words ‘...a book about God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,14). Eriugena is interested in exploring the incomprehensible, the nothing, where ‘...being is understood as the manifestation or comprehensibility of that nothing’ (Sells,1994,58). The Heart Sutra begins with a similar declaration of how the nothingness manifests in form ‘Form is emptiness, emptiness is form’ and is carried on the teachings of *Hua yen*.

Spiritual transformation is aided by Buddhist practices and teachings which aim at keeping open-endedness alive, the effect of which on the practitioner is to bring them into a sacred space, a divine mandala, where pure awareness and ‘unbounded wholeness’ can be experienced. Eriugena’s apophatic language does not allow the mind to rest on a definite ground, it maintains perpetual movement and ‘...recedes infinitely just beyond every approach, a point he calls ‘nothing’ (Sells,1994,59). ‘Point-instant’ reality is the reality that is perpetual movement and cannot be captured no matter what angle of approach a person takes. Spiritual transformation is assisted by a language which arrives at no conclusion and thereby carries the rational mind beyond itself, causing it to go ever deeper, into the heart of darkness, into the mystery not of unintelligibility, as Dunne called it ‘inexhaustible intelligibility’. When the thinking mind is steered beyond its own rationality, beyond itself, without ever arriving at any conclusive ground, it is being led into mystery of the ‘super essential darkness’, where ‘...not even God can know God’ (Sells,1994,60).

### 3.23 Trusting the darkness

Enlightenment, healing or salvation is not the achievement of a static perfection, that would impede growth, possibility, newness and surprise and would be choosing death (Thanatos) over life (Eros). In the *Zen* poem on our spiritual journey we are always ‘Trying to make it to Cold Mountain’ metaphorically. It is not the destination the *Zen* poem emphasises that is the most important thing, after all our home was at cold mountain from the start, and *Han Shan’s* essential teaching to those he meets is ‘try to make it to Cold Mountain.’ Just one word to you who pass, take the trail to Cold Mountain’(Kline(trans),2006 xii). Just as the

sentence and reference always remains open we are on the road to where the trail never ends, ‘...Cold Mountain Trail never ends’ (Kline (trans)2006, xv), as such it is the path and the journey that do the work, the journey that never ends requires mindfulness, awareness and strength but also passion, ‘When the Guest is being searched for, it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest that does all the work’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,25). Eckhart says that passion is essential for things to be accomplished and this is God’s fiery love in the soul and without it there would be no accomplishments and both the soul and God would die. ‘All deeds are accomplished in passion. If the fiery love of God grows cold in the soul, the soul dies. And in a certain sense, God dies also’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,104). The Way to Cold Mountain is not an easy way though *Han Shan* the author, says that it can be travelled with the ‘everyday mind’ the mind that is not distracted with where it is not, but is right here in this moment. It is the ‘no mind’ that prevents thoughts distracting from this ‘Nen’ moment. ‘Everyday mind, that is the way...No mind - what shifts my thoughts’ (Kline(trans),2006 xxiii). *Han Shan* realizes that there is no static perfection; though he has taken drugs and eaten long life herbs he still has not found immortality, ‘Gathering herbs for long life, still I’ve not achieved immortality’. We travel with *Han Shan* in his poem through many reflections on impermanence, how the petals are blown from the tree, how dynasties have passed and how even great seas have come and gone ‘... Where the dust blows through these heights, there once shone a silent sea’. Though he observes and lives all the transformations that a life can have he is not focused on death,’ When you have read the classics through, you know quite enough about death’ (Kline,2006, (trans)x). Following the endless Cold Mountain path, is not the way to the realization of death and destruction, though one is brought face to face with impermanence, rather it is the way to growth, the way to come home to what one truly is.

At a particular point, *Han Shan* says the trail itself will disappear and one will be lost, this is the ordinary experience of a crisis in one’s life. As mentioned earlier this is the dark wood where Dante awakens to find the trail ‘wholly lost’. It is the place where Mary Oliver sets out from to find the new road through a barrage of bad advice (1992). It is the experience that propels Neruda to set out to decipher what had ‘ignited in my soul’ (in Whyte,1992, dedication page). When the trail is

lost, he advises we must ask those less substantial elements of ourselves, those things residing in the shadows, what the way home is. 'Now that the path's lost, now it's time for body to ask shadow, which way home' (Kline (trans.),2006, xx).

When the trail, a person was following is wiped away or the bridge has been washed away they are forced to stop and assess how they are to get home. At this moment, the daring adventurous part of the self stops, afraid to take another step over the broken bridge. This is the experience that David Whyte writes about in his poem 'The Old Interior Angel' the experience of sitting in front of a broken bridge high up in the Himalayas afraid to take another step. While sitting there an old woman comes by '...and looking up said Namaste "I greet the God in you" (and) ... she turned her lined face and went straight across that shivering chaos of wood and broken steel in one movement'. When the heroic doing, part is forced to stop '... the old interior angel limps slowly in with her no-nonsense compassion and her old secret and goes ahead. "Namaste" you say and follow' (Whyte,1992,82). Out of the inner shadows comes an older wiser more compassionate part of ourselves that knows that '... there is a dark invisible workmanship which takes discordant elements and makes them move in one society ...' (Wordsworth, in Robinson,2006,54). The way to the other shore is by way of the divine, the God within, the Buddha nature, that we already are, "Namaste" you say and follow'. To be lost, as we have seen earlier in the American Indian poem *Lost*, is to not know how things fit together and one's place in the scheme of things. 'If what a tree or a branch does is lost on you, then you are truly lost'. Indeed, the whole teaching of *Hua yen* is a statement that one is inherently not lost. When this displacement is, the overriding experience the poem says we must '... stand still for the forest knows where you are you must let it find you' (Wagner in Whyte,1997, intro). In both cases, we are found for wherever we are 'is called here' and by being here, in full and 'total presence', a new way opens again.

On the Creation Spirituality path when the way has been lost, 'when we awake in a dark wood' like Dante in the divine comedy we have entered the '*via Negativa*' where a person is asked to make friends with the darkness and enter the unknown. 'All darkness is about mystery' (1983,136) says Matthew Fox in his book *Original Blessings*. Exploring the mystery through the writings of Christian

medieval mystics, he outlines four paths through which a person travels the spiritual journey. One of these paths is the '*via Negativa*' a path that is embraced in the knowledge that the experience of nothingness is paradoxically the experience of everything. The *via Negativa* is the experience of shedding, of letting go of symbols of language that limits and isolates what it names, thus echoing Sell's 'referential openness'. A quote from Meister Eckhart succinctly summarizes the trajectory of the *via Negativa* 'God is not found in the soul by adding anything but by a process of subtraction' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,132). There is a peeling back of the layers, a process of reduction where it is recognised that 'language cannot do everything' and where one can '...feel closer to what language can't reach'. The limitations of the ordinary mind are well documented in Buddhism and re-iterated in the medieval Christian writers who encourage that one should love God mindlessly, that is without the usual representational images or names or concepts; '.... Bare your soul of all mind and stay there without mind' (Eckhart in Fox,1983). Where there is not-self, not-language and even not-God; (Eckhart 'prayed God rid me of God') there is being silent and embracing the dark.

The letting go process, the willingness to travel into the dark for Eckhart was a process by which 'we are to sink eternally from letting go to letting go into God' Who is 'a super-essential darkness' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,139). How is a person to have confidence in the dark, how are they to have '...faith in the nights' as Rilke put it? A person gains the courage to embrace their own darkness's according to the *via Negativa* path by embracing their pain, and allowing themselves to be emptied accordingly, thereby entering through those experiences into the nothingness from which everything comes, the 'manifestation and mystery arise from darkness' as the Tao says. When nothingness is recognised as a 'holy nothingness'... 'its presence will change us...', 'We shall be recreated as everything is created *ex nihilo* from the nothingness' (Fox,1983,150). Nothingness is not blankness, suffering is that which disproved absolute nothingness; it is the matrix of creativity and the possibility for transformation and re-creation. The trajectory of the *via Negativa* is downward, it is the way of letting go and sinking down into the depths of the unknown and coming to ground with a new understanding that '... my ground and God's ground are the same'

(in Fox,1983,161). It follows that the nature of God's mind and my mind are the same.

The Buddhist *Dzogchen* path is a process of pointing out that the true nature of our *ground* or primordial state is empty and pure, always perfect and always present. It is this ground that the person is asked to have confidence in and to sink down into. The ground has three qualities; essence, nature and energy (compassion). The essence is emptiness, its nature is cognizant, these are inseparable and their togetherness is called compassionate energy. The compassionate energy is unconfined, unobstructed and all pervasive and said to possess the wisdom that knows, a wisdom that can liberate and an energy that is caring of others. *Tsoknyi Rinpoche* in his book *Carefree Dignity* explains the ground in *Dzogchen* as follows; 'The ground is the nature of things. This nature, *dharmata*, is self-existing. This *dharmata* nature is not fabricated' (1999,25). The ground was not ever made, it never did not exist and it is beyond us improving or changing it. It is simply '...The natural state itself' (1999,25). In the true nature of mind, in the ground there is no confusion and to experience this is to be in touch with inherent wakefulness. When the mind is free of objects to attach to, it simply experiences its own clear open unbounded nature, its own empty compassionate overflowing. The essence of mind is no different from the essence of the Real, both are empty. It is clear also from *Dzogchen* that we are continuously part of the true nature of things. Eckhart makes clear that a person is always connected to the ground

'Now the moment I flowed out from the Creator all creatures stood up and shouted; Behold here is God' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,12). Eriugena also sees that '... the Logos (a ground) flows into all things; it flows them into being and overflows them' (Sells,1994,48). It overflows them because it cannot be limited to any one thing it must continuously be, as the Heart Sutra says, 'gone, gone, gone beyond'.

The spiritual transformative experience does not exclude the crises that befall us in our lives. When the road is lost or the bridge is down a person has entered the dark, the mystery of not-knowing. In staying close to what is arising in our lives no matter how difficult, we are still 'thinking the truth of being' with Heidegger. In the Creation Spirituality view we have entered the *via Negativa*, a process that

is based on subtraction and letting go of all limiting and confining symbols and language, because God is to be found in subtraction and loved mindlessly. The transformative experience of the *via Negativa* is to bring a person back to ground zero, to the primordial state of the beginning. In the stripped back experience, there is also the realization that God's ground and their ground are the same.

‘...For the intellect to be free it must become naked and empty and by letting go return to its prime origin. A person becomes a pure nothing by an unknowing knowledge which is emptiness... darkness and remaining still’ (Eckhart in Fox,1984,48).

The identity between God's ground and the souls ground expressed as ‘abyss, nothingness and darkness’ (Dietrich,2001,32).

*Nyingma Dzogchen* speaks of the pure and empty primordial state as the ground of a person. This inherent ground has an essence that is empty and a nature that is awareness and together expresses themselves as a compassionate overflowing. Dunne's transformative question was; ‘Is what I am doing what God is doing’?

Standing in the ground of one's true nature, is to stand where God continuously overflows himself in compassion. For the Buddhist *Dzogchen* practitioner to uncover the transformative pure empty primordial state of the ground, a mind free of objects is needed. A mind free of limiting objects is clear and unbounded and naturally expresses itself as compassion also.

### 3.24 ‘The Station of no Station’ implies continuous transformation

Both Buddhism and Christian Medieval mysticism and the Buddhist ‘point-instant’ view highlight the need for continuous revolution, continuous going deeper and further and when a person does this, they get glimpses of that which cannot be named or limited to concepts and words. *Ibn'Arabī*, the Sufi mystic recognizes the truth of continuous revolution in his writings, he calls it the way of ‘...perpetual transformation’ (in Sells,1994,90) based on love and compassion. ‘...My creed is love, wherever its caravan turns along the way that is my belief, my faith’ (1994,90). Seeing intellectual knowing alone as being insufficient Sufi mystics saw the heart as being the locus of transformation and termed it *ma' rifa*, where ‘...a continually transformative knowing’ (1994,91) takes place. How the

real and the true (*Al haqq*) manifests is constantly changing and any person who is not constantly changing ‘...cannot know or reflect the constantly changing manifestation of the real’ (1994,91).

At the centre of Buddhism is the ‘point-instant’ view which stresses the reality of transformation at every moment. The real and the true is beyond being limited or bound no matter how profound the experience, one must empty oneself of all concepts. Be like the snow says Rumi ‘...wash yourself of yourself’. Language and the intellect limit and ‘bind’ the manifestations into discreet images. When the manifestations are experienced as constantly moving, as in the ‘point-instant’ view of Buddhism ‘...they become transparent and revelatory’ (Sells,1994,92). This is not the ‘knowledge of knowledge’ path it is the way of ‘bewilderment’ (*hayra*) which like Eckhart asking that God might rid him of God ‘I pray God to rid me of God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,50). *Ibn Arabī* asks ‘Lord increase me in bewilderment in you....’ (Sells,1994,101). Continuous transformation in the Sufi context is expressed in the circular spinning or turning dances around the central axis which has no ‘from’ and no ‘to’, no starting point and no ‘end point’. Knowledge that is transformed is for Eckhart an unknowing and it ‘is also the way of seeing through everything’, ‘...it is the way of transparent knowing...when this is understood it is possible to know everything and welcome everything...you can learn everything and return to everything and praise everything’ (Fox,1983,56).

In the Buddhist experience, transparent knowing (‘objectless awareness’) or in Dzogchen the union of the empty and the clear, is experienced when *avidyā* (not understanding or seeing clearly) is transformed into *vidyā* (a seeing or comprehension of the true nature of things). Just as there is no beginning or end *Ibn Arabī* extends the theme of constant change to the spiritual path itself. On the path of bewilderment, one must be aware that there is no terminus along the way, no destination. This continuous transformation paradigm is expressed in the phrase ‘...the station of no station’, a no-place (an emptiness a nothingness) where one meets the Real ‘.... in each of the constantly changing forms of its manifestation, in each moment and in each breath’ (Sells,1994,105). In every instant, there is change and the heart mirrors that new expression and becomes one with the divine in that expression. One passes away (*fanā*) in every ‘point-instant’ moment of a new manifestation of the Real and this demands a

‘bewilderment’ (*hayra*) that stops at no station. It is a journey of no journey without beginning or end, it is the heart that continuously changes with each new breath, it is the knowledge of the Real manifested in every changing ‘point-instant’ moment, it is ‘...the merging of the way of knowledge and the way of love’ (Sells, 1094,115). In the Buddhist experience when knowledge of the ‘brightly shining nature of mind’ (the real) is uncovered it naturally expresses itself in compassionate loving activity.

Spiritual transformation in the Sufi view is ‘perpetual transformation’ based on love and compassion. Transformation is placed in the heart from where a continuously transformative knowing arises. If we think of the spiritual path as a pursuit of the real and the true, the Sufi sees them as constantly changing manifestations and any person not changing is not reflecting the real and is not ‘doing what God is doing’. ‘Point instant’ reality of Buddhism expresses transformation at every moment, where there is no to or from, beginning or end. Where nothing solidifies into a concept, knowing is transformed into an unknowing, a ‘bewilderment’ which itself becomes the way of ‘transparent knowing’. The path of bewilderment, like the ‘point-instant’ real, is a continuous transformative paradigm that has no end, no terminus, and no station.

It is a no-place, a nothingness; in the Buddhist terminology, an ‘emptiness’, an ‘open awareness’, an ‘unbounded wholeness’; in the Christian mystical writings of Eckhart a darkness; where one meets the Real.

### 3.25 Language pushed to the edge - The desert experience

Meister Eckhart the medieval Christian mystic, has been described as the ‘...mystic of the ‘inner desert’ and Dietrich suggests that his thought might be described as the ‘metaphysics of wilderness’. He describes God in one of his sermons ‘a still desert ... in his oneness and solitary wilderness, in his vast wasteland and in his own ground’ (Dietrich,2001,36). This is the transcendent unnameable, unknowable aspect of God but wilderness is also a symbol for the ground of the soul, a ground shared with God. Unity of grounds *unitas indistinctionis* ‘... is an interior transformation characterized by abandonment, detachment, emptiness and liberty’ (Dietrich,2001,37). For Hadewijch the 13<sup>th</sup>

century mystic a union of wills (*unitas spiritus*) and a union without distinction (*unitas indistinctionis*) were achieved through ‘poverty’ a poverty that brings about a ‘vast simplicity’. ‘Simplicity that is without beginning or end, without reason, sense, opinions or thoughts, without a knowing. A simplicity that is boundless and without limits’ (Dietrich,2001,35).

In Buddhist terminology, this is the simplicity that is ‘without mind’ an ‘open awareness’ that unfolds into ‘unbounded wholeness’. This is the simplicity of ‘nonattachment’ that grows into ‘unbounded wholeness’. The *Bon Dzogchen* view of ‘unbounded wholeness’ is a limitless simplicity also that can be accessed when mind is returned to its true primordial pure nature. Reiterated in these early mystical writing of the Christian church is the paradox that when a person travels ‘without a knowing’ he travels with a simplicity that opens into the unbounded and the limitless, into a continuously transformed knowing (*ma’rifā*). This is where the poor in spirit reside in unity and ‘...nothing is there except silent emptiness ever answering to eternity’ (Dietrich,2001,35). ‘Silent emptiness ever answering eternity’ is in Buddhism ‘open awareness knowing itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’. Simplicity and unity is achieved when all ‘notions’ are stripped away and union is achieved through ‘annihilation’ (*anéantissement*) of the will. In this ‘wild wide simplicity’, this vast wilderness is the symbol of the soul’s own recovered original nature (Dietrich,2001,35). The original nature of mind in Buddhism is the empty ‘brightly shining mind’, pure from the beginning whose simplicity is maintained by the ‘point-instant’ view which annihilates all arisings that would cover a person’s original stainless awareness.

What is the way to achieving this this simplicity? There is no way says Eckhart ‘Go without a way, on the narrow path, then you will find the desert’s track’. Where it is possible to.... ‘Sink all my something into God’s nothing’ (Dietrich,2001,39). To sink into God requires a complete ‘detachment (*abegescheidenheit*)’ to return to a primordial state before existence. Symbolically the God/world relationship became expressed ‘... in terms of emanation and return, flowing out and flowing back’ (McGinn (ed.) 2001,14). This flowing out and flowing back is the spiritual dynamic of Dunne’s ‘passing over’ and returning, it a positive expression of the ‘not-self teaching in Buddhism.

A compassionate flowing outward that is accomplished through detachment from that which is 'not-self' and therefore the trajectory is towards other.

In his study of the medieval Christian mystics, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Meister Eckhart, Frank Tobin highlights again how the images of the desert and a wasteland become positive expressions of the detachment that prepares the way for spiritual union. According to Mechthild 'one lives in the "true desert" ... if one loves *das nicht* and flees *das icht*' (Tobin,2001,49). To love the nothingness (*das nicht*) that is God requires a letting go of the 'somethingness' (*das icht*). A person is being asked to give up the 'erotic-mind's insistence on continuously attempting to own the other. In attempting to name that which is beyond words Mechthild uses the word nothingness to discourage the mind from making concepts and images and thus attempting to delimit God the unnameable. Mechthild's paradoxical way to connect with the divine is through 'estrangement and alienation' because to promote alienation '.... intensifies God's presence' (2001,51). These kinds of paradoxes play out in Eckhart also, for instance when he says 'God is the newest thing that is' (in Fox, 1983,32). These kinds of linguistic and metaphysical assertions invert a person's normal way of thinking so that they might re-assess their connections to the divine. There is also to be found in the language of Marguerite Porete, another medieval mystic, arising out of her mystical visions, the paradoxical statement that the only way to the unknowable God is by way of wanting nothing, knowing nothing '...and having no place for God' (Lichtmann,2001,71). If we translate Porete's way to spiritual realization into Buddhist terms it would be that the 'not-self' understanding uncouple the craving mind (*tanhā*) from its wants and desires and together with 'objectless awareness' prevent the ultimate reality from becoming a limited concept.

Language and thought are pushed to the edge where one is emptied of all conditioned images, where willing nothing allows for the Christian soul to be brought to nothing in God. Lichtmann emphasises how Porete uses the path of annihilation and the word annihilation to destroy all the terms we normally use to articulate a connection to the divine. The Buddhist 'point-instant' view also has annihilation as an inbuilt feature of its dynamic, it is perpetual revolution where

nothing stops, it is the dynamic energy that keeps all things open and free, it is the locomotive that passes through the 'station of no-station'.

### 3.26 Annihilation becoming a fluid transparency.

In the Buddhist view Marguerite's *Via Negativa* or path of annihilation is highlighted in the very fabric of existence where the Buddha saw the three marks of existence, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatha*). When these realities are fully embraced all previous conditioned and self-orientated projects are seen to be empty of inherent and lasting happiness. The very nature of these realizations compels travelling onward in the newly realized knowledge of ignorance. Knowing and willing are instruments that create, in the medieval Christian mystic, a dualistic view of self and God and need to be destroyed. Like Mechthild it is the nothingness *Le Nient...* a metaphor for the primal maternal ground of being and seedbed of all possibilities', that is the characteristic that swallows all other designations, yet this '...unmanifest nothingness....'(Lichtmann,2001,73) through its goodness (*Bonté*) overflows all boundaries. As the person becomes more annihilated, the more they are transformed, the more knowing, willing, and having are annihilated the more transparent and simple the person becomes. One is reminded of the 'point-instant' view which highlights that 'everything is its own annihilation' (Stcherbatsky,1962,95). Progressive simplification and a refinement into transparency is to be seen in the *Arhat* who finally cannot be found or encompassed and the *Dzogchen* practitioner who achieves 'Rainbow Body' and disappears.

Porete's language is the language of disappearing or annihilation or passing away (*fanā*) in the Sufi tradition, where to progress spiritually is to become more and more simple and transparent and to disappear and finally to be indistinguishable from love. Disappearing (*fanā*) as the *Arhat* does, is to be indistinguishable from the highest truth that of love or compassion and as Eckhart points out in the Christian understanding the highest name for God is compassion, it follows for the Christian that it is to be indistinguishable from God. Annihilation or disappearing in the Buddhist experience is a sign of one who has become one with

the truth of things (*Dhamma*). The truth of things once realized, i.e. that suffering or woundedness are endemic, gets expressed in the Buddhist practitioner through increased mindfulness and compassion for others.

What appears in Marguerite's mirror is the totally transparent, '...that is the no-thinged soul' (Lichtmann,2001,75). The fully transparent has no solid fixed self, knows and wills nothing, but paradoxically this annihilation is its freedom. The final effect of willing nothing is '...transformation into the nothingness of God' (Lichtmann, 2001,78) where God's bountiful outpouring is mirrored in the transparent self that is transformed to a 'fluid transparency' as free flowing as 'burning glass' (Lichtmann,2001,77). Longchenpa calls 'pure and total presence' a 'transparency' because 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness' is the experience of seeing transparently. Buddhism also through its teachings promotes a 'fluid transparency' of mind that knows the 'point-instant' 'not-self' empty free flowing nature of empty luminous mind. Free of all willing even the will to do the will of God there is for Eckhart a '... breakthrough to the God beyond God' (Lichtmann,2001,84), the darkness beyond darkness. In this breakthrough, there is no difference for Eckhart between God and the person:

'And when I return to God and to the core, the soil, the ground, the stream and the source of the Godhead; No one asks me where I am coming from or where I have been. For no one misses me in the place where God ceases to become' (Fox,1983,11).

The contemplative medieval Christian writings outline a path to transformation as a simplification through poverty or annihilation whereby one becomes a boundless transparent simplicity without limits. In this 'wide simplicity' a person returns to their primordial existence in God. Simplification brought about by the Eight-fold Path builds goodness power or positive force which refines the mind and actions of the Buddhist practitioner, transforming his life into a goodness orientation. The epitome of transformation in Buddhism is the unbounded *Arhat* who is beyond measuring and who is so transparent that he cannot be found. The *Arhat* has become the truth and returned his mind to the primordially existing purity of the 'brightly shining mind'. Goodness, power or compassion cannot be bounded it flows out, just as God's compassion flows out. Transparency implies there is nothing hidden, no barriers to becoming the highest truth of love and compassion. Both the medieval mystic and the Buddhist teachings seek to break

free of limiting language to describe that which is unbounded and indescribable. Whether the path is Mechthild's loving the 'nicht' or Marguerite's paradoxical wanting or knowing nothing and having no place for God, the intent is to keep the ground open, either for God to enter in the Christian context, or for the Buddhist to experience the true sky like nature of mind. Both experiences are spiritually transformative, through their processes of simplification an experience of the ultimate arises, and becomes a fluid transparency that continuously overflows itself in compassion.

### 3.27 Paradox of ultimate truth

In *Hua-yen* not only are statements concerning the ultimate truth paradoxical but also '...the way in which the truth makes its appearance is also paradoxical' (Wright,1982,328). The ultimate truth is revealed through the medium of conventional 'empty forms' which is called the 'illuminating cause (*liao-yin*) of ultimate truth' (1982,328). Any object can reveal ultimate truth; Eckhart would agree, 'Wherever I am there is God' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,20) while being empty and non-existent, and again; '...everything that is created is in itself nothing' (1983,36); this is the paradox of both 'is and is not'. The object is both the medium and participates in ultimate truth as for example form is emptiness, emptiness is form, '...but is also negated in view of its referent' (Wright,1982,329). 'Being is God's circle and in this circle all creatures exist. Everything that is in God is God' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,23). The object is empty and non-existent and therefore not ultimately true but it is the place where ultimate truth manifests. For the ultimate to appear the medium must disappear. In the Sufi view one passes away (*fanā*) in every moment of a new manifestation of the Real and this demands a 'bewilderment' that stops at no station. In order that ultimate emptiness not become a reified concept, emptiness must continuously empty itself and never settle into a stationary object, it must always be the 'emptiness of emptiness' or 'the station of no station.'

*Hua-yen* echoes the Christian mystical view that enlightenment is a progressive 'return to the source', which is 'One Mind 'returning to an awareness of its original unity and identity...' (Wright,1982,330). As in the case of Eckhart and

the medieval mystics, emptiness, annihilation, estrangement and alienation, are methods to return to the source, the 'One Mind' that flows out and returns. 'Now the moment I flowed out from the Creator all creatures stood up and shouted; Behold here is God!' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,12), 'And when I return to God.....to the core to the ground. No one asks me where I am coming from or where I have been' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,11). According to *Hua-yen* our human existence is one of alienation also from the ultimate ground of existence. We are bound by conventional truth but this will not afford access to the source to the primal ground since One Mind is not reached through rational thought. In its view of the absolute manifesting through the medium of the conventional *Hua yen* shows how it is possible, unlike Caputo, to have 'Recollection' and 'Repetition' as they arise from the same basic ground of emptiness. Paradox pushes the mind to stay open to what may be beyond conventional thought, while at the same time using conventional structures to surpass itself. Miri Albahari previously asserted that deluded mind was seeking to import *Nibbānic* qualities. Desmond stated the 'erotic' mind was seeking greater understanding and Caputo's 'passion for the impossible' comes from emersion in the flux. These all assert that the ultimate is found within the structures of the conventional, which is both affirmed and denied at the same time. Paradox is the attempt to say that which is beyond words, yet needs the 'form' or structure of language to highlight that 'form is emptiness and emptiness is form.'

Spiritual transformation in *Hua yen* is the uncovering of the truth that each phenomenon can reveal the ultimate truth. When the ultimate appears, the medium disappears just as there is a passing away (*fanā*) for the Sufi when the Real manifests.

This is based on the 'two truths' principle of ultimate and conventional truths. *Bon Dzogchen*, however, sees the ultimate truth of the wisdom of liberation to be 'groundless and rootless'. The true nature of things in *Bon Dzogchen* is 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness', being open and unbounded it has no objects. Therefore, reality is not an object of ultimate wisdom but ultimate wisdom itself. The transformative dynamic is towards a return to source, in the Christian medieval writings this is done through the realization of emptiness, alienation, annihilation etc., that open the space for the ultimate to enter; In *Hua*

*yen*, a return to the ultimate ‘One Mind’ is through the realization of the interpenetration in identity, which suggests that all things are ‘in the realm of truth’, the supreme good. For Eckhart, a person is never outside God’s circle and there is absolute identity from the beginning between God’s being and the persons being ‘God’s being is my being and God’s primordial being is my primordial being. Where I am, there is God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,20).

### 3.28 Mantras

In its efforts to express the ineffable, language strains and can even disintegrate altogether ‘... what lies beyond man’s words is eloquence of God’ (Steiner,1969,60) or as Rumi says, ‘Silence is the language of God all else is poor translation’ (Rumi quotes). The closer we get to the Real the more the difficulties increase in trying to express what is revealed to the mystic. Meaning becomes opaque and words can consume themselves in the effort to stay open in the ‘emptiness of emptiness teaching’ or they can be burnt to ashes as in the hundred-syllable mantra, which in its recitation hurdles faster and faster toward a final silence. In this instance ‘...to speak is to say less’ (Steiner,1969,70) and remaining silent is imagined as entering a great darkness. Here as Steiner suggests ‘... the word borders not on radiance or music but on night’ (1969,68). This darkness for Eckhart is God’s darkness that no light can penetrate, it is the ‘...and unknowability of the hidden divinity’ (Fox,1983,43). Eckhart says, ‘The most beautiful thing which a person can say about God would be for that person to remain silent from the wisdom of an inner wealth’ (Eckhart in Fox 1983, 44).

In Buddhism when language thoughts, words and descriptions struggle or fail in their efforts to describe the ineffable, the darkness *Das Nicht*, the mystery, it moves into the realm of sound or *mantra*. A mantra is an instrument (*tra*) of the mind (*man*) which in later evolutions became something that protected that mind. In *Tantric Sadhana* practice there is one mantra associated with the deity, that when recited is said to transform the reciter. Mantra sound, like the sound of the bell as it fades, a well-known *Zen* image, is a strong unspoken metaphor for the impermanent and insubstantial nature of reality. In Pure Land Buddhism, the recitation of *Amitābha*’s mantra is said to be sufficient to bring about *Amitābha*’s

promise that those who recite his mantra will be re-born in a pure land. As a meditation aid, like a *Zen Kōan*, it can lead the practitioner into deeper and deeper meditation and finally into silence. This is the way the hundred-syllable mantra works in *Dzogchen* practice, from its slow beginning it gets faster and faster until the words blur and becomes vibrational sound energy and then abruptly stops, leaving the practitioner in silence and open space. The primordial sound is said to be OM and every recitation of OM is said to vibrate throughout the entire cosmos. In this way mantras capture that which remains hidden and unseen, ‘Mantra accomplishes the apprehension of what is not or cannot be seen’ (in Alper (Ed) *Understanding Mantras* 1989, 2. From Gonda {1963b} 1975b, 260 Citing 1.15.20}). These magical and spiritual prescriptions are built on word sequences that reverberate in the mind and body becoming over time ‘mental artefacts to be revered and mastered’ (Mantras,1989,2).

In his study of Indian Buddhist *Dhāraṇī/Mantra*, Castro Sánchez traces the correspondence between naming as an act of calling up the essence of a thing and the mantras ability to re-create a connection to the original vision which constituted it and when accomplished is said to be a ‘truth act’ (*Satyakriyā*). The creator of the *mantra* and its power derive from the seer being in tune with the very energy that created and gave order to the cosmos. The energy of the cosmos is expressed in a ‘true language’ where ‘...to speak the truth is identical to expressing the universal Law (*Dharma*)’ (Sánchez ,2011,18). The *Theravādins* and others rejected the Vedas yet they saw some features as being useful and assimilated them into the Early Buddhist view of the power of the Buddha’s speech, where his speech expresses the truth or the reality. His speech has and bestows a protective power, and it can grant insight when memorized.

Mantras for the *Mahāyāna* were expressions of the expressionless nature of emptiness, as a ‘no-meaningness (Skt. *nītarthathā*)’ expression of the ultimate reality beyond words. On the other hand, ‘.... for the *Vajrayāna* instead *mantras/dhāraṇīs* reveal their emptiness as producers of innumerable meanings’ (Sánchez,2011,27). *Mahāyāna* saw emptiness as inexpressible and thus mantras’ function is to be ‘exhausted into silence, while *Vajrayāna* uses them, in line with its view of multiple possible meanings, to release their ‘...enlightened sonic/linguistic power (Sánchez,2011,46). The liberating power of this mantra is

explained by *Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche* as being so powerful that reciting it is equivalent to ‘... practicing the whole teaching of the Buddha’ (in Sogyal Rinpoche,1992,388). The power of the mantra, composed of twelve syllables, is such that it can free a person from the chains of the twelve links of Interdependent Origination that keep them locked in *samsara*. The mantra can act as vehicle for conveying the realization of an individual Buddha as *Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche* explains; ‘Although we are not able to see *Padmasambhava* in person, his wisdom mind has manifested in the form of mantra, the twelve syllables are actually the emanations of his wisdom mind, and they are endowed with his entire blessing. The *Vajra Guru* Mantra is *Padmasambhava* in the form of sound’ (1992,389).

Do mantras have any relevance in the modern context of transformation? If a Buddha has an individual sound is it too far to suggest that we mere mortals have also? Gerard Manley Hopkins in his poem ‘As Kingfishers Catch Fire’ seems to suggest that we have our own unique sound, and just as a bell or a stone dropped in a well, what we hear is the ringing out, coloured by all the cracks and flaws of the well of our lives.

‘... As tumbled over rim in roundy wells stones ring. Like each touch string tells, each hung bow bells finds tongue to fling out broad its name....’ and like the sound from the well or the bell a person’s particular sound is announced ‘...myself it speaks and spells. Crying what I do is me for that I came’ (Hopkins,2013,1).

A person’s life and the experiences ‘that which is closest,’ has an individual sound that helps ‘think the truth of being’ (in Pezze,2006) and only that individual can articulate; only that person can be the manifestation of. David Whyte in his poem *Statue of Buddha* underlines the far-reaching effect of the Buddha’s words which came from a strong belief in his own unique authentic sound ‘You believed in your own sound and so everything you said is still being spoken’ (Whyte,1992,85).

Noted for his difficulty of language Hopkins, as Robert Langbaum points out, stretches language as far as possible in the pursuit ‘... of the simultaneity of word and experience’ (Langbaum,1974,63). His language is an attempt to convey the energy of a ‘...moment of understanding ... a moment before conventional syntax has through its analysing function separate subject from object, thus turning

experience into memory' (Langbaum,1974,63). This is his attempt to describe the *Nen* moment, or the 'point-instant' moment. Hopkins like Eckhart attempts to express the 'thisness' as opposed to the 'whatness' of things and in attempting this uses words to get underneath definitive meaning to the thing itself '... where the object is perceived from inside, because perceived together with the self in one concrete experience' (Langbaum,1974,59). Inside at the heart of being is where Eckhart sees himself: 'Gods being is my being and Gods primordial being is my primordial being.' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,20). *Hua yen* sees the person as being embedded in infinite interconnection, where interconnection in identity is the 'supreme good'. A person so embedded is always in the 'realm of truth'.

Does the eternal nothing, *Das Nicht* have a sound? Eckhart would say yes, it is the sound of 'isness', of being, manifesting newness, at every 'point-instant' new moment. '...You ask me Who is God? What is God? I reply; Isness. Isness is God...and that is why God becomes where any creature expresses God' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,12). Those who dwell in the 'eternal now' of 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness', where every action is new, know God to be the 'newest thing' and know themselves to be '...younger today than I was yesterday' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,32). God's action, ever new, is the sound of liberation freeing all things into newness, just as the 'point-instant' moment is the mantra that frees them from all limiting referencing. God's action is a compassionate overflowing of his 'isness' an inexhaustible blessing singing its way into the ground of everything. The expressive energy of the 'empty' 'luminous' 'cognizant' nature of mind in *Dzogchen* likewise is the creative energy of compassion that flows out naturally. 'I the creativity of the universe, pure and total presence, am the real heart of all spiritual pursuits...' (Longchenpa in Lipman et al,2000,23).

The spiritual transformative dynamic of sound comes into play when world cannot express the ultimate mysterious emptiness of *Das Nicht*. Recitation of mantras are mind instruments than when recited can transform the reciter by, causing a Buddha's promise to be fulfilled, reconnect them in a 'truth act' to the original vision that gave rise to the mantra, capture the unseen primordial energy

of the cosmos. The transformative power of mantra is that in reciting a specific mantra one is said to accomplish all the teachings of the Buddha at once. Transformation can occur through the realization that mantra also is a manifestation of the wisdom mind of a Buddha together with his blessings. The mantra of one's life can be a path which helps to 'think the truth of being, (in Pezze,2006) the individual mantra where with practice the person becomes the truth of the true empty 'not-self' nature of things.' All things have been drawn from nothingness' and therefore '.... their origin is nothingness....' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,37).

### 3.29 Language into silence

Is being brought to a place of silence a place where words fail a common experience across different spiritual traditions? Expanding that question further is there a common experience of change and transformation across different traditions? In an encounter with the ultimate reality, be it Buddhist, Christian or Muslim, are there common transformative experiences? These are the questions which Randall Studstill addresses in his book *The Unity of Mystical Experiences*. Taking a systems approach to mind, it is his contention that though the spiritual practices and beliefs may be quite different, they all have the same effect of disrupting '... the processes of mind that maintain ordinary egocentric experiences and induce a structural transformation of consciousness' (Studstill,2005,6). He is not suggesting that all spiritual doctrines or experiences are the same but that there are common transformative processes. His 'mystical pluralist thesis' holds that though phenomenologically different, mystical experiences are focused on a 'common Reality' (2005,9). To assess the possible psychological shifts and changes generated he uses a systems model which shows the effect of phenomena on the psychological system (mind). This essentially shows how the borders of the system are challenged and penetrated if there is sufficient disequilibrium generated to cross the threshold of the boundary creating an opening in the system which allows more information in and thus '... promoting its evolution towards more complex levels of organization' (2005,12) and more accommodation (space) for transformation.

Experiences of the ultimate reality are experiences that have enough energy to breakdown the guarded system that maintain ordinary consciousness and as a result open the system to greater states of awareness. When the cognitive system is destabilized through paradox of language or insights such as the ‘emptiness’ or ‘not self’ or ‘point-instant’ teachings, a process of transformation is initiated which results in the person being more aware of what is real, more emotionally tuned in, have greater awareness and compassion for others and an increased ability to deal with difficulties in life.

Systems theory concerns itself not with the objects or the contents of consciousness but rather with its operation, how it shifts and changes and what influences it to do so. Everyday cognitive systems are deconstructed ‘... to provoke a cognitive transformation’ (Studstill,2005,23). For personal growth to occur the old ways, structures and systems must be transformed. This transformation can occur through the destabilization that spiritual experiences bring. In this sense, spiritual practices are therapeutic and transformative. In the Buddhist tradition, what is evident is that change or transformation is not based on one’s understanding of doctrine, as doctrine itself, as the Buddha stressed, is not the important factor; what is most important is the doctrine’s soteriological effect, which can be seen in an increase in compassionate understanding of suffering and a decrease in self-centeredness. In the transformative process if the cognitive system feels under threat one response is for that system is to ‘...rigidly adhere to dysfunctional patterns, to accommodate the crisis without having to change’ (Studstill,2005,121). The system may effectively retrench; close its boundaries intensify its defensive system and withdraw. On the other hand, if the feedback within the system is experienced as positive, for example gaining greater understanding of oneself as an image of God, or one who possesses Buddha nature, the inhibiting constructs can be changed. Transformation and change is not just concerned with learning new approaches or esoteric insights but rather a reorganization of the conceptual system that results in new ways of engaging with life and with others.

### 3.30 Shock tactics

Disturbing the mind's equilibrium using a kind of shock tactics can be observed in Buddhist Tantric practice which, as Snellgrove in his introduction to Tantric texts, shows how they '...range from the preaching of strict living to extreme licentiousness' (Snellgrove,2002,160). The licentious activity applies to the *yogin* who has freed himself from all conventions '...but who has also learned the secret of the absence of passion by means of passion' (160). The Tantric *Hevajra tantra* that Snellgrove comments on, is full of shocking antinomian statements, it describes a veritable Bacchanalian feast of exotic foods and drink and sexual encounters. The shock element is meant to destabilize the cognitive system by playing upon the distinctions we have of good and evil, and is based on the 'non-dual' perspective teaching. The same 'nondual' perspective that leads Rumi to say, 'Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field I will meet you there ...' (Rumi quotes). This is itself, like many of Eckhart teachings, a 'skilful means' (*upāya*) employed to penetrate our conditioned neurotic defences. Eckhart promotes 'detachment' and paradox, to penetrate the conditioned defences. A person must travel by the way of no way, by the way of referenceness, without a why 'This I know, that the only way to live is like the rose, which lives without a why ...' (in Fox,1983,30). Even the why of God must be abandoned; Even the concept of God must be 'I pray God rid me of God' (in Fox,1983,50).

The spiritual practices and insights help to break down the defensive organization of everyday consciousness creating an opening in the defensive cognitive system. A new space is created that allows for change and transformation to occur. The practices encouraged by Eckhart and the Christian Mystics together with those of *Dzogchen* and other Buddhist schools work to challenge the ordinary cognitive system. They disrupt and undermine the cognitive map that divides awareness into dualistic categories. The result is an encounter with the unknown, the darkness, with the real, with 'unbounded wholeness' or 'objectless awareness' or the 'not- self, which if embraced will result in more openness. If a person is brave enough they can even ask for more 'bewilderment', to make a deeper encounter with the real, like the Sufi poets. Openness is the key to evolution of the cognitive system, nothing happens in withdrawal except shut down and stasis. Openness or

emptiness in the Buddhist sense ‘allows the system to evolve, to self-organize into a new pattern of psychic organization ...’ (Studstill,2005,239). When the everyday cognitive map is no longer readable, a person is left to experience the previously unknown depths in themselves. In a spiritual sense, this is on the edge where words can fail, and an inner silence descends, in meeting the great darkness of the God or the Buddha within.

For transformation to occur the common defensive psychological system must be disrupted. A strong energy is needed to penetrate and disrupt the cognitive system and move it towards transformation, an experience of the ultimate is one such experience that has enough energy to break through the guarding system. When the cognitive system is disrupted a space is created for transformation to occur. The transforming agent is not the doctrine per se, which should be let go of as the Buddha said, once one has arrived at the other shore. Transformation is through the effect of the teachings which become visible in how compassion has grown in the person. The re-organization of the conceptual system is aided when positive feedback, such as being an image of God or having Buddha nature, is experienced. Tantric Buddhism uses shock antinomian tactics to disrupt the conceptual cognitive system where the ‘non-dual’ teaching becomes a skilful means (*upāya*) to penetrate conditioned cognitive defences and create new space for transformation to happen. The creation of space or openness in the cognitive system is key to transformation occurring. Buddhist teachings of ‘point-instant’ reality, ‘open awareness’ and ‘unbounded wholeness’, ‘not-self’ and many others are instruments of continuous openness continuous transformation.

### 3.31 Hermes and Buddha - Tricksters

Who are the agents of transformation and how do they assist in the transformation process? Hermes is the god of transitions in classical literature, and is seen to be present during times of transformation. He is the classic trickster archetype who presides over the world of flux, the world where liminality prevails. He is the guardian of the cognitive threshold, the lake that must be crossed to effect transformation. He is present when the everyday sense of self is collapsing either through a spiritual encounter with ‘not-self’ teachings or psychotherapeutically

when the rigid sense of self no longer works. A liminal space is created when the ego is sufficiently displaced and the old self based on selective images that support old roles are broken. Not only is Hermes present at these times of transformation but he actively encourages and works to undermine existing structures to create more openness for change to occur.

Hermes is said to be a 'psychopomp' a guider of souls from one life to the next, or from one state of being to the next. When the ego is struggling with letting go of certainty and moving into unknown territory, it is Hermes who leads and encourages it onward, to have trust and faith in the unknown. In the Medieval spiritual sense, the unknown and the darkness are associated with God and in the Buddhist context what we are unaware of (*avidyá*), that which lies in the darkness, is our true nature. It is Hermes who leads a person towards realizing who or what they may be. God of boundaries and transitions, he is present whenever or wherever change and flux are in play. Though he is the shepherd of transitions and liminality, he is also a trickster. A trickster is a disturber, one who undermines the status quo, a breaker of established ways of seeing and being in the world.

The trickster is the quintessential outsider; he lives outside on the margins in a liminal betwixt and between paradigms. The trickster lives between two worlds, the existing one and the one he is working to bring about. Part of his, (and the Buddha's) ability is to breakdown distinctions that we hold between good/bad, reality/illusion etc. '... In fact, he casts doubt on all pre-conceived and expected systems of distinction ....' (Abrahams,1975,155). The following is a synopsis of some of the characteristics of the trickster as highlighted by Abrahams; He is free of temporal and spatial boundaries; He is to be found at thresholds or in threshold moments; He can exhibit unusual physical and mental abilities; He can make himself multiple; He can have a two-fold physical nature and be associated with mirrors. Having both a creative and destructive nature he is always situated between the worlds of life and death (1975, 159/60). The foregoing descriptions could be a description for the Buddha also. The trickster is thus by temperament and situation perfectly suited to cross boundaries and establish new camps in previously uninhabited areas. In this way, the new territory is consecrated made sacred and the one who leads into the new territory is a sacred being.

The trickster's undermining of the established order of things turns out to be a creative act of moving and widening the circle of what can be deemed sacred. Through his work what had once been thought of as bad and thus abandoned or banished is now brought within the new expanded circle of sacredness. To be the agent of transformation and new possibility Hermes is forever preaching not unlike the 'point instant' view, 'not so, not so, not this or that', he says no to every structured norm. 'Liminality may perhaps be regarded as the Nay to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may come' (Turner in Abrahams,1975,185). The Buddha's teachings work towards creating maximum openness and thus creates the widest circle of sacredness.

The liminal, the peripheral, the underwayness, the darkness, have their being in Hermes and the Buddha through being bringers of the 'word'. Hermeneutics, as Richard Palmer highlights, is the process of exposing '... something hidden from ordinary understanding....' (Palmer,1980,1). To 'un-conceal' the hidden is apocalyptic, it is to wake up and be the awakened one (The Buddha) and this demands the ability to cross established thresholds and access knowledge that lies therein and thus become a 'bridge' between the worlds of waking and dreaming, visible and invisible. This dynamic of crossing is mirrored in a person's life in John Dunne's paradigm of 'passing over' and returning, which is an enactment of the 'not-self' teaching. Just as the Buddha's teachings are said to waken a person from the dream world he has created, so to Hermes has the power to wake those who are asleep. The message of Hermes and the Buddha aims at bringing out that which has been hidden or concealed. The hidden message of who we are is concealed but is brought to 'unconcealment' through spiritual practice. In the Buddhist view the focus is not so much on 'interpreting the 'word' but more so on enacting the 'faithful tidings' that have been unconcealed by the Buddha, who has left a way to uncover the hidden truth of things? Buddhism would agree that there is an ongoing process, a dialogue needed to re-gain a connection to a primordial moment of 'unbounded openness'. There is a map to the treasure that lies hidden in the unconscious darkness, on the periphery where the Hermetic and

Buddha natures reside sleeping in the dark well of the body. It is too one-sided to see the Buddha and Hermes only in a deconstructionist light, they are equally reconstructionist; who to create Truth constructions continually clear old constructions to make way for the new, while being aware that their own constructions are temporary models and not the truth itself.

### 3.32 Buddha and Hermes – Disrupt to open new ways

There are many parallels between how Hermes leads people and how the Buddha and his teachings also lead and inspire people. The Buddha to undermine the fixed views we have concerning the nature of the self and the nature of reality leads one from the darkness of ignorance to the realization of how things really are. He is liminal in so far as he lives between two worlds as embodiment of the ultimate reality and as teacher in the relative world. He is the *Tathāgata* who cannot be encompassed or found yet he is present to those that need his compassion. As embodiment of the teachings he too is free of spatial and temporal boundaries as witnessed by his ability to walk on water, multiply himself, fly, read other minds, pass through solid structures and the power to guide others according to their needs. His teachings are called the ‘middle way’ and he too walks and preaches the, liminal line between life and death, in every ‘point instant’ moment of life. As teacher of the ‘middle-way’ and the ‘non-dual’ perspective he brings new realization and creates new and broader inner territories where the disowned can be encompassed and re-claimed. Turner has defined liminality as possible the ‘Nay to all positive structural assertions’ and the Buddha’s teachings on ‘point-instant’ reality and ‘not-self are also a Nay to all entities that claim permanent and self-existing status.

Through the intervention of the Buddha (in the form of his teachings) and through Hermes, new possibilities for consciousness are opened and pushed to their limit, as in the ‘unbounded wholeness’ teachings where there are no boundaries at all. Just as God has been defined as a ‘circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere’, when boundaries are flung open a person finds themselves standing like Moses on sacred ground. When a person ‘passes over’ and returns boundaries are pushed open and a new realization emerges that

‘...wherever you place your feet there rests a blessing’ (Rumi in Harvey,1995,131), everywhere the world is seen to be a blessed fullness. Without boundary nothing is contained, there are no contents, no objects, there is only ‘objectless awareness’. This resembles the very early Buddhist view of the mind as having no contents. Without contents, the mind is not given to selection or judgements or categorization it is undifferentiated. ‘Without boundaries, there are no object relations-in a sense there are no objects; without definition, there can be no thought; the world is ouroboric undifferentiated, pleromatic’ (Stein,1999,3).

The Buddha is the principle of completeness (pleromatic) of infinite wholeness, (ouroboric) who like Hermes differentiates what is real from what is an illusion. The Buddha has a parallel function to Hermes who works in the darkness, in the underworld of the psyche, the place that must be entered if a person is to be complete psychologically and spiritually. ‘In the journey into the underworld-which Hillman has advocated as essential for psychological wholeness-we must confront those darker aspects of ourselves ...’ (Stromer,2). The Buddha, like Hermes is a whisperer (*psithyrists*), the one who teaches that we should listen to inner whisperings, the inner stirrings that long for wholeness. As a guide, the Buddha is aware that what we fear most is death, by leading us through the death of all our illusions, all the impermanence’s that we thought would bring us happiness, he leads us back to awareness and a committed life, that is now acutely aware of the temporal nature of everything. ‘... There is an importance (to) hearing the deathly side of things’ (Doty, 134 in Stromer,2) because it is in the mirror of death or loss of all our neurotic conditioned constructions that we better see our own image. Sarah Mc Clintock calls the Buddha a ‘compassionate trickster’ and makes the point that ‘...as trickster he is the embodiment of the unconditioned and this paradoxical status accounts for the transformations he works in others’ lives’ (Mc Clintock, 2011, 90). As embodiment of the unconditioned he is not confined to the rules of conditioned existence, he can bend those rules in the service of exposing what is the true nature of reality.

The transformative process is a journey across the cognitive threshold to new realizations. The Buddha and Hermes are archetypal liminal characters or energies assisting in the transformative process. As characters, they both work to undermine existing limiting psychological structures. As inner energies, they are

the energies of Desmond's 'erotic mind' or Albahari's pre- *Nibbānic* mind that seek greater awareness and completion. Psychologically the Buddha's teachings help guide the person from one state of realization to a more advanced state. Transformation is the creation of the largest circle possible and in bringing a person to awareness of the truth of reality. The 'Unbounded wholeness' teaching or the definition of God as a circle, is the largest circle, though empty it is the fullest possible, and so the person is attracted because 'it is in the direction of the fullest that truth lies'. In expanding, like the *Arhat's* mind to infinity, the circle embraces ever wider manifestations of sacredness. The world itself consequently is seen to be an infinite sacred fullness. As bringer of the new word, the Buddha un-conceals the hidden truth of our true nature and the true nature of everything. The Buddha is '*Dhamma* become' the embodiment of the unconditioned completeness and not being confined to conditioned rules works in the darkness of the psyche whispering to the 'erotic' mind that greater blessings are possible if the person comes out of hiding 'Do not hide the sight of your face is a blessing' (Rumi in Harvey, 1995,131).

### 3.33 Conclusion

If the spiritual journey of transformation is imagined as an actual journey where a person sets out from where they are, having in mind where they want to get to, then they might be said to be in a liminal in-between space until the journey is completed. Liminality is defined as a psychological and temporal transitional event that creates identity as a happening, where the person is revealed to themselves as something different. A person is moved from a profane space into a sacred space where their new identity is revealed. In the Buddhist view, what is revealed or 'unconcealed' is the realization of 'non-duality' through which there is the transformative realization that one's identity is not different than being. Liminality is also defined as being underway. Being underway implies being defined by Heidegger's 'not yet future' that is never a 'self-corresponding entity in the present'. The Buddhist path is a circular one that always arrives back to the here and now, to this 'point-instant' moment of what we have been all along. The transformative insight is the realization that one is the Path. One's life as it is

unfolding now in this moment of delusion or awareness is the path that leads to ‘thinking the truth of being’.

The spiritually transformative experience can arise by recognizing the difference between attempting to bind a person, through attempting to appropriate the others transcendent aspect, and seeing them as a gift. Through seeing the difference between binding and gift there arises a transformative freedom, or a space, where the other can be free of projections and craving, a space where genuine care and compassion can arise. This is the transformative experience of simply allowing things to be as they are. When the desire to appropriate is surrendered, transformation can best be seen through a change in how a person interacts with all that is other. For Heidegger interaction begins when we are claimed by thing and are in effect ‘bethinged’ by them. In the Buddhist view we are attracted to things that support the self-construct and we reject or ignore all else. Through repetition we condition and are conditioned by the things we crave (*tanhā*) but these are the things a person needs to let go of to open an inner space for transformation to occur. ‘Attraction’ and ‘allure’ as per Husserl, are not in the Buddhist view seen to be residing in the external object but rather in the conditioned *klesha-mind* and its dualistic perceptions. Being led or attracted by what a person craves keeps them in an abstracted state from the present. Transformation for some can be the process of getting free of binding, limiting, craving to get to the present moment. Attached to painful events of the past the challenge can be how to get to live wholeheartedly in the present. The transformative realization of the ‘point-instant’ view brings a person to, and holds them in the continuous present where everything is open, without reference to the past or the future. Transformation is a deconstructing of the old system of relating, it requires travelling without reference to the past or future, it is travelling ‘without a why’ as Eckhart says. Transformation requires a surrendering if there is to be spiritual and psychological growth. A letting go and a surrendering to a more ‘universal identity’ as Wallace says is required. Buddhism and Christian contemplative tradition would agree that reconnecting with Buddha-nature or God nature is the ultimate transformative experience.

Taylor outlines how when meaning and coherence have been lost, due to the disappearance of God, a person sets out on the road of appropriation to re-enforce

certainty in their lives. Because of God disappearance, the spiritual view of the self as an image of God has also disappeared. A person so bereft of a spiritual identity tries to appropriate divine qualities to itself, to create certainty. Certainty and truth in the self are blended and underpinned by Descartes *cogito ergo sum*. The pursuit of certainty gives rise to and supports the self construction. A way out of the self-project, with its attendant painful experiences, is to let go of constructing activity, allowing space for the 'unconstructed' to arise. In early Buddhism, the stopping of constructing activities leads to the transformative experience of the 'unconstructed *Dhamma*'. This is the transformative experience of not trying to create the truth of the self but rather experiencing and becoming the truth of *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa* that is 'signless' 'unbecome' and 'unmade', beyond the self construct. The Buddhist teachings simply ask if the constructing activities that a person is bringing into being in the pursuit of certainty are helpful or not in one's life. The transformative Buddhist teaching to free oneself of this kind of circular entrapment, that demands constant reinforcing to maintain the constructs, is to let go of conditioned structuring and referencing. To travel like this openly in the darkness of not-knowing without references is to be doing what the Buddha did, who was said to have crossed to the other shore without any support.

On the spiritual transformative path, one will inevitably encounter enigmas and puzzles that the constructing strategic mind will see as absurdities. Whether the paradox is in the form of a *Zen Kōan*, the 'point-instant' view, *Dharmakīrti's* negative quatrains, the *Chan* statement of the 'no *dharma, dharma*' or the journeys end for the Sufi being to arrive at the 'station of no station'. All these paradoxes are teachings which reinforce perpetual openness, perpetual revolution that never allows the strategic structuring neurotic mind to build its elaborate dualistic buildings. The classic paradox from the Christian biblical tradition is outlined in the story of the burning bush which Moses encounters. Two orders of reality come together, the bush is on fire but it is not being consumed. This paradox gives rise to God telling Moses to take off his shoes for the ground he is standing on is holy or sacred ground. When paradox is occurring, a sacred space has opened. Without the old references and structures ready to hand, there will be encounters with the new and the surprising. As in any new adventure there will be failures to be experienced. These failures however can be the agents of

transformation themselves. Without failure, a person is in danger of not growing and simply remaining 'a troubled guest on the dark earth' as Goethe said. Being defeated by greater and greater beings, rather than winning, is how Rilke sees a person grows. With the experiences of failure, a person becomes more grounded in the real and builds the necessary stamina to have a 'passion for the impossible' or take on the *Bodhisattva* vow to save all sentient beings. There is a spiritually heroic side in everyone, called Buddha nature that is not afraid of failure, waiting to be discovered. A person fails in the pursuit of certainty, but it is that 'passion for the impossible' that energizes and eventually defeats us. The Buddha was also defeated in his attempts to achieve perfection and gave up harsh aesthetic practices as a means to full understanding. The Buddha gave up and became the 'immediate man who lives from moment to moment'. This is the transformative movement from pursuing a perfect future to living in the here and now present on a path of discovery rather than certainty. It is the great intention of the *Bodhisattva* that opens the path to maximum discovery and subsequent failure, but that is where the spiritually transformative experience rests.

The transformative journey can be initiated and sustained by a question that arises from the need for a new direction or vocation in a person's life. For John Donne the question is 'Am I doing what God is doing'? This question can lead to the pursuit of understanding in the 'knowledge of ignorance' and openness to 'pass over' to various points of views. This is a positive enactment of the not-self teaching. 'Passing over' is a compassionate activity that transforms the pursuit of certainty into a wisdom oriented mind that pursues understanding and acceptance. Not choosing one experience over another is also a positive enactment of the Buddhist 'non-dual' view. On the transformative journey, the search for meaning is a search that takes place in the circumstances of one's life, where it is possible to 'think the truth of being' (in Pezze,2006). Travelling as a discoverer allows for a 'vocation' to emerge where it is possible to experience with Wordsworth a moment beyond oneself when 'vows were made for me'. This is a call that is address to oneself only. This is the possibility that Buddhism keeps open in its teachings of emptiness and 'point- instant' reality. The Sufi teaching on constant transformation (*ma'rifa*), and constant revolution

through the 'station of no station' teaching is also meant to fuel the constant transformative energy that never stops pushing us forward towards realization.

## Chapter 4 - The Body as a Vehicle to Enlightenment

### 4.1 Introduction

The Buddhist ‘not-self’ teaching is the quintessential understanding which says that the answer to suffering and the truth of impermanence is ‘not-self’ by which is implied that the answer to suffering is to be other-focused. This other-focus is supported and enhanced by following the ‘Eight-Fold Path’ as outlined by the Buddha. These eight elements are traditionally divided into three groups, Wisdom, Ethical Conduct and Concentration. Wisdom is defined as being composed of right views (right understanding of the four noble truths) and right thoughts (freedom from ill will, lust and cruelty). Ethical conduct is made up of right speech (abstaining from lies and harsh and judgemental language) and right action (to abstain from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct). Concentration is enhanced by having right effort (avoiding evil thoughts and focusing on good ones), right mindfulness (paying attention to body and mind states) and right concentration (focusing on an object in deep meditation). To end suffering, one should follow the ‘Eight-fold path’ which requires self-discipline of body, speech and mind, self-purification and self-development and in that sense, encourages one to be their own therapist. By following the ‘Eight-fold path’ a person’s positive force or goodness power is enhanced and with it an equilibrium or balance is achieved between what one is and what one does. On a higher-level balance is achieved by creating the conditions that will draw the person’s ‘true’ identity closer to the truth of being. The Wisdom aspect of the ‘Eight-fold path’ implies that suffering arises from not understanding the true nature of the self or reality. As such it begins its ‘therapeutic’ approach by showing how the person’s psychology is conditioned, with its teaching on ‘Dependent Origination’ and how craving and *karma* are strong underlying forces channelling one’s thinking and acting. Buddhist ‘therapy’ could be called exposure therapy or reality therapy, in that rather than concentrating on how the self is or on its hurts and wants, it sees the solution to suffering to be found in coming to terms with how things really are. This matter of fact practical approach is summarized in the parable of the man shot with an arrow. The Buddha says that there is little point trying to find out what type of arrow it is, what kind of bow it was shot from and who might

have shot it. These are secondary to the situation of helping the man who is shot; he could die if such speculations were entered in to.

The Buddhist perspective and approach to mind has gained much popularity within the therapy profession. Many books have been written outlining how the Buddhist approach compliments and throws new light on how a therapist might work with a client. One of the most popular of these books is Mark Epstein's '*Thoughts without a Thinker*'. Built on an exposition of the 'Four-noble truths' and the 'Eightfold path' his book focuses attention on the critical issue of the nature of the self from the Buddhist perspective. Epstein sees the Buddhist teaching of 'not-self' to be the greatest contribution to psychotherapy because it frees the person from narcissistic concerns, the source of all suffering. Epstein shows how the concepts and practices of psychoanalytically based psychotherapy have a striking correspondence with Buddhist practices and teachings. He explains the practices of bare attention, concentration, mindfulness and analytic enquiry and shows how these are prominent motifs in psychology. Later using Freud's theories on remembering, repeating and working- through he shows how Buddhist teachings on meditation practice can complement and enhance the therapeutic process.

David Brazier in his book *Zen Therapy* sees the ethical dimension of the 'Eight-fold path' as offering the way to psychological health '.....to be psychologically healthy is to return to live from our core ethics' (Brazier,1995,44). If the ethical guides of the 'Eight-fold path' are the way to health and happiness, then is it the function of the therapist to teach the client moral precepts? In the normal course of therapy says Brazier, it is the therapist's 'selfless attitude' that eventually inspires the client, so there is no need to be prescriptive or legislative. Brazier goes on to show how the variety of problems that people bring to therapy can be viewed as *Kōans*. In wrestling with a person's difficulties (*Kōan*) the individual is brought to new insight and clarity; indeed, it is, says Brazier, very important that the therapist not take away the dilemma but rather work to 'sharpen' it. The more technical and directly applicable parts of his book concerns what Buddhism calls 'mental factors' These are said to be aspects of mind that capture the quality of an object and can influence the mind. These mental states are seen to be 'formations' or mental events that arise with consciousness. Brazier discusses

these mental factors in the form of statements or axioms and goes on to show how they apply to the psychotherapeutic process. He begins his discussion with 'root relations' which traces the roots of suffering to 'greed', 'hate' and 'delusion'. How a person relates to objects is discussed in his 'object relations' theory, which says that all mental states are conditioned by objects which a person pays attention to. Other factors discussed are; 'the theory of association' or conditioning, which states that mental states are conditioned by those that immediately precede it; *Karma* as the law of moral consequence; the theory of '*ahara*', which says that we keep our conditioning going by feeding it; the '*dhyana*' theory which says that taming the mind is possible. It is easy to see how Buddhist insights into the mind in the way Brazier presents them could be very useful tools in the therapy process.

Buddhism teaches that there are four practices that will cause a transformation in a person's perception; these are 'mindfulness' 'equanimity' 'loving-kindness'(compassion) and 'joy'. Of these, 'mindfulness' and 'compassion' have become new features in therapy. 'Mindfulness' in clinical practice takes its basis from Buddhist teachings and sets out to show how the capacity for conscious awareness might be '...sustained moment-to-moment...' (Siegel et al.,2008,2). With 'Mindfulness', the emphasis is on helping the person to come to awareness and acceptance, non-judgementally, of how their mental constructs work. Using the 'point-instant' insight of Buddhism, discussed earlier, in the therapeutic setting 'Mindfulness' is defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment" (in Siegel et al.,4). 'Mindfulness', promoting openness and acceptance, is seen to undermine any one-sided clinging to pleasant feelings only. It promotes openness to both pleasant and unpleasant feelings equally as non-dual states. Together with 'Mindfulness' clinical psychology has come to see the fostering of 'Compassion' as a legitimate healing approach. In clinical psychology, this approach has been pioneered by Germer & Neff of the Harvard Medical School and the University of Texas respectively. They have developed a self-compassion programme to help people develop initially more 'loving-kindness' towards themselves. This practice is then expanded to loved ones, friends and eventually into the wider community of those we know, those we have difficulties with and those we are

indifferent to. Their programme focuses on self-compassion which is defined as compassion directed inward.

While the above approaches are positive contributions that Buddhism can make to the process of psychotherapy there are some divergences in the comparisons that need to be highlighted. While the goal of therapy could be summarized as 'self-actualizing' the goal of Buddhism is 'non-self-actualizing'. The solution to suffering from the Buddhist perspective is to be found in the ethical dimensions of the 'Eight-fold path' which of themselves highlight relationship to others and the broader community. Western therapy sees consciousness raising as a method to facilitate 'seeing things clearly'. In the Buddhist context, however, as David Fontana illustrates, 'mental cognition (consciousness) is regarded as a *skandha* like any other, merely a mechanism for presenting stimuli to the mind to form representation of phenomena' (Fontana,1997,36). Consciousness in this case can be that which comes between us and the direct, authentic experience. We must then guard against assuming that the same terms have the same meaning in therapy and Buddhism. From the Buddhist perspective, we encounter the world directly when we step out of our habitual self-structuring, then we can meet what is really other. Buddhist psychology, for this reason promotes a 'non-self-psychology'. Buddhist psychology is radical, it refuses constructs, its energy is focused on deconstructing the deluded self which keeps us imprisoned and isolated from our greatest potential which some schools equate with 'Buddha-nature'. So, radical is it that ultimately it goes beyond its own 'raft' of theories and concepts (i.e. beyond it-self) seeing them as not useful when we have arrived on the other shore of liberation. It is possibly too radical for the constructionist Western mind that sees all good things associated with self? Buddhist psychology does not focus on individual traumas, the effects of upbringing on shaping personality or the stages of life from infancy to old age. It is not that interested in the content of consciousness, it is interested in the process of consciousness. The content of consciousness versus the process of consciousness can best be illustrated by how meditation is used in psychotherapy and spiritual meditation. In the therapeutic setting meditation is used to show how the person's mind is full of conditioned concepts. In spiritual practice meditation is used to show what the

process of consciousness is, by showing how thoughts arise dependently and because they have no inherent self-structure fall away.

Is the Buddhist influence on therapy or therapy's influence on Buddhism a good thing? Patrick Kearney in his article 'Why Meditation is not Therapy' thinks most definitely it is not. Kearney's concerns come from having read Jack Kornfield's *A path with heart: A guide through the perils and promises of spiritual life*; Jeffrey Rubin, author of *Psychotherapy and Buddhism: Towards an integration*; and Mark Epstein, author of *Thoughts without a Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist perspective*. Having read these books, he comments 'I felt somewhat disturbed by what I see as a growing confusion about the nature of Buddhist teachings and a willingness to distort and dilute these teachings, apparently in order to make Buddhist meditation more saleable in our contemporary spiritual marketplace' (Kearney, Intro to online article). Kearney highlights how both Kornfield and Epstein suggest that westerners have a unique form of suffering. Kornfield sees them as 'wounded adult children' while Epstein classifies them as 'hungry ghosts'. Because of their deep psychic wounds, they are unable to sit in meditation properly without being overcome emotionally. Both Kornfield and Epstein see these people as requiring a combination of psychotherapy and meditation. To say that some experiences are special is for Kearney to miss the fact that the 'Four Noble Truths' of Buddhism are concerned with the 'structure' of experience not with the 'content' no matter how traumatic. All experiences arise and end, that is the structure of experience, that is what makes it unsatisfactory. According to Kornfield and Epstein certain experiences are immune to the path which implies that the path does not work in certain cases and if so does not really work at all. The 'Four Noble Truths' are not concerned with specific types of suffering or experiences, but just the fact that they arise and cease. It is the dependent arising 'patterned' nature of experience that Buddhism emphasizes. Kearney re-iterates forcefully where psychotherapy and Buddhism diverge highlighting that what there is and all there is in the Buddhist view is 'not-self' but process. There is no mind beyond the contents that arise and cease. Finally, Kearney argues that this modern blending of Buddhism with other spiritual paths and psychotherapy, in the way Kornfield blends them, creating a 'Great Way', leaves freedom to move from one spiritual vehicle to another.

However, this leaves a person a non-committed spiritual shopper, but never a committed finder according to Kearney.

Buddhist practice and techniques are unwavering in their focus to bring a person's identity as close as possible to the true nature of reality. This goal is fully expressed in the *Arhat* whose being is said to 'be from truth' and thus has become *Dhamma*. It does not discriminate in the application of its understanding; the truth of 'dependent arising' for instance says, 'if this is then that is, and if this is not that is not' no matter how emotive the arising may be. From a compassionate point of view, it may say that what the person is experiencing and consequently feeling is a true feeling for them, but it is not based on a full understanding of reality. In that sense, it is true but not real. It is only a full understanding of how things really are and the application of the 'Eight-Fold Path', that subsequently builds goodness power or positive-force, that will shift the painful self-focus towards the universal and liberating transpersonal truth of the true 'not-self' nature of the person and reality.

Enlightenment in Buddhism is a waking up to the realization of how things really are. The process of awakening to a large extent has focused on meditation practices and the realizations stemming from the insights arising therein. Coupled with these experiential insights there are many teachings which realized beings have left as mile markers for those travelling the spiritual path of transformation? The combination of personal practice and spiritual teachings has become the instruments that are usually used to help us work on changing the habits of the conditioned mind. However, Buddhism is an inclusive practice and as such considers all three aspects of the person, i.e. body, speech and mind. In this section of my conversation with transformation I am looking closely at the often-neglected area of the body. The Pali word used for mind in early Buddhism is *citta* often translated as 'heart-mind' to emphasize the feeling dimension of knowing, i.e. compassion. To know or be enlightened in the Buddhist view is not just an intellectual understanding, to truly know is to have a compassionate response for those who continue to suffer in the not knowing (*avidyā*) of unenlightenment. Enlightened knowing involves a willingness to look at how our mind set, with all its conditioned prejudices, is contributing to our continued suffering. The courage to take that critical look at oneself requires a willingness

to move into a less self-centred ego-logical dimension, a willingness to explore the darkness of not-knowing and to be vulnerable. The early Buddhist yogis left the everyday world and moved into the unknown unpredictable darkness of caves and forests. The unknown the unpredictable is a challenge to live without the usual conditioned references in the hope that a deeper transformation would happen in an encounter with unpredictable otherness. Enlightenment is the attainment of a freedom and liberation not only of mind, but of body and speech also. In purification practices, it is usual to touch the joined hands to the forehead invoking purification for the body, a testament to the interconnectedness between body and mind. Tantric Buddhism recognises the possibility of achieving transformation through the body and has developed many body based yogic practices to fuel enlightenment.

As human beings, we have an innate drive to become completely who we are and are meant to be. Psychology refers to this as a ‘self-actualizing’ or ‘individuation’ drives. The spiritual equivalent to these energies is Buddha-nature which inspires its ‘self-actualizing’ through emphasising that there is a primordial purity at the core of each person or as Eriugena and Eckhart say each person is an ‘theophany’ (in Sells,1994,43) or a ‘book about God’ (in Fox,1983,14). Buddhism encourages the realization of this unrecognized core by challenging a person’s adherence to negative and limiting belief systems that keep them distant from the true nature of mind. These belief systems stemming from *karmic* experiences reside not only in the ‘store-house consciousness’ (*ālaya-vijñāna*) but because of the body mind connection that is seen to exist in Buddhism, these *karmic* energy traces or seeds (*bīja*) are stored away in what might be called the body of unknowing. The body of unknowing, or what Western psychology calls the unconscious, stores a person’s disowned or abandoned psychic material, the material that unknown to us guides and motivates all aspects of the life we are living. Buddhist practices and psychotherapy assist in bringing these ‘unconscious’ drives and forces to light. All that is unknown, all that resides in the darkness of the unconscious, in the forest of the body-mind, is what the early Buddhist forest dwellers set out to encounter. It is possible to have a similar experience when we first realize that all we know and don’t know, all that we experience and struggle with are part of the path that is constantly moving us forward towards greater realization and

embodiment. The non-conceptual element resides in the body in the forest of feelings sensations and emotions and it is in this unknown frontier that the enlightenment experience can also be found. Meditation is the practice of being aware of what is occurring now in this moment. It is the practice of non-interference, it is allowing whatever arises to arise and in this way judgements and concepts are suspended and a person can rest in that space. In meditation, what comes into view is that thoughts and emotions are fleeting, rising and falling as the mind moves quickly from one thought to another. Aware of our tendency to conceptualize Buddhism tries to keep these experiences open by such teachings as the 'emptiness of emptiness'. However, there is directly available in the body all the non-conceptual elements of feeling, intuition and sensation that when encountered, not only creates more inner space for the body, but also deeper and broader awareness for the mind. The body is a library containing all our *karmic* history, all that we are aware of and all that we have buried in attempts to protect ourselves. In body focused meditation we become aware that each part of the body has a unique history a unique story to tell. The 'big toe' is as Reggie Ray says a 'universe' (2008,62) itself with its own inbuilt already existing awareness that is uniquely ours. Body oriented psychotherapy describes a range of therapeutic approaches which sees the body and mind to be intimately interlinked. There are a broad set of terms used to describe a body/mind approach such as 'body focused therapy', 'somatic therapy' or 'body awareness therapy'. Some of the 'schools' of the body oriented approach include; Bioenergetic Analysis, stemming from the work of Lowen and Pierrakaos, Biosynthesis coming from the works of David Boadella, Body-mind Centring arising from the work of Bainbridge Cohen, and Biodynamic Psychotherapy founded by Gerda Boyesen. Many of these approaches, though adding new elements or choosing to focus on specific methods, were influenced by the earlier work of Wilhelm Reich. In the 1920's Reich, a colleague of Freud, further developed Freud's ideas concerning the long-term effects of childhood development issues on the later adult mind. He set out to investigate how shocks in early life continuously affected the free flow of energy in the body system. According to Reich the body's reaction to these traumatic incidents produced energetic blocks which he later termed 'character armouring'. Reich diverged from Freud's talking therapy approach to show that early traumas could be addressed directly by working on the body. Reich

speculated that difficulties at different stages of development would affect the body-mind in different ways. Thus, birth trauma or difficulties with feeding from early childhood would have a specific effect which differed from later teenage difficulties with sex and relationships. These different effects he saw as leading to specific observable 'secondary traits' which he called 'character structures'. Reich's approach was to work with massage, breath techniques, body posture and exercise. Other body-centred approaches appeared later, those influenced by Gestalt (Hakomi); Jungian psychology (Process Oriented Psychology); Body Awareness (Focussing); and Buddhist mindfulness practice, developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

To give an insight into how Gerda Boyesen saw the work of psychotherapy and its relation to the body I draw on the last article she published before her death in 2006, titled 'Body Psychotherapy is a Psychotherapy'. In this article, she outlines how neurotic conditioning works by giving an example of a fish whose space to swim in was restricted for some time and when that restriction was removed the fish still swam in the 'imagined' "neurotic space". This for her is a good example of how a person's neurosis limits their life both 'psychologically and spiritually' (in Lang,2001,33). Thus, she sees from the very beginning that helping to remove this 'invisible neurotic' barrier that a person is conditioned to swim in, not only has a psychological benefit but a spiritual benefit also. Tracing the development of psychotherapy to Freud whose work she sums up as '.....integrating as much as possible of the client's unconscious material into the ego' (2001,34). Reich discovered that when muscular defences were encouraged to soften, repressed memories and emotions came to consciousness. According to Boyesen her work had two aims '....to provoke and produce the repressed energy from the unconscious, and then to integrate and empty the energetic fluid by natural methods' (2001,36). Situationally it is clear that Boyesen sees herself as following in the Freud/ Reich line of psychological understanding and approach. Further confirmation of her Freudian links is to be seen in her concept of the 'Id canal'. She discovered that instinctual emotions '.....follow the intestinal wall up towards the head and are expressed by the mouth and face. I call this emotional pathway the "instinctual canal" or "Id canal"', in reference to Freud's concept of the 'Id' (2001,39/40).

Biodynamic therapy developed by Boyesen is based on the view that psychological physical and emotional happenings are the result of energy moving through the person. Transformation happens by helping the energy to flow naturally because this energy moves our ‘..... thought processes, memories fantasies creations; our cell-building our blood flow, shivers and swellings; our actions impulses ecstasy, pain’ (Southwell, 1980,41). There is an interpenetrative dimension to energy according to Biodynamic psychology where it is seen that a ‘...stream of memories may flow into a muscular charge; the rhythm of rage may transmute to super-vitality or to ecstasy’ (1980,41). Thus, through this concept of the interpenetration of energy, movement in one level of living can ‘.....precipitate or to strengthen activity in another plane.....’ (1980,41). The Biodynamic goal is to achieve ‘equilibrium’ or ‘balance’ between the uprising ‘vertical’ emotional energy and its ‘horizontal’ outward expression in action. If the emotional cycle is not completed the person will suffer from the vegetative stress of excess unintegrated vertical emotional energy. The ‘horizontal’ energy Biodynamics defines as that energy which moves a person towards and interacts with the external world. Physically it is the function of the central nervous system directing the muscles for action. Biodynamics calls this the ‘motoric ego’ as it is seen to regulate the vertical energy in its external expression. ‘Biodynamic equilibrium’ is seen to be ‘.....the flexible relationship between the vertical and horizontal functions’ (1980,44). This is seen to occur when the person does not deny their emotions and its energy but can choose when to express it and when to contain it and thus a person can find their own balance.

Biodynamic psychotherapy employs a series of massage techniques to treat ‘dis-equilibrium’ and restore ‘equilibrium’ or balance either when the vertical or the horizontal energies are excessive. Once harmony or balance has been restored it employs other massage techniques to deepen the state of equilibrium. With the achievement of balance comes access to what Biodynamic psychotherapy calls the ‘primary personality’ a state of being open where the person is not withdrawing their energy but taking pleasure in being in their environment and is flexible enough to embrace new things in life. A person living out of their ‘primary personality’ is said to be secure and stable in themselves and without the rigidity of relying on willing, is open and flexible. The ‘primary personality’

person is one who has shed his 'armour' allowing his energy to flow freely allowing internal stimulus to easily come to the surface and be expressed.

The primary personality is also an ethical personality which does not only think of the self alone. There is also a spiritual dimension to the 'primary personality' as envisioned by Boyesen. In her article entitled the 'Primary Personality' she says that the 'spiritual' qualities come from '.....being in touch with the instinctual self and the unconscious .... where this contact transcends itself and the person towards the Higher Self....'(Boyesen,1980,6). At this deep balanced level of the 'primary personality' the person is motivated by the "qualities of eternity, beauty compassion, grace, nobility and passion'" (1980,6). She goes on to highlight how the energy that flows through and beyond the body and by so doing causes our awareness to grow wider. 'We begin to interact with something larger than just ourselves. Our sensations extend beyond our physical bodies; our perceptions extend beyond the limits of the mind' (1980,6/7). The deep balance of the 'primary personality' results in feelings of being '....one with the universe.... with feelings of .....love for humanity.... There is empathy too for other people's suffering, combined with determination to fight the evils of the world.....' (1980,7). There are no limits to the development of the 'primary personality' once the limitations of a person's neurotic character patterns have been thrown off. 'There begins to grow a belief in something more than just ourselves, and seeming limitations of the material world do not fence us in any longer' (1980,7). In so far as Biodynamic therapy deals with the movement or lack of energy it is possible to have experiences of being connected to an energy above and beyond the energy of the person's body. I give an example from my own work of such an experience. In those moments, one is working beyond thoughts and concepts beyond the immediate physical in what could be called a spiritual way. The spiritual dimension of Biodynamic work can be seen from the Buddhist view, as stemming from the early Indian Buddhist characterization of the 'point-instant reality' as a 'flashing-energy'. To be in contact with that 'flashing-energy' in Biodynamic work is to be in contact with reality 'non-conceptually', which is a feature of enlightenment itself. Buddhist doctrine through its insights shows how off balance and out of tune we have become with how things really are. Its soteriological practices show how balance and harmony

can be restored when the neurotic self building ceases and the unbounded dimensions of reality are embraced. Biodynamic psychotherapy seeks to restore balance to the physical system by removing the energetic blocks held in the body. When the body opens, and is free flowing the mind is open and expanded also. This is a point of intersection between body work and Buddhist spiritual practice.

In the more common talking therapies such as ‘Person-Centred Therapy’, the goal could be said to be one of restoring equilibrium or balance also. In this instance, however, the balance sought is between what a person thinks and wishes and what they say and do. Firstly, by bringing to consciousness how the person may be reacting in a conditioned way the client comes to see how their responses maybe out of balance with what they truly believe. By reflecting to the client what they have said the ‘Person-Centred’ therapist clarifies for themselves if they have heard correctly and helps the client clarify their statements. Is what they have said stemming from a ‘real’ feeling associated with a ‘real’ statement. Rogers believed the person had all the resources needed for self-understanding and where necessary could alter their concepts, attitudes and behaviours, if a climate of empathy and acceptance could be created. In an atmosphere of genuineness (‘congruence’), ‘unconditional positive regard’ and ‘empathy’ Rogers believed that the client would be helped to bring balance between what they professed and what they did. Much of the therapeutic process of various psychotherapeutic approaches from ‘Person-Centred Therapy’ to ‘Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy’ to ‘Psychodynamic-Therapy’ is devoted to helping the client see how what they are saying might be contradicting what they are really thinking and doing and then helping them achieve more correspondence between the two.

Biodynamic psychotherapy also has a focus on restoring balance to the client but the equilibrium it is seeking to facilitate is that which comes from accessing the ‘primary personality’ and not the balance which comes with focusing on a decrease in contradiction between saying and doing (though this may be a natural result). While the qualities of the ‘primary personality’ compare well with the Buddhist view of ‘Buddha-nature’ it diverges in that it is seen to be a ‘core’ aspect of the person while Buddhism sees ‘Buddha-nature’ not as a self or a thing but a potential for fulfilment. However, some convergence can be seen between the

experience of the 'primary personality' and the 'Buddha-nature' potential in that both are focused beyond the self.

When a person opens to experiencing the body in its many manifestations they are entering a journey in the 'knowledge of ignorance' and encouraging the transformative experience of 'unbounded wholeness' and because this arises with 'open awareness' the confines of our awareness get extended also. In body focused meditation or body focused work in the psychotherapy context, we slowly become aware of how we are using the body to repress and block difficult feelings and emotions. In body therapy terms this is called 'body armour' (Southwell,2001,3), which is using the body as a to defensively block the unwanted or buried thoughts or feelings. However, there is in there among all the unwanted and all that has become unconscious, lying outside of present awareness, our Buddha nature. The more familiar we are with how we are using the body to repress what we deem unacceptable, the more aware we become of how one sided and narrow is the ground on which the self- concept is built. The more we accept that we have narrowed and limited ourselves the more possible it is to break out of the established self-structure that has been created. The more we unravel the self-structure the more we encounter the deeper transformative truth of Buddha-nature, the truth of emptiness at the heart of one's existence and at the core of all existence. In this experience, we have entered deep into the darkness of the forest, the Sufi 'station of no station' or the Christian 'divine darkness of God'. The body is a 'wisdom-mind' itself and when given time and attention, when it is followed as opposed to being directed, as in meditation or body focused 'Vegeto' (Southwell,1988,9) therapy, it naturally seeks openness and healing. It knows, from a deeper and more knowing part of ourselves, better than we do what we need and acts on our behalf to bring that about. When allowing the body to speak and following where it wants to lead one comes inevitably to woundedness or suffering (*dukkha*) and the realization of how concepts, labels and judgements are not just mental phenomena but have physical effects also. This suffering can be touched in the body because the body registers directly, it is the ego that selects and supports the self-construct and blocks off the wisdom of the unwanted or 'abjected' (in Ives,2013,87). That which is rejected is recorded in the body and when connected with can reveal an entire life story.

What we are not aware of, including our Buddha-nature or ourselves as images of God in the Christian understanding, lies buried along with all the other originally disowned, now unconscious parts, in the darkened forest of the body. What is abandoned remains, in Jungian psychological terms, in the 'shadow' of our awareness or in the 'long bag' as Robert Bly calls it (1988, Ch.2). What one fears is not in the external world, but rather what is contained in the 'long bag', and these fears are covering over and blocking access to one's Buddha-nature potential. What is not realised is that the contents of the 'long bag' are agents of healing. In reconnecting and experiencing these originally disowned parts we are, according to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, doing 'soul retrieval work' (2015,3), where 'soul' is understood as the balancing of internal energies with the five elements. When the body and mind are out of balance, the missing energy can be recovered through focusing on the earth for groundedness, water for fluidity, fire for joy or inspiration, air for flexibility and space for openness. The German poet Rilke echoes similar healing possibilities when the way is lost on the journey of life and we feel disconnected '... And if the earthly no longer knows your name, whisper to the silent earth: I'm flowing. To the flashing water say I am' (Rilke in Mitchel,1987,255).

Through its practices of 'mindfulness of breathing' for instance Buddhism is not only cultivating mindful awareness of what is occurring, it is over time opening and deepening the breath and thus igniting a stronger and more vital 'life-force' (*prana*). With vital energy flowing it is more possible to take everything onto the path and burn it as part of the energy of transformation. A person becomes a 'good host' and more able to welcome all that arises in their lives as an invitation to deeper understanding and deeper transformation. They suffer and are spiritually (and physically sick) because they are homeless, because they have gone astray in thinking and acting, Buddhism and psychotherapy strive to 'bring the mind (and body) home' to its true nature of original 'non-conceptual awareness'. While it is possible to understand Buddhist teachings on an intellectual level and recognize the positive contribution they might make in one's life, enacting or embodying them to bring about real transformation in one's everyday life can prove to be difficult. The body as part of the path to transformation can be a

difficult journey, as historically it has been used as a dumping ground for our unwanted emotional and psychological material. All this *karmic* inheritance, all these hidden aspects, seen from the viewpoint of *Dzogchen* (the Great Perfection), and *Hua-yen*, which enacts the truth of universal emptiness, are transformative energies that give a direction, that move a person towards, not away from transformation. Previously I have discussed how Albahari, Desmond and Tsoknyi Rinpoche support the view that the mind even in its delusions is attempting to move towards the fullest where truth lies. When a person understands how these hidden energies are inhibiting their path to transformation they begin to see that the path they are on in the life, with all its difficulties has a meaning and a purpose. This is a transformative experience which leads to understanding that what we suffer from, is as the Buddha has said indeed a 'Noble truth', through which we are made more noble.

Enlightenment has been characterized as 'becoming *Dhamma*' (the truth of things as they are), but to get to this transformed state a person needs to embrace *karma* first, that is make *karma* conscious. One's *karmic* experiences are not just negative things to be endured they have a trajectory, a plan. In the Christian context a person is, according to Aquinas, capable of the universe (*capax universi*) when our arms are moved with love, implying that with love and acceptance everything can be part of the great embrace. Everything is part of the great embrace in Buddhist *Bon Dzogchen* as part of 'unbounded wholeness' or the repeated interconnectedness of *Hua yen*.

The spiritual path is in one sense a road to enlightenment that is best travelled in the light of the 'knowledge of ignorance' where each encounter along the path is a revelation of a truth. The path can be traversed when one adopts an open inquiring attitude to what one encounters in the body. In a spiritual journey the person is on a growth path and the body wants to bring about a stopping to that which inhibits its growth and thus be more in tune with and facilitating to the spiritual journey. The body, out of tune with the spiritual aspirations, locked in its neurotic conditioned and defensive struggles will make the journey to realization more difficult. When a person begins to experience and surrender to, the positive contribution that *karma* has made to getting them where they are now, they have a transformative experience of the 'nonconceptual' arc of the conceptual.

Enlightenment or freedom has been defined as ‘nonconceptual awareness’ and this is captured poetically in *Zen* in the sound of the bell falling to silence in the distance. Is it possible that a person also has a unique sound or (*mantra*) that when followed leads to ‘non-conceptual awareness’? If so a point of access is in and through the body, where the pains and sufferings and the brokenness are portals to transformation? To access this possible transformative energy in and through the body is to enact what *Dzogchen* teachings call ‘referenclessness’ or ‘emptiness’ or Eckhart’s teaching on traveling ‘without a why’, both suggesting that it is most beneficial to the path of realization to travel in openness. This is travelling the road of the body openly with an attitude of creative unknowing, where words and concepts are not needed, where space (emptiness/*śūnyatā*) itself provides the transformative matrix. Nothing is outside the ground of ‘primordial purity’, Buddha nature or ‘unbounded wholeness’, not even those aspects of ourselves we have rejected. Buddha nature is unbounded and thus is guiding everything towards the best outcome. Buddhist practice is the transformative practice of tuning in to the workings of Buddha nature, uncovering it and allowing it the space to perform its transformative work in one’s life and thereafter in the external world.

In early Buddhism transformed realization begins with encountering the ‘three marks of existence’ (impermanence, dissatisfaction/suffering, not-self). A direct experience of all three is to be found in the body. It is easier to recognize how impermanence, i.e.

growing older and suffering are manifested in the body but a ‘not-self’ experience may seem contradictory and more difficult to realize. However, and this is where the body is very important as a direct experience of the teachings, ‘not-self’ implies otherness, and while otherness is a difficult idea in relation to a physical self, commonly a person is unaware and pays little attention to the body and thus the body becomes an unknown other. This is a transformative experience as it parallels the spiritual experiences of the forest meditators who deliberately set up direct encounters with the unknown to access Buddha-nature.

Embodiment of the teachings is enacted in the Buddhist and Sufi traditions through dance where the spiritual and the physical meet as expressions of the absolute. The dancers embodied movements radiates out from the centre making

larger and larger circles until symbolically he encompasses the world. This is an enactment of the meditation on love and compassion that begins with compassion for oneself and grows larger to encompass family and friends and then strangers to end with compassionate care for the world. Compassion arises out of the wisdom of seeing (*vidyā*) and so the movement is both an outward ‘centrifugal’ one combined with a ‘centripetal’ one returning inward, returning to its wisdom source. This is the wisdom and compassion that arises from the direct transformative experience of allowing the body’s inherent wisdom and compassion to be a guide that leads to freedom.

The *klesha-mind* interprets the ‘not-self in a way that bolsters the defensive neurotic conditioned self-structure. It buries all that does not support the self-image into the ‘shadows’ of the unconscious (*ālaya*) into the darkness of unknowing. Just as the Buddha’s enlightenment begins with a re-connection to all his past lives, one’s spiritual experience begins with a re-connection or a re-binding (Latin; *religare*-to bind back) to all that has been buried or disclaimed. This is the clearing process necessary for the ‘golden statue of the Buddha’ that has been overlaid with ‘defilements’ to be uncovered and reclaimed. Buddha nature remains buried in the darkness of our not knowing (*avidyā*) or not recognizing that this possibility of enlightenment or freedom is to be discovered within. The clearing begins when we first encounter those ‘shadow’ aspects of ourselves either in Buddhist practice or therapy and begin to take responsibility for them. On a spiritual level, the transformative experience may be a sinking into the darkness of pain and suffering and being surprised to find that it is a liminal experience lead by Hermes or the Buddha. On an emotional level, the space becomes clearer when a connection is made with Buddha nature. There is also a transformative realization that behind the difficulties of life Buddha-nature was present pushing one towards greater and deeper realization. Buddha nature pushes towards the extraordinary and this begins to happen when, as Kristeva highlights, one falls in love. On the spiritual journey, we assume again this ‘right to be extraordinary’ and find ourselves ‘expanded to the dimensions of the universe’ (in Ives,2013,99), as the *Arhat* or *Bodhisattva* is, when the limiting defensive self-protective self-structures fall away in the recognition of a deeper truth of love and compassion. Buddha nature working in the background is that ‘...dark invisible

workmanship and which reconciles discordant elements and makes them move in one society' (Wordsworth, in Robinson,2006,54).

Embodiment is the direct experience of 'not-self' whether it is in the meditative exploration experience where body parts become 'portals' to new worlds and new galaxies, all that is other. Thus, body exploration becomes inclusive of others particularly when the 'portal' is a door to the wounded parts of the person. The wound once connected with becomes the place of transformation as it is the place where the light gets in, the place where the person becomes conscious that; 'What moves in me is also moving in you. (Kabir in Bly,1977,7). When the disowned and the 'abjected' (in Ives,2013,87) are touched, woundedness is opened again to allow the spiritual healing message to penetrate. In this way, all that has been kept in the shadows of the unconscious (*ālaya*) and written in the body resembles a treasure texts (*gterma*), said to have been hidden by *Padmasambhava* in the earth, in sacred statues and within the person. When the treasure text written in the body is accessed, homesickness is ended. 'This is my body I am found' (Whyte 1992,65).

#### 4.2 Can body speak the mind?

Is enlightenment or freedom an experience that is confined to the mind only? This chapter explores what part the physical body plays in the transformation journey. Are there ways of knowing and understanding the body that reveal how a person blocks their own spiritual path with neurotic debris from the past held in the body? Can the body in effect speak our minds and is it possible to understand what mind it is speaking, the darkened mind of 'delusion' or the light-filled mind of awareness. The 'mind-body problem' has been embedded in philosophical thinking for many years. In his essay *The Ontological Dimensions of Embodiment* David Levin explores Heidegger's thinking on being regarding embodiment and sets out the body problem quoting Heidegger words; 'The body phenomenon is the most difficult problem' (Heidegger in Levin,1999,124). For Heidegger body and mind are intimately connected and what goes on in the body is not mere mechanical displays. In attempting to define thinking Heidegger says; 'We are trying to learn thinking. Perhaps thinking...is something like building a

cabinet.... At any rate; it is a craft, a handicraft....'. Later he says; 'Thinking guides and sustains every gesture of the hand....' (in Levin,1999,127). We literally make (as a cabinet maker would make) gestures with our hands and how we perform these gestures can signify our unawareness or 'indifference 'to the '...wonderful intelligence inwrought in the hands themselves....' (Levin,1999,137). To gesture is to 'bear' or to 'make appear' and just as the Buddhist *Dhammapada* reminds us 'You are what you think and all that you are arises with your thoughts. With your thoughts, you make the world' (Byrom (Trans.) *Dhammapada.pdf*, p.2); gesturing translates those thoughts and gives them visibility in the world. To make gestures is to speak out, 'bringing forth' what was previously concealed in thought into the light of 'unconcealment'. 'The gesturing of our hands is a *techno*, a skill, an articulatory capacity .... bringing what we touch and handle into the beauty of the unconcealment of truth.....' (Levin,1999,137). A 'skill' or 'capacity' implies the possibility for development, as Levin suggests, where the capacity is the 'gift' of our embodiment. The realization of the 'gift' '...transforms every gesture into a movement of rejoicing and thanksgiving....' (1999,138).

Most of the time we are unaware of and pay little attention to the gift in our 'fallen' condition of 'ontological forgetfulness' (Levin,1999,133). In Buddhism, the hands are used in many ways to compliment the meditation techniques or to 'articulate' intentions. These gestures (*mudras*), seen also in Sufi and Buddhist dances, are a 'skilful means' (*upāya*) of bringing the meditation realization into the 'gift' of the body. In bringing the inner realizations to 'unconcealment' a person moves into communion and conversation, and away from 'forgetfulness' or ignorance (*avidyā*) of the 'gift'. Because of the new realizations, thoughtfulness and awareness to what one is articulating, or what one is in touch with mentally and physically, naturally arises. Hands are concerned with what can be touched. We can handle things as mere tools or instruments aware of their usefulness only; with greater awareness, we can be more '.... mindful of their dimensionality, the span of their presence....' (1999,138). There is the gesture of grasping at things that the *klesha-mind* promotes and which is reflective of an instrumental or surface understanding of the nature of the thing. With mindfulness, a person can bring more 'caring' in how they relate to other things.

How we relate as ‘flesh’, how we touch and are touched are questions explored by Sartre. For Sartre ‘flesh’ is that which embodies both presence and contingency, it is the ‘...pure contingency of presence’ (Sartre in Moran 2011,11). For Sartre, it is the act of touching or caressing that ‘reveals’ (or ‘brings forth’ or ‘make appear’ in Heidegger’ terminology) the other as flesh to myself while the other experiences my body as ‘flesh’ as the cause of their own en-flesh-ment. This is in line with Sartre’s view of engagement with the world and the body as the ‘tool of tools’. This is the instrumental nature of body whereby the body is an instrument through which other things are made known or ‘unconcealed’. Revelation through the body is very much in keeping with the trajectory of body as a path to liberation. In relationship with the other however Sartre sees his ‘transcendence’ (the ability to do something to change the present situation) as inhibited or limited by the relationship to the other. ‘I am imprisoned in an absence’ says Sartre and also, I am a limit for others ‘From the moment I exist I establish a factual limit to the Other’s freedom...’ (Sartre in Moran,2011,14). This view is challenged by the *Hua yen* view of repeated interconnection where each thing both is the ‘totality’ and helps to create that totality through their unique contribution. Though we are unaware of it most of the time but we are all someone else’s other and in the Buddhist, view this is not a limiting factor as the self grows out of the other, but rather an opportunity for the realization of the compassionate ‘not-self’ teaching. There is nothing ‘absent’ in the *Hua yen* system, which in its interpenetrative understanding sees everything as always present whole and complete. The *Bon Dzogchen* vision is one of ‘unbounded wholeness’, and ‘open awareness’ is a vision of always perfected. An ‘open awareness’ or what early Buddhism terms ‘objectless awareness’ is not limited nor does it imprison, it is aware of itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’ or as a Great Completion in *Nyingma Dzogchen*. For Sartre, the body becomes that which needs to be overcome because we have an ‘intentional directedness towards the world.’ The body must be surpassed and as such is an ‘... obstacle which I am to myself’ (Sartre in Moran,2011,18). Rather than being an obstacle the body as experienced in meditation and body focused work is an instrument that assists the ‘non-dual’ path to enlightenment. How the body plays a vital role in coming to realization is the essence of the exploration in this chapter.

### 4.3 How to be capable of the universe

The early Buddhist practitioners, aware of the power of ‘non-conceptual’ objectless awareness, went in search of an environment free of predictable structures, both outer and inner. These practitioners retreated to the forests or other wild places, to challenge that part of themselves that would reduce the Buddhist call for constant inner revolution to an intellectual or philosophical principal only. They challenged themselves to live without a ‘why’ as Eckhart had said or without the usual references to maintain openness towards all that they might encounter. In these wild places expectations are challenged and insights are gained through a direct meeting with reality. Retreating into the wilderness is essentially concerned with leaving the prescribed pathway that has become a predictable temporary dampening of feelings and emotions in the hope of a more deeply transformative encounter. At some point when things have become stable and predictable a person is called to make it to ‘Cold Mountain’, or like Beowulf in the Old English Saga, to go into the wilderness and descend into the swamp to encounter those darker parts of themselves that have been terrorizing them and preventing them from meeting things as they really are. Beyond the familiar path there is an unknown territory, a darkness, full of new encounters new insights and new revelations, in spiritual and psychological terms this is the transformative liminal frontier of the body. When working in the ‘forest of the body’ the strategic thinking side of the person will not benefit them as its goal is to keep them suspended in defensive strategies. The early forest dwellers sought out the darkness, the mystery and the unpredictable in the wildness of the forest, aware as they were of their transformative effects. The forest became a liminal space where the old structures of conditioned predictable structured thinking were challenged.

The early Buddhist practitioners sought out referenceness and structurelessness in the wilderness. The body is the perfect paradox in so far as it holds physically the pattern of conditioning and yet as it is commonly an unknown quantity it is also a darkness and a mystery. Wherever there is paradox we have entered into a sacred dimension as the Biblical story of Moses testifies. Heidegger has suggested

that in contemplating ‘the truth of being’ we should think that which is closest. The body is that which is closest and while we have charted the mind’s vagaries and potential the body as a place of transformation has been somewhat neglected. In the previous chapter liminality was defined as a desert or a swamp to highlight that it is a place apart where transformation occurs. *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa* is that which has been defined as an ‘unbecome’, ‘unmade’ and all that is ‘unfabricated’ (See Harvey,1995, Ch.11&12). It is a place apart from the conditioning mind. The metaphoric language of the early Christian contemplative tradition is also that of the wilderness of referenceness and of darkness. God, the ‘super essential darkness’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,139) is a ‘nothing’ beyond defining names and signs. The path to the nameless nothing, the way that the mystery becomes manifest is by following the path of negation, the path of darkness, the path of unknowing. This is the path that the early forest dwellers cultivated to encounter that unknown, the referenceness darkness. They went down into the dark lake openly to encounter the ‘unbecome’ and ‘unmade’ within themselves.

Enlightenment in Buddhism is to wake up to what is real and this involves becoming more aware of what is really happening in one’s life at this moment. The process of awakening in Western psychology is called the ‘individuating process’ in Jungian psychology or the ‘self-actualizing potential’ in the Rogerian understanding. These definitions define a process whereby the person seeks to become all that they can be ‘...what has been there all along’ (*to ti en einai*) (Caputo,1987,12). In the Buddhist vision Buddha nature is the underlying driving force encouraging the person to become as completely as possible who they have always been. It is the goal of both psychology and Buddhism to help the person; open to the life they are living with less fear and more understanding. A spirituality that does not deal with Hegel’s ‘path of doubt and the highway of despair’ (in Dunne,1975,2) is an incomplete and insubstantial way and thus transformation to the ‘brightly shining mind’ (in Harvey,1995,155) must deal with the darkened confused mind also. Unblocking the web of psychological patterns that retard a person and diminish their view of themselves is both a spiritual and psychological healing. Indeed, the Buddha Nature teaching and the ‘self-actualizing’ principle highlight that a person possesses a core or primordial pure nature, ‘a brightly shining mind’ that encourages them to have confidence in

their fundamental goodness. However, the path to achieving insight to this ‘goodness-being’ is often painful and requires that a person be willing to let go constantly of all their conditioned and retarding belief systems to stand unveiled before the truth of life and the inevitability of death. We have a fundamental spiritual nature, a ‘religious instinct’ (in Hopcke,1999,66) as Jung called it and this is not something to be gained but rather uncovered. It resides in the depth of our being, in the dark recesses of the body-mind, sometimes so deeply hidden that the person is not aware of it. It is in this hidden darkness where the spiritual paradigms of Caputo’s ‘passion for the impossible’ and Dunne’s ‘passing over and returning’ is to be found. Buddhism and psychotherapy work towards revealing the truth of life and the truth of who a person is. It holds a mirror up to our psychological constructs to show how a person does not fully understand the true nature of their minds or of phenomena. It offers a path to bring us to be beings that are capable of the universe (*capax universi*) as Aquinas says (in Harris,1989,146).

Buddhism promotes a radical questioning, through its ‘point-instant’ teaching and its many teachings on emptiness, ‘impermanence’ and ‘not-self’, of all our belief systems, of all the stock answers that we use to navigate the world. It is relentlessly seeking that a person lets go of all assumptions and remedies in order that they discover anew the ultimate truth of who they are. Letting go and dropping down into the darkness and the unknown are challenging invitations that can remain purely conceptual if not experienced directly. The ‘forest of the body’ provides an ideal place and opportunity to experience directly what could be left as purely metaphysical or philosophical teachings, never meant for or too scary for real embodiment, real in-corpora-tion. A letting go process implies that there is a counter holding back process. Holding back, or holding on takes place not only in the thought processes of the mind but are detectible in the physical body also. Buddhism and psychotherapy asks a person to question all thoughts and concepts, to look at their possible origins in the past and to see how the past is conditioning their thoughts and feelings. However, these teachings are not given as another layer or grid system to be overlaid on an already existing conditioned system, rather they are processes which ask a person to look at the entire span of their lives so that they might understand what the driving forces are. Buddhism

does not condemn a person's history or their mistakes, it asks them to assess their lives, to take all of it the dark and the light as part of the journey towards realization. Only through integration or through the practice of 'non-dual awareness' can a person achieve the openness necessary to have a compassionate understanding for themselves and others. Nothing of our lives is to be excluded everything is seen to be unfolding as it should and everything is to be greeted as a message from life itself helping us to fulfil our journey. Nothing is to be rejected and in that way like the 'point-instant' insight, everything is a moving forward and '...nothing leads us away...' (Ray,2008,16). Rumi also encourages embracing the light and the dark elements of ourselves.

'... welcome and entertain them all. Treat each guest humbly, the dark thoughts and the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from the beyond' (Rumi quotes).

Everything is a positive contribution to the life a person is living and in that way fragmentation is superseded by wholeness and with that a '...boundless optimism'...and '...underlying trust ....' (Ray,2008,16) emerges about the life we are living and its value. The Buddhist 'non-dual' perspective is not just an interesting way to see things; it has a direct bearing on promoting a positive integrative view that contributes to increased optimism, trust and value.

#### 4.4 The unique journey

Probing as it does pre-conceived ideas, personal constructions and all the mental paraphernalia a person uses to limit themselves Buddhism fosters the uniqueness of every individual's experiences along the path. The spiritual path is not so much a prescription as a set of milestones that indicate where one might be at a given point, but what the person experiences on the way is unique to that person. The path is always to be walked always ahead to be revealed as we walk towards becoming '...what has been there all along (*to ti en einai*) (Caputo 1987,12). The Buddhist practices are guides for the journey they are not the journey itself, they are to open a person to the possibility, and inspire them with examples, and the assistance of those who have completed the journey. The journey is into the unknown, the unconscious parts, to touch and feel again those abandoned or

forgotten grounds that lie in the darkness of the soul or the *klesha-mind*. The history of what has been abandoned, what has not been able to be incorporated, the pains and sufferings we have endured are written not only in the neurotic *klesha-mind* but also in the body. The body's design, its physical shape is strongly affected by what we have deposited in the 'store-house consciousness' (*ālaya*) the *karmic* seeds (*bīja*) are action traces whose effects are not just on the mind but rather they are rooting themselves in the body also. The body's very structure has something to reveal, something to teach us that when unlocked opens the person to living with more awareness mindfulness and compassion. The greater the embodiment the more a person can be present to and embrace all the emotions that arise from and that are felt in the body. Being present to the variety of emotional experiences and having the ability to accept them short-circuits the habitual pattern of judging and distancing oneself from what one is experiencing. If the spiritual journey is the seeking of greater and greater disembodiment it will view the unpredictable nature of emotions as threatening and potentially destabilizing. This is to move in a contrary direction to the 'unbounded wholeness' and 'open awareness' of *Dzogchen* and the first *Nen* moment teachings of *Zen*. These teachings together with others are experiences that contribute to the realization of full and open presence. If Buddhism is to remain true to its own deconstruction and destabilizing origins it must see that emotions like other practices are designed to move the energy, either mental or physical, from the darkness of unawareness into consciousness.

The early forest dwellers left the road of predictability to open themselves to the unpredictable the spontaneous encounters with life. In our individual lives the body contains a store-house of unpredictable emotions and feelings waiting for us to be brave enough to touch it. Reggie Ray makes the point and I agree that the '... nonconceptual is essentially somatic...' and therefore if non-conceptual open awareness is an enlightenment experience then sensation intuition and feelings which in turn bring us into contact with the world around us and with others in a non-thinking way, are elements of enlightenment itself '(Ray,2008,39). The Buddha in his own journey went through a period of meditation practices that saw the body as a hindrance to spiritual enlightenment and coming close to death gave up the renunciation of the body as a valid way to enlightenment. His meditation

exercises in contrast to the harshness of those who tried to conquer and subdue the body, is consciously based on what the body is feeling and sensing and how these experiences are driven by the thoughts we are having at that moment. Thoughts are not just brain activity, what we think has physical affects, thoughts are ‘point-instant’ ‘...bursts of energy experienced in the body’ (2008,45). Buddhist meditation is a process designed to help a person let go of the reifying tendency of the thought process and to help them enter ‘... fully into communion with our true embodied nature’ (45). In trying to become more spiritual we are often led to ignore what it is we are experiencing on a body level in the misguided notion that the body has nothing of value to say or to give us that might assist on the journey. In Buddhist meditation practice we are encouraged to allow things to arise in the present moment unplanned, uncoloured by our usual judgements. If this can be done a way is opened towards embracing the future and whatever arises in it. If one immediately seeks to clothe these arisings in garments of the past, then what is most pressing and in need of attention may be missed. If what is arising now in the immediacy of the body is ignored then there is a danger of using spiritual practice as ways of subduing, and strengthening the neurotic ego and practising in what Chogyam Trungpa called ‘spiritual materialism’ (1973), the use of spiritual practices to strengthen a non-spiritual outlook.

#### 4.5 Body as experience of enlightenment

*Vipasanā* meditation is based on becoming more aware of what is happening in the body. When attention is paid to the body a person notices subtle sensations of and minor changes such as in temperature, vibration or discomfort. Thus, a person becomes more aware of when they are feeling pleasure and when they are feeling pain. Thich Nhat Hanh has developed focused meditation practices which bring awareness to the body. This can be as simple as being aware that ‘Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out I know I am breathing out’ to more complex awareness of the consequences of one’s actions. ‘... Aware of the suffering brought about by unmindful speech, I breathe in. Determined to learn to listen to others and to speak words that are constructive and bring harmony, I breathe out.’ (Thich Nhat Hanh 1993,17 &130). In this way, a person opens to

allow things to be as they are and register the changes in energy and in the feelings, that arise. Each feeling or sensation is a new experience which passes as another arises, as quickly as the 'point-instant' view outlines. A person begins to see how changing and fleeting their experiences are. Remaining open, with a 'non-judgemental awareness', allows everything to arise and disclose itself, thus affording the opportunity to see their inherent dependent empty nature. The longer a person can stay open and accepting of that which is arising the more they recognize the fundamental energetic origin of thoughts and emotions.

Reality as 'point-instant' 'flashes of energy' was an insight of the early Indian Buddhist practitioners where each thought, each feeling, was a unique energy moment arising and ceasing moment after moment. These 'energy flashes' are physical manifestations that a person experiences directly, they are in the body examples of the spiritual teachings, such as 'point-instant' reality, 'impermanence', 'emptiness' and 'not-self'. Buddhism and psychotherapy are founded on the principle that if you have not experienced something it is not true for you. Indeed, the Buddha is quite forceful in his instructions that a person should not rely on anyone else including the charisma of the teacher but rather they should bring to life the truth of the teachings in the experiences of their own lives.

In working with the body there is a constant challenge to let go of pre-conceived ideas and concepts and to go deeper into a direct experience. In this way body work becomes a practice to realize and literally embody the vast body of Buddhist teachings. The fundamental principle of body-work is that a person's mental constructs are not divorced from their physical selves, and so it is possible that in de-constructing the neurotic patterns in the body, usually experienced as physical or energetic blocks, a simultaneous de-construction effect will occur on a mental level. In previous chapters the dynamic of letting go as a spiritual necessity was highlighted. Working with the body focuses on dismantling physical blocks, assists the letting go of the historical constructs of the *klesha-mind* and helps the person experience what is happening in this 'point-instant' moment. With practice, there is a realization that all the features of enlightenment reside in the body and that the experience of the body is itself an experience of enlightenment; 'We realize that the actual experience of our body is in fact the experience of

enlightenment' (Ray,2008,53). This implies that the more enlightened one is the more embodied one is also, recalling that the way to perfect a 'great self' is through the perfection of body, speech and mind.

In the psychotherapy practice of body-work there are ways to work with the body that allows the body to speak its mind as it were. One such method is Vegeto (Southwell,1988,9) therapy, based on the principle that what a person has a stored in 'store-house consciousness' (*ālaya-viññāna*) of repressed emotions has energy that is carried in the body. These repressive mind-energies can be accessed through the body and once registered and given space there is an opportunity for them to transform. The process of repression begins when the judgemental mind does not allow difficult feelings to penetrate the self-structure and as a result they go straight into this store-house or 'long bag' to use Robert Bly's description (Bly,1988, Ch.2). Vegeto (Southwell,1988,9) therapy encourages these emotions out of the bag that have been weighing a person down and preventing them from fully participating in the now of life. By assisting the person to follow the subtlest stirrings in the vegetative nervous system great torrents of feelings and emotions can emerge usually out of the well of grief.

Both Buddhism and psychotherapy are processes of re-remembering, remembering that a person is capable of the processes of 'self-actualizing' or 'individuation' in the psychological sense, and that they are already expressions of enlightenment through the fact of possessing Buddha nature in the spiritual sense. In the Christian understanding a person is an '*imago dei*' and even a 'book about God' as Eckhart professes. Both processes require that a person remembers, in the sense of bringing back together the disparate and lost parts, to bind them back together. It is in this rebinding that the spiritual and religious (Latin; re-ligare - to bind) dimensions of psychotherapy come to the fore. In this way, a person comes to realize that not only the physical, but all matter (*rūpa*) '.....is and always has been a free liberated and completely pure expression of enlightenment' (Ray,2008,54), which the *Heart Sutra* expresses in its mantra of, 'form is emptiness and emptiness is form.' We have been redeemed by the physical, by matter, brought back to our senses, to our true nature, by paying attention to its stirrings within.

#### 4.6 'Big-toe universe'

The call to re-member who we truly are usually comes in psychotherapy in the form of a crisis, be it in the form of illness, depression, exhaustion or anxiety. These manifestations are pointing out that a person has gone off course somewhere and needs to stop and look at what is happening. When a person stands still and listens deeply to what is happening in the body they discover a wealth of knowledge and wisdom that the body has and can impart to them, out of the darkness and the shadows where it has been banished. When one enters the forest of the body for the first time, as David Wagoner's poem *Lost* suggests, a person must begin by standing still, listening to what is arising all around, and in this way become more aware of one's place and in that way become more visible, so that the person can be found by the universe itself.

'Standstill, the trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost, wherever you are is called here. .... Stand still the forest knows where you are, you must let it find you' (In Whyte,1997, intro). *Hua yen*'s infinitely repeated interconnection is an unbounded view which is all inclusive. Each person is centre, the most valued cause and participant in the structure of things. There is not ambiguity, one is always within the 'realm of truth' and goodness where goodness is the 'interpenetration in identity' (Cook,1977, Ch.3). The forest of the body knows where we have come to on the road, where we have stopped or are frozen on the journey. It holds all that we have buried and turned away from and abandoned on the road. When the path is lost as Han

Shan describes in his *Cold Mountain* poem, '...it is time for body to ask shadow, Which way home?' (Han Shan in Kline,2006, xx) When a person stops and stands still, all these disowned parts catch up and come to meet them. If a person can give themselves over to the body as guide they can '...feel we are in the presence of a force, an intelligence filled with wisdom, reliable, worthy of respect and devotion' (Ray,2008,60).

Opening to the body calls not for doing but rather being, it is the standing still that is advised when one is lost in the forest, not running away from its messages but rather by being open and present to the body coming to life, a person can learn to

read what it brings to them. In this way, mindful- attention, non-judgemental openness, and compassionate acceptance for the person that one was and those abandoned parts of oneself that were hidden in the darker recesses of consciousness is fostered. What lies obscured in the shadows is not dead or energy less; it has a drive and an ‘intention’ of its own. It has a drive and energy to bring to the surface the emotional, feeling quality of the compromises, the abandoned parts and all the associated hurts. While these contents in the ‘long bag’ of consciousness originate in the past *karma*, a body focus does not dwell in the past; its focus is on what the body is unfolding in the here and now, in this present moment. A person can be imprisoned by the past, paradoxically by what they have locked away, but body focused work loosens the hold that the past has by encouraging that shadow energy forward. Compassion begins with a compassionate acceptance for oneself of the past, for one’s inevitable mistakes, shortcomings and failures. This compassionate practice can begin with unlocking the emotional material of the past that was deemed unacceptable and abandoned.

Meditation particularly *Vipasanā* meditation is about bringing awareness to various parts of the body and exploring what is happening here and now in this moment, which could be quite different from what was happening previously, in this way it becomes a practice in learning to see things as they really are, in the now of this moment, not as we imagine, project or have simply ignored. Through focusing on areas of the body a person begins to recognize simple awareness, in the beginning whether that area is cold or hot, numb or alive. Going deeper, a more abstract awareness can be experienced, for example if the area could be characterized as light or dark, heavy or light alive or dead. In this way, one’s knee or elbow is experienced as having different energies, moving with different intensities than has been experienced previously. Whatever part is focused on, is a world of itself and becomes as Reggie Ray calls it a ‘big toe universe’ (Ray,2008,62) with all its own categories. As awareness of the subtle differences grows deeper a person moves from the simple awareness of breathing in the present, to experiencing other more complex teachings.

While a person is consciously bringing their awareness to various parts of the body, the body is meeting them with its own awareness. In my own practice as a body focused therapist I like to get my clients early on in our sessions to visualize

their internal structure. Even though I guide them through the journey pointing out and stopping to consider their inner organs as we travel, it is amazing what is included or excluded in their subsequent drawing. (See Drawing in Appendix 1). What the colours and shapes of the organs mean in the drawing, what it might mean to have no eyes, no heart, no genitals or no legs are all open avenues for exploring. The body is already aware if we a person is not seeing properly, or their heart is frozen or they are not taking a stand when they should. It has its own wisdom, its own unflinching directness, when a person turns to hear what it says, they become aware that wisdom and compassion are closer than we ever realized. In our ordinary lives, we are driven by ‘intentional consciousness’ (Ray,2008,68) or the *klesha* mind, which propels us towards what we want for our lives, but in listening to the body a person becomes awake, as we wake up to the body’s awareness. We encounter a ‘...self-existing already present awareness ....’ (Ray,2008,71) that is uniquely ours. Sensations that appear solid upon investigation show themselves to be fundamentally energy charges, ‘momentary flashes of energy’ that arise from the ‘point-instant’ view. We are attributing stability and endurance to these momentary occurrences. By being open and aware of this energy, it is possible to see the residual traces of conditioned thought patterns, referred to as seeds (*bīja*) in Buddhism as momentary bursts of energy. Recognizing the energetic base of phenomena is the modern quantum view, but also it is the view that untangles the mind from its solidifying, conceptualizing and splitting tendencies. The body and its various parts are simply what they are, they are a ‘there is (*il ya*)’ an ‘isness’ a ‘presence’ that Levinas speaks about (1987). When a person opens to and accepts the many manifestations that a body part can have, sometimes cold sometimes hot, sometimes withdrawn, they are having a direct ‘non-dual’ experience. They are experiencing ‘point-instant’ reality and touching ‘presence’ as it changes moment to moment. The body in this way is a manifestation of what the Sufi mystic calls the ‘real and the true’ (*Al haqq*), which manifests as that which constantly changes. Becoming aware of the body is becoming aware of a dynamic process; if a person can sink into this process they can experience its energetic qualities, without resorting to objectifying it, naming it and conceptualizing it. ‘Non-conceptual’ ‘open awareness’ or ‘objectless awareness’ are features of an enlightened mind. Whatever aspect or part of the body one is working on, whether recognizing

numbness, tightness, pain or tensions the focus is on what is immediate and present and palpable in this moment as it is through this meditative attention that a person comes to ‘think the truth of being’ (in Pezze,2006). Tightness, numbness and other held aspects, called ‘armouring’ in the Biodynamic therapy setting, are hindrances to the free flow of energy in the body, they are also historical compromises that affect the mind. These are blocks to specific feeling energies but also, they are blocks to awareness. The path to seeing all arisings as a ‘display of primordial open awareness’ as per *Dzogchen* is difficult when a person’s energy is focused on shutting out unwanted energies. Where there is resistance and solidity, specifically in terms of a person being very defended, termed ‘over-grounded’ or ‘armouring’ in body therapy, awareness cannot penetrate. The first step is to recognize that a person is very cut-off and withdrawn, like the Fisher King, in own hurts and woundedness A person can come to recognize that this woundedness has caused them to withdraw from experience to protect their feelings and they stop engaging, thinking that will keep them safe. ‘If you only stop singing I will keep you safe’ (Whyte,1992,35), the more we come to see how the body is used to repress feelings emotions and thoughts the more we can see what is called self is built on repression;

‘...the more we are able to engage the process of unravelling the layers of our ‘self’ concept. By going deeper and deeper into the rivers of feeling, discomfort, sensations and emotions in the body, finally we arrive at our core, the empty space at the centre, which is open and free but, at the same time, the basis of our entire being. At that point, our embodiment is complete, our realization is actual and the solid “ego” has become a distant dream’ (Ray,2008,82).

We have entered the black lake of discarded feelings with Beowulf, through the Sufi ‘station of no station’, or the Christian mystical divine ‘darkness’, the ‘nothingness’ of God and found where mystery and manifestation arise as a ‘darkness within darkness the gateway to all understanding’

#### 4.7 ‘Non-conceptual awareness’

In the Christian mystical context, Eckhart expresses the letting go and deepening process as an eternal sinking down, as a ‘...letting go to letting go into God’ (Fox,1983,49). The body’s tensions and discomforts signal that a person is

gripping too tightly to some idea of the self and trying to maintain it against others and even their own better judgements. Tension is an invitation to look at what the 'erotic-mind' is grasping onto and holding so tightly, what is driving it and what energies a person is shutting down to accomplish the holding. We have become a walled city that has become used to the hardness and the coldness of the walls, but once the resistance dissolves we become aware of the tensions; the resistances from the inside, it is then possible to move through it. Part of a person longs for a breakthrough in the walled city that they have become, longs like Rilke's walled cities for the enemy 'All you undisturbed cities haven't you ever longed for the enemy' (in Bhagwati,2007,265). To let go of the grasping-mind (*tanhā*) that strives to make concepts a solid reality, a person is letting go of the self-concept as a fixed reference, and takes a step into a new and unknown 'referencless' territory. In this place, the conceptual judgemental and objectifying mind does not function well. Without solid posts to grasp onto there is the opportunity for the mind to experience itself as 'open awareness', an open territory, looking at itself in the form of 'unbounded wholeness'. A person can release themselves from the prison of ego confinement into an open space where they are free to experience energy and vitality in themselves and in life. Caputo champions the transformative effect that results from staying in the flux and meeting things openly with 'undecidability'. It is in that fluid matrix that an energetic 'passion for the impossible' arises. Dunne's spiritual structure of 'passing over and returning' is a compassionate energy that moves outward towards others and in that way mirrors what God is doing. The deeper a person ventures into the unknown forest of the body, the more alive they feel, and the more they learn from each part of the body that is 'passed over to'. A person comes to realize that thoughts based on history are 'not self' (*anattā*), that feelings and emotions based on perceived hurts are 'not-self', and that all their seemingly solid inner constructs are 'not-self'. No matter how high a person builds the barriers within, there is a level of dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) that becomes apparent when the body lets go of its usual holding patterns, then the mental emotional and physical cost become apparent. The body has wisdom to impart, stored in its very cells are the energetic traces (*bīja*) of all past actions. Each part of the body is aware in its own way; each part through its own distinctive experience has its own wisdom to impart. Each part of the body is a '... whole world' (an)...individual galaxy' (and) ....

Each part is in ever changing relationship to other parts, other galaxies within the vast unknown universe of the body' (Ray,2008,89).

The body, free of the neurotic strategic mind, is an open frontier, a vast empty unbounded world that can be explored. The further a person penetrates the various 'galaxies' of the body the deeper they travel into the openness, the emptiness the nameless, the referencless darkness of unknowing. Though they are in the unknown, they are led by the body, as Buddha might do, who calls them, whispers (*psithyrists*) to them to look and see what is happening at this moment.

In Vegeto (Southwell,1988,9) therapy, when the body follows its own inherent needs it will move towards freeing itself of tyrannical energies and seek the most open unbounded situation it can bring about. Previously in discussing the true nature of mind it became clear that from the Buddhist view of the inherently 'brightly shining mind' and the discussion on how *Dzogchen* sees the true nature of mind not as the ordinary deluded state (*sem*) but rather the enlightened mind (*yeshe*). Desmond sees that the 'erotic mind' though being misled, its actions are to bring about deeper awareness. Just as the mind moves towards that which is most beneficial and freeing so too the body will move a person 'in the direction of the fullest where truth lies' (De Chardin in Gallagher,1988,48). The body knows what inner journey a person needs to make and what needs to happen for them to change. The body is on our side as it were, and as we become more familiar with it, we grow to trust that it is acting on our behalf out of a deeper more knowing part of ourselves. It is in fact working on behalf of the 'great-self', our Buddha-nature, our Buddha-wisdom-mind, obscured from our view at this moment.

As I have discussed previously, a hallmark of enlightenment is the experience of 'nonconceptual open (objectless) awareness' which the 'point-instant' view promotes and which affords a direct naked connection to things as they really are. When a person works with the body and allows it to open and communicate itself directly, a person is facilitating this 'non-conceptual' direct first *Nen* moment way of knowing and understanding. Buddhism and Psychotherapy focus on bringing the person into the present, because the past is filled with 'conceptual abstractions' which together form a view of reality that Buddhism refers to as a

‘dream’ or magical thinking. Concepts that attempt to solidify and stabilize things are deconstructed by the person’s experience of the body as fluid ‘the world is no longer experienced as consisting of things that are lasting and solid but rather as something that vanishes almost as soon as it appears....’ (Gethin in Williams and Tribe,2005,85). In meditation practice, there is a progressive examining of our conceptual framework, how it limits and colours our thinking and how to let go of it to open to life as it is. With practice, a person discovers the ability in themselves to see their own ‘non-conceptual’, open, compassionate mind. A concept is a poor approximation of the reality, a defective map that a person keeps adding to and eventually comes to mistake for reality itself. In meditation practice the mind is learning how to be aware and mindful in a new way so that it can come to see deeply into things.

In body, oriented therapy the focus is to move deeper and deeper into what is happening in the body, and in this process the mind learns also how to focus and to penetrate deeply into things in general. These are practices that uncouple the mind from continuous conceptualizing that abstracts a person from the present. Concepts judgements and labels are mental obscurations that Buddhist practices challenge. These obscurations also can be seen in the physical geography of the body.

#### 4.8 Wholehearted living

A concept, a label, a judgement, is not just mental phenomena they have physical import that can wound and these wounds can be touched in the body itself. It has been my privilege to accompany many who have suffered from these kinds of wounds. The woman brought to shame because of the shape of her body, the young man feeling isolated because of being gay, the man who never thought he fitted in. All these experiences are held in the darkness of the body, waiting sometimes a whole lifetime for a moment when it can speak out. The body registers every experience directly; it is the ego-mind that selects strategically those experiences that support or enhance the kind of self it is trying to maintain, those that do not support that image are buried deep in the body. This selective knowledge is called ‘ignorance’ (*moha*) in Buddhism as ‘It is the act of blocking

our knowledge and wisdom-received by the body and abiding in it....' (Ray,2008,107-8). To support a self-concept, the body is manipulated, narrowed, forced into acceptable and unacceptable positions. Where denied unwanted parts are abandoned demonized and boycotted, the body becomes frozen, cold to the touch and usually an area of physical pain. The body becomes a victim sacrificed in the name of the dual constructs of self-concept and a predictable life. In a retreat situation, a teacher at an unexpected moment, will shout *PHAT*, while the word traditionally is meant to scare away demons, it is also meant to break in on our usual predictable thought patterns at that moment causing them to drop. When we let go of our habitual structures we are living in a world filled with surprises or blessings coming to meet us in every moment. This is living deeply, free of the half- life we have confined ourselves to, a new energy moves through us a new joy in simply being. It is the moment when one awakens, the moment when one connects with the buried and disowned feelings and speaks them, it is the moment of Desmond's original astonishment at the 'givenness of being', the beginning of speech itself,

'.... It is the opening of eyes long closed .... It is the heart after years of secret conversing speaking out loud in the clear air. It is Moses in the desert, fallen to his knees before the lit bush....it is the man...finding himself astonished opened at last, fallen in love with solid ground' (Whyte,1984,22).

The 'solid ground' of the body is aware that this wholehearted living is possible and tries to move us closer to it, prods us with that continuous dissatisfaction that we feel but don't know why.

The call to embrace life, to live wholeheartedly in joy and blessings gets shoved into the 'long-bag' of the *ālaya* because to the strategic mind this is to live in chaos. Though we tie it tightly the contents of the 'long bag' continue to disturb us, sending out uncomfortable messages. A person's fear is not residing in the external world; it is deep within struggling to get out of the bag. But here is the secret; though many think if the demons of the 'long bag' get loose mayhem will follow, not so, they are agents fundamentally allied to the cause of healing. Both mind and body are on a healing trajectory and though a person may not realize it they are working towards the deepest awareness. They too want to grow up, move on and leave more internal space free for a person to take in more of life directly.

The more letting go a person achieves the more inner space they create and the more open and flexible they become. All these together prepare a person for meeting the deepest reality of life because in that encounter with all that is real a person becomes more and more present. The more present the person is the more they are aware at every moment where they are and the more they are present the more God is present in the medieval Christian writings ‘Wherever I am there is God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,20).

I have had clients who were struggling in this way caught between maintaining a ‘self’ concept and opening to a new way of experiencing life wholeheartedly. ‘When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy’ says Rumi highlighting what it is like to live wholeheartedly. It can be a long and painful struggle, to try to break free of one’s deadening, limiting, and stagnant, neurotic structures and make it to the present moment openly. A few things can happen, the person remains in the struggle and lives in a kind of intermediate *Bardo* state, or the person chooses the rigid ego driven self- structure and spends a great deal of time killing off any organic life energies. From the Buddhist perspective, a person is also dealing with *karma*; in the choices we make, on the side we come down on, we are acting and creating *karma*. We create negative *karma* through negative actions, and our refusal to meet and embrace life or the body is a *karma* creating action because we choose limited awareness and second-hand experiences. In a somatic oriented meditation and in body psychotherapy work a person connects again with those abused and short-changed parts of themselves that are living in the basement in the darkened areas of the psyche. When a person finally allows themselves to meet these abandoned energies with openness and ‘non-judgmentally’, compassion begins to flow and the healing process begins.

#### 4.9 Owning the shadow

When a person accepts things as they are, duality ceases and things are made whole and this in turn makes them holy. The way of paradox, of the Buddhist ‘point-instant’ reality or the ‘dharma of no-dharma’ (Huang Po in Loy,1999,20), or of the Christian, ‘God is a nothing’ (*das nicht*) (Mechthild in Tobin,2001,49),

or the Biblical losing to find ‘...whoever loses their life for my sake shall find it’ (Matthew 10;39), is the way of spiritual maturing. We suffer when we choose one element of the paradox over the other, because the other element is contradicted. Spiritual growth then could be the development of the ability to hold paradoxes without choosing the nominally sacred over the nominally profane. Letting go of craving (*tanhā*) and projecting are also energies that have physiological import, especially in the context of working with ‘Shadow’ material. The Shadow arises through division, through dividing our lives into that which is acceptable and not acceptable. The rejected parts take up residence in the shadow of the unconscious. Shadow material, as Johnson highlights collect a great deal of energy to itself influencing how we are in the world and if the energy is greater than the martialling ego energy it can erupt (See Johnson,1993,5). In the Buddhist view *karmic* actions generate ‘action traces’ or seeds (*bīja*) which accumulate in the ‘store-house-consciousness’ and come to fruition progressively ‘channelling’ our thoughts and reactions in the present. When a person maintains a distance between themselves and their store of shadow material they project it outward onto others, both negatively as seeing the ‘bad’ being carried by a person a people or a specific race; and positively through projecting the best parts of themselves onto others. This positive projection known as the ‘Golden Shadow’, clouds a person’s view of the real person and forces them to assume a burden as the one who will redeem my life. Yet it is these shadow parts that will lead a person to *Cold Mountain* when the predictable road has been washed away ‘it is time for body to ask shadow which way home’ (Han Shan, Kline (trans.)2006, xx).

Robert Johnson sees the spiritual path as a movement from opposition, to being able to live with paradox. In the Buddhist context, this is the way of ‘non-duality’ where nothing is denied as inherently separate or bad. In the Christian context, it is summed up by the apostle Matthew (6;22) ‘... if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light’. This ‘non-dual’ perspective is the perspective that leads Eckhart to say that ‘...Everything praises God. Darkness, privations, defects, evil too praise God and bless God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,56). To have a ‘non-dual’ perspective is to have infinite compassion for everything that is arising and this is to be in harmony with God, it is to be doing what God is doing as John Dunne points out. Every now moment that is seen undistractedly is

a moment where God's presence in the Christian context or the true nature of things in the Buddhist, can be experienced, no matter how difficult or 'sordid' that moment may be.

'... One moment weighs like another. Only in retrospection, selection, we say, that was the way. The critical moment that is always now, and here. Even now, in sordid particulars the eternal design may appear' (*Murder in the Cathedral*, Eliot, 1968, 60-1).

To live fully a person must let go radically and travel the way without references, into the unknown, into the 'marvellous', this is to travel as Eckhart says, 'without a why' and trusting in not knowing. 'Transformed knowledge, which is an unknowing, is the way of transparent knowing, it is the way of unselfconsciousness...' (Eckhart in Fox, 1983, 56). The paradoxes of possession and loss, of knowing and ignorance, are captured again by Eliot in his poem *East Cocker*;

'... In order to arrive at what you do not know, you must go by a way which is the way of ignorance. In order to possess what you do not possess, you must go by the way of dispossession. In order to arrive at what you are not, you must go through the way in which you are not' (Eliot in Wheatley, 2010, 296).

The road to what we are not now is by the way of 'not-self', the way of emptiness, the way of nothingness that way of darkness, and this is the way to be fully present, open and alive. Conflicts, losses, disappointments that a person experiences along the road of their lives are moments when the trail is lost or the bridge is down cause them to stop and re-assess. Complex difficulties that are without solution Johnson highlights are unconsciously self-invited to overcome ego's belief that it is responsible for everything. This is Buddha nature in the way I have been envisioning it, constellating inner events to push a person towards realization. In deliberately bringing about this unresolvable situation, an opening in Caputo's 'undecidability' opens, generating a moment of authentic goodness. When a person is stopped in their tracks, brought to ground in an unresolvable impenetrable dilemma or life *Kōan*, they are being invited into the dark impenetrable ground of God, into their own unknown, their own shadow, their own Buddha-nature lying in the forest of the body.

#### 4.10 Embodied spirituality

To give flesh as it were, to the many spiritual and psychological experiences I have discussed above it might be helpful to show how such things as giving up a self-image, disowned shadow, projection, entering the darkness, traveling by the way of not knowing, and offers of resolutions from the unconscious, can be seen in a person's life. The following are extracts from a case history of a client who came to see me after her relationship had hit a severe bump in the road. Her boyfriend had betrayed her with another woman and dashed all her plans and hopes, the one person in the world whom she trusted had let her down. Everything she had planned had been stopped in their tracks. Thus, began Anne's call to a new life a new way of being in the world, an invitation had arrived to stop perpetuating the old ways and readdress her life. She felt alone and betrayed and these played themselves out in her need to be alone with and carry the hurt herself. I asked if she felt she had to handle this situation all by herself. 'Are you going to make it better' she said. 'Nothing can make it better'. The legitimate anger she might be feeling in relation to her boyfriend was displaced into a statement of me not being able to make things better. This was the first insight into Anne's difficulty with anger, how it had been buried and disowned in the shadow of the unconscious. In later sessions, we worked on Anne's indirectness and what it would be like for her to ask directly for what she might need. After a long pause, she said 'Mind me'. 'How' I asked. 'Just take care of me'. A very long silence followed. She began again, 'You know if I like a person the less likely I am to say what I think and feel'. From this it was becoming clear that I was to be the healing minding mother/father figure and she the injured child. Also, she was caught in a dilemma of only speaking her mind directly to those she did not care about. The following were the associations I made about her way of navigating the world and her connections with others. Indirectness = Liking = Taking care of the connection = Fear of losing connection = Withdrawing a connection to herself = Disempowerment (where needs are not recognised). On the other hand, Directness = Not liking = Not caring about the connection or its possible loss = Giving voice to anger and judgement = Quasi Power. Her dynamic was such that she would abandon herself to stay in connection with someone she liked. This is how convoluted things become in the psyche, hiding unacceptable parts of oneself

to be accepted is a classic burying things in the shadow, to surface again in situations where she did not care about the other person. In the Jungian view all things that were occurring in Anne's psychic life were in fact a situation brought about by her unconscious to get out of the dilemma of 'true-self/false-self', to find a more coherent inner life. Previously the mind trajectory, even in its delusions, towards wholeness was discussed and how in *Hua yen* through its 'infinite interpenetration' vision saw good penetrating the bad, thus all things are seen to be always in the 'realm of truth'. Paradoxes abound on a spiritual journey, whether in the four quatrains of is, is not, neither is nor is not, both is and is not, of Buddhism or the definition of God as a nothing in the contemplative Christian tradition, the holding together of these opposing forces is a transformative energy.

This '*conjuncto oppositorum*' in Anne's case was a joining together of the true and the false, the hidden and the seen, the good and the bad. The energy of these conjunctions played themselves out in the therapy whereby after feeling progress was made with connection in a specific session, this would be disproven in the next session where what happened previously would hardly be remembered. The energies of connection, disconnection, and projection of disowned anger all came together to keep alive the self-view of 'I don't get what I want'. No matter how hard I tried to be available to her she did not want anything I could offer. This is a threshold or liminal moment in therapy where a person reaches an impasse of trying to rely on the old ways of coping while knowing these are not working anymore. If she allowed herself to be fully seen and met, she would in turn experience all the years of pain of not allowing herself to be completely visible. She tried the old way of 'I don't want it anyway' as a means of blocking the buried feelings. The choice to enter the darkness of the buried feelings is not a decision a person makes likely; we try everything to block that entry first. To be present in the moment can sometimes be a long journey, a journey blocked by old emotional injuries and hidden energies.

On one occasion, I led Anne through a physical meditation where I asked her to visualize her body internally as I guided her through an inward scan to see what she did and did not connect with. The purpose of this visualization was to see what Anne was aware of about herself physically and to give space for the body to speak its mind. Spiritual awareness I feel is less robust if it is not anchored in

immediate awareness of our embodied selves. Anne drew a picture of what she had connected with in the visualization (see appendix 1). The picture was striking by what it did not include; no face features, no fingers or toes. Her left shoulder was higher than her right, left arm and leg, longer than her right. Her head she described as light, while her hands and feet were cold. Presence and awareness are spiritual factors that Buddhism values and practices as means of helping people connect with the truth of things. As Anne's difficulties show, and many others I have worked with, a fruitful ground to build that presence and awareness is to begin with how unaware we are of the very thing that is closest to us, i.e. our bodies. Thich Nhat Hanh in his book *The Blossoming of Lotus* has developed a series of meditations focused specifically to bring awareness to the body and to help healing and transformation. Beginning with simple breathing exercises that bring our awareness to the fact that; 'Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out' (Hanh,1993,17). Through these body focused meditations, he covers the entire range of Buddhist spiritual exercises from taking refuge, in one's self, in who we are, (this is the antidote that stops projection of our Golden shadow onto others), to re-connecting and re-appreciating all the parts we are made from. Going deeper with each exercise he manages to cover mindfulness, awareness, karma and compassion while staying very much within the milieu of the body. Once Anne had drawn the map of her body, I asked if she would try to take up those positions that were represented in the drawing. She took up a position as outlined by her drawing; it was a rather distorted pose. It was impossible for her to walk and her overriding need was to stay still. 'I have to stay still... I feel like a statue that can't move... moving is wrong'. She was frozen to the spot. Her natural outflowing life energy was inhibited. She tended to contract, bringing her energy inward rather than outward. From her physical position based on her drawing it was clearer that one of the ways she met life was sideways rather than directly. Being absent or away, being deeply withdrawn and hidden, became more recognizable with direct body work with Anne. She endured connection by splitting off from the contact and daydreaming, the energy in her body was almost impossible to connect with; it was cold and deeply buried in the distorted body that turned away from reality and fled for refuge into the body. I thought of her as being dead, so far buried and resigned were her energies. On many occasions, I tried to help Anne connect with

the energies buried in the body only to encounter resignation and a refusal to change anything about the old script of her life. Denial was the predominant thing she practised, denial that what she felt or thought was of any value or could contribute in any way to changing anything, 'after all that was my job to bring about the change' she had said. However, from an emotional and psychological point of view if there was no emotional charge or discharge with the resultant integration, then there was subsequently no psychic integration either. If spiritual practice is not to be another way to escape from what is lying dead in the darkness, if it is to be really integrated into one's life and not just be an interesting rather esoteric eastern pastime, then it must be penetrative and recognize the suffering that people go through. The Buddha recognising this begins his realization of the path to freedom with the recognition that suffering is real. A compassionate response of Christian mysticism, of Rumi, Eckhart and Kabir is the recognition that what is moving in you is also moving in me. Before anything could begin to move outward in Anne she herself needed to recognize her own deep withdrawnness. She arrived one day saying, 'I am dead'. 'Then perhaps you would lie down and be a corpse', I said. She consented. 'I could stay like this for hours' she said. This is not Desmond's 'posthumous mind' experience when the 'erotic mind' has let go of its appropriating philosophy and creating space for the appreciation of the 'original givenness of being' to enter. Anne's deadness was a complete shutting down and withdrawing. She was in hiding and not able to 'take refuge' in anything including herself. Noticing her feet were moving in and out I asked her to focus on that. After some time, she wanted to move from the rigid pose and be floppy and sprawl and spread herself out. She did and laughed and giggled her way to floppiness. No matter how withdrawn we are there is a more knowing part of ourselves (on this occasion her feet) that is wiser and more caring of what we truly need. Any spiritual path should incorporate training in listening deeply to ourselves and those wiser parts that have our best interests at heart, but this can be a long process for those who have practised cutting off and aborting what arises as being unacceptable. I wrote in my notes about Anne 'I wonder what the dead dream of' as a way to ponder what happens in such a restricted life. I did not have to wait long as she arrived into her next session with a dream, the substance of which was as follows. 'I am telling a friend who is sad and depressed that if she goes to a body worker, he will put a hand on your heart, although it will

be painful for a moment it will be fixed' she recounted. Here a direct message from her wisdom-mind pointing out that to allow herself to be touched at a heart level was the way forward. We are changed when we are touched at a heart level keeping in mind that *citta* means heart/mind. Indeed, the very word for courage comes from the French (Coeur) meaning heart. To speak from the heart, or allow oneself to be touched to the core, takes courage. In a later session, she recounted the following dream; 'I pretend to be dead. The border guards are outside the car. I know the place where I am going. I spell my name incorrectly and give the wrong phone number'. This was a telling message, of how deception is used to get her to where she knows she is going. The threshold guards guard the liminal space, the space of transition, the central space in the Mandorla, they must be encountered to cross to the other shore. In her dream these border guards are that which imprison her and the means of escape, the car, is stopped.

There is an internalized energy blocking her and blocking the energy she needs to go on the path that she wants to go on. Her unconscious knows this and she uses tricks to fool those internalized guards. There is a masking, to protect that which is precious and needs careful attention, the hidden, the fragile, the new and precious. A commitment to the journey of change comes about when a person is touched deeply and they can move from broken-heartedness to wholeheartedness, where they can experience doing things from a deeper place and feel what that is like to allow themselves to be guided by that which they love. 'When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving through you. 'Let yourself be drawn by the stronger pull of what you truly love' (Rumi Quotes). The dead can come back to life, this is the Christian message highlighted in the biblical story of Lazarus and indeed of Christ's own story. Spiritually and psychologically we too can return from the deadness and imprisonment of past traumas when the journey to our true natures takes onto the road all the murky material in the shadows of the unconscious, indeed without it there is no transformative path to travel. Resolution or resurrection comes in the form of messages of healing from the dark pool where all the unacceptable disowned parts reside. Indeed, as Eckhart and the Buddha-nature teachings highlight we have all that we need spiritually as images of God or Buddha, but not recognizing this we '... wander from room to room hunting for the diamond necklace that is already around your neck' (Rumi Quotes).

However, at certain stages or points on the road, it is very difficult to harness that inner certainty and help is needed to assist in re-connecting with our true natures. Assisting as a therapist in that re-connection is firstly a process of helping the person become aware of what is happening in this moment of connection between therapist and client. Secondly as a body oriented therapist deeper connection can be made through focusing on those areas of the body that are giving pain, it being a Noble truth' in the Buddha's teaching. On one occasion while working on Anne's right shoulder, which she said was 'Killing her' I asked, in an attempt, to facilitate her connection with herself, if any images came with that pain. She could see she said 'seven thin hairy figures with pointy fingers, pointed shoulder blades and pointed noses. They are judging, angry, spiteful figures always pointing out things. On my left side, there are three round chubby girls, they are pale and seem to be waiting.' She did not want to look at these hideous figures and physically turned her body away from looking at them. I was reminded of her distorted posture which caused her to encounter the world sideways. These witchlike figures with their grotesque malformed bodies were not unlike the three witches in Shakespeare's play Macbeth. They are the ones who can bring messages concerning the future; they are the messengers of change. There is also the connection between Snow White and the seven dwarfs, in this case however they seem to be transformed into rather hideous figures. The path to a more open genuine life seems to demand, in Anne's case, encountering these seven devils, only then would there be movement and psychological integration.

'Lonely one you are going the way to yourself. And your way leads past yourself and your seven devils.....You must wish to consume yourself in your own flame; how could you wish to become new, unless you first had become ashes!'  
(Nietzsche,1976,176).

To be led past oneself is to be on the path to the 'station of no station' which is continuously leading past everything. The best way to get an insight into what might lie past her usual narrowed experience of herself was to use a visualization of a journey itself. During later sessions visualization exercises such as entering the 'Gates of Hope' whereby the client visualizes herself walking down a road and entering through a gate on which the words 'Gates of Hope' are written, then she continues recounting the story of what she sees on her journey. In summary, the following motifs were recounted, a pastoral scene with lambs and cows, with

many beautiful flowers, there are brambles that enclose the field. Throughout her journey, she holds onto her money.

While as a therapist, shorthand interpretations are dangerous and only the client's interpretation is valid, the following interesting parallels emerge. Money is how we negotiate value and that is being held onto even in this seemingly ideal place. In transition mythology, paying to be carried across the river is common, without that exchange no transition can be made. There are again border guards except this time in the form of brambles. In fairy tales, the prince must cut through the brambles that enclose the castle to get to the sleeping princess. There are flowers and lambs and cows, all possible symbols of delicate new life. 'I don't pick the flowers' she says, reflective of her severe restriction and her sometimes dead colourless life, 'it is an ideal place for children, for my niece and nephew'. Two energies seemed to be needing resolution in Anne; an upward energy that would encounter the seven witches and thereby gain insight into what they had to tell her about herself and a pull back to a more ideal place, to the 'Secret Garden', to the land of children and undifferentiated consciousness, a timeless *Nen* time before separation. How these energies would be integrated in Anne's life turned out to be a significant part of the psychotherapy work. Anne's life is based on a hide and seeks principle, where what is presented is not the real and what is hidden must be protected from possible harm. This distortion can go so far as Anne not being able to tell what was going on the surface of her own body but could only register whether my hands were cold or hot, such was the level of absence of connection with herself. Absence of connection is not the realization of any spiritual motif; indeed, it is the absence of the most basic awareness itself. There is a constant self-displacement happening in Anne's case because she believed safety was never to be found in oneself, always in others. To maintain that safety, she would adjust her thinking according to the external needs of the person or situation. This is not the realization of 'dependent origination' for instance; it being a defence mechanism the need to defend takes up all available psychological space. A central question arises, does a person need to have a strong self-image first to take on and accomplish a spiritual journey. Early Buddhism speaks of a 'great self', one who is perfected in body speech and mind. It seems to me that we need something like this 'great self' that has the breadth and depth

to take on the spiritual and psychological challenges that a spiritual path will bring. The conflict, as in Anne's case, can be between fully inhabiting the body with all the fear that that brings and the practice of fleeing from it and not being fully here.

There are many meditations designed to help focus a person to the here and now and thereby assist in cultivating a presence (non-fleeing) way of being. *Longchenpa* earlier highlighted what he termed 'pure and total presence' which is the ability to be in the present in body and mind openly meeting things as they arise. Presence and openness can also be assisted through working with the element of the body. The body can assist in the process of learning when distractions are arising and abstracting from being fully present, fully participating fully alive. Not-self, emptiness, 'unbounded openness' are experiences that are aimed at bringing a person to more direct and transformative encounters with the real. In a person's life, what is most real and closest at that moment is what is painful. Like Heidegger who saw what was closest as being the most real and true, the Buddha also understood suffering as the 'truth of being'. This is Anne's struggle indeed, a struggle I have encountered many times with others also, how to surrender all the 'half-loves' as Rumi says that must be surrendered to 'bring one whole heart home'. The seven hideous figures and the three cherubs hold hidden insights that Anne needs to progress psychologically. There is healing of the past and the elements that inhibit progress, when the body is helped to open to a new way of being. When physical integration happens, psychological integration is not far behind. When this happens, there is the realization that the treasure a person sought externally was buried in our own back-yard all the time. The door to realization is closer than we think; 'I have lived on the lips of insanity, wanting to know reason, knocking on a door. It opens; I have been knocking from the inside' (Rumi Quotes). And later reemphasising that we need to pay mindful attention to what is closest 'You wander from room to room hunting the diamond necklace that is already around your neck' (Rumi quotes). Anne's flowers in her secret garden can only be picked when, according to the medieval alchemy, she goes '*per crucem ad rosem*'; through the cross to the rose. The cross, the intersection of paradoxes must be gone through to gather back, (*religare*) where gathering-back or binding-back together is a religious and

spiritual experience, we can recall all that is hidden in the depth of the soul, in the depths of the body; our Buddha-nature, ourselves as images of God. When a person is not-themselves, when they are in flight from their history, they live in a distorted world holding tight (*tanhā*) to the images and methods of surviving they have perfected. To move further a letting go of historic defensive positions is necessary.

#### 4.11 Life as invitation

It has been said that all the illness or sickness we experience is ‘home sicknesses’. As Taylor has outlined the Christian has lost that feeling of being part of a divine plan and when the person recognizes this there is a wish to live a more integrated and authentic life. Sogyal Rinpoche in his talks and teachings, sums this up in when referring to meditation as ‘bringing the mind home’, bringing the fragmented and distressed mind back in touch with the deep well of inner healing. Fragmentation and loss of soul can happen through being in an abusive relationship, where something goes dead inside, and in the same way deadness pervades when a person has not been loved sufficiently. In these experiences, there is a deep wounding and to survive it the feeling is locked away in the deep recesses of the body. The body in this way becomes a dumping ground for unbearable pain. The body must then be distanced from as it is the container for all that is shadowy and abandoned, it too must be abandoned. By so doing we lose touch with what the body knows inherently, instinctively, purely (in the first *Nen* moment of awareness) before the strategic mind gets hold of it. Yet it is these scorned parts that become the agents for transformation. Karl Jung once responded to a client who came to him saying he had lost his job and was extremely stressed, that that was wonderful and something new and transformative was now going to happen. In this way, all the *karma* we create has a purpose and a meaning and gives one’s life ‘directionality’ (Ray2008.149). What a person suffers from is what they have *karmically* constructed, as *karma* is said to have the features of ‘collecting and orchestrating’, so that in and through those very same *karmic* constructions they eventually learn the lessons they need to, to become the person, they were meant to be. A person begins to realize that

they are not suffering aimlessly that their wounds have meaning and a wisdom, as Rumi put it ‘The wound is the place where the light enters you’ and echoing Jung ‘where there is ruin there is hope for treasure’ (Rumi Quotes). Eckhart says; ‘Everything praises God. Darkness privation, defects, evil too praises God and blesses God. (Eckhart in Fox 1983,56). Those who have achieved the enlightened state, their whole being is said to have become *Dhamma*, an expression of the truth, an expression of what is ultimately real. In the unenlightened state, the challenge might be thought of as becoming *karma*, which is to recognize and take responsibility for our situation and to understand that our woundedness, together with the disowned parts, are energies pushing us towards opening and becoming the person we need to be. ‘It is, always the ultimate reality of the universe flowing through us, being us, and coming to its own fruition in and through us (Ray, 2008,149). A person begins to see that in some way they have brought together and arranged the emotional and psychological instruments needed for their own enlightenment. This leads them to seeing all the events in their lives as opportunities for insight and change. A person begins to see life as a call, an invitation to open and embrace all that *Hua yen* emphasizes they have uniquely been blessed with. A person can move then from living in the shadow with a wounded-consciousness like the Fisher King, or to the light of a blessing-consciousness. A person can let go of the sadness and the hurt that they have been clinging to and as Rumi suggests they can ‘...quit being sad (and) hear blessings dropping their blossoms all around you’ (Rumi Quotes). Through understanding the cause and the purpose of *karma* a person develops loving kindness and understanding for the meaning value and purpose of their own lives and by extension can develop the openness to have compassion and understanding for others.

#### 4.12 Being one’s ‘Great Self’

A person can develop trust in life and its processes and recognize that each person is on a unique and personal journey, being either a ‘book about God’ as Eckhart says or by uncovering the truth, the reality of things as they are through the energy of their Buddha nature. A person labels and classifies their experiences into good

and bad, yet their experiences, have an inherent meaning and determination of their own and move along a healing trajectory. It is the become *dharma* experience where there is no distinction between the reality of the universe and a person's reality. Being capable of the universe (*capax universi*) paradoxically is being capable of being one's great self, one's Buddha nature. In the Christian mystical sense, it is visualized by Eckhart in the line, 'Gods being is my being and God's primordial being is my primordial being. Wherever I am there is God' (in Fox,1983,20). In the early Christian view, a person is larger than they realize and capable of the universe and the divine plan unfolding itself in them. Against this the self is a limiting concept; it confines a person to living out a small life. The Buddhist insistence on, 'not-self' and 'point instant' reality, are *mantras* that opens a person to greater and greater depths of understanding. A person is the 'sacred', they have Buddha nature, they are always standing in the 'realm of truth', they are always standing in the ground of their already perfected primordial state of *Dzogchen*. As such they have the power to 'sanctify' and because '... we are and have the divine being within, we bless each task we do...' (Eckhart, in Campbell (ed),2002,73). 'Do not hide, the sight of your face is a blessing, wherever you place your feet there rests a blessing' (Harvey 1995,131). Sacredness is not lived by running away from life and hiding, but rather by meeting by embracing the relative and often painful occurrences and allowing them to inform and guide us. Yeats, the Irish poet, has such an epiphany sitting in a London coffee shop when he recounts; '....my body of a sudden blazed, and twenty minutes more or less, it seemed so great my happiness. That I was blessed and could bless' (Yeats, *Vacillation* from *The Winding Stair*,1933). The blessing sounds and sights of a dawn also fill Wordsworth to the 'brim' to the point of deep understanding and realization that something greater than himself was moving through him and guiding him. '..... I made no vows but vows were made for me; Bond unknown to me was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly, a dedicated Spirit. On I walked in blessedness which even now remains.' (Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, in Bloom & Trilling,1973,200), This is Wordsworth accepting his calling, his vocation, walking into the bonds that have been given to him. It is an inspiring picture of what can happen by paying mindful attention to what is happening in one's life where the 'truth of being' unfolds itself. The feelings of 'unbounded wholeness' and liberated awareness that resonates from

Wordsworth's lines are not constructs of the *klesha* mind, they are granted to him through his practices of mindfulness and awareness. This state of blessedness was not bestowed on him without any struggles without 'terrors' 'miseries' or 'regrets'. 'Ah me that all the terrors, that all the early miseries, regrets vexations lassitudes; That all the thoughts and feelings that have been infused into my mind....'. (Wordsworth 1.355-8, in Ruddy,1996,46). These emotional upheavals, he realizes, are what has helped to make him who he is especially when he is living up to his inherent true nature. He continues, '...should ever have made up the calm existence that is mine, when *I am worthy of myself*' (1.358,61).

As a therapist, much of the suffering I have encountered in clients stems from feelings of not being 'worthy of myself', a general feeling a person has of not living their lives from an authentic place in themselves that truly reflects their Buddha nature or who they were meant to be. How can a feeling of living up to one's deepest self be restored? From a body therapy view, as I have outlined, one can come to have 'faith' in the unknown in what surprises, in what is outside the predictable grid of the strategic mind. If letting go and travelling deep is accomplished then maybe we can, like Rilke, 'have faith in nights' or like Wordsworth come to know that '.... there is a dark invisible workmanship that reconciles discordant elements, and makes them move in one society' (Wordsworth 1.351-55, in Ruddy,1996,44).

#### 4.13 Our lives are the path

One of the features of the Buddha's enlightenment is his re-remembering of all his past lives and re-experiencing all their associated suffering. It is therefore implied that enlightenment comes from bringing all that we have buried in the dark of the storehouse consciousness, to mind so that it might be healed. A person buries the unacceptable to support some form of self-concept. When a person separates, and selects those things that they don't want they also lose the wisdom content of those experiences. A person can re-connect again with the pure awareness and wisdom aspects of their inner selves when they like the Buddha stop and take time to re-connect with those parts of their lives that have been disowned. The Buddha frees himself by re-remembering everything, not selecting or judging just

remembering all his experiences. He no longer dis-owns any part but embraces completely all his relative experiences. His re-connection with these experiences opened him to connect more deeply with others. Without going through these experiences, the Buddha would never have found the substantiality necessary to teach others what he had found. There is implied in the Buddha's way to enlightenment that understanding alone is not enough, direct experience is the foundation on which all the teachings are grounded. Teilhard De Chardin makes a similar point when he says, 'To understand the world knowledge is not enough, you must see it touch it live in its presence and drink the vital heat of existence in the heart of reality' (in Gallagher,1988,20). What is at the heart of reality is heat or fire and when a person connects with that centre of reality they are probably going to be burned. It is said that an enlightened teacher, one who is in contact with that centre of reality in himself is on fire and one must be cautious because to come too close is to risk being burned but to stay too far away one risks freezing. The 'point instant' view of reality is distilled into a view of reality as 'flashing energy' an energy that when the advanced *Dzogchen* practitioner connects with this energy at the moment of death, transforms their body into a rainbow of light symbolizing their passing into the energy of the universe. The Buddha's realization came from his ability to finally embrace and be present to the entire spectrum of his experiences. From a body perspective, the entire spectrum of experiences can be traversed again in and through the body. While there is, a path outlined in Buddhist practice, this is not the experience, it is only pointing to it and a person should not mistake it for the way. The teachings are a container that helps to cook the neurotic structures a person has created that prevent them from feeling, 'worthy of myself'. They give structure to the letting go and surrendering into the 'referenclessness' or Arabi's 'bewilderment' of being; to entering the unknown and making the path on the journey. 'Pathmaker your footsteps are the path and nothing more; pathmaker there is no path, you make the path by walking' (Michado; Proverbs and Songs XXIX Selected poems, in Rothery,2014,169). Kahlil Gibran reemphasizing that the journey is to the 'station of no-station' reminds us '.... To say not I have found the truth, but rather, I have found a truth....' (Gibran,1946,63). A person's life is the path and all that they encounter through their *karmic* inheritance are provisions for the journey.

Kabir the Indian poet and Bhakti mystic, also highlights how we have become lost by forgetting what the journey is,

‘... You don’t grasp the fact that what is most alive of all is inside your own house; and so, you walk from one holy city to the next with a confused look. Kabir will tell you the truth; go wherever you like, to Calcutta or Tibet; if you can’t find where your soul is hidden, for you the world will never be real’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,9).

Connecting with the spiritual dimension within, affords us the ability to see how things really are. If this connection is not made a person remains a ‘...troubled guest on the dark earth’ (in Dunn,2001,20-21). In another self-questioning poem Kabir asks himself: ‘What is the river you want to cross?’ (in Bly,1977,17). Or in other words what is the path you want to take. This is a liminal transformative question that a person might ask who feels that they need to undertake a journey of discovery to become ‘worthy of myself’. He answers ‘There are no travellers on the river-road, and no road. There is no path because a good walker leaves no path...’ (in Feng & English,1989). Kabir recognizing that there is no path more important than what is closest and so encourages himself to ‘Be strong then enter your own body; there you have a solid place for your feet. Think about it carefully! Don’t go off somewhere else!’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,17). Yet again reiterating that what a person seeks is inside not outside he says:

‘Don’t go outside your house to see flowers. My friend, don’t bother with that excursion. Inside your body there are flowers. One flower has a thousand petals. That will do for a place to sit’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,47).

What a person has lived through, and literally embodied, is where the truth they are seeking lies, inside the paradigm of the body. This is full incorporation or becoming *Dhamma* for Kabir, where the physical and the spiritual meet in the ‘full length of the body’.

#### 4.14 Disintegration of concepts and strategies

The Buddha in referring to the body makes the following statement; ‘...the world the cause of the world the cessation of the world, and the way to the cessation of the world, I declare, exist within the fathom -long body, with perception and mind’ (in Swearer (ed.),1989,141). We come to be aware of what is really going

on through Meditation, which in Buddhist practice has two phases, calm abiding (*shamatha*) and clear seeing (*vipassanā*). The first phase is to calm the turbulent mind and once settled it can look deeper and see clearer. In body focused work the body itself is the object on which attention rests and this in turn helps slow the mind and create an inner peace. A beginner in meditation in using the breath for instance can get caught in conceptual constructions of what a peaceful mind should be, which can lead to frustration when the mind continues along its turbulent road refusing to conform to a concept. It is only when a person can stop trying to achieve the desired state and embrace the turmoil as part of the energetic display of the mind that it is possible to progress.

In the Biodynamic psychotherapeutic approach *Vegeto* (Southwell,1988,9) therapy tracks the energetic display in the body and the subtle movements that arise of themselves in the nervous system. A therapist's intention is simply to be present to and listen to whatever arises as the body speak its mind. By focusing and being open to the energetic impulses, pains, desires in the body, and by simply allowing them the freedom to manifest the '...body wakes up' (Ray,2008,180) and the more awake a person becomes the wider the circle of their embrace. As the body wakes up so does the person become more present to the immediate reality of how they and all things are. This is the figurative and literal embodiment of Caputo's staying in the flux where everything is moving and changing and everything is made anew. The more letting go the body does, the more psychologically clear the mind becomes and because mind and body are intimately linked, they work together to achieve each-other's freedom. If the mind is the store-house consciousness (*ālaya-viññāna*) of *karmic* action traces, then the body is the store-house of the energy that accompanies the actions. A person seeks therapy often when that energy in the body is pushing upward so strongly that it can't be pushed back down, and thus the person often feels that they are disintegrating. Nothing seems to work anymore on any level and the person feels at sea. There is disintegration, but it is the disintegration of concepts and strategies usually constructed to support the self-concept that are no longer working or satisfying. The strategy of keeping everything together employs the body to be a holder; a container for all that does not fit the self-concept of the time. The body is wiser and does not want to be used in that way, its way of being is to move

forward towards life, not to withdraw and hold against it. It knows that it is in the 'direction of the fullest truth lies' as De Chardin said (in Gallagher,1988,48). Eventually either through illness or some other trauma the body will force a stopping of that which is contrary to its own growth (Buddha) nature. It will force a stop on the story, the narrative we have been fashioning to create a centre around which to elaborate the stories into a self as Augustine highlighted. When the story dies the emotions and feelings behind it get a chance to surface, only then does a person realize that they have been holding back a powerful emotional life energy. This energy that when embraced becomes a positive agent in assisting them to live more fully and more deeply. In body work, as this holding comes into awareness, a person recognizes it as a border. The closer they get to the boundary or liminal line, to the store-house of emotions in the body, the more they feel fear and panic. If a person can pass beyond the border the defensive line, they realize that it is made of old outdated things, old fears, old concepts and old pains. What the person thought of as self turns out to be old structures, old rags and bones of the past, supporting a past that has frozen them in a past time. If a person passes beyond the border there is the experience of being able to breathe again, of feeling alive again, of feeling happy and so much lighter without the 'burden of all that thinking', as one of my clients described it.

'Here, finally, we arrive at our most basic experience of being alive, just the empty open space of our awareness. When we journey down into the body, to its deepest levels, when we extend our awareness from subtlety to greater subtlety, we eventually arrive at the completely open domain of empty space, our basic body, our basic nature' (Ray,2008,194).

From the *Vajrayāna* Buddhist perspective emotions are not the problem, nothing in the external world is the problem, as in their own true nature these are inherently pure.

They are thus arising '.... from a realm beyond ego-the Buddha nature...' (Ray,2008,199) and serve to undermine the ego's strategic need for control. In their own way, these emotions are a call to surrender to a deeper knowing, a deeper level of letting go, and a deeper self-compassion.

#### 4.15 Accessing the primary personality

The body is the object of meditative inquiry in the *Vajrayāna* methods outlined by Ray. There is a therapeutic, more hands-on method, which shares the same principles. Biodynamic body focused therapy also views emotions as central to the healing process and uses many methods such as talking, massage, movement and meditation to address and help integrate the emotional energy of the person. Biodynamic psychology developed by the clinical psychologist Gerda Boyesen integrates in its approach, classical psychology, Reichan body work and psychodynamic psychotherapy. The biodynamic axiom is that joy, and well-being both spiritual and physically are the elements that make up a non-neurotic person. Biodynamic therapy sees an intimate connection between body and mind and as such sees that by working with the body the mind can be positively influenced. Physiologically tissues and organs of the body are developed from three primitive layers of cells that compose the early embryo. One of these is the ‘Ectoderm’, which produces both the skin and the nervous system. Every cell of the body is affected by what happens in the nervous system.

‘Depending upon how you look at it, the skin is the outer surface of the brain, or the brain is the deepest layer of the skin. Skin and brain are a single unit. Every touch brings about a variety of mental responses. In other words, the skin thinks and feels and the brain can feel and thinks’ (Capepini & Van Welden,2010,32).

Emotions have effects on the body system, in times of extreme stress for example when we are frightened, our muscles will tense up, our breathing become shallower, and because we may need our muscles for fighting or fleeing, more blood will flow into those areas. In this scenario, our body is highly charged with ‘up energy’ or ‘charge’ that naturally seeks release or discharge. If for some reason this does not happen, and our feelings are suppressed, then charge is built up in the body affecting our body’s ability to regulate itself naturally. These unreleased emotions are interruptions to the natural cycle of charge and discharge. Prolonged practice at holding back the energy results in a ‘...build-up of body armour’ (Southwell,2001,3). Body armour is the energy used by the body to suppress the natural desire of emotions (energy in motion). Just as the Buddhism in India and the Sufi mystics saw change as real and anything resisting change as unreal, the body can be the place where this conflict between the desire for change and holding back is fought. The body contracts to hold back the energy and our

natural flexibility and self-regulation is lost. A person develops instead a neurotic structure not only in the body but also in the mind which affects the body down to the level of tissue. These vegetative disturbances are the result of unreleased tension built up in the body. According to the biodynamic theory of psychoperistalsis, unreleased emotional charge results in build-up of pressure in the walls of the small intestines. Once the pressure or stress has been released there is a parallel discharge of built up fluid due to peristaltic contraction. This discharge is monitored by use of a special stethoscope placed over the small intestine during massage. Different parts of the body, being unique ‘universes’ as Ray calls them, have different sounds; these are different *mantras* that are unique to that part of the body. Just as encounters with the real can make it difficult to articulate the ‘signless’ the ‘nameless nothing’ and require a language that never stops at a definitive definition, mantras of the body resonate differently when touched, and by following the path of sound a person can be led by the body to significant psychological connections. Sound has held a significant place in spiritual writings; ‘The temple bells die out. The fragrant blossoms remain. A perfect evening!’ is the famous Haiku by Bashō where what is the dying out in one sense is the arising of another. The aftermath of sound is silence, and this can be experienced in meditation and in the body when the sounds of resistance or neurotic disturbances have died out, there is only the silence, of ‘open awareness knowing itself as ‘unbounded wholeness’, the ‘immaculate looking at itself’ (Ven Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje ‘Letter in praise of emptiness’).

The link between vegetative disturbance and its psychological effect is a well-established principle in the work of Gerda Boyesen. At the heart of biodynamic psychotherapy, as its name suggests, is the mobilization and release of the fundamental dynamic energy that is trapped in contraction to help move the person forward towards fulfilling his or her unique potential. This potential is called ‘primary personality’ in biodynamic psychology, and refers to that state which is free of neurotic repressions.

In Buddhism, the ‘primary personality’ could be seen to resemble Buddha nature, that essence or potential that has the capability to realize itself at the highest and deepest level. We have lost contact with this potential in ourselves and live in what biodynamics calls a ‘secondary personality’. This is the neurotic ‘armoured’

*'klesha-mind'*, living in a second hand limited way, within the confines of the self-project. The focus of the Biodynamic body approach is to re-connect a person with their true core inheritance, the primary personality by encouraging the energy at the core through loosening the energetic holding that is blocking it. This natural potential that has been overlaid by doubts, criticisms, hurts that can cause the potential to withdraw and sink below the surface of consciousness. This primary personality is free of neurotic blocks and limitations. It is an original unboundedness and once experienced opens the way to the experience of the divine or Buddha nature.

As in Buddhist meditation practice the primary focus of biodynamic body work is to reveal how the secondary personality or self-concept is blocking the innate potential for living more fully and dynamically, wholeheartedly, 'being worthy of myself'. This is done by focusing not so much on the past or by asking many questions, but rather creating an accepting space for the person to explore whatever is moving them in the present and how they are experiencing that. An atmosphere of open acceptance is encouraged and a sense of '...creative unknowing, being open to the unexpected, willing to be surprised....' (Southwell,2001,5). It is the experience of 'non-conceptual' 'referencless' traveling, without a 'why' and the Sufi 'perpetual transformation'; the 'constantly changing manifestation of the real' as it arises and ceases in the body. This 'creative unknowing', is travelling the way in the 'knowledge of ignorance' and this principle was the very things that lead the early forest meditators away from the known path into the darkness of the unknown forest. Through body work a person can come to realize that this 'creative unknowing' is accessible in their own body. A willingness to be surprised is difficult for the rigid self-concept as it is built on Kelly's 'predictability', labelling, judging and projecting. Trust in the body, what it says, what wisdom it is literally holding, can be accessed by following the 'point-instant' 'energy flashes' that manifest in the body. In body focus, there is an open invitation to whatever is arising without preconceived ideas what these stirrings might be on behalf of the client, and so by simply encouraging him/her to allow them, he/she is practising 'non-conceptual awareness'.

#### 4.16 Nothing is outside the ground of Buddha nature

Body work deals with negative unconscious material which interrupts the natural flow of the vegetative system, not through words or concepts but by direct contact with the vegetative life energy itself. To touch and be touched is a powerful thing, and a biodynamic therapist touches a person with the specific 'intention' of connecting through the various physical, psychological and spiritual levels of the body; from the matter of fact level of skin, to the deeper level of muscle (secondary personality), to the structural level of bone (primary personality), the person's energy follows downward, from daily consciousness, to deeper darker levels of the unconscious; in the Buddhist view, from outer to inner to secret levels of knowing, in the Christian mystical setting, the person sinks according to Eckhart '...eternally from letting go to letting go into God'(in Fox,1983,49) or into 'emptiness' The letting go process the sinking down further and further into the body, is as powerful as coming to know the divine, the Buddha-nature, one's original or primary being. 'By moving down through the layers of our body in the somatic practice, we arrive where our body is an empty, luminous presence' (Ray,2008,210), or in the Christian mystical setting, the unnameable nothingness (*das nicht*), that is a silent emptiness responding to eternity. When a person refuses to connect and resists participating fully in all aspects of their lives, they withdraw, become judgemental, and use projection and labelling as a quick referencing for what is happening in their lives. This is the type of connection the 'secondary personality' based on a *klesha* mind or self-construct has with life.

However, if the person drops into the '...unconditioned dimension of body...' (2008,210) it is possible to forge a new less ego driven relationship with our life and our life's experiences. When a person descends further and further into the experiences of the body they discover larger and larger levels of space (not-self), just as in the quantum science view, and within that space a greater and greater ability to let go of all the pain, and inner struggle that has been holding them back. '.....When we journey down into the body, to its deepest levels, when we extend our awareness from subtlety to greater subtlety, we eventually arrive at the completely open domain of empty space, our basic body, our basic nature' (2008,194).

At the deepest body level, there is only the awareness of space itself or what biodynamic therapy calls an ‘oceanic’ dimension. In the Buddhist teachings, a person is encouraged to take everything onto the path and through body focused meditation, or direct bodywork, they learn how to move directly into relationship with all the aspects of their lives, the pain, the turmoil, the sadness and the chaos, as well as the joy the connectedness and the deep understanding, the darkness and the light. At this deep level, a person can come to understand that everything is happening according to their *karmic* needs and in that sense, they are opportunities for real understanding and growth, for moving from the rigidity of ego-consciousness into the fluid open awareness. Body work both meditative and psychotherapeutic helps a person to embrace whatever is arising in their lives now. This is Wallace’s ‘transformative surrender’ in action; it is a letting go not to a transcendent idea, but to the experiential wisdom of the body. Everything that arises helps a person to fully relate to life by exposing how the self-concept keeps them from fully being present. Through body work or meditative exploration, a person can come to experience the *Hua yen* view and see that every part is connected to every other part.

From the ‘dependent origination’ teaching and *Hua Yen* philosophy, meaning arises through dialogues of interconnection, the expression of which is compassionate engagement. For the Christian mystic, to emulate God’s continuous creative compassionate, engagement with life, is to be ‘doing what God is doing’, and this begins with a compassionate engagement with all aspects of one’s own life. To enter the experiences of the body openly without pre-conceptions is to open to experience ‘objectless unsupported discernment’ the beginnings of ‘*Nibbānic*-mind’. No thought is separate from a feeling, no emotion separate from a physical experience. Physiologically the same material that makes the skin is responsible for forming the brain, to touch one is to touch the other and in so doing re-connects with Desmond’s original ‘astonishment’ of being as a gift (in Simpson,2009, Ch.2).

At the ‘primary’ level we possess Buddha nature which comes to the fore once the blocks in the body and mind have been cleared away. At this level, there is the ability to see things clearly (*vidyā*) without strategic agendas and to be open to everything that is arising. It is the experience of ‘non-conceptual awareness’

itself, our original state that was lost in the mire of concepts and self-referencing ideas. When a person's original nature is uncovered, there is natural compassion which arises, a compassion that has been obscured by defensive anger and hostility towards oneself and others.

Just as the body sends out continuous fluttering from the 'primary personality' so too Buddha nature continuously tries to move a person forward along the path of *karmic* purification, to assist them in their attempts to be 'worthy of myself'. If Buddha nature is the fundamental ground of our nature then nothing is outside of it, all is encompassed in 'unbounded wholeness', all progress toward the realization of Buddha nature is orchestrated by Buddha nature (Ray,2008). If the ground of our being is Buddha nature and its deepest expression is awareness and deep awareness is 'open awareness' of 'unbounded wholeness '.... the "end point", then is wholeness aware of itself' (Ray 2008,252).

*Nyingma Dzogchen* expresses a similar view through its teachings on our fundamental nature which it sees as being 'primordial purity', 'the brightly shining mind' knowing itself as 'unbounded wholeness'. Nothing is outside of the unbounded nature of wholeness, everything is in the *Hua yen* 'realm of truth'. Eckhart expressing the all-encompassing nature of God, says 'Outside of God there is nothing but nothing' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,39). Buddha nature is behind everything that happens on our journey; All the twists and turns all the dead ends and blind alleys we have gone down, all the karma we have created was part of Buddha nature's plan that leads to ultimate realization.

'Whatever happens to us, and within us, is the expression of Buddha nature, pushing us forward in our own unfolding. There is nothing in our life or experience that is outside of it. The Buddha nature thus may be referred to as the 'totality'. As we progress along the path to our own self- discovery, our awakening and realization, our relationship with "our" Buddha nature naturally develops and matures, and this relationship is ultimately "engineered" by Buddha nature itself' (Ray,2008 ,225).

This is echoed in the early Christian tradition by Eckhart who says 'Everything praises

God. Darkness, privation defects, evil too praise God and bless God' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,56) When a person connects with the deepest dimensions of the body,

they are in touch with the ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ dimensions of their true nature and become aware that the flow of experience is emerging from and falling back into this Buddha nature body. In the Christian mystical tradition, Eckhart refers to God’s continuous outflowing as that which pushes a person forward to realization, when he says, ‘God is a great underground river that no one can dam up and no one can stop’. Everything a person is unaware of resides in the unconscious (*ālaya*), including our Buddha nature, however, in the body is where we can become aware and begin to see that there is a ‘directionality’, an ‘individuation process’ which includes *karma*. Conceptual self-constructs keep a person distant from all that the unconscious contains all the liberating and transformative potential that is waiting in the deep well of the body. All that a person has enfolded into the body in their attempts to keep the self-concept alive, all the associated struggles and pains, the distortions of subject and object, will open out again into their original purity, their original immaculate nature, in the ground of Buddha nature. When this happens, there is enough internal space to understand what Eckhart meant when he said that ‘Everything praises God’ (in Fox,1983,56). This is very much the *Hua yen* vision also where nothing is seen to be outside the compass of truth, because the absolute assumes conditioned appearance, and by so doing the truth can encompass the false. Through body focused work whatever has been hiding in the shadows of the unconscious (*ālaya*) is encouraged forward and with that movement there is a subsequent release from the grip of *samsaric* energy. In this sense, every movement forward is as profound as Jesus walking on the water. The transformative possibilities are shown to be inside all along, all the half-truths the mild distortions, all the grand distracting constructions are surrendered because one comes to realize that if one is to be ‘worthy of oneself’; ‘A thousand half loves must be forsaken to take one whole heart home’ (Rumi Quotes). All that is not wholeheartedly a reflection of who one is must get stripped away in the realization that ‘everything is its own annihilation’ (in Stcherbatsky, 1962,95); all that does not contribute to the movement towards awareness and completion, that keeps us homeless, must be let go of. We become committed to the journey, because the journey is not distinct from the person and who that person longs to be. All the ‘shadow’ material is food for the realization of the journey. The spiritual journey depends on it in some way because without it there is nothing to

transform. Buddhist practice is not to subdue parts of ourselves but rather to create more and more openness and space where those parts can begin to feel at home and welcomed back. The futile efforts at trying to subdue instinct are beautifully exposed by Kabir;

‘... I gave up sewn clothes, and wore a robe, but I noticed one day the cloth was well woven. So, I bought some burlap, but I still throw it elegantly over my left shoulder. I pulled back my sexual longings, and now I notice I am angry a lot. I gave up rage, and now I notice I am greedy a lot.’ (in Bly,1977,50).

Nothing is to be abandoned on the path, not even the *klesha* ego, whose creativity and energy, that up to now has been used in the service of self-constructs, is needed to meet the challenges that transformation brings with it. It takes a great deal of creative and imaginative energy to maintain a neurosis, a philosophy of being in the world, no matter how distorted that vision may be. The goal of spiritual practice is not to crush the ego’s energy or creative force but rather turn it in the direction of more beneficial mental activity, a strong ego a ‘great self’ is needed to be heroic and courageous enough to descend below its own constructs and face what it has been working so hard to keep it in the shadows of consciousness.

#### 4.17 Dancing into cosmic awareness

Movement and dance are central to the Sufi mystical tradition. In the Buddhist *Vajrayāna* context the essence is at the centre and the path to it on the circumference and the road is an effort to ‘grasp the essence’ at the centre. In the Sufi Dervish experience the ‘ecstasy’ (*wajd*) is also a ‘finding’ (*wajd*), a discovery of God at the centre. The Sufi path is to unite with the ‘beloved’ and become through that union an instrument of God and a lover of all his creation. ‘Listen friend the body is his dulcimer. He draws the string tight, and out of it comes the music of the inner universe ...’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,46). The Sufi approach, much like the *Hua yen* approach, is to encompass the spiritual and the physical, seeing the physical as an expression of the absolute, it connects with it through the heart while keeping in mind its spiritual source at the same time. The movement of the Sufi dancer is both circular and a spiral as it moves out from the centre, making larger and larger circles it symbolically encompasses the world. As the dance

progresses the dancers shed their outer black coats, a symbolic shedding of ego, and exposes a pure white tunic reflecting their true nature. As the dancer moves the right arm is raised towards heaven while the left arm points downward to the earth. In this way, they move suspended between heaven and earth, around themselves and around the centre. 'It is time to put up a love- swing! Tie the body and then tie the mind so that they swing between the arms of the Secret One you love...' (Kabir in Bly,1977,36). Wherever the dancer places his foot during the dance there is manifestation and sacred creation. 'Don't hide the sight of your face is a blessing. Wherever you place your foot there rests a blessing' (in Harvey,1995,131). The dancer is said to dance the rhythms of the cosmos and thus through his body tunes in to the rhythms of the earth. As the body sways its inner rhythm changes and consciousness also changes. As the body is given more and more to its earthiness, the awareness penetrates deeper and deeper into the 'nothing' (*das nicht*) into the darkness of eternity at the centre. Knowledge for the Sufi is metaphysical and cannot be reached through the thinking mind; it must be achieved through practice. As the dancer spins he gathers all the elements together as he moves and joins the light of heaven to the darkness of earth. 'Everything is swinging; heaven earth, water, fire, and the secret one slowly growing a body' (Kabir in Bly,1977,11).

This divine experience is an in the body experience of moving towards the centre of one's spiritual longing and then outward from there in larger and larger circles of awareness and joy. The one who is sought is to be met says Kabir openly without protection with the full length of the body. '... I have to let go of the protective clothes and meet him with the whole length of my body' (Kabir in Bly,1977,42). The Buddha placed great emphasis on experiencing the truth of the teachings for oneself and not being seduced by the charisma of the teacher or the words of the teachings, but rather he emphasised one should focus on the meaning and not just the surface meaning but the inner meaning. The mystical path stresses experience and not solely learning from books or devotion to statues or bathing in holy waters, because only what one has lived through is true.

'There is nothing but water in the holy pools. I know, I have been swimming in them. All the gods sculpted of wood or ivory can't say a word...The Sacred Books of the East are nothing but words. I looked through their covers one day

sideways. What Kabir talks of is only what he has lived through. If you have not lived through something, it is not true.' (Kabir in Bly,1977,37).

It is in and through the way of experience that a person finds the centre that in the Buddhist context is an uncovering and bringing to light of their primary personality or

Buddha nature. This 'journey' to the centre is like breathing in and breathing out, for both in the Sufi and Buddhist practitioner. This fundamental life rhythm is the pulsing at the centre of organic life itself. It is the rhythm of the Sufi dance moving inward and outward. The heart, the organs, the blood stream and the muscles all pulse. There is a contracting with a movement away from the periphery to the centre which alternates with a movement from the centre to the periphery in expansion. It is the '...process of emanation and re-absorption...' (Tucci,2001,23) that is found in the cosmos. The focus of body work is to encourage deeper and more expansive breathing, the body lets go and slips down deeper and at the same time moves outward. It comes to rest deep within at the centre where Buddha nature appears and emerges from concealment. This is the place where God is realized and the spinning dance stops. This is the place '...where God ceases to become' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,11), it is the 'station of no station' and the place one realizes oneself to be the empty centre of 'unbounded open awareness'. 'For a long time, I used to circumambulate the Kaaba. When I attained God, I saw the Kaaba circumambulating me (Mitchel 1,1991,73). As a newly transformed entity the practitioner can transform the world even as he breaths.

'... And every time my breath goes out, the divine hosts of the Blessed Cakrasamvara radiate forth on the tips of beams of light, to purify the world of inanimate objects into a divine palace, and the beings of the world of animate objects into a divine mandala like themselves. And then my breath gathers them all back into me; and this happens over and over again as I breathe.' (Strong,1995,205).

#### 4.18 What you seek seeks you

The breath is the medium that helps bring deeper and greater awareness both in meditation and body focused work. There have been deep and profound moments that I have witnessed with some of my clients, of deep inner and outer cosmic

connection. After such a deep experience one of my clients reported, that he felt he was not breathing but something was breathing him. ‘... Kabir says Students; tell me, what is God? He is the breath inside the breath’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,33). The dynamic structural plan of the *maṇḍala* and its energy is based on the simple yet profound act of breathing, with its double motion, a double motion that, as Strong highlights, is at once ‘...a centrifugal one spinning out compassion from the centre and a centripetal one seeking wisdom by spiralling inward.’ (Strong,1996,311). The *maṇḍala* moves between absence and presence in its ‘oscillations’ between inside and outside. In its formal enactment, it brings the absent Buddha to the immediate present moment of the here and now. Paul Mus refers to the *maṇḍala* as a ‘mesocosm’, a place of passage, a magical structural milieu that can overcome the absence of objects or persons.... wherever they may be or no longer be’ (Mus in Strong,1996,307). We are unaware of who we are and what we maybe, it is distant from us and we are absent from it, yet it is within the *maṇḍala* of this very body that our innate nature can be realized, and that which has been absent for so long can be re-claimed.

‘The time will come, when with elation you will greet yourself arriving at your own door, in your own mirror, and each will smile at the others welcome and say, sit here. Eat. You will love again the stranger who was yourself’....’(Walcot,1987,328).

The breath is the medium that binds us again and again to ‘the breath inside the breath’ to what has up until then been lost, and exhales it out into the universe. In this way, the person themselves becomes the agents of transformation, the change they have been seeking is and always has been seeking expression through them, as Rumi so eloquently sums it up; ‘What you are seeking is seeking you’ (Rumi quotes).

The psychological and spiritual transformation a person is seeking, the *Zen* stories and the writings of Kabir and Rumi tell us, is not to be found in exotic holy places or by undertaking pilgrimages to holy shrines, rather it is to be found in our own backyards, where it is buried underneath the unwanted qualities and traits that we have thrown into the darkness of the unconscious. These aborted parts are un-lived portions of a person’s life that wait patiently to be reclaimed and integrated back

into consciousness. In the Buddhist setting they arrive back in the form of *karma* coming to fruition.

Psychologically these 'shadow' parts contain the '...the totality of the 'Not-I' world that the ego holds at bay' (Ray,2008,265). It is in the process of letting go of these shadow elements and plunging down ever deeper into the darkness that the Christian mystic experiences what God is 'a super-essential darkness' as Eckhart says (Eckhart in Fox,1983,43). It is the shadow *karmic* elements that push their way up into consciousness that provides the trajectory towards awareness. If 'open awareness' and 'unbounded wholeness' are the marks of ultimate freedom, then the more 'shadow' material we have dealt with and integrated the closer we come to living unboundly. From a physical point of view that energy pushing upward, as part of the emotional and physical cycle, that seeks expression, is usually met with resistance at first by using the body to physically and emotionally clamp down the upward energy, to keep the unwanted psychological and emotional material in the darkness of the unconscious. But if 'I am what God is', as Eckhart maintains then we are in the darkness together. There Hermes the liminal god of darkness and change resides also. The Buddha also resides in the darkness, in the darkness of our not-seeing-minds (*avidyā*) working on our deep neurotic patterns to bring us to full realization of the true nature of our minds. The psychological and emotional material pushing against the barrier of a person's resistance is the energy of 'unbounded wholeness' and open unconditioned awareness seeking to liberate itself and with it bring greater liberation to our lives '...and it is possible a great energy is moving near me. I have faith in nights...' says Rilke in his poem *You Darkness* in which he senses the power of the darkness to give birth to the light (in Hopkins,2003,24).

Wholeness and awareness seek to complete themselves in and through the shadow parts of our lives by encouraging a person to experience them and integrate them back into their lives. If the Buddha's achieve enlightenment in the true nature of our minds then there can be no half measures to realization of 'unbounded wholeness' and open unconditioned awareness, nothing less than bringing the 'totality' of what lies in the unconscious darkness up into awareness of 'pure and total presence' will suffice; As Rumi puts it 'A thousand half-loves must be forsaken to take one whole heart home' (Rumi Quotes). This kind of total embrace

of shadow material would leave a person resembling an *Arhat*, not identifiable, being nothing that can be named or held within a classifying circle, with a mind that is expanded to infinity. The *Arhat* has become the teachings, the nature of reality, the *dharma* itself, and as such is the personification of emptiness itself. In the great embrace of the darkness when a person plunges down and down into the depths of the body from surface skin, to muscle, to bone into the very cellular membrane, they encounter the letting go of ego's reasoning, as the poet Emily Dickenson describes '... and then a plank in Reason, broke, and I dropped down and down, and hit a world at every plunge and finished knowing - then...' (in Cooney,2000,200). When reason breaks, the strategic *klesha-mind* falls and at every new encounter a new world or galaxy is met in the body. We encounter the great emptiness the great silence that we are, the unbounded empty open unconditioned nature in the heart of darkness. For the Christian mystic, the more he explores the body and the deeper he goes, the closer he moves into God's darkness, the less able he is to hold onto a static concept of the self. In the Buddhist understanding the deepest experience brings one to the realization of emptiness impermanence and silence. Silence says Rumi 'is the language of God all else is poor translation', and a person comes to experience this silence after they have exhausted themselves going through several emotional cycles. A person comes to realize, through these cycles, that what they are calling the self is a continuous process of charge and discharge, coming together and dissolving, of thoughts, ideas, emotions and drives. In *Nyingma Dzogchen*, one's true nature of mind is said to be 'empty', that is it is large enough to fit in everything, the light as well as the darker elements. Secondly it is said to be 'cognizant' in nature that is in its primordial state it is an open or objectless awareness that is large enough to meet the empty essence. Finally, it is said to be unconfined in compassionate capacity that is it is fundamentally large enough to have infinite compassion.

#### 4.19 'The right to be extraordinary'

What we have attempted to disown, what we have tried to disavow as being other than the self we are trying to establish, becomes in body focused meditation or psychotherapy an encounter with what is 'other'. It is a physical encounter with

shadow aspects, it is a spiritual encounter with the liminal darkness that is Hermes and the Buddha it is an emotional encounter with a person's divine nature or Buddha nature pushing them towards deeper and broader realizations. It is in and through the body that a person can expand to infinity, '... the nature of the body leads us through and beyond all definitions and limiting concepts' (Ray,2008,278). The disowned, the abandoned the elements that a person buries, what the modern French philosopher Julia Kristeva calls the 'abjection', is whatever disturbs our constructs of order and identity. The 'abjected' brings us in touch with what is real, it does not care for the boundaries we have established to distance ourselves from the 'real nature of things' and in this way its energy coincides with that of Hermes and the Buddha. For Kristeva sociality and subjectivity are founded on abjection, on the expulsion of the unclean and the disorderly 'But the abject can never be eliminated, and accompanies in sublimated form, society' (in Ives,2013,87.) The variety of ways to purify the 'abjected' is for Kristeva what religion is concerned with, and what gives it its meaning. An unbounded environment can be created according to Kristeva when one falls in love, then '... one assumes one's right to be extraordinary' (in Ives,2013,99). To fall in love, for Kristeva, is the 'vertigo' experience where one is moved beyond the individual boundary where the experience is '.... To expand me to the dimensions of the universe' (in Ives,2013,99). One is now capable of the universe (*capax universi*) through the experience of love. An enlightened person in early Buddhism, as Kristeva has highlighted, has 'expanded to the dimensions of the universe' (in Ives,2013,99) given that '*citta* is said to have expanded to infinity' (Harvey,1995,62). Love brings an '...inrush of total subjectivity, an infinity of subjectivity' (in Ives,2013,99). 'Infinite subjectivity' is limitless, it is the simultaneous enactment of the centrifugal and centripetal movement of the Sufi dancer that as he moves downward more and more into himself becomes at the same time wider and wider. From the Early Buddhist perspective as Peter Harvey has highlighted an enlightened *Arhat* is a being who has developed his changing self to a very high level. A self thus developed in a 'great-self' with a mind that is limitless, without boundaries. This is the 'extraordinary' 'infinity of subjectivity' that a person can be through the practice of loving kindness and mindfulness. The right to be our 'extraordinary selves' is also the energy which underlines the *Dzogchen* teaching on primordial purity and the Buddha-nature

teaching. To have an in-the-body experience of our extraordinary selves there firstly needs to be the ‘vertigo’ experience of falling, whereby the vertical uprightness gives way to initial horizontal un-grounded-ness. Earlier the necessary and transformative effects of failure were discussed. The in the body experience of this letting go results in the slowing of shallow rapid breath which gets deeper and deeper and as the person drops down into the deepest dimensions of the mandala of the body they ‘expand into the dimensions of the universe’. This is the inward movement of the in breath where one encounters the hidden, the disowned, the shadow, the darkness of God, and the ‘other’. The more a person descends the more they expand beyond their own limits, and as in the love experience where a person is ‘expanded to the dimensions of the universe’ (in Ives,2013,99), we find we have an unlimited capacity for connection with others. To love or practice loving kindness or compassion requires becoming open and vulnerable to other’s presence and suffering. This experience of connection beyond oneself comes from practising Dunne’s ‘passing over’ that builds mindfulness and compassion.

The ‘abjected’, the disowned all that lies as ‘otherness’ in the unconscious, is part of who we are and the more we integrate it back into consciousness the more consciousness expands its ability to include all others. The more a person knows of their own embodiment the more they see it includes others. This is the place that Kabir has reached when he says, ‘What moves in me is also moving in you’ (Kabir in Bly,1977,7). This experience of connection beyond oneself is what builds compassion and mindfulness. Through our interaction with others we come to recognize our shadow material in the form of what we ‘project’ onto them. Therapeutically this is a negative projection whereby our disowned psychic material is projected onto others and they are left to embody all that we want to distance ourselves from. On a Buddhist level, according to Ray what we are seeing and noticing and how we interpret our interpersonal relationships relates to our ‘unresolved *karma*’(Ray,2008,290). On a physical level, the upward emotional charge of the abandoned *karmic* material in the body pushes for resolution and re-integration. However, not all darkness can be made conscious because in the Christian sense God is a ‘super- essential darkness’ (Eckhart in

Fox,1983,139), and in the Buddhist sense to become dharma, as an *Arhat* or a Buddha is, is to be beyond definition and findability. The journey into the darkness is the spiritual and physical journey which never ends, as we never come to rest on what can be fully encompassed, the journey is after all as the Sufi has said a journey which arrives ‘at the station of no station’. It is the inward journey that the *Kōan* or the *mantra* prompts, a journey that makes a person larger and larger in awareness and wisdom and which brings the person to realize the quantum emptiness and openness at the heart of things. In bodywork, it is possible to find physical areas where upon contact the person relaxes, breaths out strongly, and drops down to a deeper level of connection. This is the experience of connecting with space in the body, be it the shoulder the arm or the leg, these are ‘portals... (and) dropping into these portals we have suddenly found ourselves in space without conditions or limits... (Ray,2008,307). This is the experience of ‘boundlessness’ or in Biodynamic terminology an ‘oceanic’ experience. Ray speculates that more than just being a conduit these ‘locals’ themselves may have cosmic dimensions and goes on to say that this cosmic dimension; ‘... presents itself not only as without any limits, but also experientially-as not having any ‘location’ at all, including that of our body.’ The inevitable question that follows is where is the ‘unbounded’ space located, inside or outside the body? (Ray,2008,307).

An example from my own client work might serve to illustrate the point that inner space paradoxically is not confined to the body. A quick background will set the scene; my client was a middle-aged woman very well educated and very good at talking about things with wonderful insight. After some time, I noticed that despite the insights nothing was really changing for my client, so I decided that we would do direct body massage to give other non-verbal parts a chance to come to the fore. My approach is a biodynamic one which uses a small electronic stethoscope places on the small intestine to hear the dissolution of emotional material in the body. As I worked on her body using a light massage or ‘basic touch’, not to provoke too much in the beginning, my client relaxed and over the time surrendered more deeply. As I moved along her body the sounds followed, if I moved the sound moved in harmony. By this time my client was deeply

relaxed and not trying to control anything. I moved down to her feet to bring the energy down to assist her in feeling more 'grounded'. As the feet are a good exit point I moved my hands off slowly, only to notice that as I moved off her body the energy sounds kept coming with me. I moved further back from the massage table, my hands still connected with her energy and the sounds followed, if I stopped they stopped, if I began again they began again. I moved as far as the door and still the sounds were in rhythm with my movements. As she dropped down further and further into the open space created by the energy dissolving the neurotic blocks, the body opened to allow the space to connect with all the space around her. At that moment, it was joined with me and through me with all outside space.

Space in Buddhism is the facilitator and the place where all visualizations are dissolved. When we had finished, my client said she felt 'infinitely open' yet grounded at the same time. The deeper we go the more openness we find, yet the more incorporated, the more fully present, we feel. In meeting the 'other' the disowned, the 'abjected' in and through the body we meet our own primordial depth, our own cosmic expanse, and at the same time our own belongingness and presence are revealed. The 'otherness' in the shadows in the darkness are revelations waiting to reveal themselves. They are like '*g terma* texts, 'hidden treasure texts' buried deep in the body to be revealed later at a time when the person can deal with them and understanding the meaning therein. The inside is not separate from the outside or the outside different from the inside each is expressing the other, we; '... discover that this 'interior space' is not limited to our body at all, but is to be found 'outside' of us as a cosmic reality...in the unfolding of our cosmic body, we discover an increasing boundlessness to our own awareness' (Ray,2008,319). At the deepest level, there is the experience of 'non-duality', so wide is it that no distinction is found between the person and all of life, they discover they are the 'totality' itself. The cosmic dimension of the body is to be seen in Kabir when he says referring to his body; 'Inside this clay jug there are canyons and Pine Mountains... All seven oceans are inside and hundreds of millions of stars...' (in Bly,1977, 6). A person can open to re-connect with all this teeming life at the deepest level. It is in and through the body that it is possible to have the *Arhat* experience of 'a mind expanded to infinity', an

‘unbounded wholeness’ opened to such an extent that no circumference can inscribe.

#### 4.20 Creative energy

From the Christian mystical tradition, the darkness, the unsayable is associated with God. From the psychological tradition the disowned, the ‘abjected’ the Not-I, all reside in the darkened shadow of the unconscious waiting to be re-admitted back into consciousness, this is the very definition of healing. In the Christian tradition when God is admitted there is redemption. From the Buddhist tradition, it is possible to see these shadow elements as unresolved *karma* pushing a person to more conscious awareness of their deepest nature, which is the truth of things as they are without distinction ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. From a body perspective, the ‘other’, that which is unknown, is the very heart of our embodiment. When a person contacts that unknown otherness, they discover openness, spaciousness, a deep open awareness that is not bound or limited by concepts and projections. When we glimpse enlightenment in the body we touch our fundamental primordial Buddha-nature ‘...simply awareness knowing itself’ (Ray,2008,326), or the ‘immaculate looking at itself’ (Ven Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje ‘Letter in praise of emptiness’). Deep within the Christian mystic’s centre is the open unknown, ever not-self ‘super essential darkness’ God that forever is unfolding. All that a person seeks is right here in the very fabric of our lives. We can, through body focused practice, give up the heady world of confusion, neurotic habits, envy and jealousy and sink down to touch ‘the empty ground of our being’ (Ray,2008,330).

Buddhism exhorts experience as the final measure of things, experience that is driven by the peripheral the marginalized, the shadow elements, which are radical liminal energies that promote transformation, just as the Buddha was a radical marginal phenomenon himself. Eckhart champions the ‘non-dual’ experience of the equality of a person’s primordial ground and God’s primordial ground and therefore what ‘boils up and overflows itself’ in the Plotinus and Eckhart sense, is an act of creation that also arises from the empty ground of a person’s being. The unwanted material buried in the shadows of the unconscious pushing at the

borders for re-admittance is for the Christian mystic, God's creative darkness flowing through the person. It is life itself arising out of the space, out of the darkness. Through body focused meditation or body work, a person is brought in touch with the 'unborn' the 'unoriginated' the 'uncreated' the 'unformed', the true nature of our minds, the nature of *Nirvāṇa* itself. At some point if a person is to live more authentically they too must journey into the 'Dark Continent' like Marlow, Conrad's narrator in the novel *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad,2015). He goes search of his darker brother Mr. Kurtz to find him and relate to the disowned elements that he and his life represents, not surprisingly, deep in the interior wilderness. The spiritual and psychological journey that encompasses the inner wilderness of the body includes Hegel's path of doubt and highway of despair and is the richer for it.

In the Christian mystical tradition; What is a person is to do, if such a spiritual 'breakthrough' to the nothingness of the Godhead, occurs? Eckhart answers in what could be a *Dzogchen* answer; '... A person works in a stable. That person has a Breakthrough. What does he do? He returns to work in the stable' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,91). In the nothingness both humanity and divinity have the same primordial ground. In the same way, the realization of emptiness is the realization this moment is intersected by eternity. Therefore, there is nothing special to do, only to realize that profound truth that this brings to a person's life and how they live it; this is the 'ordinary mind' of *Zen*, and the way of *Dzogchen*. For Eckhart, this is the message that Moses brings down the mountain, announcing a new possibility of a land flowing with milk and honey '...that milk and honey was humanity and divinity. Compassion flows when humanity and divinity flow' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,107). From the body perspective, the person has the potential to 'flow' his energy outward when body blocks are opened. Humanity is flowing, for Rumi, when we are acting from an authentic place, or 'when we are doing what God is doing' as John Dunne suggests; 'When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy' (Rumi Quotes). God is always creating and flowing for Eckhart because 'God is a great underground river that no one can dam up and no one can stop.' (Eckhart in Fox,1983,16). This is a coming together of the realization of nothingness and the compassion that it elicits in and for the here and now.

#### 4.21 The person as a self-manifestation of the divine

The coming together of humanity and divinity is presented in *Zen* by showing how the ‘... absolute nothingness and the self- interpenetrate one another. In other words, we are presented with the nothingness-self...’ (Shizuteru,1977,160). For Eckhart and many of the early Christian mystics, dynamic penetration into the nothingness is through the path of negations that opens out into ‘unbounded wholeness’. Through the emptiness teaching and its subsequent refinement as the negation of negation itself, there is a continuous opening into and staying in the nothing without a doubling back to affirm anything. This is the language of ‘unsaying’ and the willingness to travel on the road to the ‘station of no-station, in practice. The coincidence of affirmation and negation is in *Zen* a coincidence ‘... of nothingness and here-and- now actuality’ (Shizuteru,1977,159). Shizuteru outlines how *Zen* represents this nothingness through three pictures which are dynamically related to each other. The first is the classical circle with nothing in it; we might recall here that in early Buddhist thought this was the view of mind, i.e. without contents. Being in touch with or seeing things as they are, is the ‘truth’ the ‘thusness’ of things that Buddhism champions. In his paper on ‘God and Nothingness’ Robert Carter in referring to form and emptiness says that emptiness or nothingness does not ‘...create the world as forms, but is the world of forms, for forms are the self-expression of, and thereby the self-revelation of, the formless’ (Carter,2009,12). Ultimate reality is not a distant attainment; it is right here in this moment and in every moment as the ‘point-instant’ underlines. We must always start from where we are now in the world of the forms where ‘...all forms of the formless and as such are particular revelations of that which is prior to both finite and infinite, the secular and the divine ‘(2009,12-13). In Christian mystical terms Eckhart sees ‘Every creature is a word of God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,14) who expresses that which is ‘Beyond thoughts beyond words beyond description’ (Heart Sutra).

Inner space and outer space the same space, appearance and emptiness, being and nonbeing are at the heart of our lives. It is through the realization of ‘... a profound existential contradiction in the depth of our own self’ (Nishida in Carter,2009,13)

that a religious experience manifests. There is the realization that at each moment that I am alive I am also dying each moment. There is in the contemplation of emptiness the realization that there is no findable self. When a person looks deeply inside ‘...we find our individuality slipping away into “absolute infinity, the absolute other,”’ (Carter,2009,13). As we are impermanent we are continuously slipping into otherness, a fleeting reflection in the *Hua yen* sense of the whole. We are a temporary arising of emptiness as form. ‘We are a self-determination of the absolute, a self-manifestation of the absolute, hence our divinity’ (2009,13). Essentially, we are absolute emptiness and only temporarily are we form expressing that emptiness. There is the contradiction of one’s individuality and one’s impermanence cohabiting with one’s life as an expression of the whole, and the empty ‘unborn’ the ‘unoriginated’ the ‘uncreated’ and the ‘unformed’, the true *Nirvānic* nature of everything. How a person lives this contradiction, how they hold it or ignore it is an important element because the inherent tension, if they can hold it, leads them on to deeper and deeper encounters with their own divine nature ‘... Take your practiced powers and stretch them out until they span the chasm between two contradictions ... For the god wants to know himself in you’ (Rilke in Mitchel,1987,261).

On a psychological level, Jung believed that the holding of a tension between contradictory feelings or between what is conscious or unconscious would inevitably result in the birth of a third reconciling term, poetically Rilke imagined that the holding of tensions or contradictions was an experience that would reveal the god to himself

‘... For the god wants to know himself in you’ (Rilke in Mitchel,1987,261). This ‘transcendent function’ (Jung,1960,69) was a resolution that transcended the other two terms. Buddhism thrives on contradictions such as the mind scrambling four quatrains of is-is not-neither is nor is not-both is and is not. There is to be found similar complexity in the introduction to many texts for example in the Root Text of the Middle Way (*Mulamsdhyamakarikā*) ‘Everything arising interdependently is unceasing and unborn, neither non-existent nor everlasting, neither coming nor going, neither several in meaning, nor with a single meaning ...’ (Nagarjuna in Kongtrul,2009,172). In the Buddhist context, the reconciling of the tension comes in the form of insight into how things really are, the true

empty, 'not-self' nature of things and that insight generates wisdom and compassion in dealing with our situations and with others. This is not the Christian view of sinfulness and redemption through sacrifice; rather it is responsibility for the actions and the consequences given back to the person who has been empowered to live an ethical life through his own experience of the truth of the Buddha's teachings. *Nagarjuna's* reconciling matrix of is-is not, both is and is not, neither is nor is not; is not a matrix that reduces everything to meaninglessness but rather is the axiom of complete openness, it is not trying to create unintelligibility but rather is aiming for '... inexhaustible intelligibility' on the road to the 'station of no-station'.

#### 4.22 A joyful life - 'There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way.'

When the *klesha* mind releases its hold, there is space to enjoy one's life. Joy is a deep inner awareness that what we are doing is what God is doing in the Christian context, or realizing the true nature of things in the Buddhist context. We can dance with Rumi, give ourselves over to *Kabir's* ecstasy and sing love songs with Solomon when there is the Gnostic realization that '... the kingdom is inside of you and it is outside of you' (Gospel of Thomas; Nag Hammadi Library, 1990, 126).

Prayer takes on a new character in this cosmological realization. It is the realization of the giftedness of things and an automatic response of gratitude, 'If the only prayer you say in your entire life is 'Thank You' that would suffice' (Eckhart in Fox, 1983, 34). It is to move from having to strategize ways to possess things, to being able to appreciate things for themselves. It is '...to live the wayless way free and yet bound... learn to live *among* things but not *in* things...' (Eckhart in Fox, 1983, 115). To be able to move among things is to not be limited by fear or judgements of good or bad, it is the 'nondual' Buddhist perspective in action. To live among things is to recognize and pay attention to the blessings that enfold us.

In the Buddhist vision, this is the way of 'non-duality' where nothing is denied as inherently separate or bad. In the Christian context, it is summed up by Matthew

6.22 ‘... if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light’. This ‘nondual’ perspective is the perspective that leads Eckhart to say that ‘...Everything praises God. Darkness, privations, defects, evil too praise God and bless God’ (Eckhart in Fox,1983,56).

The ‘abjected’ the disowned that which is buried in the shadows, in the *ālaya* in the forest of the body is a potential hymn of praise. In his poem, a *Ritual to Read to Each Other* William Stafford appeals to that hidden dimension in all of us, ‘And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy, a remote important region in all who talk; though we could fool each other, we should consider, lest the parade of our mutual lives gets lost in the dark’ (Stafford,2003,89-90). The Buddha is the awakened one, he who has come to realize things as they are and did not flee from what he encountered. It is important in any new experience of waking up to oneself and to life that that new experience be supported and that the line of deeper and deeper exploration not be broken or given up as this may send us back to sleep. The body can be the vehicle through which we ‘wake up’. ‘For it is important that awake people be awake, or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep, the signals we give-yes or no, or maybe, should be clear; the darkness around us is deep’ (Stafford,2003,89-90).

Joy is part of spiritual experience that a person feels moving through them when they are stirred on a deep level. A person becomes enthusiastic (literally filled with God) again for life, for their own lives and its possibilities. There is the experience of being their ‘extraordinary’ selves, fully present no longer hiding in the shadows. The divine spark is lit by the radical transformative question a person wishes to answer. For the

Buddha the question became ‘What is the path that leads to the end of suffering’, for Dunne it was ‘Is what I am doing what God is doing?’ for the struggling individual it may be ‘What is it that I am worthy of in this life?’. On a body level, the question may be ‘What is the meaning of what I am feeling?’ Whatever the question, it is a spark that ignites the ‘brightly shining mind’ prompting that the journey should begin. We take our first tentative steps onto the path and however confused and frightened we may be the fact of staying true to the original question that ignited the journey leads to an experience that resembles Neruda’s,

‘... something ignited in my soul ... and I went my own way deciphering that burning fire and I wrote the first bare line, ... pure wisdom of one who knows nothing, and suddenly I saw the heavens unfasten and open’ (Neruda in Whyte,1992).

#### 4.23 Conclusion

Early spiritual practitioners retreated to remote places to challenged themselves with the unknown in search of deeper transformation experiences through a direct meeting with reality. Transformation comes with experiences of that which is outside the predictable realm of the habitual mind. A person can challenge themselves through encountering the unknown wilderness of the body. A profound transformative experience can be experienced in the body when it is encountered openly. The body is a new world, a frontier of exploration where new encounters are possible. A transformative realization is the realization that what is in the unconscious is unpredictable and this makes it difficult for the mind to have pre-formed concepts about it. What is in the body-mind is also unpredictable and this makes it suitable as an instrument for ‘non-conceptual awareness’ to be explored.

What is stored in the unconscious has been uncovered as a psychological driving force but this has physical manifestations also. The body-mind connection creates greater awareness of the interconnection between thoughts and the physical effects of those thoughts. Accessing what is stored in the unconscious through the body is a transformative knowing which gives a broader scope to the path to realization.

Spiritual transformation is based on the realization of ‘non-conceptual’ ‘open awareness’, and this can be experienced as a somatic experience of sensation, intuition, and feeling, which brings the person in contact with the world. Touching mindfully brings Heidegger’s ‘beauty of unconcealment of truth’ to the fore (2009,54). These are elements of enlightenment found in the body that help the transformative process in a direct way.

Spiritual and psychological paths are paths of letting go that are unique to each person as we are not all letting go of the same things. The spiritual goal however is not letting go as a fleeing from life. Buddhism values the here and now

experience where Heidegger's 'truth of being' is revealed as a transformative encounter with suffering. Transformative letting go and encounters with suffering can be encouraged and supported through the experience of connection with suffering and letting go in the body. Everything is part of the path of realization; nothing is a moving away, everything is a moving forward. Everything is a 'great perfection', within the 'realm of truth' and 'unbounded wholeness' or in the medieval Christian view within God's circle. This is a transformative awareness that promotes openness and acceptance for the things that arise in one's life. Meditation is working with allowing the unplanned to arise; the body is the home of the unplanned. *Vipassanā* meditation explores what is happening in the body now, in this moment. To ignore what is arising in the now is to seek Caputo's 'recollection' for a lost perfection. Any part of the body is an 'unknown universe', when focused on we meet its already self-existing awareness. Allowing the body to speak its mind is to practice 'non-dual awareness'.

Body is the direct experience of thoughts and emotions as 'flashes of energy' and as such is a direct experience of the teaching on 'point-instant' reality.

Understanding of the energetic nature of things is an experience that can bring transformation in thinking about the true nature of reality. 'Thinking', says Heidegger is a 'handicraft' and 'thoughtful gesture' (in Levin, 1985, 65) is embodied thinking also. These are the transformative insights which say thinking is an embodied activity. Deconstruction of energy blocks in body results in deconstruction of mental blocks by creating more inner space in which transformation can occur. The body manifests many factors of enlightenment, from impermanence, momentariness, dependent origination, to suffering these can be experienced through exploring the body. Enlightenment through the body implies that the more one is enlightened the more embodied one becomes.

In the *Hua yen* view all matter is 'redemptive' because it is an expression of the absolute. All matter is the expression of enlightenment stemming from the *Heart Sutra* teaching that 'form is emptiness and emptiness is form'. This is the transformative view that sees relative existence as an expression of the absolute echoed in Eckhart when he says, 'wherever I am there is God' (in Fox, 1983, 20). The abandoned parts in the shadow are mental and physical matter that has a

drive, intentionality and wisdom of their own. To connect with hidden or shadow elements is to connect with the unknown beyond one's control. It is the paradoxical transformative experience that uncovering 'shadow' material will uncover Buddha-nature also, because they are hooked together. The word religion comes from the Latin 'to bind back', thus binding back the abandoned parts not just those deemed to be 'spiritual' has a religious energy or dimension. The unwanted and abandoned are needed to complete the healing process. This is the transformative healing knowing which recognizes that nothing is outside the true nature of emptiness. If, however, the body is energetically blocked or 'armoured' awareness cannot penetrate. This is how the body is used to repress, but the more awareness it has of its repressing tendency, the more it sees that the self structure is built on repression and the easier it is to let go of it.

The body registers things directly because skin is the outer surface of brain, brain the deeper levels of skin. Skin thinks and brain feels. This is to realize that mind and body are intimately connected and effects on one have effects on the other. The biodynamic psychotherapeutic approach is to help free and mobilize the energy that has been blocked to create more inner space and a connection to the person's primary personality. Unblocking stored energy creates the space for transformative realization to happen. Following the path of the energy from the vegetative system, is working without concepts or words, this is working without mind and is the transformative experience of being beyond mind. As the body wakes up to new sensations and new knowledge so does the person. The ego selects what it deems necessary to support 'self' concept and solidify itself. However, the in the body experience of seemingly solid feelings and sensations being experienced as energy in motion challenges the minds solidifying tendency. The mind is the store of *karmic* traces and the body is the store of the energy that accompanied the various actions. Emotions are a call to deeper knowing and deeper self-compassion. The body naturally seeks 'unbounded wholeness' and moves towards fullness and truth because it is on a growth path. Being on a growth path it will inevitably force a stopping of that which is contrary to its own growth nature. Fear is an inhibiting factor and contributes to what is stuffed in the 'long bag' of unwanted material, but what is in there are themselves agents of healing. What a person has stuffed into the unconscious as not acceptable and now is

outside awareness, clouds the self-actualizing or Buddha-nature energies. The body is not dualistic, if given space and acceptance its energetic dimensions reveal their wisdom of emptiness at the centre. When emptiness is experienced in the body it facilitates experiencing it in the mind. Each part of the body is a unique world aware in its own individual way. The practice of focusing on the body trains the mind to look deeply also. *Karma* is the energy of action or the choice of inaction, both of which give life a direction that a person needs to uncover. By touching *karma* in the body, all that is stored in the ‘long bag’, a person can come to recognize the conditioned trajectory of their lives up to that point. However, a person can come to see the meaning and a purpose in their *karma* also. There is a realization that experiences have a healing path, and for the Christian it can be the experience of a divine plan that is unfolding.

There is and is not a path to realization; to a large extent a person makes the path as they walk. The body is one such path. There is no need to venture outside of our lives according to Rumi and Kabir. Only what a person has lived through is true. That which we have been searching for in ‘sacred pools’ and pilgrimages is the necklace already tied around our necks (Rumi quotes). To realize that one’s life at every moment is the path, that one is thinking or touching the ‘truth of being, is a transformative view that restores the kind of meaning and value to a person’s life that *Hua yen* highlights. Buddha nature is the fundamental ground and nothing is outside of it therefore everything is guided by it. Everything is encompassed by our primordial Buddha nature or in the medieval Christian view within God’s circle. A person is a temporary arising of emptiness, a self-manifestation of the absolute and so is a divine reflection, a ‘book about God’ as Eckhart says. *Hua yen* sees everything to be in the ‘realm of truth’ always enfolded in ‘unbounded wholeness’ always in the flow of being where reality is wisdom itself and a blessing. These are the transformative insights that purify and gather everything, including the disowned and abjected, onto the path as aids to realization. The ‘abjected’ disturbs constructs of order and identity and likewise love, the great disturber, can expand a person to the dimensions of the universe. A person in love assumes ‘the right to be extraordinary’, just as the *Bodhisattva* filled with ‘lovingkindness’ and ‘compassion’ assumes the right to be extraordinary in his ‘passion for the impossible’. The dimensions of the universe

are paradoxically inside and outside the body at the same time, as the example from my work illustrates. It is the journey towards what a person sees as completeness that makes the journey transformative. In the end, there is the realization that we have always been living in fullness, a sacred matrix an 'unbounded wholeness' where everything arises as a display of 'no-dual' awareness wisdom. When we return to our original ground of the pure awareness of this moment we experience again 'original astonishment' at the goodness of being. Integration of shadow material in the unconscious will assist in the journey to realizing oneself as a 'great self' with a 'passion for the impossible' capable of the universe, who can travel the path to realization openly in the knowledge of ignorance, without a 'why' as the Buddha did and arrive at the other shore where clinging ends and God's nothingness becomes the 'unbounded wholeness' that never stops moving us forward toward the realization of Buddha nature.

## Conclusion

The tendency to think of spiritual transformation as a journey from an unenlightened state to an enlightened one is quickly dispelled by the early Indian Buddhist view of reality as a dynamic ‘point-instant’ reality which highlights existence itself as transformation. If spiritual transformation is assumed to be that which happens at the end of journey to enlightenment ‘point-instant’ reality would say that the transformative energy is ever ongoing and we are continuously participating in it in every moment. It is a transformative energy that insists on the present momentariness of things and thus it is a sword of enlightenment that cuts through all speculative thinking that would try to solidify the real into a static reality. ‘Point-instant’ reality, is the instrument that through its repetitive cutting of the mind’s tendency to speculative and abstract thinking, holds the person in the first pure moment of thought.

As ‘point-instant’ reality allows for no permanent establishment, including itself, it cannot be perceived by a mind given to constructing activities. ‘Point-instant’s flashing characteristic implies that the mind that perceives it must have a luminous quality. The

‘point-instant’ view sees transformation built into the very fabric of existence itself. Spiritual transformation therefore is not an understanding that somehow transcends reality, in fact, it is embedded in it.

The ‘point-instant’ view is at once apocalyptic, in that it sees behind the veil, to what is real and is deconstructionist, in that it deconstructs all structures that would block access to the pure momentariness of things. In its insistence on immediacy, ‘point instant’ reality has nothing to do with memories or future speculations nor does it include an eternal ultimate or any kind of abstract knowing within itself. We could be forgiven for thinking of the ‘point-instant’ view as a vehicle to assist in spiritual transformation as utterly destructive, but on deeper reflection it becomes clearer that its trajectory is towards bringing us into to the truth of the infinite openness of reality.

The transformative nature of ‘point-instant’ reality is paralleled in contemporary metaphysics by Caputo’s insistence that it is by staying in the flux of life that real

moving forward towards 'what a person was to be' is achieved. It is through repeated encounters with the ever new and 'undecidable' that spiritual transformation is seen to be a continuous revolution that forges a person's identity.

In the Buddhist view if the nature of reality is a 'point-instant' reality then the identity of a person that is being shaped by encountering it must be like itself, 'unbounded and 'immeasurable'. An enlightened *Arhat* has become such an immeasurable. Spiritual transformation in Buddhism is coming to see (*vidyā*) the real and as the 'point-instant' view is a view of unrepeatable moments, it suggests that openness is required to meet that which is multiple and beyond plans and strategies. It was the desire of the early Buddhist meditators to meet the real that led them to withdraw into caves and forests to meet the unplannable and unpredictable openly. Spiritual transformation necessitates staying close to whatever is arising in this 'point-instant' moment because it is there as Heidegger says, in what is closest, that it is possible to 'think the truth of being' (in Pezze,2006). To be in tune with 'point-instant reality, is to be willing to live without plans strategies and old references. This is to live in Caputo's failure laden 'uncertainty' and 'undecidability' that promotes a 'passion for the impossible' (in Simpson,2009,18). Failure becomes a spiritual structure in a person's passion for the impossible 'and is in tune with the 'point-instant' reality which has failure inbuilt into the structure of existence. Thus, at every moment we are in a transformative matrix of failure. 'Point-instant reality is structureless, it has no centre its centre is everywhere just as *Hua yen* says. Thus, we are always in the 'realm of truth'.

If 'point-instant' reality is the deconstruction of all structures how does the self-structure fare against its penetrative searching? Firstly St. Augustine shows how the self is a selective construct that supports the story of the self becoming itself. The 'self' seeking a centre around which to construct its narrative becomes self-conscious by becoming a character in its own story. However, a dilemma arises in that the self as narrator is always outside the story being narrated and thus is left unknown, unseen and unsatisfied. This kind of recollection is really a misremembering that fails to bring the whole self into communion. Spiritual transformation contains a redeeming of memory when the person comes to know

the true nature of themselves and reality. In the Buddhist view the story of the self is influenced by the *karmic* imprints of past actions contained in the 'all base consciousness'. Spiritual transformation is the recognition that the self is being driven by conditioned concepts and this condition is preventing us from seeing the real 'point-instant' reality which is a 'non-conceptual' openness. Conceptual thinking is the arising of conditioned thoughts which are thinking us. The mechanism that helps in coming to realize the truth of things is the 'not-self' nature of reality. This teaching overcomes the view that objects of perception are external and consciousness is internal. The self builds psychological constructs in the name of 'predictability' and safety but these constructs become blocks to encountering possible transformative experiences of failure and developing a 'passion for the impossible'. Transformation is achieved through the realization of 'not-self' emptiness and this is the re-attainment of 'primordial non-dual awareness' which undermines all selective dualistic thinking. Emptiness is the universal truth that means we are never outside of the 'flow of being' where being and non-constructed identity, arise together.

How does a mind given to constructing a bounded self come to know itself as unbounded *Nirvanic* freedom? The answer is either, delusion and liberation are features of the same mind or that the pure nature of mind is its true nature. The deluded grasping *klesha* or 'erotic mind' even in its delusionary activity is seeking to achieve the maximum in whatever way it defines it. Thus, the grasping mind is trying to import *Nirvanic* qualities such as unity, presence, and unique identity in the service of the self-construct. The transformative 'non-dual' view recognizes that a person is always being led in the direction of the fullest where truth lies and allows for the fact that truth may be being misperceived.

The 'point-instant' view is the view that is 'unbounded' unlike the grasping aspect of mind which tries to set up a bounded self. The *Bon Dzogchen* vision sees the truth of reality as being 'unbounded wholeness' wherein phenomena arise as a dynamic flashing display that is perceived by 'open awareness'. The *Bon Dzogchen* view of 'unbounded wholeness' continues the earlier views that we are 'always in the realm of truth' and in the 'flow of being'. 'Point-instant' reality has no objects and thus an 'objectless awareness' that is not limited is the parallel psychological attainment that perceives the empty 'unbounded wholeness' clearly

without impediment. The wisdom of ‘objectless awareness’ does not relate to reality as an object but rather reality is wisdom itself. Thus, again we are seen to be residing in the truth and by staying in the flux or thinking that which is closest the way to the truth of being is discovered.

The Buddhist transformative view is that a person’s being and identity have never been separated as one’s life of awareness and delusion is the path through which the truth of being manifests either as enlightenment or delusion in any one moment. As the

‘point-instant’ reality is a reality that deconstructs all systems and references it demands that a journey be travelled openly or ‘without a why’ as Meister Eckhart says. This is a brave undertaking requiring a letting go and travelling in the dark of not knowing to encounter as the early meditators did the truth of being as it is. If we are not brave enough and are lost without God’s plan as the Taylor’s Christians are then we set about creating certainty by appropriating divine qualities into the self-structure. This is not unlike the deluded mind trying to import Nirvanic qualities into its self structure also. The truth *Dhamma* is unconstructed and the way to it is through an unconstructed knowing. This transformed knowing is as Eckhart calls it an ‘...unknowing, it is the way of transparent knowing, it is the way of unselfconsciousness’ (in Fox,1983,56). To travel openly in the dark of not knowing, is to be doing what the Buddha did when he crossed the river of *samsara* without support. To travel unsupported is to re-enact what the Buddha did and thus a guiding question on the spiritual journey can be ‘Am I doing what the Buddha did. John Dunne sees the Christian transformative question as ‘Am I doing what God is doing’. This is a question that promotes a journey of understanding and a recognition of ignorance that leads to ‘passing over’ to the other and highlights that no point of view is absolute.

Having a question, as the Buddha had, the correct question for one’s life can be the beginning of a spiritual quest. ‘Passing over’ to others entails a willingness to surrender one’s views and positions easily as the Buddha instructed his followers to do. ‘Passing over’ is a compassionate enactment that values understanding above certainty and wisdom above the adherence to dogma. ‘Passing over’ to the other is also a positive enactment of the ‘non-dual’ view. Travelling as a discoverer allows for a vocation to emerge, where like Wordsworth one might

experience the blessed event where ‘vows were made for me’ an event that leaves blessedness in its wake, ‘.....and on I walked in blessedness which even yet remains.’ ‘Point-instant’ reality and ‘emptiness’ are synonyms for constant openness an openness that the Sufi teachings on constant transformation (*ma'rifa*) and constant revolution through its metaphor of the ‘station of no-station’ are constant transformative energies that never stops pushing us forward towards realizing that we are always in the ‘realm of truth’, always enfolded in ‘unbounded wholeness’ ‘always in the flow of being’ where reality is wisdom itself and blessing are dropping all around us.

The Spiritual transformative path is a travelling openly into the unknown into the mystery into the darkness of what is closest, where the truth of being can be thought. It is a journey into the unpredictable into a new territory that the mind finds difficult to form plans and judgments about. The body is such a new world, a frontier of exploration where new encounters give rise to spiritual insights. ‘Non-conceptual awareness’ is a feature of enlightenment and can be explored in the body in the somatic experiences of sensation intuition and feeling, all that brings a person in contact with the world. In our usual unaware state, we move through the world only noticing and touching that which is immediately useful. Touching mindfully says Heidegger ‘brings the beauty of unconcealment of truth’ (2009,54). What we physically or psychologically touch mindfully reveals its truth and so it is with the body. As I mentioned previously we are always in the realm of truth so everything that is in the mind and energetically held in the body is a truth that is moving a person forward towards greater realization. Through meditation practice a person explores what is happening in the moment, taking note of what is arising and dying away without judgment. The body is the perfect object to experience what is arising non-judgementally. ‘Point-instant’ reality is distilled energetically into ‘flashing energy’ moments. However, the body is the matrix of flashing energies that can, with mindful attention, relate to. The body speaks our mind energetically revealing that which we have blocked off because it did not support the self-view, and the pains and hurts that have left *karmic* traces in the body. Realizing how one is using one’s energy in the service of a self-construct can be the insight into how flimsy the ground of the self-construct is. In the *Hua yen* view ‘all matter is redemptive’ (Ray, 2008) because it is an

expression of the absolute and as I have shown previously nothing is outside ‘the realm of truth’ or ‘God’s Circle’. Therefore, the unwanted the disowned shadow parts living in the darkness of the body/mind have a redemptive wisdom that is needed for a complete authentic experience of enlightenment. There is a spiritual or religious experience at the heart of binding back the discarded parts of the self as to bind back *religare* in Latin is the precise meaning of religion. The Buddha’s journey was animated by his wish to heal suffering, to bind back all mankind to the truth of the end of suffering. In his own experience remembering or recalling all his previous existences and the suffering therein was an important element in his enlightenment journey.

When a person recalls, or touches again through the body, all that has been abandoned in the darkness of the unconscious, spiritual and physical healing are possible. Previously Augustine shows how the narratives construct a limited remembering a kind of anti-memory. In fully recalling the past the Buddha redeems memory that then expresses itself as a Eucharistic *caritas*, a sacrament of communion with love and compassion for all mankind. Working directly with the body is working with the ‘flashing energy’ of reality that is an experience that is ‘beyond words, beyond thoughts, beyond description’ (*Heart Sutra*), a transformative experience beyond mind. The body naturally seeks wholeness and moves a person in the direction of fullness because it is always wants to be on a transformative path of growth. Thus, everything in the ‘long bag’ of unwanted psychophysical materials are agents of healing and transformation themselves. The ‘abjected’ disturbs and transforms unhelpful constructs of order and identities that are keeping a person from full participation in life.

Transformation is a dynamic disturbing process, it moves ever onward and outward. Transformation in the Buddhist view is a process that results from and continues to build goodness power and positive force. In the *Kalama Sutra*, the Buddha reinforces the central importance of leading a good life by emphasizing that even if there is no afterlife and no consequences for right or wrong actions a ‘disciple free from hostility free from ill will, undefiled and pure’ (*Thanissaro Bhikkhu*.1994.1) will have at least lived a good life. Thus, leading a good life is underlined as a central feature of the outcome of Buddhist practice even if all else fails to be true. My thesis investigated how the trajectory towards goodness might

come to be recognized as a dynamic that is inbuilt into the fabric of reality and into the ‘true nature of mind’ of the individual. If the truth of reality is a ‘point-instant’ dynamic reality, as the early Indian Buddhist thinkers saw it, then as I have emphasized it implies that openness is a fundamental characteristic of all phenomena. This openness moves a person from being trapped in private self-obsessed concerns to being a ‘great-self’ who is as Aquinas said ‘*capax universi*’ (capable of the universe). Being capable of the universe in the Buddhist *Theravāda* tradition is exemplified by the *Arhat* who has become the universal truth (*Dhamma*) itself. If this achievement is real, then indeed every person possesses ‘Buddha nature’. If the interpretation is that this is some sort of remote ideal, that cannot be realized in this life, then the Buddhist path itself is mocked. The energy of enlightened activity is compassion which is a dynamic reaching out towards others where others means all others without exception. Compassionate reaching out is the activity which rests on seeing the ‘not-self’ open nature of things. Enacting the ‘truth’ of openness is to be willing to not hold an absolute position but rather be willing to ‘pass over’ to other perspectives. The Buddhist teachings on ‘not-self’, ‘point-instant reality’ and ‘emptiness’ imply that everything is porous and dynamic and as such can be stepped into.

As I see it if Buddhist doctrine is not to become a set of esoteric eastern principles, they must be enacted and in that enacting, prove themselves. The Buddha himself encourages his followers not to believe any of his teachings on his say so, but rather prove it for themselves from their own experience of enacting the teachings. The Buddhist view is not monochromatic, it is not a set of teachings which works only within its own narrow confines, if it did it would contradict its own universal truth principle. The *Bon Dzogchen* principles of ‘unbounded wholeness’ and ‘open awareness’ underline how the Buddhist view is all inclusive. A person is always within the enlightenment experience, even if not immediately recognized. ‘Unbounded wholeness’ implies that the truth is symphonic and all-inclusive. If the true nature of mind is ‘brightly shining’ and ‘primordially pure’ it is a mind that sees goodness everywhere and in everyone. Seeing the ‘true nature’ of things, as the Buddha did, is not a self-limiting experience, it is an experience that propels one towards dialogue with others. The Buddha spent a great part of his mission in dialogue with the other spiritual views

of his time. Both in his practice and his teachings the Buddha's mission was one of engagement with the world. To follow the Buddha's principles, as I see it, is to be engaged not only in uncovering one's 'true nature' but also, because an enlightened mind propels an enlightened heart, it is to be engaged as a positive force in the world.

My thesis while its focus is on the Buddhist view of transformation, it is influenced by the questioning and dialoguing premise that the Buddha followed. My work, however, differs in that I attempt to show, however briefly, that there are parallels and echoes of the Buddhist understanding in other spiritual paths. As the title of my thesis is *towards* understanding transformation I am not suggesting that it is a complete articulation of all aspects of transformation. In my uses of other spiritual traditions, I am simply shining a small light on those areas which share similar teachings and in this way hopefully increase understanding that might help build an alliance of the good. I do not believe there is anything to be lost in this approach and everything to be gained in terms of understanding and inspiration. If the outcome of Buddhist practice is that a person develops more 'loving-kindness' and 'compassion' for others, that is not the development of a superior position, but rather a position born out of genuine understanding, that as Kabir put it, 'what moves in me also moves in you'.

The Buddha's path is not a sectarian view it is a eucharistic *caritas*, a sacrament and a communion in which all can share. The mystical Christian, Sufi and Bhakti writings that I use have a clarity and a radiance which arise from enacting their own truths about a person's relationship with God. They are beautiful in themselves and possess an integrity and a depth of their own that I do not wish to dilute. By coming to understand the ontological depth and structure of the Christian or Sufi teachings is the Buddhist teachings of 'not-self' and 'dependent origination' illuminated by this new context of understanding. It was never within the scope of the thesis to give an exhaustive account of the other spiritual traditions as space would not allow. As to the question that what I have used is 'superficial', I would answer that what I have used is not peripheral or a cosmetic enhancement but rather vignettes of insights that add a deeper and wider angle of view and understanding to the Buddhist insight, by seeing it reflected in relationship with other complementary views. This is in keeping with the *Hua yen*

vision of the structure of reality as a web of interconnections, of infinite interdependence. Thus, it is my view that the absolute is reflected infinitely and to be found everywhere in every person and in all true teachings. This vision of the absolute being reflected in the relative is echoed in the Medieval Christian teachings of Meister Eckhart also.

As to context, the various pieces I have encountered from other traditions become part of the context of understanding the specific Buddhist insight I am discussing at any given point. They shed light on the Buddhist view which is the primary focus of the thesis. In an open referencless journey the context is created through the journey and the dialogue that arises from that which is encountered. The Buddha said he crossed the flood 'without support' and I think this is perfectly reflected in the Christian biblical story where Jesus gets out of the boat and walks on the water (Mathew; 14:22:33). Is the Buddha's message or Jesus's message diminished by such a comparison? I think not. By showing how one journey is reflected in the other both are enhanced. My thesis is an effort to step out of my boat of comfortable references and attempt to turn the poetry of the Buddhist teachings into the truth of open engagement with other spiritual traditions.

Buddhism seeks to show the truth of being is the truth of a person's identity and therefore his centre is not limited to his individuality. The truth of 'point-instant' reality is a dynamic which pushes a person to larger and larger circumferences of compassion and understanding. This is enacted in compassion practice where the focus of one's compassion meditation begins with oneself, extends to family, friends and the wider community until it ends with embracing the entire universe. 'Traverse again and again your way from centre to circumference, going ever farther afield. You will re-discover everything everywhere.....Soon everything individual and distinct will have been lost and the Universe be found.' (Schleiermacher in Moore(Ed),1997,104). The underlying Buddhist view is that of a constantly changing dynamic expressed as the 'emptiness of emptiness' teaching or as the 'point-instant' river that never stops flowing. This insight is echoed in the Sufi characterization of the ever -flowing nature of the spiritual path as a journey that never stops because it cannot arrive at a 'station of no station'.

‘The word “ritual” is from the Latin *ritus*, from the Greek *rheo*, meaning “to flow, run, rush or stream,” A rite is a river -*rivus*..... To be in ritual is therefore to be in the river’ (Moore in Moore(Ed),1997,116). The ‘raft’ (be it a Christian, Sufi or a Buddhist raft) that one uses to navigate the river is not the important thing. The Buddha himself said that the raft should be abandoned once it had served its purpose. It is the recognition that we are always part of that on-going-ness that turns life into a sacred flowing ritual. The Buddhist insights of ‘not-self’, ‘point-instant’ reality and ‘unbounded wholeness’ are teachings which encourage the open dynamic engagement with all that is beyond self. These teachings are not monolithic truths but rather teachings to be used in a continuous engagement with life. The specific rituals and practices, be they Buddhist Sufi or Christian, are vehicles that lead a person to realization they are not realization itself. ‘One does not find baptism at the river; rather one finds the river in baptism’ (116). The river of truth is revealed by the practices each tradition follows. Goodness is not confined to any one approach, it flows naturally from a mind imbued with ‘loving-kindness’ and ‘compassion’. This is my view and my approach in the thesis coloured as it is by the *Dzogchen* view of the ‘already perfected’.

The dynamics of spiritual transformation reveal goodness at the heart of life and the person. These transformative dynamics help a person to see clearly that they have always been in the ‘realm of truth’, always enfolded in ‘unbounded wholeness’ ‘always in the flow of being’ where reality is wisdom itself with blessing all around and where there is no difference between God’s being and mine. They bring us back to the first pure moment of ‘agapeic astonishment’ that sees and values goodness and this pure moment is the beginning of thought. Pure thinking is to think the good and to investigate the ‘truth of being’ is to think that which is closest, then the ‘truth of being’ can be penetrated by thinking the good. Goodness power is the transformative power that expresses itself as overflowing compassion from the ‘empty luminous ground’ of the mind of loving kindness, a power that the Buddha experienced on recalling all his past lives. To be compassionate is to be doing what the Buddha did and as ‘compassion is the best name for God’ according to Eckhart, it is also to be enacting what God does and is.

The Buddha set out to find the answer to the problem of suffering and through his journey composed of failure and success came to realize the truth beyond suffering. A person's own journey, their spiritual path can I believe yield similar insights and meaning can be extracted with mindful attention to what is occurring in a person's life. If Heidegger is correct and that it is possible to 'think the truth of being' by examining that which is closest, then there is hope for those who like Dante find themselves in a dark wood 'where the true way is lost'. My work to some degree is an 'experiment with truth' inspired by Gandhi who modelled how one might find a way out of the dark woods by living the spiritual truths of two traditions. It is also a 'passing over' to other spiritual 'Ways', inspired by Buddhist teachings and John Dunne's paradigm. '... Start a huge foolish project like Noah....' Rumi said and so I did, because he knew that the boat anticipates the river and that through the work of building, the transformative light of understanding would emerge to transform the person themselves, thereby fulfilling the Buddha's instruction to "Make of yourself a light" (Oliver,1992,68). What I found in my search was a 'Way' of understanding that illuminated several traditions and that in the end the river itself became the 'Way'. Cratylus knew this when he said that we cannot step into the river even once, we cannot because we are always in the river never outside and as such our lives are a creative ritual a sacred *mandala* that is always flowing in the 'realms of truth', enfolded in 'unbounded wholeness' always in the flow of blessings, always flowing outward in compassionate engagement with all that is other.

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1

