

These excerpts from Maxine's forthcoming book *The Wisdom of Lived Experience* are offered as introduction to some of the concepts she will be presenting at EBOR. As part of the discussion of *Coming Alive*, Chapter 3 suggests that we may be hard-wired by evolution and fetal experience to *anticipate* a care-giving environment, which will shape subsequent experience. It also reviews the roles of implicit (unrecalable) and explicit (conscious) memory with regard to the sense of lived experience.

Chapter 3: Awakenings

Hard wiring and preconceptions as the roots of unconscious fantasy

Research in the last couple of decades is suggesting that the anticipations of a receiving environment and the motivations for relating to that environment are hard-wired at birth. Trevarthan (1996) observes how soon after birth the infant and mother enter into reciprocal gesturing, and indeed that the infant reaches toward the mother with the right arm (left hemisphere) and toward himself with the left arm (right hemisphere). He concludes that this is evidence not only of how rich the emotional communication is between mother and neonate from just after birth, but also of significant pre-natal organisation. Trevarthan suggests that there is an

Intrinsic Motive Formation (within the limbic system) that emerges in the brain stem at the embryo state before there are any neocortical neurons (p.578).

and that this formation is guided by the various emotional interchanges which then shape the developing cognitive systems.

It would seem reasonable to conclude that the origin of the asymmetry (between the hemispheres) may be in the activities of the brain that *precede and anticipate* uptake of information from the environment... (Emphasis added) (p. 571).

Very recent research involving 4-D ultrasounds (the added dimension being time) suggest foetuses can anticipate their own bodily motions, as evidenced by the opening of their mouths to receive their hands at 24 weeks of gestation. (Ferris (2015) p. 24). These data suggest that much hard wiring or early foetal organisation anticipates aspects of post-natal

development. They echo Bion's conjectures about *preconceptions*, that is, built in anticipations about unfolding development once the anticipations are met. They also reflect Solms' and Friston's contention that the brain is an intentional, not just a reactive, organ and organizer of experience. It seems that such anticipation, the roots of unconscious fantasy, begins very early in development...

In addition, studies (Mancia, 1981,1989; Schwab et. al, 2009) suggest that the foetus, from about 7 months of gestation, is engaged mostly in an active REM-type sleep. This underscores Mancia's earlier suggestion that during this type of sleep, beginning in late gestation, there is "a sensory integration tak(ing) place similar to that which occurs in the adult...which is the electrophysiological equivalent of the hallucinatory experience of the dream. " (Mancia,1981, pp. 351-352).

He also suggests that this active sleep provides a frame of reference for a primitive nucleus of mental activity, which might foster dream-like activity, that is, REM-type sleep, as well as registering the rhythms and stimuli from the maternal/uterine environment. This nucleus, likely found in the brainstem, matures significantly prior to birth, and may be related to that which Trevarthan refers to as the Intrinsic Motive Formation. These authors may be offering different perspectives about the same thing, although Trevarthan speculates a much earlier state (embryonic) of emergence...

He suggests that the foetus' intense motor activity, both in waking and sleeping states, could be seen as evacuative of unprocessed sensory-motor elements (Bion's beta elements). (*ibid.*, p. 354)

Further, Mancia postulates that the protective functions of the uterine environment... may comprise a kind of 'skin' function which can protect the foetus/baby in its likely violent encounter with the birth process that involves not only the expulsion from the mother's body but the rapid transformation from a passive intake of oxygen via the placenta to the

need for active breathing on the part of the neonate. These beginnings of mental life, as noted by Mancina, then, suggest an outline of somatic experience that gives rise to hallucinatory dream-like phenomena, likely the roots of unconscious fantasy, and the capacity to metabolize sensory into psychic elements (the process Bion terms alpha function)....

Helmholtz, Freud and Friston (2010) suggest that we have unconscious processes, internally generated from associational learning, to organise and explain our sensory experience...

Bion's notions of pre-conceptions may be heir to this same view... the internal inferential models help to structure experience in part by binding free energy. Bion's preconception of the breast or attentive maternal care is a good example. Probably a legacy of evolution, it seems that there is an inborn inference that attentive care will be forthcoming. When it is met and confirmed by experience there is further confirmation about oneself and the world and the inference about good care is strengthened. When the expectation or preconception is *not* met there may be a jarring dissonance, experienced as deep disappointment in or perhaps cruelty by the object. Neurologically, there is a release of destabilizing, disturbing free energy. The inference is shaken and re-calibrated, and the dissonance may register as psychic trauma. There seems, then, from various perspectives, to be evidence for innate inferences or fantasies that organize experience and intentionalities. Also, when not met and carried forward these inferences may contribute to disturbances that comprise psychic traumata.

Implicit (unconscious) memory may encode external as well as internal happenings

...Implicit memory, referred to earlier as registering the earliest non-recallable experiences, is also part of the timeline of emotional and psychic development. In contrast to explicit memory, that which is available to

consciousness and has been known about for many years, our understanding of implicit memory has been clarified only more recently.

Implicit memory usually refers to the earlier experiences of life prior to the maturation of the hippocampal structures, which facilitate cortical memory processes, and it is generally felt to be organized by the amygdala. These early experiences date to the last two to three months of fetal life. They are registrations of the prosodic elements, the melodies and rhythms of the mother, her earliest attunements and ministrations. They may be either positive, laying the background of harmony and safety, or they may be negative, registering neglect, trauma, and disharmony. These earliest pre-lingual experiences are registered in the right hemisphere, where they remain unconscious. While there are no explicit memories that would support conscious recall available prior to the maturation of the hippocampus at about eighteen months of age, these prosodic elements are carried forward in the individual's voice, bodily expressions and carriage. The individual's attitude toward and expectations of the world may be seen to be written in nearly every gesture in the here and now. When this unremembered, but present-in-the-moment level of experience can be understood and expressed in words and thus thought, it can gain the stamp of time and place and thus reside in the past rather than lingeringly haunt the unremembered present of the individual (Schoore, 2011). ..

In the absence of active recall from the implicit level of experience it is intriguing to consider that aspects of dreaming, both the unconscious process and the consciously remembered dream may carry the implicit forward toward explicit recall and understanding.

The work of Mancia (1989), enhances understanding of the organizing function of dream-like states in fetal life, and perhaps beyond. From sonographic and neurobiologic studies and measurements of what is considered to be active sleep in the foetus, it seems that from about six months of gestation active sleep, akin to REM sleep in the adult, serves an integrative function for sensory input, motor output, and affective (pleasure/pain) learning. Mancia hypothesizes that this integration forms a proto-mental nucleus of the self based on bodily experience prior to birth. Such integration serves memory (familiarity with mother's voice and other prosodic elements) and continuity beyond the caesura of birth—all of which enriches the storehouse of experience within implicit memory.

It may not be surprising, then, that remembered dreams can carry forward and represent these implicit memories. Therapists report that dreams can bridge the gap, offering visual and emotional representations of issues that the patient cannot recall, but which 'speak' to the heart of early traumatic issues. These dreams likely express aspects of implicit memory and can deeply inform the therapeutic work as well as general efforts involved in growth and development (Mancia, 2006; Andrade, 2007; Joseph, 1992).

A clinical vignette may be helpful.

When I was working with children I had occasion to hear about their dreams. I have never forgotten that of a sensitive 4 year old boy whom I have the privilege to work with for only a few months, due to his family's changing circumstances. During that time, he made use of play materials but mostly harnessed his vivid imagination to express and find understanding about his intense feelings about the newly arrived baby

sister and his feelings of loss of privilege in the family. On the last day of our work he told me a very moving dream:

He was playing at a sandy beach and had discovered a beautiful blue marble there. But after a very short time he lost the marble in the sand and realized in the dream that he would not be able to find it again until he was 16 years old. (end of dream)

He seemed to know what the dream meant, and we both seemed moved and sad, which I noted along with the dream's suggestion that the blue marble would be found once again when he was older. That is how the hour and our work ended. I did not hear further how things went for him or his family, but I have frequently thought of our work and especially the richness of that last dream. Admittedly, these are my associations, but my intuition suggested he also had some inkling of the sands of time which would reveal the lost marble, the beautiful marble of the work we had done, but also the marble as the potential for thought and understanding which had not been part of his family pattern. And the dream's message of finding the marble again as an adolescent suggested some forecasting of his wish to find another mind to relate to as we had in our time together, perhaps a wish for that kind of relationship as he moved away from his family into the wider (blue marble) world. Then, and now, I am deeply impressed by the expressive power of this dream, from the imaginative mind of a 4 year old about himself and his future.

Mancia reminds us, further, that the dream provides imagery "able to fill the void of non-representation, representing symbolically experiences that were originally pre-symbolic." (Mancia, 2006, p. 93). In the little boy's

dream there may be several instances of meaningful, even complex, representation: the blue marble of possibly compassionate understanding, briefly found and then lost again until a future date; the need to wait (marble lost in the sands of time) and yet the hope for the future (to be found when he is 16 years old). These complex representations of course may be recognized by the dreamer in an *après coup* form, that is as remembered in a looking back manner, when his symbolizing capacities are more mature...

Hans Loewald brings an added perspective: he postulates that in health there is an on-going dialectic between the products of implicit memory, which he calls primary reality or primary narcissism and that of explicit memory, that is, secondary process thought. He suggests that there are two forces in mutual operation: the forces towards unity, merger, and remaining one with the object (i.e. no differentiation) and the second force towards differentiation. These forces are in mutual tension all throughout life. For Loewald, the communication with the more highly differentiated mind of the parent aids in the differentiation process, both with the external object or parent and also within the ego and one's own mentation. ...

Loewald stresses that memory discharged as action rather than represented as thought is coincident with the implicit memory systems, and is the most experience near, while conscious representational (explicit) memory is less so. These two systems are synergistic and co-creating in the to and fro of union and differentiation. All the while the primary memory requires on-going contact with parental figures, who help to organize the child's experience toward conscious representation. (Singer and Conway, p.1191). Where Solms postulates the role of the subjective ("I remember") as vital to conscious memory, Loewald suggests that role comes from parental organisation and is vital to the growth of secondary process. (Loewald, 1976, p.170)...

Loewald, similar to Civitarese, describes the harmonious, synergistic interplay of these different elements in growth and development.

But trauma may also be engendered within implicit experience. The range of unconscious processes, which are registered in implicit experiences, allows complex activities to be performed smoothly and efficiently but, because they are automated, that is out of the range of conscious recall, these unconscious elements are less amenable to change. In terms of impacting mental functioning these automated, repetitive patterns often carry intense affect (unbound energy) as exemplified in PTSD reactions. The memory traces of old traumata may then trigger reflexive, undiminished, and thus re-traumatizing responses...

To further illustrate the accruing value of intuition and lived experience Chapter 6 offers clinical illustrations of Bion's transformations in O and K and Bohm's concepts of mindfulness and genuine dialogue.

Chapter 6: Becoming: The On-going Process Of Coming Alive

We half observe and half create the world

The wisdom of *Lived Experience* gathers strands from various sources -- neuroscience, philosophy, psychoanalysis, history, literature -- each enriching our understanding about what transforms the inanimate into the animate, what occurs in awakenings, in coming alive.

Neuroscience emphasises how primary affect is for all of neural functioning, but also how vital is its mediation by cortical processes in order to enable consciousness of those affects and their intensities and valences. These cortical processes, noted as the left-brain functions of cognition, include language, detail, and indeed the internal divisions, which give rise to a sense of a separate self. But the products of language and thought, so prominent in everyday lives, can coerce one into believing that thought-based products, rather than affect, are the most trustworthy portals into reality, growth, and transformation.

Memory is prominent in shaping perception as stated by Solms and Turnbull (2002):

We all automatically reconstruct the reality we perceive from models we have stored in our memories...We adults *project* our expectations (the products of our previous experience) onto the world all the time, and in this way we largely construct rather than perceive...the world around us. ...

(emphasis in the original) (Solms and Turnbull, 2002, p.155).

An elegant and humorous example of our seeing only what we expect to see is ensconced in the now-famous video of the person in the gorilla suit walking across the basketball court, and being unseen by the about half of the observers tasked with tracking ball-handling details (Simon and Chabris, 1999). In an updated version (theinvisiblegorilla.com, 2010), for those familiar with the gorilla's appearance, the change of colour of the background and a player leaving the scene during the video offer renewed reminders that we only see what we anticipate.

Dialectics is key to a processive approach to reality. The dialectical process... lies at the base of all of physical biology and psychic growth (Ogden, 1992a, 1992b, 2002). This process transcends personal boundaries, and as individuals we surrender entirely to the process, as do the cells involved in the transformation of the bud to the flower to the fruit. In the interweaving of thoughts, the giving and receiving, a "shared operation of which neither of us is the creator" is formed (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 354). This surrendering process dissolves personal boundaries if narcissistic tendencies do not obstruct the to and fro. Personally held perspectives fade from view as deeper common ground becomes revealed. Several authors consider that an emerging discussion from such common ground is what arises in true dialogue. (Ogden, 1994, p.1; Giegerich, 2005, p. 5; Reis, 1999).

The poetic state of mind sees beyond the surface towards the depth, unless the eye becomes fastened to the surface, or to the glitter of excitement, flattening the potential depth and emergent meaning into a concrete representation. McGilchrist offers glimpses

of poetic insights, which enlarge everyday views so as to “extend the scope of our possible self-awareness” (McGilchrist, p. 342).

Blake’s depiction of Urizen (‘your reason’) is seen as the closing down of the mind, in its efforts toward domination and power. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* sees the same process of closure in Satan’s fall, as a consequence of his rebellion against a God he refused to worship. As Tweedy mentions:

The “hardening” process or “damnation” as Milton calls it –is the central psychological process of *Paradise Lost*. ... As Satan falls and hardens, so Eden is viewed as further and further away ...*Paradise Lost* thereby depicts the gradual process of self-damnation in Milton’s most memorable and dramatic character, the state that Blake also refers to as ‘Satan’ (Tweedy, p. 241).

The fall, then, away from Paradise may be seen as the sweep back into concretisation. That is, the hardening into the absolute which once again imprisons, sheering off realisations of choice, and space for reflective thought and the recognition of goodness.

But the fall may also be seen as the departure from the god of the absolute, daring to become the modern man who questions, rebels and discovers his own individuality. While *Paradise Lost* has often been seen from the perspective which values the adherence to the perfection of the Garden of Eden, it may also be read from the view of the explorer who dares to leave this paradise. As Chuster (2014) suggests, the medieval Christian world seems to have depicted eating the apple of knowledge as the sin of hubris. That is, going against the dictates of the absolute god, daring to explore and to think on one’s own as worthy of expulsion from Paradise, and indeed subject to the Inquisition, which declares independent thought as heresy. From the modern secular perspective,

being seduced by the snake to eat of the fruits of knowledge would be seen as the first explorations into separation, following one's curiosity, the first 'no' to the perceived external authority. The snake as insinuation, calling one to go against the rules of the Garden, is interesting and deserves more thought.

In either case there is a fall from 'grace', that is, a being cast away from the comforting certainty, into uncertainty where dread and doubt prevail. The medieval world from a Christian view was one of certainties, whether of heaven, hell or purgatory. The modern secular world is more one of uncertainty as man contemplates infinities, whether of the external cosmos, or the internal unconscious world. Uncertainty is inevitably accompanied by doubt and its darker companion dread, both of which are part of the experience of modern man, who may then quest even nostalgically after the fantasied, dread-free certainties of the unquestioned Garden.

As moderns, we are invited into another kind of grace, that of dialogue with its offerings of receptivity, learning and change. But our narcissistic proclivities still hold us back, declaring the value of certainties as to who we are, what we believe, and the importance of our firmly-held identities which must not be disturbed.

Through the lens of the medieval view, eating from the tree of knowledge is the betrayal of unquestioning obedience and the suppression of curiosity. Through the lens of modern man the fall may be viewed as the consequence of daring to step away from the unquestionable known, in exercising one's curiosity and taking responsibility for one's actions and choices. Growth of the mind is possible here, but not without the dreads of isolation and vulnerability. Such a fall could then be seen as daring to emerge

from the encapsulation of narcissism and its pure, eternal, paradisiacal surround into the unknowable universe with all its doubts and dreads. Such a step is transformative for the growing self (Chuster, *ibid.*, pp. 178-180)...

...It seems that we trend toward the concrete in much of our thinking, especially when we may be even slightly over-reaching the limits of our grasp of a subject. This may be exemplified in the statement by a notable physicist, regarding an idea, which becomes distorted and misused due to its being concretized into an object (Dyson, 2015):

... Erwin Schrodinger invented wave functions as a way to describe the behaviour of atoms and other small objects. According to the rules of quantum mechanics, the motions of objects are unpredictable. The wave function tells us only the probabilities of the possible motions. When an object is observed, the observer sees where it is and the uncertainty of the motion disappears. Knowledge removes uncertainty. There is no mystery here.

Unfortunately, people writing about quantum mechanics often use the phrase “collapse of the wave function” to describe what happens when an object is observed. This phrase gives a misleading idea that the wave function itself is a physical object. A physical object can collapse when it bumps into an obstacle. But a wave function cannot be a physical object. A wave function is a description of a probability, and a probability is a statement of ignorance. Ignorance is not a physical object, and neither is a wave function. When new knowledge displaces ignorance, the wave function does not collapse; it merely becomes irrelevant (p. 273).

This statement may illustrate a couple of significant issues: firstly, a state of mind which has sufficient grasp of the subject (a noted physicist viewing wave functions as probabilities illustrating ignorance) to resist

concretizing the idea of a wave function into an object, while also clarifying how concretization can distort: “ignorance is not a physical object, and neither is a wave function...when new knowledge displaces ignorance the wave function does not collapse; it ...becomes irrelevant”. In addition, this statement illustrates how our usually visual efforts to create metaphors (probabilities as waves) may easily lead to a concrete image (the wave collapsing into a single point), which we then believe. Dyson, I think, beautifully illustrates, here, how our ignorance can lead us toward clinging to our images as concrete, solid things to hold onto and believe. Another example of the products of thought distorting in a manner that makes us feel that ‘what we see’ (the image of a wave and a pinpoint) is all of reality.

In psychoanalysis, as well, we tend to concretize clinical data into scenarios or narratives and then to believe these constructions. It is difficult not to, because it is hard to listen with evenly hovering attention as Freud advised (Freud, 1912) to allow the references to underlying issues cohere for a moment and then de-cohere again. Having faith that there will be creative cycles of coherence and de-coherence in the emergence of unconscious processes is a strain when we are faced with uncertainty and the wish to find clarity for our patients and for ourselves.

From impatience amidst doubt to patience amidst awe (Bion’s Transformations in K and O)

Thus, when I can be genuinely open to the confusions and distractions that inevitably accompany these explorations, I may allow myself to feel but not be overwhelmed by the attendant doubts (not collapsing from the fall from certainty). I am then taking the necessary steps toward the sculpting of new internal space – space that reveals the complexities not only of the uncertain external reality which remains hidden

from superficial views, but also complexities about the internal realities honed by my efforts. My initial zeal and impatience in the face of doubt and uncertainty, with proper attention and careful mediation, will very likely give way to a patience and humility borne of suffering and endurance of the encountered tensions and frustrations. These experiences may yield the greatest fruits of the whole endeavour, for patience and humility, amidst faith in the value of the overall project, sculpt an inner space that fosters quiet reflection amidst awe – not another paradise or return to the all-providing womb, but a contemplative space which fosters the on-going emergence of unfolding depth and richness. This opening of the mind via the *expansion of inner space* can then be viewed as the path toward the deeper reaches of reality.

The trajectory of Bion's contributions to thinking and Becoming illustrate this sojourn. Students of Bion, (Ogden, 2004b; Sandler 2005; Vermote 2011; Civitarese, 2013, 2015) identify an 'early Bion' and 'late Bion' which demarcate different emphases in his explorations toward psychic truth. 'Early Bion' refers to his focus on the transformation of sensory experience into meaning and thought via a function well illustrated by the sensitive mother receiving the sensory disturbances that her infant cannot bear to feel. The baby's cries or discharges of these unbearable tensions are taken in by the mother, who tries to get to know them so as to make them bearable and even meaningful to her infant. This process of getting to know, described by Bion as K (for Knowledge), involves the mother's rhythmic, attuned, intuitive responses, which bring her baby in touch with the vitalizing aspects of those discharged tensions. Alpha function, then, which is Bion's term for this reverie process, may involve the sculpting, shielding transformations toward being vitalized rather than being overwhelmed by the undifferentiated aspects of reality, which may

confront and confound the fragile psyche. It may be parallel to Hegel's externalisation of disturbance for examination prior to re-introjection as a bearable part of self. A significant difference, however, would be that the emotional experience offered by the maternal reception – a sense of being cared for -- may have become installed in evolution as a pre-natal anticipation that, when met, gives rise to the sense of being recognized and affirmed, another aspect of coming alive. Such an evolutionary anticipation, noted as a *pre-conception* by Bion, is one element, which when realised via experience, gives rise to satisfaction, affirmation and growth. Travarthan's Intrinsic Motive Formation (1996) and Mancia's considerations on prenatal development (1981), and the emphasis on the inference as vital for internal harmony and growth (Friston, 2010), align with this view.

Alpha function, then, is at the heart of the process Bion describes as *container/contained*. This process embraces both the receiving function of the reverie (the container) and the at times overwhelming tensions or affects derived from lived experience (the contained). It involves both conscious and unconscious processing and remains one of dialectical tension, container and contained being mutually dependent upon one another.

Coming alive to our lived experience, in Bion's thinking, requires such a mutually dependent process. This way of working, transforming sensory experience into thought via reverie, occupied several years of his working life and is referred to as Early Bion by his students.

But in his later work he began to feel that language, the usual vehicle of thought, may obstruct the emergence of soft-edged intuitions and dream-like images and experiences. He was in these

later years interested in the interface where the undifferentiated (termed 'O' by Bion) takes on finite and thus representable form, 'at the interface' between the world of the dream and that of the bright light of day, where right hemispheric functions yield to left brain representations, that is, at the point where thoughts emerge.¹

Vermote (2011) suggests that in looking toward the undifferentiated emerging into thinkable form (a Transformation of O to K in Bion's terms) one would perceive the emergence of something new, which differs from "early Bion's" concern about the processing and thinking about existing emotional experience (Vermote, 2011, p. 1091). This earlier transformation of sensory elements into images and then thoughts required tolerating frustration until a cohering image adequately represents the previously dispersed elements. Later Bion requires a background of patience and trust that "entails (the attitude) of waiting and tolerating doubt and mystery until something finite emerges from infinity" (*ibid.*, p. 1092). Trust and faith are necessary states of mind in these 'late Bion' formulations.

A vignette from my own clinical experience may illustrate some of these issues. A while ago, I seemed to be in the midst of musings that would spontaneously occur during or just after rather intense emotional experiences, as if to give form to those experiences so that I might further think about or understand them. One such musing from the consultation room follows.

The startle of recognition that the 'problem' at hand for my patient at this moment is a person I suddenly realise is someone I know rather well but in an entirely different context.

¹ See beginning of Chapter 5 for an illustration of the experience at this interface

My first impulse is to defend this other person, who seems to be such a target of rancour. But this descent into what would become mutual harangue would close me off to a deeper understanding of my patient. So I actively seek the wider perspective of listening to my patient's here and now concerns, wherein the 'problem' may be a realistic concern for my patient, while also becoming both a screen for his/her projections, and one of several possible views of a complex situation.

In trying to attain this wider view, a feeling and then an image seem to come to my rescue. In the midst of my patient's intense complaints and aware of my different relationship to the person who is currently felt to be such a problem, a feeling arises of being amidst differing realities, discreet but connected in some deep way. And then comes an aerial image of several local islands and their surrounding, connecting sea. The image is calming because it seems to offer a sturdy representation of the discrepant views about the 'problem' as different aspects of the same reality. The tension of different realities is resolved when I can apprehend the image of different aspects (islands) of the same reality. It seems that the capacity for varying imagery and distance in terms of the mind's eye is key to being able to navigate these shifting views of reality with a reasonable, compassionate compass.

Associations to this musing: this visual image and the spontaneous widening of the field served to absorb my feeling of startle and the intensity of 'complaint' about the 'problem at hand' for my patient of the moment. In a way the visual was both a *container and contained* in Bion's sense. The image of an aerial view of separate islands connected by a surrounding sea represented the distinctly different realities I was experiencing, while also offering the context of the deeper connection (the surrounding sea). My experience was that this imagery allowed both the intensity of my patient's complaint and of my startled, potentially defensive emotion

to be contained by offering the context of multiple simultaneous realities or emotions (several islands). And it felt like the gently emerging nature of this image fostered this containment. Indeed, I live and work near a marine environment (Puget Sound where there are many islands), an environment, which could give form to the emergence. This perspective suggests a *Transformation in K*, in Bion's terms, the cohering of various alpha elements or dream thoughts into a pattern, offering space and potentially meaningful thought.

But this vignette might also be considered a *Transformation of O to K*. The undifferentiated realm of the immediacy of my patient's intense complaint and my startled defensive impulse gives way to the emerging imagery and subsequent thought. This may exemplify the "point where the undifferentiated gets a finite form, a point in infinity where he/she could see the thoughts as they emerge" (Vermote, 2011, p. 1115). Also, it could be considered as an example of what Bion termed the *language of achievement* (Sandler, 2005, pp. 391-397): a finite representation with roots in the infinite or undifferentiated realm (Vermote, 2011, p. 1114), a clear image that has mediated the intense (infinite) 'certainties' of the complaint (and my impulse toward a defensive response). The representation (the image) itself seems to have brought added dimension to my experience and perception of the situation of my patient, but it also fostered my appreciation of the wider situation, which is not constrained by my patient's intensities. I believe that the potentially frozen, fixedly certain complaint, which had gripped my patient (and me for a moment in my defensiveness), was dissolved for me by the image. Or, from a slightly different angle, the imagery, in allowing a

way forward so that I could view my patient's intensities as one of several realities, offered the mental and emotional space needed for my transformation and growth.

This example may demonstrate how impatience amidst doubt (my initial defensive startle) may give way to patience amidst awe (an opening of the mind via expansion of inner space) as the path toward the deeper reaches of reality.

Mindfulness and the implicate order (Bohm): recognizing the animate and inanimate as two phases of a unified reality

This expansion of mental and emotional space, accompanied by awe, is often considered in terms of mindfulness. We have seen from a neuro-scientific view (Solms, 2013), that there is a neural network that monitors the external world, which links us with memory and cognition, and an internal network that attends to our inner self-regulatory functions, and registers our sense of well-being via affect. Usually, the brain can focus on only one network at a time, but studies (Jospiovic, 2012; Ricard, et al, 2014) have shown that those who are very familiar with meditation can maintain both networks' activity simultaneously. This dual activity leads to mediation of intense affect without being swept away...

Specifically, meditators in studies with control groups demonstrate more capacity to experience raw affects and pain than non-meditator controls. (By way of coordinating brain oscillations) (t)hey are less overwhelmed by their own and others' pain and are

able to feel more positive emotions related to compassion, rather than negative emotions related to burnout by the distress...

These brain oscillations would likely equate with the Solms' description of cognitive cortical functions binding or transforming the affect or free energy (my defensive response to my patient's intense complaint) into a representation (the image of the islands), which binds the affect. In the first person subjective experience, and from EEG evidence, meditators experience the usually stable sense of self as becoming less fixed and permanent, probably because the sense of harmony and flow offers a more containing representation, binding free energy (anxiety) and reducing the need for certainty as to 'who we are' and 'what we know'. The more harmonious sense of unity likely decreases the terrors of uncertainty and thus also the defensive need for absolute and concrete experience...

Similarly, David Bohm (1980,1996), a physicist well versed in Eastern and Western views of the nature of reality, suggests that the universe may usefully be regarded as a continuous field in flux...

Bohm (1980) suggests that the deepest, widest, most unified reality is one of constant motion involving both implicate (enfolded) and explicate (unfolded) elements. Recognizing that we tend to fragment the world in our abstracting, which freezes the frame, fragmenting the constancy of flow...

Bohm, then, is suggesting that both the conscious explicit experience and the unconscious implicit elements are phases of the same unitary reality. To my mind this description aligns with the experience of the meditators, as well as to my emerging imagery in the last vignette of the several islands surrounded by a connecting sea.

He suggests that we can pay attention in a way to overcome our necessary fragmentation of reality: sustained inquiry into the exercise of attention and recognition of our assumptions as just that -- as assumptions rather than truths -- aids in the recognition of the “fragmentation of the world...which arises from our need for our language (-) rooted... thought processes” (Bohm, 1996., p. xxvii). Such recognition would allow one to come closer to the implicate order, the unfolding and enfolding of deeper reality, closer to “O” in Bion’s terms...

...How interesting that non-judgmental curiosity is also what is described as the poetic stance in our review of poetry. And it may be the process one engages in with At-one-ment, which is Bion’s notion of Being.

This open dialogic process amidst quietude allowing fresh, emerging views may well be what also occurs internally within the individual during meditation, when there is simultaneous attention to one’s cognitive and affective functions. This view may also be illustrated by my own experience of widening the field as I experienced my patient’s intense complaint. My first (affective) impulse was defensive, but that was mediated by my awareness that I needed to remain non-reactive and to seek a larger container. I believe my doing such was employing non-judgmental curiosity to view not only my patient’s intensely experienced concern, but awareness of the different context I held toward ‘the problem’. The resulting image, several islands and their surrounding sea, served as a fresh, clear view of the current situation, rather than as a pressured chamber where one intense complaint dominated the space...

Bion’s vertex of atonement may be very similar.(Sandler, 2005, pp. 60-65). He suggests that explicit experience includes registrations of

material reality, which can be put into words. Psychic reality, however, that which is implicit, in the same way Bohm describes, cannot be put into words. It can only be opened up to and lived. In my vignette, my refraining from reactivity and opening my view to the wider reality (several islands and their surrounding sea) could be viewed as a moment of atonement, because I had faith that such an opening would deepen the possible realizations which could only be intuited. According to Sandler (2005) *at-one-ment ...*”describ(es) situations that are experientially alive and truthful... formulat(ing) an evolving ultimate reality during the here and now”(p. 60), that is, not to know but to apprehend the transient reality of the moment. “ I believe that is what occurred in the vignette once I could open up past the momentary reactivity.

All of these viewpoints suggest that coming alive involves submitting hard- edged thought to the softer sense of intuition. That is, opening up mental space involves the softening of edges, while remaining hardened closes down and strangles off the rhythms needed for transformation. The propaganda of the left hemispheric functions then, offering language, detail and precision promises certainty as *the way* forward. This allure may actually be an agent for the ego’s yearning toward sleep, as Solms warns us. The biologic pressures toward automaticity add to those tendencies of the left hemispheric functions...

The legacy of the fall from certainty, viewed as the idealised bliss of remaining undisturbed by change, may be seen as the hard work of coming alive, awakening, swimming against the biological pressure toward automaticity. This may be part of Becoming.