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Carlos Varela

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAIN MEMORY IMAGES

A Dissertation Presented

by

CARLOS VARELA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1989

School of Education

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CARLOS VARELA

Approved as to style and content by:

John W. Wideman
John W. Wideman, Chairperson of Committee

Grace J. Craig
Grace J. Craig, Member

Marion B. Rhodes
Marion B. Rhodes, Member

Marilyn E. Haring
Marilyn Haring-Hidore, Dean
School of Education

ABSTRACT

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAIN MEMORY IMAGES

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CARLOS VARELA, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

M.A., AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

ED.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by: Professor John W. Wideman

Although references have been made to the nature and significance of mental imagery in the past, they have not considered a particular kind of image which, among the many memory images a person has, is the most important one for that person. This memory image has been called by the author the main memory image.

It is possible that a person will have more than one main memory image. This occurs when there is more than one most meaningful image. These images may be important in the life of an individual.

The study is guided by three main questions: 1. Are there such things as main memory images? 2. Are they meaningful for the individuals that recollect them? 3. Do they contribute in any way to self-understanding, healing, or well-being?

Ten subjects of various nationalities and at least eighteen years of age were chosen. They were asked to recall the most significant memory image of their life, describe it, discuss its meaning, and state whether it had any impact on self-understanding, healing, or well-being. A three month follow-up was included to see whether the image originally chosen continued to be the same.

The interview involved an open-ended, standardized questioning format. The analysis was qualitative and inductive, employing direct quotes, synthesized into a profile.

Nine subjects elicited a main memory image. One subject elicited three. For all of the participants the image had meaning and it contributed to self-understanding, healing, or well-being. The follow-up revealed that the memory image chosen continued to be the same one after three months, with some qualifications in two cases.

The inquiry suggests that there may exist a phenomenon that could be called a main memory image (or images) which may be meaningful for the subject and could contribute to self-understanding, healing, or well-being. This image may continue to be the most significant one for at least three months.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In a number of modes of psychotherapy, mental imagery has been employed as a diagnostic and treatment instrument. It has been used to achieve better self-understanding, healing, and in developing a sense of wholeness.

This inquiry is an attempt to explore the nature and therapeutic significance of a particular kind of memory image (or images) that is called in this study a main memory image. It is hypothesized that this image exists, that it is a preconscious phenomenon, that it is part of the individual's mental phenomenology, and that it is included in a person's ontological structure. It also reflects internalized objects and object representations. These latter terms (objects and object representations) I use in an object relations sense and in a psychoanalytic sense. In subsequent chapters all of these terms will be referred to, each within its own particular context. It is hoped that

their meaning will become clearer as the study progresses. A great deal has been written on the subject of mental imagery. We know that Aristotle (1986) referred to it, and that its influence on the person's emotional and physical well-being was acknowledged in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. During these periods medical practice was essentially humoral and holistic. However, with the appearance of the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy, the holistic view of the person is put into question, and the role of imagery and imagination in medicine is almost totally banned. By the nineteenth century practitioners are guided mainly by a physiological and mechanistic view of the person. It is not until Freud (1972) that the importance of memory images is acknowledged and taken seriously in medicine and psychiatry.

Although references have been made to the nature and importance of mental imagery in healing and achievement throughout history, they have not hypothesized or considered the possible existence of mental imagery as an ontological entity (or at least have not made it explicit), and as there existing a main memory image (or images) with which the individual identifies the most and which is also the most significant or meaningful one for that person.

Adler's (1980) use of the earliest childhood memory image remembered, and Progoff's (1973a, 1973b) use of the "protoplasmic image" are not quite the kind of images that

this inquiry addresses. However, their views are important and they are discussed in the literature review section of this study.

The use of mental imagery in psychotherapy has been documented by such authors as Horowitz (1983) and Lazarus (1984), but no reference is made to employing a most significant memory image or images. This reference is also absent in Sheikh's (1986) anthology. Nevertheless, what is clear in these authors is that mental imagery does have a therapeutic potential.

The memory images we are searching for are the most significant ones for the individual(s) at the conscious level. They are not necessarily unconscious and biological phenomena like Progoff's image, or Jung's (1976) archetype with its mythological motifs within the collective unconscious. Yet, they are reminiscent of Jung's "personal image" which "expresses content of the personal unconscious and a personally conditioned conscious situation" (1976, p. 443). But still, the images we are after are really a preconscious phenomenon, as will be discussed in the second chapter. This does not mean, however, that the unconscious does not participate in their formation and meaning. Here we are inclined to assume that the person is a unitary and systemic entity in which all parts contribute to the whole in such a way that unconscious, preconscious, conscious, and biological elements interact dynamically.

In the clinical experience of the researcher, there is reason to believe that the use of a particular kind of mental image (or images) called main memory images can significantly enhance the practice of psychotherapy. However, there is nothing in the literature that guides us in this direction. This inquiry is an attempt to explore this phenomenon and see whether it can contribute to psychotherapeutic endeavor.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to see whether there are such things as most significant memory images; whether they are meaningful for each individual; and whether they contribute to a person's well-being, self-understanding, and/or healing.

A second purpose is philosophical. Do these memory images have ontological validity? The evidence for their ontological nature cannot be empirically proven because ontology is metaphysical, and metaphysical entities are not necessarily things that can be measured, quantified, or generally observed. If these images have ontological validity then they cannot be considered mere "epiphenomena." Considering them so may involve a risk in that their importance in the life of the psyche may be overlooked, and as a result, limit or even ban its use in clinical and

educational practice, a situation we should surely avoid. At this point, these most significant memory images are only hypothetical constructs. But they will guide us in this study, and perhaps help us in understanding a person better. Do they have therapeutic value? Can they be helpful in knowing oneself better? Can these particular memory images be elicited, described, and attributed meaning? Can they be translated to a clinical technique or to educational purposes? These are some of the questions that will guide this study.

1.3 Research Method

This inquiry is composed of two major sections. The first, which is the literature review, will examine the role of imagery, imagination, and fantasy in philosophy, psychology, and neurology. It will also include a final section using an example from literature and a brief description of imagery and imagination in science. Mental imagery has a long and complex history. It exists within a number of disciplines in one way or another. This inquiry has selected the more representative disciplines only. The main memory images we are searching for may be seen as a part of an extensive tradition and history that cannot be overlooked. They would not be adequately understood if they are not seen as part of this broad and intricate past.

Some of the questions that underly the first section are:

1. What role has imagery had in philosophy?
2. What definition of meaning will be employed in determining whether the main memory images have significance or not for the subjects?
3. What role has imagery had in psychology?
4. Assuming mental images exist, what is their neurological basis?
5. What role does imagery play in literature and science?

The answer to these questions will give an idea of the scope and significance of mental imagery within the various disciplines.

The second section involves the actual empirical inquiry regarding the main memory image or images. It will yield a qualitatively different kind of information which will connect with the first section. It is thus hoped that these memory images will be understood as an element or link within the history and tradition of imagery.

Questions that will be addressed in the empirical section will be:

1. Do main memory images exist?
2. Are they meaningful for the subject?
3. Are they conducive toward well-being, healing, and/or self-understanding?

Since the purpose of this study is only to inquire about this particular mental image and not to prove something, it follows that the most appropriate approach is a qualitative research method. Since we are not after pure quantities, but individual depth and qualitative experience, the method of open-ended, in-depth interviewing presents as the most suited approach because it allows the subject to describe his or her experience in his or her own words. According to Patton "qualitative measures describe the experience of people in depth. The data are open-ended in order to find out what people's lives, experiences, and interactions mean to them in their own terms and in their natural settings. Qualitative measures permit the evaluation researcher to record and understand people on their own terms" (1986, p 22).

The data will be collected by means of the qualitative interview process as discussed by Patton (pp. 197-205). The interview format will follow the standard open-ended interview, as Patton (pp. 202-205) also points out. A semi-structured format will be followed which will permit subjects to express their experience without hindrance, while guiding them to comment on the questions which the inquiry addresses. In a study of this kind it is important that the interviewer be open to unexpected information. Therefore, he will be free to include clarifying or new questions as appropriate, in addition to the planned

questions which will follow a standard interview format. Ten persons will be interviewed. They will be at least eighteen years of age, articulate and suffer no profound form of psychopathology, such as schizophrenia, acute or chronic post-traumatic stress disorder or disorders that include psychosis. We wish to avoid confusion between the image we are searching for and such images as post-traumatic flashbacks or psychotic images. The researcher will follow Horowitz's (1983) distinctions between the different kinds of images.

Participants will be of both sexes and of various ethnic backgrounds. (One secondary purpose of this study is to see whether these main images exist in persons of different nationalities.) An attempt will be made to balance the number of females and males.

It is expected that some participants will prefer to express themselves in Spanish, since some of the subjects will be of Hispanic background. Translations of verbal and/or written information will be made by the researcher.

A three month follow-up will be included in order to determine whether the memory image chosen continues to be the subject's main memory image. The reason for this is that what was once considered the most important memory image may later turn out to be the wrong one. The subject will simply be asked whether the image recalled continues to be the same one. Results will be considered tentative only.

It is possible that a subject will have more than one main memory image. This occurs when various images are equally significant. At times, images will have a common theme, or follow a sequence. It is even possible that a group of images will form something similar to a collage. However, when this occurs, the images tend to have some form of unity, revolve around a particular period in life, or even reflect a view of the world. The researcher will be open to other possibilities. Absolute claims about, what has been, such an elusive and even debatable mental phenomenon, cannot be made at this time.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since there is no concept like the main memory image in the literature, this study will represent an inquiry into, what appears to be, a new idea. The topic of mental imagery is not new, but the idea that there is a most significant memory image which is meaningful and can contribute to healing or self-understanding, is new. That it is an ontological entity is also made explicit in this study, perhaps for the first time.

If such a phenomenon exists, and if it is meaningful and conducive to well-being and/or self-understanding, then it may be employed as a psychotherapeutic tool. If it is universal, then it can be applied to any individual in the

world. We know from the literature that mental imagery exists in all races, whether they are "primitive" or not. They are also present in children, and possible future studies may wish to focus on this population.

This study is significant because it is an initial attempt to discover an inner source of healing and wholeness within the person. It is economical and uncomplicated. The procedure is relatively simple, but the results could make a difference in the life of an individual.

The main memory image (or images) can be used as a diagnostic instrument, while simultaneously serving as a form of treatment. It can also be a source of meaning for the individual. In this sense it would be another means of addressing the problem of "existential vacuum" which Frankl (1985) refers to, and as such, it would have clinical usefulness. It may also serve as a source of inner support, since the subject can refer to it in times of need. (In the researchers's clinical experience the use of this image has been critical in emergency or crisis situations during actual sessions.) Because it can lead the subject to another level of awareness, he or she carries a deeper cognitive appraisal of the self and its place in the world. It may help clarify who one is and what one's relation to the world is. A most significant memory image would represent that individual within a particular time and place. It would represent the individual within a

meaningful period in the world. The image reproduces a past event, but it is not just a past event; the person is going through a real present experience. The image has meaning in the present.

The literature lets us know (and clinical experience also) that memory images are accompanied by feelings. This would also be true of the main memory image. It is known through Freud (1972), and later writers, such as Alice Miller (1981), that therapeutic results are obtained when a traumatic memory is accompanied by the feeling that was originally present. However, most memory images are not traumatic at all, yet they can still be accompanied by original feelings, new ones or mixed. A memory image, as a form of cognition, is not an isolated mental event, it also partakes of affect. This is why a memory image can emotionally move the individual and even lead him or her to some form of action. Sometimes they carry a "lesson" for the individual, which influences future ideas and behaviors.

A meaningful memory image can give a person the opportunity to come in touch with hidden resources of self-knowledge, while also serving as a linking phenomenon within the inner life of the individual. As an internal phenomenological link, it could contribute to a better understanding of the meaning of one's existence.

Since memory images can have a symbolic function, they may allow the individual to transcend internal dynamics

and/or experiences that have no apparent logic, or seem too disconnected. The capacity of the ego to synthesize and integrate experience may explain the syncretic function of imagery which Werner (1973) refers to, and this in turn would explain the potential symbolic function of the mental image. All this means that the resources for symbolization, transcendence, and meaning are within the individual. They only need to be tapped and understood. The memory image we are searching for is one possible way of achieving this, and here lies a great deal of its significance.

1.5 Analysis of the Data

The information gathered in the interviews will be presented as direct quotes, synthesized into a profile which will attempt to maintain the integrity and meaning of the subject's verbal expressions.

Consideration will also be given to non-verbal information because it can contribute significantly in understanding the individual experience. This may involve descriptions of personal experiences (which could include clinical data) and other information relevant to this inquiry. All this, of course, within the context of anonymity.

The profiles will be studied in order to identify important themes, topics, and process elements. The analysis

will be mainly inductive, which allows these elements to emerge from the information given by the participant.

Recurrent themes, topics, and processes will be gathered to discover important similarities within the individual experiences. Differences that are significant will also be addressed. The analysis of differences and similarities will always be referred to the three main research questions which inquire into the existence, meaning, and therapeutic value of the main memory image.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Generalizations are not possible from a sample of ten subjects. However, this study is an initial inquiry and not an attempt to prove something. Even the follow-up results are not conclusive relative to this sample. Nevertheless, the information gathered may be a source of motivation for further inquiry.

Mental images are not tangible phenomena and they can be influenced by a number of internal and external stimuli. Recalling a main memory image within a limited time span could also affect the reliability of the participant's report. However, this situation is not necessarily limited to this study, but it is also a reality in general clinical situations, such as the mental status examination, diagnostics, and history taking in which reliability is

frequently an issue. A study into memory imagery should be willing to consider a possible indetermination factor precisely because of the intangible nature of such imagery.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 The Philosophical Background: Imagery, Imagination, and Fantasy

The subject of mental imagery has an extensive tradition and history. Most works on imagery do not include a study of its background. The reader may often erroneously believe that the topic of mental imagery is a contemporary phenomenon. In reality, it is centuries old. It was taken very seriously by philosophers of Antiquity, and it continued to be addressed in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and in later periods.

This chapter is an attempt to give a brief history of mental imagery within various disciplines. By doing this it is hoped that the reader will gain a perspective that will allow him or her to link the particular memory image we are searching for with this historical tradition.

Representative moments and figures have been chosen. The subject is vast, therefore, selection has been necessary.

The chapter has been divided into different sections. The first two sections give the philosophical background

which includes the definition of meaning to be employed in this inquiry. Why is meaning defined? Because it can be an elusive and vague concept and we certainly wish to avoid this. These are followed by a psychological section, another on the neurology of imagery and a brief note on imagery in literature and science.

This author considers that the subject of mental imagery is a serious one. This is why the philosophical and historical background has been given importance.

There is no concept similar to main memory images in the literature, except, to a limited extent, in Alfred Adler's use of the earliest childhood memory a person can remember, and in Ira Progoff's "central image." (They will be discussed in the psychological section of this chapter.) However, much has been written on imagery, imagination, ontology, and metaphysics. These topics revolve around, and have led to its conceptualization. Since it is a mental and memory image, it has been necessary to study the ideas of others on these topics in the hope that they will shed some light on it.

It is in the philosophers of Antiquity where we find the first references to mental imagery and its relationship to memory. Philosophers of later periods continue to address these topics in their writings.

We usually call images representations of things. In Democritus and Epicurus images (eidola) are representations

of things "sent" to our senses (Ferrater Mora, 1975c). Lucretius defines the images (simulacra) of things as "a sort of outer skin perpetually peeled off the surfaces of objects and flying about this way and that through the air." He then adds: "These we must denote as an outer skin or film, because each particular floating image wears the aspect and form of the object from whose body it has emanated" (1964, p. 131). The terms imagines (Cicero), figurae (Quintillian), and spectra (the Epicurean Catius) have the same meaning as eidola and simulacra (Ferrater Mora, 1975d).

In the Theaetatus Plato says that memory images are impressed on our being as if on a wax tablet. In another work (The Republic) he discusses "fantasy" which is employed in a similar sense as imagination in other writers. However, for him fantasy is the representation of "appearance." In this sense it is opposed to knowledge of being or reality, since what appears is only a shadow or reflection of the "real thing." Plato tends to consider fantasy as a manifestation of "opinion" (doxa or "appearance" as mere semblance) which creates simple "images" or eidola (Ferrater Mora, 1975b).

For Aristotle "it is impossible even to think without mental images" (Manser, 1967). This point is also made in his treatise On the Soul: "For the soul's never thinking without an image" (1986, p. 208). In this same work he

defines imagination as "a movement coming from the activity of sense-perception (1986, p. 200). The term he uses for imagination means "how the object appears," whether the object is present or absent and only in thought. In On Memory and Recollection he links imagination to memory: "It is obvious, then, that memory belongs to that part of the soul to which imagination belongs; all things which are imaginable are objects of memory, and those which necessarily involve imagination are objects of memory only incidentally" (1967, p. 295). Finally he adds an important comment in which he states that memory is part of the "primary sense-faculty, i.e., that with which we perceive time" (1967, p. 297).

The Greek Stoics employed the term "cataleptic fantasy" to refer to fantasy in the sense of apparition, image, or representation. "Cataleptic" designates the action of apprehending or taking possession of something. The Stoics distinguished between true and false appearances. There are two kinds of true representations: those caused by objects which produce an image corresponding to the object and those caused by objects in an external and fortuitous manner. The first represent cataleptic fantasies because they involve the signs and criteria of truth. The second are non-cataleptic fantasies because they do not have these signs and criteria. Cataleptic fantasies form the basis of reflective assent and knowledge in its true sense.

Non-cataleptic fantasies do not lead to knowledge (Ferrater Mora, 1975a).

In a certain sense, image and representation have the same meaning. Imagination is, in its true sense, a representation. Etymologically, imagination is a re-presentation of something. This re-presentation is necessary in order to organize the things that present themselves to the subject. Knowledge would not be possible without the re-presentations that imagination make possible (Ferrater Mora, 1975d).

The close relationship between knowledge and imagination may seem strange, since imagination has frequently been associated with mere fantasizing. However, various modern authors have pointed to the important relationship between them. In Hume (1987), for example, imagination has the freedom to "transpose and change its ideas." In the same paragraph he adds: "Wherever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily produce a separation" (1987, p. 57). For him there is no combination of ideas without the faculty of imagination. Kant (1973) finds that imagination produces a "synthesis" of the diversity of the given which is not by itself knowledge, but without which knowledge is not possible.

In the Middle Ages fantasy and imagination were given similar, if not identical, meaning. Some philosophers, especially of the Neoplatonic tradition, considered fantasy

as an intellectual or predominantly intellectual activity. Others, following Saint Augustine, considered fantasy to be related more to sensibility than to the intellect. Among the Thomists it was common to distinguish between sensible fantasy and intellectual fantasy, although it was more common to consider it a sensible faculty. Fantasy produces "phantasmata" which can be of various types: images which reproduce sensations; images related to possible types of knowledge; appearances that do not correspond to external objects. In the last case fantasy is pure imagination. In the other cases fantasy is a combining faculty which can serve as an auxiliary in the formation of ideas (Ferrater Mora, 1975b).

Aquinas (1945), following Augustine, considers that imagination and intellect are different only in their functions. For him body and soul are a unity, and the imagination is part of this whole. His view of the person is holistic, a view that will change with Descartes. For the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1956) the function of the imagination is to "retain impressions by the senses, to combine them, and chiefly to form images" (p. 225). But it cannot be relied upon to test the reality of a thing; it "perceives nothing except bodies, or properties inherent in bodies" (pp. 130-131). Nevertheless, perfection of imagination is necessary for prophecy. The condition of the imagination depends on the condition of the organ that is

related to it. Here again we find the typical Medieval holistic view of the person.

For some time fantasy and imagination were practically equivalent. In the eighteenth century fantasy was considered to be unbridled imagination. Nevertheless, if fantasy contributed to creativity it was not looked down upon. Frequently, fantasy was considered to be the productive and creative element in imagination. During the period of German idealism (particularly Fichte and Schelling) it was difficult to tell whether writers were referring to a creative fantasy or a productive imagination (Ferrater Mora, 1975b).

At about this time, Kant (1973) describes two functions of imagination: imagination can re-present "signs of concepts of long ago," and can also "reproduce the image and form of an object, taken from a large number of objects of different classes or of one and same class" (1973, pp. 217-18). His word for imagination is *Einbildungskraft*, a word which suggests the ability to form mental pictures. As noted above, in Kant, imagination synthesizes the manifold of appearances and perceptions. Without it we cannot apply concepts to sense experience.

In Hume (1987) ideas are defined as images. For him imagination is an image-making faculty and plays a crucial role in thinking. It reproduces impressions which enable us to think about things in their absence. There are strong

indications (especially in Book I) that ideas are mental pictures, which indicates that he sees imagination as that which enables the person to see things "in the mind's eye." He distinguishes imagination from memory in terms of vividness and strength. Memory images are more vivid than imagination images. Another difference is that memory reproduces images in the same order as the original impressions, whereas imagination can "transpose and change its ideas." To remember something is to have a particular kind of mental experience in the form of a mental image distinct from any other kind of image or idea.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century we see in Coleridge that imagination has three potentialities: the power to conjure up a mental image; the power to make us see the image as universally significant; the power to elicit in the subject profound feelings in the presence of the image. Imagination allows the individual to have glimpses of truth. However, these are not truths about the external world. They are truths about the individual, since in our observation of the world we are really making observations about ourselves. Similar to Kant, he believed that the function of imagination was to unify disparate and opposite elements, and that only through mental images could we represent to ourselves the way in which a general concept could be applied to what we experience (Warnock, 1978). It is Wordsworth who attributes to the poet an intensified

version of what every person experiences as imagination. Imagination has an image-making role. It reproduces things "in the mind's eye;" it allows one to think them and feel them when they are absent. Images are impressed on the mind by intense experiences. Mental images which are impressed by deep emotions cannot be separated from them. This fact becomes clear after a careful reading of Wordsworth's "The Pedlar." In this poem (as in other writings) he expresses the idea "that we can understand things only if we can form images of them in the mind," as Warnock puts it (1978, p. 116). As one comes to understand the emotion one also understands the image or the object of the emotion. When we see through the inner eye we can focus upon meaningful images and form them precisely because of their significance. This suggests that the feeling associated with the image may be stronger in the absence of the object, or we are allowed more time to comprehend it (Warnock, 1978).

It is especially relevant to our study that Wordsworth experiences, in the description of the landscape image in the poem "Tintern Abbey," a sense of "restoration, which has led him to an understanding of the life of things," and a "healing understanding," which he wishes for Dorothy. Nature alone will not have this effect, even if ecstatically experienced. This is only possible when nature is mediated by the capability to retain images. It is this capacity of

retaining images what affects the way we perceive things in the present moment. He attributed to imagination the capacity to reproduce, create, and understand. Through it the person could even understand the universe, its life, and meaning (Warnock, 1978).

As we enter the twentieth century, the subject of mental imagery continues to be of interest to many philosophers, but it will be one of frequent disagreement.

For Ryle (1949) "there are no such objects as mental pictures, and even if there were such objects, seeing them would still not be the same thing as seeming to see faces or mountains" (1949, p. 254). He denies that there is a "Faculty of Imagination," and claims that "imaging is not only not any sort of observing of anything; it is also not having a sensation of a special sort" (1949, p. 255).

Shorter (1964) considers that "we are tempted to think of images as things, though of a special sort. Like pictures, it seems that they can be regarded in two ways, as objects in their own right as well as representations of other things" (1964, p. 167). Many of his arguments are directed against Ryle who, for example, considered visualizing a "sham." Shorter has it that "visualizing is not sham-anything" (1964, p. 160).

Wittgenstein concedes that persons have mental images but that these are not private metaphysical or immaterial things. His purpose is to demystify the mental image

Mitchell, 1986). He denied that mental images could "give meaning" to a word. One is reminded of Berkeley's idea that in some instances thought could take place without images because at times there are images that do not correspond to certain words of our vocabulary (Manser, 1967). This is, as we may notice, contrary to Aristotle's notion that thought is not possible without mental images.

Image is defined by Sartre (1968) as "an act that envisions as an actual body an absent or non-existent object by means of physical or mental content, but which appears only through an analogical representative of the envisioned object" (1968, p. 68). A mental image has no objectivity. It cannot be seen because to see an object is to localize it in space. Mental images are separate from surrounding objects. They envision real things, but by no means of a mental content. Sartre believes they are analogues of other objects. For him, all mental acts are synthesis, they are form, and have structure. Images are a "certain kind of consciousness." The mental image is an act and not a thing. It is consciousness of something (Sartre, 1973).

The philosophical literature on imagery is extensive. However, there is no concept with the intention of the main memory image (or images). Bergson (1963) writes that there are always some memories that are predominant. Main memory images are among these predominant, or most significant memory images.

2.2 The Philosophical Background: Ontology, Meaning, and History

Significant memory images are not simply psychological phenomena. They are also ontological in nature. Ontology is the science of being. In each person being is a unity. According to Van Steenberghen (1952), "every being is one or undivided in so far as it exists" (p. 53). It is this sense of unity what impels one to think of the individual as having a self, not many selves. Deviations from this sense of unity are considered to be pathological, since the subject would not have a genuine sense of wholeness. Our culture is especially prone to a breakdown in the self in the form of neurosis and psychosis, as Freud has pointed out in *Civilization and its Discontents*, for example.

Sartre (1973) points out that there is an ontological law which states that there are two kinds of existence: existence as a thing of the world, and existence as consciousness. Memory images are a part of the latter, though they originate in the subject's interaction with the external world (this interaction itself being dynamic and complex). They come about as a result of being-in-the-world. In Heidegger (1961) it is through Dasein (being there) that a person's self-history is possible. By Dasein he meant "man's conscious, historical existence in the world, which is projected into a there beyond its here" (p. 8).

Since memory is historical and ontological, so are memory images. These are more than just psychological phenomena. They are historical, ontological, and symbolic. The fact that they have meaning points to their transcendent nature. Dasein (being-there), as a historical entity, is an opening to the world. It is what allows the child to experience daily life events, and experience them in different degrees of significance. As an adult, the individual can recall these significant events even those that are not as significant. Because daily events occur in space and time, the memory image will be a picture of a moment in space and time (or space-time, as Toynbee would allow). Memory images are usually mental pictures of a particular time and place. They are inner landscapes that can appear before the mind's eye at will.

It is interesting that Sartre (1943), following Hegel, believes that essence is found in the past. If we translate this to the person, we may conclude by agreeing with Adler (1980) that what a person can become is already prefigured in childhood, as seen through the earliest memory a person can recall. One would also agree with Progoff (1973a, 1973b) that what the individual can become is already present in the "central image" or "protoplasmic image" that guides the individual toward the achievement of his or her potential being. In this sense, one's being is already prefigured in the past and so is one's essence.

Memory images are actually experiences in the present. They refer to a past event, but their presence is always an actuality. You do not see or feel in the past, but in the present. Their meaning is also for the present. A similar concept is found in Wilbur (1979) and Watts. Wilbur says that "memory is itself a present experience" (1979, p. 67). Watts informs us that "you know the past only in the present and as part of the present" (Wilbur, p. 67). This idea is found in Medieval mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Nicolas de Cusa, and Dante (Wilbur, 1979). For these mystics there is no independent present or future, they only coincide in an always present moment.

That memory images are present realities is understood by psychotherapists since Freud. Most psychological and psychosomatic illnesses contain pathological memories, associated with trauma, guilt or loss, for example. The signs and symptoms are experienced in the present, not in the past. The association of pathological memory, affect, and somatization in hysteria was elucidated by Freud (1972), and it is a clear example of present suffering due to negative memory images, disturbed feelings, and somatic manifestations. Freud's therapy consisted in undoing such images so that they would never again appear before the patient's "eyes."

The particular memory image we wish to find must be meaningful for the subject. Dilthey (1962) has given us a

clear definition of meaning within the life of the person. He writes as follows: "Meaning is the special relation which the parts have to the whole within a life. We recognize this meaning as we do that of words in a sentence, through memory and the potentialities of the future. The nature of the meaning relations lies in the pattern of a life formed in time by the interaction between a living structure and the environment" (1962, p. 107). This definition is important in our study because it captures the sense of meaning that will underly the memory image we are searching for.

The theme of meaning in life has been stressed by a number of authors such as Frankl (1969, 1985), and Bettelheim (1971, 1977). For Frankl "man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life" (1969, p. 154). A person is moved to act upon the world because there is a meaningful purpose behind the action itself. Without meaning a person would suffer from an unbearable "existential vacuum."

Bettelheim affirms that "if we hope to live not just for the moment, but also in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives" (1977, p. 3). He considers that meaning in life is achieved as a result of a long development, and that the coming to this meaning should be the criteria for psychological maturity. He also

finds in fairy tales a source of meaning for children because they describe psychological states by means of images and actions, and they represent a significant growth experience (Bettelheim, 1977).

Meaning adds a dimension to reality that would not exist if it were not given by someone. It is a phenomenon that encompasses the individual and the world. As phenomena of consciousness, memory images have meaning. Those that we identify the most with are particularly important because they represent deeper aspects of our self and our existence.

The Spanish philosopher Zubiri (1982) has said that "man is always the same while not staying the same" (1982, p. 134). This is possible because "history is a succession of modes of being in reality" (1982, p. 147). In his view the self is a historical entity. A fundamental concept in his thinking is the idea of "sentient intelligence." It is a faculty "metaphysically" composed of two potentials: the potential to feel and the potential to capture through intelligence (*inteligir*). As a capacitating process, history is a part of sentient intelligence. Through history a person is open to reality, and since this is achieved sentientially, it is a gradual aperture (Zubiri, 1982).

The significance of these concepts for our purposes is that memory images then become the product of an ontological unity of feeling and intelligence (or of a feeling intelligence). It is the unification of these two

capacities that make possible the original experiences that form main memory images. These memory images are historical precisely because sentient intelligence includes historical reality within it. Zubiri's concept implies a unity of feeling and intellect. In this sense, it is contrary to the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. It can also be helpful in understanding feeling and cognition in clinical practice. The clinician would avoid thinking in dualistic terms. It also would explain why mental images are cognitive and effective at the same time, and why they can be so laden with meaning.

2.3 The Psychological Background

The psychological literature on imagery is very extensive. There is no definite or conclusive theory about mental imagery. Nevertheless, most students agree upon its existence, and many use imagery as therapy; some even believe that it can be a critical ingredient in achievement (in sports, examinations, and presentations, for example). Images are recommended by Lusser Rico (1983) to enhance creative writing. It is also employed by the Catholic Charismatics by imagining Jesus healing the person that is ill (Csordas, 1988).

Greenspan (1986) tells us that at age two the child can form a mental image of his or her mother when she is not

present, or of a favorite teddy bear. Piaget (1968) points out that there is no evocative memory before age one-and-a-half or two because it requires mental images or language, some form of preoperational or operational representation. Piaget and Inhelder consider that "mental images are merely a system of symbols which provide a more or less accurate but, generally speaking, delayed translation of the subject's preoperatory or operatory level of comprehension" (1969, p. 79). The preoperatory level occurs before the age of seven or eight, while the operatory, or stage of concrete operations, is present after this age. Before age seven or eight, mental images are "static;" after this age they are "kinetic" and "transformational," which result from anticipations or reanticipations that are themselves based on operatory comprehension (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969).

For Arieti (1967) a memory image is a memory trace which represents something. To be evoked it does not require the corresponding external object. Following Susanne Langer, he considers mental images to be "one of the first symbols" (1967, p. 62). Images are one of the earliest and most significant foundations of human symbolism. Rollo May (1983) writes that symbols allow us to transcend immediate and concrete situations. Whitehead (1959) points out that although symbols do not create their own meaning, they nevertheless discover it for us.

The formation of images is in reality the basis for higher mental processes. Through it the subject not only recalls something, but can also evoke a corresponding feeling. In Arieti's words, "images soon constitute the basic level of the inner psychic reality, which in human psychology is as important as, and in some respects more important than, external reality. Imagery helps the individual not only to understand the world better, but also to create a surrogate for it. Whatever is known or experienced tends to become a part of the individual who knows and experiences" (1967, p. 63).

As a result of studying Jaensch's experiments on eidetic imagery, Werner (1973) concludes that memory and fantasy imagery arise out of the primordial and undifferentiated functional unity between the sensory and imaginative fields. He believes that in primitive man images and percepts are less differentiated in respect to each other than in modern man. In primitive man imaginative processes are syncretic to a higher degree. There is also a closer connection between emotion and memory image. In children there is a similar situation, since a child's memory is strongly affected by feelings. This unification of affect and memory images is found in modern adults also, but to a lesser degree.

One can assume that the extent of unification of affect and memory image would depend on the status of the ego

functions. Bellak and Hurvich (1969) have studied twelve ego functions systematically. Most (if not all) of the ego functions participate in the memory image process. Some of the functions that are surely present are, for example, the synthetic integrative function, thought processes, and reality testing.

Memory images appear to be preconscious phenomena. For Freud (1969) all thought processes have the "quality of being preconscious" (p. 19). When someone is asked to recollect a past event and visualize it in the mind's eye and describe it, what is taking place is a preconscious process. It seems to be a borderline phenomenon between the unconscious (because of the image which is reminiscent of dreams) and the thought that underlies it (which is reminiscent of cognitive thought processes). Kris (1964) describes preconscious mental processes as constituting a continuum which reaches from "purposeful reflection to fantasy, and from logical formulations to dream-like imagery (1964, p. 311). Memory images would fall within this continuum.

2.3.1 The Imagery Debate

For centuries it has been understood that mental images exist. Not only are they present in dreams, but also in day-dreaming and memory.

In Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, imagination, sensation, digestion, and reason were considered among the faculties of the soul. The practice of medicine was truly "holistic." In Aristotle imagination has a physiological arousal function, a conception that reappears in later historical periods. His view implied a unity of mind and body. In the Renaissance, mental images are linked to pathogenesis and are included in the practice of humoral pathology. It is with Descartes' dualistic philosophy, the split between mind and body, that this holistic view is questioned. Imagination, as an aspect of the mind, will become disengaged from the body. By the eighteenth century, psychosomatic medicine is banned from official medical practice, and in the following century, it has no place within the mainstream mechanistic medical view. Few practitioners (Cabanis, for example) followed the unitary view of mind and body (McMahon and Sheikh, 1986).

It is with the Wurzburg school of psychologists that imageless thought is conceived. A person can imagine something, but the judgement that affirms or denies its existence is not itself portrayed by an image. According to this school, not everyone has images, and those who do, have different introspections about them. Imagery in an experimental situation could not be reliably defined. There was no agreement as to what experiencing images was. Mental imagery in psychology was filed away for about fifty years

because it was considered to be a mere vague mental epiphenomenon (Gardner, 1985).

In recent years Zenon Pylyshyn (1981) has consistently attacked the idea that imagery deserves consideration as a distinct form of mental representation. He believes that mental images are only products of symbolically encoded rules and propositions. A person has sections of knowledge encoded in propositions and employs them in order to construct what phenomenologically seems to be an image. His view is that images are epiphenomena which appear when other reasoning and memory processes interact. They do not constitute a faculty of the brain.

It appears that the main target of Pylyshyn has been Stephen Kosslyn's theory of imagery (Kosslyn, 1981). In summary, the theory states that long-term visual memory structures retain information regarding the appearances of objects. As occurs in other long-term memory structures, a person is not aware of this information except when it is being accessed or manipulated by processes which include: 1. those that "generate" or create the image in the visual buffer from information retained in long-term visual memory; 2. those that "inspect" the visual image by converting the patterns of activation in the visual buffer into organized percepts, while identifying sections and relations within the image; 3. those processes that "transform" the image through rotation or change of location.

Following Luria's concept of imagery as a "functional system" of the brain, and Kosslyn's theory, Martha Farah (1984) proposes the hypothesis that "imagery is a faculty or system of the brain, made up of identifiable subsystems that each have a direct neurological instantiation" (1984, p. 246). It is this view that guides her in her study of the neurological basis of mental imagery (discussed below).

Another researcher that has been the target of Pylyshyn is Roger Shepard. Shepard and Cooper (1984) discover through their experiments on imagined rotation of objects that "the mind can model physical processes, subjecting them to the geometric constraints that hold in the external world" (Cooper and Shepard, 1984, p. 106). They conclude that it is possible that this has occurred as a consequence of evolutionary processes during which structures and movements in the physical world have been incorporated into the human perceptual system. They compare this internalized capacity to model external events to Chomsky's concept of innate schematisms which serve as the foundation of language.

2.3.2 The Neurology of Mental Imagery

While surgically treating patients with temporal lobe epilepsy, Penfield (1975) discovered that electrical stimulation of the interpretive areas of the cortex

sometimes caused them to recall events of the past. He would stimulate areas such as the first temporal convolution below the fissure of Sylvius of the right temporal lobe which would cause the patient to hear a voice of someone from the past. These responses he called "experiential" because they were recollections of lived experiences. These experiences were not necessarily significant ones. He found that the hippocampus plays a very important role in memory. "The hippocampi seem to store keys-of-access to the record of the stream of consciousness. With the interpretive cortex, they make possible the scanning and the recall of experiential memory" (1975, p. 36).

The important role of the hippocampus in memory is also stressed by Winson (1985) and Young (1988). Following O'Keefe and Nadel, Young says that inputs to the hippocampus build a memory and "cognitive map" organized around particular coordinates, such as data about time and place, individual needs and characteristics of other persons (Young, 1988).

It is generally thought that the right hemisphere produces and analyzes mental images, while the left hemisphere specializes in abstract and verbal functions. Lesions of the right hemisphere produce major deficiencies in tests of mental imagery (Changeux, 1985). However, Changeux reminds us that each hemisphere has "functional sensory areas" and that both hemispheres interrelate through

more than two hundred million axons of the corpus callosum. There may be a right-left oscillation between hemispheres. With activation of the frontal lobes there is a movement from front to rear. Positron-emission tomography (PET scanning) has allowed researchers to observe this movement (Changeux, 1985).

Cases studied by Farah (1984) who were inferred to have damage to the image generation processes were found to show a trend in lesion sites. Although an anatomical locus was not found for long-term visual memories, inductive evidence suggests that the posterior left hemisphere is critical for the image generation process. Again, it is generally assumed that imagery is a right hemisphere function. This view, however, does not apply to image generation in itself, but to diverse forms such as "spatial ability" and higher visual perceptual processes.

2.3.3 Imagery and Psychotherapy

The role of mental imagery in pathology and healing has a long history. In Aristotle imagination is a faculty of the soul, which was considered the source of motivation and action. The Stoics were aware of its influence. Marcus Aurelius admonishes the reader to "wipe out the imagination," and follow "rational principles" (1927, p. 140). Nevertheless, he finds in dreams remedies for

"bloodspitting and giddiness" (1927, p. 74). Seneca (1968) recommends to his depressed friend Serrenus moderation, patience, and recreation in the country, and that he stop imagining that he lives an unfortunate life. He prescribes faith in himself, and that he believe that he can follow the correct path in life.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, physicians understood that there was a relationship between imagination and pathogenesis (McMahon and Sheikh, 1986). Weyer, who died in 1588, saw the connection between abnormal fantasies and illness (Zilboorg, 1967). After Descartes, the sense organs begin to play a greater role in medicine, and imagination becomes of secondary importance.

It is not until the twentieth century that the role of mental imagery as a therapeutic tool is really understood. Freud was aware of the role which pathological memories had in the etiology of hysteria. He found that hysterical symptoms immediately disappeared when the patient recalled and verbally expressed the underlying process and events, together with the accompanying affect in as much detail as possible (Freud, 1972).

Alfred Adler (1980) developed a technique which used the earliest childhood memory. Early childhood recollections express an individual's style of life in its beginnings. Adler believes that childhood memories are near to the main interest of the individual. If the main

interest is known, then the goal and lifestyle can also be known. He tells us the following: "The first memory will show the individual's fundamental view of life; his first satisfactory crystallization of his attitude. It offers us an opportunity to see at one glance what he has taken as the starting point for his development. I would never investigate a personality without asking for the first memory" (1980, p. 75). His patients would have visual memories of their childhood combined with other senses. Adler's technique, and rationale, are perhaps the closest thing to the mental phenomenon I have called the main memory image (or images).

Assagioli (1986) is well known for his formulation of psychosynthesis, and his visualizing techniques. He finds that visualization is useful in developing concentration in its initial stages, as an incentive to creative imagination, and it facilitates the effective use of symbolic visualization. Imagination is reproductive and evocative. The former refers to recollection of real past events. The second is creative because you can combine different images, whether they refer to real past events or not.

Progoff (1973a, 1973b) has based his idea of the "central image" on the theory of the development of organisms of the biologist Sinnot. He believes that the active principle working in the human organism is an image

guiding the growth of the personality and providing the basis for the entire functioning of the psyche (1973a, p. 181). This guiding image is the "protoplasmic image" and it guides the organism to its fullest potential. This guiding image is similar to Jung's archetypes, the "underlying patterns of imagery at the depths of the psyche" (1973a, p. 193). For him "imagery in movement" is the essence of the psyche. These images which allow for intimations of truth and which guide the person can be experienced as visual, auditory, or through any of the other senses. Their meanings are not expressed in specific or logical terms; meanings are portrayed. This portrayal includes an atmosphere that represents emotions, since these are not stated explicitly (Progoff, 1973b).

Progoff's therapeutic program includes three essentials: "participation in a dialogue relationship with a second person who acts as evoker and guide in the development of the psyche; the maintenance of a psychological workbook which focuses and embodies the lonely work necessary for personal growth; and involvement in the multiple dialogue of a group workshop" (1973b, p. 203).

Lazarus (1984) sees the importance of mental imagery in a number of areas: in developing self-confidence, increasing energy and stamina, and for tapping sources of productivity. He recommends that imagery be accompanied by relaxation because the use of images will be more effective. Imagery

is useful in the treatment of phobias, psychosomatic disorders, depression, habits, and many other problems. He describes specific treatment techniques.

Horowitz (1983) considers the following uses of images in psychotherapy: 1. as a source of information, 2. they facilitate the establishment of empathic understanding, 3. they evoke expression of and working through of usually repressed themes of conflict or unintegrated themes, 4. they change moods by modifying attitudes that predominate in organizing thinking, feeling, and action. He distinguishes between different kinds of mental imagery, and stresses the importance of art therapy. He proposes a number of therapeutic visualization techniques.

Imagery may be useful in the treatment of patients with memory impairment due to left hemisphere dysfunction (Squire, 1986). It is also employed by a number of contemporary therapists. To mention only a few techniques: psycho-imagination therapy (Shorr, 1986), eidetic psychotherapy (Sheikh, 1986), and emotive-reconstructive psychotherapy (Morrison, 1986).

2.4 The Concept of Imagery in Soseki and the Use of Imagery in Science

Art and science have employed imagery for centuries. What follows represents only a few examples of its use.

It may be instructive to know what the Japanese novelist Natsume Soseki (deceased in 1916) has to say about imagery in his novel The Three-Cornered World: "Strip off from the world all those cares and worries which make it an unpleasant place in which to live, and picture before you instead a world of graciousness. You now have music, a painting, or poetry, or sculpture. I would go farther, and say that it is not even necessary to make this vision a reality. Merely conjure up the image before your eyes, and poetry will burst into life and songs pour forth. Before even committing your thoughts to paper, you will feel the crystal tinkling, as of a tiny bell, well up within you; and the whole range of colours will of their own accord, and in all their brilliance, imprint themselves on your mind's eye, though your canvas stands on its easel, as yet untouched by the brush. It is enough that you are able to take this view of life, and see this decadent, sullied and vulgar world purified and beautiful in the camera of your innermost soul" (Soseki, p. 13).

I think Soseki has understood the function of imagery well. In his view it is a powerful capacity of the soul which can transform the world and make it more beautiful and enjoyable. Such an idea, coming from a novelist, should not surprise us, since artists really know what mental images are because they are always guided by them in their creative work. Scientists are also frequently guided by mental

images in their research (e.g., cosmology, quantum physics). The function of mental imagery in scientific thought has been studied by Holton (1979) and Miller (1984). Both authors have focused on Einstein's use of imagination in his construction of a mental picture of the universe (Weltbild). Miller has given attention to the use of imagination in the development of the physical theories of Poincare, Heisenberg, Bohr, and others. According to Miller, it was Einstein's combined use of visual thinking and concepts that made possible, for example, the invention of the relativity of simultaneity.

The use of imagination in the work of Hawking and Feynman has also been pointed out by Kaku and Trainer (1987) who state that these scientists think "in terms of pictures that express the essential physical concept" (p. 154). In describing Feynman's quantum concepts Hawking (1988) points out the use of "imaginary numbers"

in the calculation of "imaginary time" which has the effect of making the distinction between time and space disappear.

It is not difficult to conceive the possibility that mental imagery played an important role in the creation of the geocentric and heliocentric theories, the Big Bang theory, the expanding universe theory, and lately, of the string theory. A picture in the mind must have preceded the drawing on paper. We know that there are mathematical relationships that underly the structure of these theories

(or of any other physical theory), but models of the cosmos must have an imaginary component because no one has seen the universe in its totality. We can only make a mental picture of the cosmos. This is also true concerning the quantum levels of the physical world. What is inaccessible through the senses can be approached through the imagination. One is reminded of Einstein's famous dictum that "imagination is greater than knowledge."

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been an attempt to show that the subject of mental imagery has a long history. It was a topic in Greek philosophy, in Medieval and Renaissance thought, and it was an issue of controversy in later periods. Romantics such as Coleridge and Wordsworth believed in the importance and power of imagination. In the twentieth century it becomes a theme of controversy among philosophers and psychologists.

It was understood by physicians and philosophers of different periods that the imagination could influence a person's physical and psychological health. Freud understood that there was a direct relationship between traumatic memories and hysteria. He found (with Breuer) that symptoms of the illness would disappear when in hypnosis the patient could be made to remember the situation

and the associative connections under which the trauma first appeared, provided the patient was allowed to freely express his or her emotions. The hysteric suffered from reminiscences. It was through the interpretation of dreams that Freud found a means of reaching the unconscious. We know that memories and dreams will usually present themselves in the form of mental images. In later chapters the role of mental imagery in psychoanalytic theory and object relations theory will be briefly discussed.

It is significant that mental imagery has a neurological basis. There are implications for diagnosis and treatment which will also be discussed in a later section of this study.

That imagery is crucial in the creation of art, literature, and in the development of certain scientific theories is a fact taken for granted by many. A mental image can serve as a blueprint for developing artistic and scientific concepts. It is surely difficult to conceive that writers like Dante, Cervantes, or Tolstoy would write their works without the use of mental imagery. This should also be true of the scientific models of Copernicus, Bohr, and Einstein.

This chapter has attempted to emphasize the meaningfulness of mental imagery. Our study represents another attempt to apply mental imagery to a better understanding of ourselves. It also tries to determine

possible applications and implications for clinical work.
This should become clearer in subsequent sections of this
inquiry.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Design of the Study

Following Patton (1986), the general methodological form of this section of the inquiry contained three major strategies. First, it included a holistic approach which means that the design was open to gathering data on any number of aspects addressed by the inquiry in order to put together as complete a picture as possible, not only regarding the description of the image and the discussion around it, but also the nonverbal information it included. Second, the approach was inductive in that it began with specific data which developed toward more global patterns. In this way categories or dimensions of the analysis were naturalistic because no attempt was made by the researcher to manipulate the setting, and there were no prior constraints on what the inquiry outcomes would be.

Contact with subjects was personal and experiential. The focus was on quality since detail, depth, and individual uniqueness were areas of major interest. The interview

format allowed the data or information to emerge from the participant's frame of reference. The underlying assumption to this approach was that the information given would be meaningful, understandable, and capable of being made explicit.

Because of time limitations, and since it was desirable to elicit the same general information from each subject, a standardized open-ended interview format was employed. The interview questions were written in advance in the exact way they were to be asked. It was hoped that with this approach interviewer effects would be minimized and interviewer judgments reduced because the inquiry would be systematic. However, because the interview was open-ended further questioning or commenting was necessary, in the form of follow-up to the respondent's leads, but without abandoning the interview frame of reference.

The same rules applied to the three-month follow-up interview. The same question was asked to all participants in the same setting as the original interview. However, this second meeting was briefer because. It did not last more than thirty minutes.

3.1.1 Planning of the Interview

The planning of the interview involved various steps which served as necessary preliminary heuristic material.

First, an interview guide was developed in which the questions were written. The researcher memorized these questions in the order in which it was anticipated they would be asked. Yet, a semistructured interview format was maintained which allowed for reasonable objectivity and depth, while being open-ended.

Second, prior to the actual interviews, there was a period of interview practicing which involved the interviewer placing himself in the position of the respondent (with the use of a mirror), and then practicing with five real subjects who were not part of the sample. The purpose of this was to check vocabulary, level of language, the subjects' understanding of the questions, and their reactions to the interview.

Third, safeguards against possible response effects were established. First, regarding participant predispositions. To avoid this the sample was carefully studied. An attempt was made to identify probable respondent predispositions that would be likely to be present, such as hostility toward the study, indifference or lack of motivation, wanting to please the interviewer, or wanting to present him or herself in favorable terms. To avoid this as much as possible "critical" cases (Patton, 1986, discussed below) were chosen from a larger number of volunteers who met the general participation criteria. Since the general population was Puerto Rican a limit of

five was set, however. The other five resulted in a mixture of ethnic backgrounds. Individuals who were later found to have profound emotional disturbances were not included.

In order to avoid interviewer effects an appropriate sample was selected (following the general selection criteria), a comfortable working environment was chosen, judgment would be suspended throughout the interview in order to allow for empathic rapport. Stereotyped expectatations about the sample was also avoided by means of suspension of judgment and the maintenance of neutrality.

Fourth, provisions were made to attempt to maintain interview data reliability. The sessions would be tape-recorded in order to be able to refer to the subject's verbal communication for analysis. In the cases in which recording was not allowed (two cases) the interview highlights were hand written during the session. The participant was explained that this would be necessary before the actual interview began.

Fifth, an attempt was made to use language that would be understandable by the participant, whether it be in English or Spanish. Technical jargon was avoided or words that may be difficult to understand.

Sixth, an attempt was also made to elicit information that the subject could give, and not material that would be beyond the reach or capability of the sample. Nevertheless, it was anticipated that the recollection of the memory

images would not necessarily be an easy task, because of the time limitations and the idea of having to remember a most significant memory image (or images). But this was precisely part of the task at hand. Is such a recollection possible? Do these memory images actually exist? This was a major challenge of this exploratory inquiry.

3.2 Subjects of the Study

Sampling was purposeful in the sense that it was not totally random. "Critical cases" were employed as sample. According to Patton "sampling critical cases permits logical generalizations and maximum application of information to other cases because if it's true of this one case, it's likely to be true of all other cases" (1986, p. 105). The use of "critical cases" allowed for the fact that a point could be made even within time-limited conditions, while employing a limited number of subjects. Ten subjects were chosen for this study, each representing a unit of analysis. They were at least eighteen years old and articulate, and were not suffering from a severe emotional disturbance, such as psychosis, major depression, or a post-traumatic stress disorder. Nationalities and gender were mixed. Half of the participants were Puerto Rican, two were Italian, one was of English and Dutch background, another was of German and English descent, and another was Jewish. The higher number

of Puerto Ricans was due to the fact that they were quite accessible. Although there is an element of convenience here, it was hoped that somewhat of a balance would be established with the inclusion of persons of other nationalities. Of the Puerto Ricans, three were Spanish speaking dominant with some knowledge of English. Among these there was some variation since not all were raised in Puerto Rico, and were second or third generation in the mainland. There were four males and six females.

Subjects had different occupations ranging from the unemployed to physician. Social class ranged from poverty to middle class. One woman was a missionary who had become blind during a mission in Colombia. In the next chapter each subject is discussed in more detail.

3.3 Collection of the Data

The data was collected using the standardized open-ended interview in conjunction with an interview guide approach. By using this method the interview was focused and time was carefully employed. Wording and question sequence were prepared in advance. The participants were asked the same questions in the same order. Respondents expressed their individual experiences in their own terms, an opportunity which allowed for first-hand in-depth information. Therefore, collection of data was based on

direct quotes which emerged from the interview itself. Because the participants answered the same questions, response comparability was expected to increase. The organization and analysis of the data was thus facilitated since responses could be located around the same questions.

Responses were recorded on a standard tape-recorder. In cases where the participant did not wish to be recorded, the interview highlights were handwritten by the researcher. Translations from Spanish to English and visa versa were made by the author. Significant nonverbal information during the interview was also gathered so that the data would be enriched by observation of other communication dimensions.

3.3.1 The Interview Process

The actual interview was preceded by a letter of introduction and a consent form. The letter was mailed after a list of prospective candidates was made. Some were recommended by persons known to the author, others were actual clinical cases known to the author, and still others were chosen from the North End community in Springfield, which is mostly populated by Hispanics, and which was quite accessible to the researcher. If the prospective candidate agreed to participate, a consent form was signed and an interview place and date was agreed upon.

All sessions took place in the interviewer's work office. Permission had been granted for its use. The office is rather small, but it is comfortable. It allowed for adequate face-to-face interaction.

Before the actual interview, there was always some light conversation; even coffee was offered. I employed a technique similar to one used in structural family therapy called "joining" combined with personal attending (e.g., offering coffee). For example, one of the Puerto Rican participants said that she had "almost forgotten the appointment," but that she was glad that she could be present because she was "curious about what would come out of this meeting." I responded: "I'm really glad that you were able to come this afternoon, and I hope coming here wasn't too inconvenient." Then I offered her some coffee. She responded with a nod and a smile and sat in a chair directly in front of mine.

Another participant knocked on the door, and asked: "Are you Carlos?" I responded: "Yes, that's me." He then looked around the room, and said: "Gee, why do you have childrens' drawings on the walls? Do you see children?" I replied: "Yes I do, but I see adults also." He added: "Looks like a really busy place, this clinic." I said: "Yeah, I think so. Would you like some coffee?" "No, thanks," he said and sat in the same chair as the Puerto Rican woman.

I point out these two examples because they illustrate, in a general way, what the initial personal contact was like just prior to the interview. In the clinical cases it was necessary to respond to feeling and content at times. For example, one of the Puerto Rican women, in her fifties, who had a history of generalized anxiety, dysthymia, and a number of somatic complaints said, as she entered the office: "I don't feel very well today. I had nightmares last night. The medication I got isn't really helping me." To this I responded: "Looks like you're feeling pretty down today and the pills don't really help." "Yes, that's right," she replied. "Would you like some coffee?" I asked. "Yes. But no sugar. I'm supposed to be on a diet." This particular conversation was totally in Spanish.

Puerto Ricans are known for their hospitality. They feel quite comfortable within its context and are used to being offered coffee, soda, or food when they visit someone. They are this way in turn. It's a natural manner with them. The researcher knows this well from personal experience. It seemed appropriate and a manner surely acceptable to persons of other ethnic backgrounds. This hospitality approach was used with all subjects. They all responded to it with apparent ease. This natural hospitality approach, coupled with responding skills and suspension of judgment, allowed for quick rapport. After some joining, the subject was ready to begin the actual interview.

After some rapport was established and the subject appeared to be sufficiently relaxed, the question phase of the interview itself began. The general procedure was as follows (English version): "In what follows I will ask you to try and use your memory as best you can. I will also ask you to try to see or visualize in your mind what you remember as best you can. There's no rush, we have enough time. You may make any comment at any time you wish, or ask any questions you may have."

The above lines were the introductory remarks prior to the actual eliciting instructions which followed: "At this point I will ask you to bring to your mind what you believe to be the most significant memory of your life. You may close your eyes or you may leave them open. You may take as much time as necessary. Once you have recalled it, try to visualize it in your mind and describe it in as much detail as possible."

When the image was recollected and described other questions followed, if they were not already answered in the description. These were: "Is the image in color or is it in black and white? Is it clear, blurry, or vague? At what age does it take place? Where does it take place? Is anything happening in this image? If so, please describe it."

Once these questions were answered, he or she was asked: "Why have you chosen this image as the most significant one? What meaning does it have for you?" If

more than one memory image was elicited, the interviewer asked: "Are all these images of equal importance? If so, why?" Of the ten subjects one had three images of equal importance. The interviewer further expanded: "What is it about them that make them equally important?" In this particular case the participant explained each one individually in some detail, giving reasons why each one was equally significant. This information will be expanded more fully in chapter four.

When these questions had been answered the participant was asked: "Has the recollection of this memory image had any impact on you? Does recollecting it make a difference at all? If it makes a difference, why does it?"

After these questions were answered the subject was asked: "Does this memory image contribute in any way in understanding yourself better, if at all? Or does it contribute in any way to a sense of well-being, if at all? You may take as much time as necessary to answer." Although these questions may be interpreted as leading questions, in reality they are among the most important ones of the entire inquiry. It is in these answers where the possibilities for clinical applications may be found, and where their importance in the psychological life of the individual is to be located. Without these questions this inquiry is almost meaningless, at least for clinical and practical purposes. Finally, the participant was given the opportunity to ask

any question or make any comment he or she had. This particular moment elicited further ideas and associations from some of the participants. Some, as if fixed on the memory image, made remarks emphasizing its impact, such as one of the Italians (a physician), and the woman of English and Dutch descent. It is as if they could go on and on talking about their particular memory images. For example, the Italian physician, when asked whether he had any further comments or questions, added: "You cannot imagine how much impact this experience has for me. It's like my whole life is there. No one really knows what one can go through unless they've been through it. It was like going through hell." As he said this he would open his eyes, his tone of voice would increase, he would stutter and his face would become red. It's as if he would scream at any moment.

A follow-up of three months determined whether the memory images elicited continued to be the most significant ones for the participants during that time. The reason for this follow-up being that the memory image originally recollected may not have really been the most significant one. Since the session lasted only an hour, or more if necessary, this may not have been sufficient time to recall a most significant memory image. Besides this, the participant was asked to recall only one image. However, requesting one main memory image had the advantage that it allowed for specificity and economy because the person would

have to focus. This does not necessarily mean that the individual may not have more than one. In the clinical experience of the researcher, it has been observed that many individuals have more than one important memory image. People have many memory images, but only some are really significant, as Bergson (1963) has told us.

Two weeks prior to the second interview the participants were contacted by mail, or personally, if possible. This was to remind them that it was almost time to meet again for the follow-up. They were contacted again three or four days prior to the actual meeting in order to insure their attendance. A brief note was sent, or they were personally contacted, if this was possible.

The second interview took place in the interviewer's office. The same seating arrangement was kept in order to maintain minimal contextual variation. The same hospitality approach was employed, which included suspension of judgment and neutrality. After a brief period of light conversation or "joining", the follow-up questioning began.

The question made to the subject during the follow-up was the following: "Three months ago you were asked to recall the most important memory image of your life, and you responded with a description of what you believed to be the most significant one. Does that memory image continue to be the most significant one? If not, what is the other like, if there is another one at all. However, if there is one,

can you describe it? Why is this one the most important? What impact does it have on you, if it has any at all?"

Although thirty minutes was the time given to this follow-up for each case, more time would have been allowed if the situation would have required it. In this particular sample this was not necessary because they all answered in the affirmative, and the responses tended to be generally straightforward. Some individuals were surprised at the question, and one seemed somewhat angry that I would question his images. The inquiry was open to any possibility.

The memory image that this inquiry explored may have been visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, or gustatory. It may also have included a combination of these senses. It usually involved long-term memory, but the study was open to other possibilities. In this sample there are instances of a combination of senses within an image which will be pointed out in the following chapter.

The questions which are given above represent the general inquiry framework. Selection has been necessary because it is not possible or perhaps even desirable to give every single detail of the interview. Much information was also nonverbal, and this will be considered in the following pages. Not all subjects were equally verbal. Some were more introverted than others. But the memory images tended to be elicited within the first ten minutes of the

interview. This suggests their preconscious nature, and the fact that retrieval, scanning, and selection were taking place, and that some degree of energy was employed.

It is significant to point out that the depressed individuals tended to be less verbal, but their images were no less vivid and significant for their lives. The depressed cases suggest that, although a person may present with psychomotor retardation and dysphoria, this does not mean that their inner world is poor, shallow, or barren. On the contrary, their images suggest that their inner world is capable of having clarity, meaning, and substance. These inner resources could have clinical implications.

One advantage the interviewer had was that the clinic where the interviews took place is well known within the community and easily accessible. The participants did not have to wait because arrangements for attending to them were made beforehand with the receptionist who spoke Spanish and English.

During both meetings the tape-recorder was placed away from the subject's view so that it would not be distracting. The office has been called by one psychiatrist friend "a down to earth work place." It's not fancy or assuming. It was hoped, then, that this ambience would not be too cold, or too professional looking, so that the participant would feel as comfortable as possible. Consideration of these factors is important, especially for this population.

3.4 Analysis of the Data

The main focus of analysis was the data collected during the conceptual, question phase of the inquiry. In organizing the analysis there were two main sources to draw from: 1. the information given by the participant in response to the researcher's questions during the conceptual phase of the inquiry, and 2. the analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during the phase of data collection.

As Patton (1986) points out, studies based on qualitative methods will include much pure description. The purpose of this being to let the reader know what was the subject's experience like from his or her point of view. In our inquiry the participant's experience was reported in reasonable detail and depth. The case descriptions were written in narrative form in order to provide a holistic view of the individual's unique experience.

Considering the nature of this study, it seemed appropriate to employ the method of case analysis. This approach involved organizing the data in terms of individual cases which, in turn, allowed for in-depth study of each participant's observations regarding his or her particular memory image.

Constructing the case study involved three steps: 1. putting together the raw case data, which included all the

information obtained during the interview process, 2. making a case record, which was a condensation of the raw case data, and which included organizing, classifying, and editing the raw case data, and 3. writing the case study narrative, which represented the description of the participant's experience.

Initially, each case was studied from its own frame of reference or uniqueness. Then, in a second stage, the cases were compared and contrasted.

Analysis was inductive, meaning that the themes, patterns, and categories came from the data itself. They emerged from the data instead of being imposed on it before data collection and analysis.

Since the sample included ethnic and linguistic variation, it was necessary to maintain sensitivity to what Patton (1986) calls "indigenous typologies" which are classification systems constructed from indigenous categories of the individuals studied. The important point here is that in order to understand someone's experience the analysis must be based on his or her concepts, not the researcher's, for example.

Finally, it was necessary to focus on the most significant data which emerged from the interview. However, this task did not prove too difficult because the questions were specific and systematic. This was also the case with the follow-up phase of the study.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

Broad generalizations are not possible from a sample of ten. However, the intention of this study was not to prove something, but to explore possibilities. Follow-up results could not be conclusive either.

Mental imagery has frequently been the subject of much controversy. Images are not tangible, and information about them depend on the participant's own report. Memory images are unique experiences that can only be fully observed and lived by the individual undergoing the process of recollection and visualization. Nevertheless, some of their significant contents can be conveyed to another person through verbalizations and nonverbal communication. A student of mental imagery can only approximate the other's experience. In this sense, the author's observations were necessarily limited to the subject's personal expressions.

A limitation of the standardized open-ended interview is that it does not allow for sufficient flexibility in relating the interview to specific individuals and situations. The wording of the questions may also constrain and limit the spontaneity or naturalness and relevance of questions and answers (Patton, 196). Yet, these weaknesses did not appear to significantly limit the expression of the individual participant's inner process during the interview.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Content of the Interview Material

The structure of the interviews was open-ended, yet they followed standard questioning. The follow-up was a briefer interview and it was somewhat more direct because the issue was whether the memory image originally elicited continued to be the same one after three months. However, in case a new image had appeared, the subject was given the opportunity to describe it if he or she so desired. The purpose of the follow-up being simply to see whether the image was the same or not.

In the following pages of this chapter each case is presented in reasonable detail and depth. These memory images appeared to represent deep and personal experiences. In all cases they were accompanied by significant emotional content. Some were so personal that the participants did not wish their expressions to be recorded and requested total anonymity. Most, however, were more open and spontaneous. In some instances the nonverbal expressions were quite powerful, full of hand movements, including

sudden facial and vocal tone variations. At times, one got the impression of dramatism, but it was not empty or false drama; it seemed too genuine, too full of living process and congruent with the thought processes.

Some participants were surprised that someone would ask them about a most significant memory image. Most had never thought of such a thing. Nevertheless, after the question to recall the image was asked, they all pondered for a while, and began describing it. None closed their eyes. They all recollected the image (or images) after not more than ten minutes.

The following cases are not presented in any specified order. I have given titles to each case based on the content of that particular interview. This procedure helped in identifying each one, while also contributing to maintain a sense of uniqueness of each case as it appeared to the author at the time.

Some cases are briefer than others, depending on the content and degree of verbalization. Depressed cases tended to speak less. Selection and editing of the interview material has been necessary.

4.1.1 The "Fantasy Castle"

Ms. M. is a sixty year old Puerto Rican widow who can speak English fluently, with somewhat of an accent. She was

born and raised in a rural and hilly region of Puerto Rico. She has dedicated most of her life to religious work. She was a missionary in various South American countries and the Caribbean. In her missionary work she preferred to inhabit in the jungles and in the mountain areas, where she came into direct contact with indigenous populations, such as the Mutilones. During a mission to Colombia she lost her eyesight because of infections to both optic nerves. She presents as energetic, emotionally intense, and articulate. She is bilingual, but feels more comfortable in Spanish.

She was recommended to this author by an acquaintance. It was known that she had a number of rich life experiences. The fact that she was blind was also of interest. Could she visualize the memory image? What would it be like? She was contacted through this acquaintance of the author who knew her. She replied promptly, and seemed willing to participate.

Ms. M. arrived on time for the interview. She entered silently, with a white and red cane, like the ones frequently used by blind people. Her dress was simple. Her general manner gave the impression of a profound humility, which impressed the writer as demanding immediate respect. The author helped her to the seat, and asked: "I hope you did not have too much trouble getting here." "Not really," she replied. "I walked over. I like to walk." "Would you like something to drink? Some coffee?" I asked. "No, thank

you, I'm alright." she replied. The entire conversation during the meeting was in Spanish. Idiomatic or regionalistic expressions are translated in the best possible way. However, the reader must be warned that many expressions—in this interview and others—cannot be literally translated. At times, only approximations are possible.

The preliminary instructions were given, and the instructions regarding the actual recollection and visualization were said to her by the author (which are those found in chapter three). Ms. M. seemed to go into a deep state of reflection, lasting about five minutes. Before beginning the actual description she gave a biographical sketch, apparently, as a prelude to the memory image.

"I was the oldest of a family of seventeen, three of whom died by age thirteen. Since I was the oldest, I was given the responsibility to take care of the younger children, cook, wash clothing, do errands, and look for food in the hills, such as bananas, plantains, and oranges. Because I was needed at home I was taken from school in the second grade. This made me very sad because I loved school. My teacher insisted that I continue in school, but my father did not allow it."

After this she began to describe a recurrent, visual, auditory, colorful, and vivid memory image. In the image she is eight years old. "I am on a hill in Aguas Buenas. There

are streams, hills, trees, and many kinds of plants around me. There are no houses around because they are very distant from each other. Birds are singing, there are lizards on the trees and plants. I am by myself. The day is bright. I called this place my fantasy castle because I used to go there by myself, play, and imagine that it was a castle. Here I always took refuge from beatings and daily work at home. I am singing, playing, and climbing up the trees. No one is around to bother. It is beautiful there."

During the description Ms. M. made a number of hand and body movements. When describing the open spaces she would spread her arms; when describing the trees she would look up ("Some trees were so high."); occasionally she would smile, as if smiling at what she was seeing. Her vocal pitch was somewhat high, but at the same time it expressed a profound seriousness. She was a little excited, and talked extensively, usually emphasizing, in a repetitive manner, the beauty of the area, and how happy she felt there.

"Ms. M., why have you chosen this image as the most significant one? What meaning does it have for you?" I asked. "In this memory I am free, and it was there where I learned to be compassionate with others. It was through that experience that I learned to understand the suffering of other people. I learned that a suffering person could find a refuge, even if that refuge was the person's soul. It was

this kind of experience that led me to be a missionary and prefer the jungle and mountain areas, and work with the Indians and poor people in other countries."

Then I asked: "Has the recollection of this memory image had any impact on you? Does recollecting it make a difference at all? If it does, why?" She responded: "I am very surprised about all this. Now I see clearly where my missionary life originated. It's funny how something from childhood can be so connected to what one is doing now. I'm so surprised. It certainly makes a difference. I've become aware about something important in myself. Suffering can lead a person to do important things for others. My God, what you're doing is like psychology. You'll be a great psychologist." She smiled and sat back in a more relaxed posture.

When asked whether it contributed to self-understanding or well-being, if at all (see chapter three for the wording) she replied: "It makes me feel happy and compassionate toward others." When she concluded, the writer asked her whether she had any questions or comments. All she said was, "Thank you very much." My final comment was: "I hope to see you in three months." As she left her humility impressed the writer very much.

Ms. M. was personally contacted three months later, and seen briefly in the researcher's office. She was asked whether the memory image she described continued to be the

most significant one. She seemed surprised, and said: "Yes, certainly. I can never forget it. It means so much to me. I keep it to myself because I know people wouldn't understand what it means to me. I'm growing old. That memory has always been coming to my mind. I knew it was important." There was a brief silence. "Thank you very much," I said. She smiled and left as quietly as she did the first time. But one could tell that she was thinking about something that was occupying her mind at that moment.

A final note on Ms. M. She completed High School as an adult and studied in a theological seminary for four years. After this she was sent to do missionary work. Actually, her missionary work began in the streets of New York City, where she gained experience for a number of years prior to leaving for other countries.

4.1.2 The "Invulnerable" Boy

B. is a very tall Jewish man. He is six feet seven inches. He was born in New York City, and was raised in a traditional Jewish family. He has a number of interests, which include things like wood carving, doing watercolors, house building, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy. He lives by himself in the woods in a house he has constructed himself. He appears to have a gentle and calm manner. He tended to speak slowly, as if he were thinking

carefully what he was saying, and as if he wanted to express himself clearly. B. also enjoys writing, and intends to publish on various artistic subjects. If one were to describe him in one word, perhaps "literary" would do. As he spoke, one could imagine him in the act of developing an essay or a study.

He was contacted personally through a friend of this writer. B. presented as willing, and interested in participating. He told the author that he was "curious" to know what this inquiry was about.

He came on time to the interview. "I really appreciate that you were able to come. I know you live rather far," I said. "I enjoy these kind of things. Psychology is one of my favorite subjects," he replied. He seemed calm and relaxed. He did not want coffee or soda, so we began the interview.

It is interesting that he had three main memory images. He is the only subject of this sample that presented more than one. After the standard questions were asked, he began the description of the first memory image. All images were vivid, colorful, and occur during childhood.

With a smile on his face, and after taking about three minutes to think, he began. "I am four or five years old, and I am on a hillside in a park in the Bronx. I am fighting with another boy my age; then two other boys join in to help him, and I am beaten by them because they

overpowered me." He looked down, then at me, calmly. I then asked: "Why have you chosen this image as a most significant one? What meaning does it have for you?" He replied: "At that time I learned that I was not invulnerable. I learned that I could not impose my will on others. It was the very first time in my life that I doubted my omnipotence, and I've lived with that idea ever since." "Do you consider that this memory image has contributed in any way to self-understanding or well-being?" I asked. "Any self-doubt that I may ever have I can see in that perspective. It seems to be at the root of whatever self-doubt I might ever have," he replied in his usual calm and reflective manner.

The second memory image also occurs at the age of four or five. It is vivid and colorful. During the description he smiled more often, as if on the verge of laughing.

He began as follows: "I am in my grandmother's apartment during a Passover dinner. I hid under a table in a corner with a bottle of wine I secretly took from the table, and drank almost the entire bottle. Things began to spin in my head."

Concerning the meaning it had for him, he said: "It represents my later tendency to look at things in different ways. It was this tendency what led me to study anthropology as an undergraduate student because one learned about different ways in which people saw things."

Regarding whether it had any impact on self-understanding or well-being, he said: "This incident did not cause me to look at things from different points of view, but it was consistent with my desire to try to see things in different ways." He then added that he sees this as an important personality trait of his which has been present in all aspects of his life, in one way or another.

The third memory image also takes place in New York City, but at the age of eleven or twelve. It is likewise a colorful and vivid memory image.

"I am driving with my father in his truck, it stops at a light, I look out of the window, and see the sky, bridge, water, and birds flying. Suddenly, I feel blended into the scenery, merged into what I was seeing."

The meaning it had for him was that "it represented the first glimpse of how the world works and of how everything is related." He connects this experience with later mature religious and metaphysical concerns. He added: "At the age of eleven or twelve I was not fully aware of what this experience would mean to me."

Throughout the interview he presented as calm, relaxed, and confident. He spoke slowly, always expressing his ideas clearly. One could tell that his mind was always at work because he would look up, or down as if reflecting. He seemed to be the introspective type, with a very rich and meaningful inner world.

He was contacted by mail for the follow-up. Again, he arrived on time for the second meeting. When asked whether these images continued to be the most significant ones, he seemed surprised and somewhat angry in response. "Yes, they are the same. They are not ephemeral things, you know, but a basic part of me." His tone was louder than in the previous meeting, and he was angry, apparently. However, he regained his composure, and smiled. With the same soft smile he left the office, just as calmly as he had entered.

4.1.3 "At a Procession with Father"

The next memory image was described by a thirty eight year old Puerto Rican woman, called here, Ms. C. She has two children, and has separated from her husband because of a long-standing marital conflict. She is one of the clinical cases of this study. She has a history of depression, and suffers from agoraphobia with panic attacks. Ms. C. is on anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medication. She is somewhat obese, and has a soft tone of voice. She speaks Spanish only. The tape-recorder was not employed with her at her request. The idea of being recorded made her anxious. She said: "I'll participate, but do not record what I say because it makes me nervous." I replied: "Please don't worry. Recording won't be necessary. I'll just write down the most important things." With these words she

relaxed and thought it out for a moment, as if considering the matter carefully, looking up, then down. Ms. C. was contacted through the clinic in which the author is employed. Contact was personal because she was accessible, since she attends therapy sessions there.

She arrived about ten minutes earlier. "How are you?" she asked. "I'm doing well, thank you. Would you like some coffee, or something to drink?" "Just some water. The pills dry my mouth." The water was gotten. After she drank a little, Ms. C. seemed ready to begin.

Her most significant memory image was vivid and colorful. She was not certain at what age it occurs, but she said that it was "before the age of five." It takes place in her home town in Puerto Rico.

The image was as follows: "I am at a procession with father during Good Friday. Jesus' passion is being enacted. My father is holding me by the hand. I am wearing a new red dress. There are a lot of people, and it is a very sunny day."

She was then asked what this image meant for her. She said: "That was a time when the family was all together. Those were happy times. Father was with us. Father was our salvation because mother did not take care of us. He showed us the correct path in life. He was a silent man, and a good man. Mother did barbaric things." As she said the last sentence her face seemed to express anger and disgust.

When she was asked whether it contributed in any way to self-understanding or well-being, she said: "It gives me feelings of tranquility." "Anything else?" I asked. "No, just peace and tranquility. When I remember this I think of happy days because those were true happy days." "Does having this recollection make any difference?" I asked. "This memory is one of the few good memories that I have. I suffered a lot during my childhood. This memory is one of the good things in my life that make me feel happy."

Ms. C. presents as a very anxious and insecure person. She is very much afraid of death, and fears that she will die of a heart attack. She also fears being alone, traveling in buses, and walking alone in the streets. Her mood is dysphoric, and she is known to be potentially irritable. During this session she seemed somewhat anxious, but this did not appear to impede the flow of the conversation. At first, she would squirm a little in the chair, or move the right leg up and down, but this stopped as she began to talk about the memory image. Surprisingly, the recollection appeared to have a calming effect on her. But it should not be forgotten that she was also on psychotropic medication, which may have contributed to the tranquilizing effect.

She was contacted again for the three month follow-up. Again, she was early for the session. When asked whether the image continued to be the most significant one, she

said: "Sometimes other memories pass through my mind, bad images. But these are not the most important ones. The one I told you comes to my mind a lot. It is still the most important one for me. I cannot think of any other that would be as important. My father meant a lot to me. He was a good man, you know." It was clear that the presence of the father was crucial in the choice.

Ms. C. is a devout Catholic. She has genuine religious concerns, and wants her children to go through confirmation. She told the author that she has had a number of "religious experiences." "Once I saw Christ with his arms wide open to me. I don't tell this to people because they may laugh at me. You're the first person that knows this."

4.1.4 "A Beach in Southern Italy"

The following memory image is of a twenty nine year old Italian woman, Ms. M. P. She is married and has four children. She works as a secretary in a hospital. She is tall and somewhat obese. The image she elicited was vague, but colorful. It was visual, auditory, and tactile. It occurs at age five. Ms. M. P. requested that the session not be recorded. "I want to keep this confidential. I don't trust tape-recorders," she said.

She arrived on time for the interview. "Would you like some coffee or soda?" "I'll have some soda. Thanks," she

answered. When I returned with the soda, I noticed she was looking at the children's pictures on the walls. "I have four children. They like to draw too." "They must keep you busy," I commented. "They sure do," she replied. At this point, we were ready to begin.

She began, after I had made the standard questions, and said: "It was around the month of October. I am at a beach in Southern Italy. The water is warm on the beach. Mother tells me I can't go to the beach in just a bathing suit. I have to put on a cover. But I tell her I don't want to. I have a pink bathing suit on."

"Why have you chosen this image as the most significant one? What meaning does it have for you?" "It's important because it is the earliest incident in my life I can remember of being alive." "Does recollecting this image make a difference? If it does, why?" I asked. "Yes, it does. I don't know why, but it makes me feel warm, and relaxed." After a pause she added: "This memory makes me feel sad. I don't know why. Perhaps because some people there are dead now."

When questioned on whether it contributed in any way to self-understanding or well-being, she said: "It makes me feel warm, relaxed, and competent. It makes me feel strong because at that age I'm already deciding for myself."

For the three month follow-up she was contacted by mail. She came on time to the second session. She was

asked whether the image she had chosen continued to be the most significant or meaningful one. "Yes, it is. It keeps coming to my mind every now and then. I have other memories, but that one is really the most important one because there I'm really myself, and I'm in the beach. I like beaches." I thanked her for coming. She said: "It was a pleasure." She smiled and left.

4.1.5 "The Terror"

This memory image was described by a thirty five year old Puerto Rican man, Mr. R. He is married and has two children. He has been in psychiatric treatment for ten years. He is on psychotropic medication. He has a large black moustache, and has a grave, if not angry look on his face. He looks really "tough." He is muscular, and has wide shoulders. He is impulsive, and can be dangerously aggressive and violent. "Once I overturned a psychiatrist's table," he said. By just glancing at him one could easily conclude that this man can be dangerous if unwisely approached. The conversation was in Spanish.

Mr. R. arrived on time for the interview. I offered him something to drink. His mouth seemed to be dry (from the medication?). He was contacted personally by the author, since he was a client of the clinic. Although he was known to be dangerous and aggressive, he nevertheless

responded in a very respectful manner, before, and after the interview. He even showed some interest in what the outcome of the interview might be when he asked: "I've never been to something like this. I may learn something. Who knows." However, he always maintained his grave and rough looking composure.

In the street where he lived he was know as "the terror" because he liked to fight and get in trouble. He would look for fights, and at times he would take vengeance on someone by "throwing rocks" and "cursing" at the person. "I was really tough. The other kids would keep out of my way." The standard questions were then asked.

The memory image he describes is vivid and colorful, and occurs at the age of ten. "I am in a street in front of my house in Caguas. The house is located in front of the municipal hospital. In that street I am fighting with another boy."

When asked whether this memory image had any meaning or importance for him, he simply replied: "Yes, it's important. At that time I proved that I could beat anyone." He then added, as if to clarify: "Showing others that you could beat them was important because there were a lot of tough people there, and one had to survive. Besides, I was always alone. No one cared for me except my father. But he died, and I was left alone, and kept to myself. That's the way it was in Caguas at that time, and it still is."

Asked whether having this image made a difference, he said: "If it didn't make a difference I wouldn't talk about it, would I?" The writer felt for a second that the subject would punch him in the nose at any moment. He added: "This is one of the few good memories I have. I feel good when I remember it." His reply relaxed the sudden tension that the author's question elicited.

When asked whether it contributed in any way to self-understanding or well-being, he replied: "This memory makes me feel happy. My mind becomes clearer because of the good things that happened there. I never really had bad moments. I would like to return to those days." When he said this his face would brighten up smiling, moving his legs, as if in rhythm with the "happy" feelings.

Again, he was contacted personally for the follow-up. He arrived on time for the second interview. When asked whether the memory image he had chosen in the first meeting continued to be the most significant one, he said: "I wouldn't have told you it was the most important if it really wasn't. I mean what I say. I don't talk crap like some people I know. It will always be the most important memory. It makes me feel happy, and it clears my mind. I told you this already. You don't believe me?" "I certainly do Mr. R. The things you have said are very interesting, and I really appreciate that you took the time to come to these two meetings," I responded, attempting to calm him.

4.1.6 "The River Valley"

The following image is that of a woman of English and German descent. Ms. L. is married to a novelist and has one teenage son. She is forty two years old. She has a number of interests, such as art, philosophy, history, psychology, traveling (especially to Mexico), farming, and learning other languages. She is fluent in Spanish, and so is her husband, who was a personal friend of the novelist B. Traven, and whom the participant met in Mexico some years ago. She is a lover of nature, adventure, and animals.

She was contacted by mail, and quickly responded, apparently with much interest. "I haven't participated in studies for some time," she said, "I would be interested in knowing what this will be like, and what will come out of it." Her participation was recommended by a colleague of the author. She was known to be brilliant, inquisitive, and always willing to participate in matters that have to do with learning, and research.

Ms. L. had been in psychoanalysis for four years "in order to deal with childhood issues," and "in order to know myself better," she said. She presents as modest, observant, and with, what seems, a strong intuitive sense.

She arrived to the interview on time. I offered some refreshment, but she said, "No thanks, I'm fine." She said that she was building a new house, and that her husband was

working on a novel. After the period of joining, the actual interview began, which always started with, and followed, the general standard questioning.

The image she describes is colorful, vivid, and it occurs at age ten. The dominant colors are gray, tan, and gold. It is a recurrent memory image.

She began the description with some excitement. "It is a landscape image. In it there is a valley, the sky, a river, clouds, and cliffs which are visible from my bedroom window. I am running from my house to another house, and suddenly I feel as if I were bounding the whole earth. Everything is crystal clear. Everything is where it's supposed to be. I feel ecstatic. This is where I belong."

In regard to its meaning, she was quite productive, and clarifying. It had various meanings. She associates it with metaphysical, spiritual, and other intellectual concerns. It appears to reflect her inner inclinations, or interests. As an adult, she studied philosophy, history, and married a novelist with similar interests. The image itself is first associated with "time and eternity." It is associated with "time, eternity, death, and the cyclical repetition of things." The rocks in the cliffs remind her of "something that isn't alive, something I'm against. They also signify my ties to the family." In the present, she is constructing a cement house in a similar landscape. "I feel that I am entering a second, or last part of my

life. I will die in this landscape. In the same one when I was ten years old."

When asked whether the image contributed in any way to self-understanding, well-being or healing, she said that although she associates the image with something "hard," she feels "calm, and centered, with feet on the ground." The "lights" in the image are "pleasurable." "It takes me beyond fear because in it I transcend." Her fear comes from the grandiosity, and awesomeness of the image, but the image is "very concrete, grounded." "In it I feel fully alive, as I feel fully alive now."

She made a final statement about the river within the image. It reminded her of Greek philosophy: "One cannot set in the same river twice" (Heraclitus). It represents "change, and letting things happen." The cliffs made her think of "ancient life, time and change."

When asked what difference this image made, if it made any at all, she said: "This image represents everything that is important in my life. It represents things and ideas that have influenced the way I am now. It makes me fearful, but it also shows me what my life is like, and who I am."

For the three month follow-up she was contacted by mail again. Ms. L. came to this brief interview on time. When asked whether the image she had described continued to be the same one, she said: "That image is too rich and meaningful to be substituted. There is too much deep and

personal experience involved in it." I thanked her, and with a smile, and eyes as if shining, she left the office, always giving the impression of being an unpretentious, yet very intellectual woman. She was friendly, and open, but behind her affability, one noticed a truly serious and dedicated intellect.

4.1.7 Medical School in Guadalajara or "Hell"

Our next memory image is that of an Italian physician. He was contacted by mail, and responded rather promptly. The author had met him on one occasion, and it seemed that he would be willing to participate. His manner was friendly, open, and giving a little of his time did not appear to bother him (since he is very busy).

Dr. N. is a young man of thirty two. He is single, and lives with his mother. He is energetic, alert, and talks with a passion uncommon in many people. When he speaks about his experiences, his face becomes red, and he stutters. It seems he wants to say many things, but his mouth cannot keep up with his thoughts. As a child, he may have been hyperactive, or, at least, perhaps too energetic for his parents. He runs every morning, and gives the impression of being in excellent health.

Dr. N. arrived on time for the interview. As he entered the door he seemed a little out of air. I asked

whether he wanted some refreshment, and that he should feel at home, and relax. "Oh, no, no, no, I'm okay. "Looks like you see kids. You have a lot of drawings on these walls, and toys too." "Yes, I do see children, but I see adults also," I replied. "Gee, what a job you have. I used to visit a psychiatric ward in Mexico. They had kids there too. But the whole setting was different." After this introductory conversation, we began the questioning phase of the interview.

It is interesting that his most significant memory image occurs at the age of twenty two. Of the sample, this is the latest memory image, in terms of age. It is "very bright," colorful, and rich in experiential associations, feelings, and life events.

After the inquiry questions were made, he began the description. "I am in the campus of the University of Guadalajara. I am entering the medical school. In the background is the city of Guadalajara. This memory spans five years. You can't realize how difficult it was, how much hardship I went through. It was like going through a battle. Like going through a desert, a jungle. It's like someone breaking a coal mine, going through hell, war, a cave, a struggle."

When asked whether this image was meaningful, he replied: "You'll never know how much it means to me. People that have not gone through the experience of studying

medicine cannot appreciate what it's like, what I've gone through. I grew as an individual, and developed an ability to deal with the patient, to see the patient as an individual. It means having learned to deal better with individuals. I have learned to be patient, and go about life in a whole different manner. I have grown emotionally, and better able to deal with situations. I learned to deal with anxiety and stress."

"Does this memory image make a difference, if any? If so, why?" I asked. "Does it make a difference? Are you kidding me? The purpose of my whole life is there, my past, my future! I wouldn't be here if it weren't for this event in my life. It's really everything to me." As he said this, his face became red, he stuttered, and became tense, the tone of his voice increased. The thought passed through my mind that if he continued, he would fall off the chair any minute. I did not, therefore, pursue this point any further.

When he was asked whether this memory image contributed in any way to self-understanding, or well-being, he answered in his usual intense way: "It gives me a sense of peacefulness, tranquility, accomplishment, and happiness. It gives me a feeling of relief."

During the interview he would occasionally stress that it is a "positive" image, especially in the present because the "university warfare" is over, although he admits that he

continues a "battle" within the profession itself due to various circumstances.

For the follow-up he was contacted by mail. When asked whether the image continued to be the most significant one, he said: "Oh, yes, without a doubt. I've even had dreams similar to that image. It always comes back to my mind." He became red again, stuttered, and became tense. I thanked him. "I hope participating hasn't been too stressful," I commented. He waved his arm, as if saying, "not at all," or something similar. Apparently he was able to calm down somewhat, and left the office with the usual quick pace and alertness.

4.1.8 "The Back Porch"

The memory image description which follows is of a thirty year old Puerto Rico woman. She is married and has four children. Ms. M. R. has been in treatment for anxiety and depression for three years. She is on anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medication. At present, she has very serious marital problems, and there is a great deal of tension around a teenage daughter who has recently had a baby from a teenage boy. The father wants the girl out of the house, but the mother doesn't. Ms. M. R. suspects that her husband has other women. She presents as depressed, and shaky. Psychomotor retardation and fatigue are prominent.

As she sits her right leg trembles. Her mouth seemed to be dry during the interview, perhaps due to the medication. She is bilingual, so our conversation was a mixture of Spanish and English.

She was personally contacted through the clinic. Her depression became immediately obvious to the author. Her face was drooped, her speech was slow. Yet, she seemed willing to participate, saying that she would, as long as confidentiality was respected. I assured her that it would be.

Ms. M. R. was abandoned by her mother as an infant. She was raised by her father, and lived with her siblings in an impoverished sector of San Juan.

She arrived early for the interview. She entered the office, sitting in the chair which faces the interviewer. I noticed that her mouth was dry, so refreshment was immediately offered. "You seem to have some difficulty talking; perhaps your mouth is dry," I said. "Yes, the pills I take dry my mouth all the time," she replied. She had a low, and soft tone of voice. During the interview it was necessary to get a little closer to her in order to hear better. Her right leg trembled.

The image she described was clear, vivid, colorful, and recurrent. It takes place at the age of nine in a back porch in her home town in Puerto Rico. She sat quietly as the author made the initial eliciting questions. Then

she began talking in a slow, low tone. I am in the back porch of my house in Puerto Rico. I am with my father. We are looking at the houses that surround our own. There are many houses; they just continue on and on, so many are there."

When the author inquired as to the significance, or meaning this image had for her, she said: "When this memory comes to me, I feel happy, peaceful, and more trusting. It also represents my father with whom I was close, and with whom I would like to be with again." She paused, then added: "This memory also makes me feel sad because someone in the house tried to sexually molest me. I never found out who it was."

Asked as to whether the image made a difference, if at all, she replied: "When it comes to my mind I feel happy and peaceful because my father is with me." She said no more, remaining very quiet, and still. Her leg was not trembling at this point.

When asked whether it contributed in any way to self-understanding, well-being, or healing, she only repeated what she had previously said: "It makes me feel happy, and safe."

She was contacted personally for the follow-up. When asked whether the image continued to be the same, she said: "Yes. That was a time when everyone was together, and happy." I thanked her, and she left with a slight smile.

4.1.9 "Summer Camp at Chautauqua"

The person whose image follows is of Dutch and English descent. She is twenty four years old, and lives by herself. She is a doctoral student in education. Ms. C. is involved in politics, and is very active in this field. She has traveled to a number of countries in Central America, and has even been to Nicaragua, where she witnessed episodes of the war that's going on there at present. She is adventurous, daring, and on one occasion, captured a dangerous thief single handed. Ms. C. has two dogs that she loves very much.

This is an interesting case because it brings up the issue of main memory images, and their possible confusion with post-traumatic flashbacks. This participant eventually reveals part of her traumatic past to the author during the three month follow-up . She also said that she was in counseling with a female psychotherapist. I have included this case in this study because the main memory image she describes is not itself traumatic, as will be seen in what follows.

She was recommended to the author by a colleague, and a letter was sent. She took some time to answer, but eventually she telephoned, and a date was set for the interview. Ms. C. is tall and blond. At times she stares intently, and one wonders what's on her mind. She sat

crossing her arms and legs. I offered her coffee, but she said that she didn't want anything. "I hope you didn't have a hard time getting here," I said. "No, it's really easy. I have Puerto Rican friends around here. They visit me, I visit them," she replied. Her face seemed somewhat expressionless. It was hard to say what she was feeling at the moment. She seemed to stare at me. But she was this way throughout the interview. After a brief exchange of words the questioning phase began.

After being asked to elicit the most significant memory image, she described a colorful, vivid, and multi-sensorial one. It occurs at age five, during a summer camp in Chautauqua, New York. " I am in a summer camp in Chautauqua, New York. There are people, a sandbox, a lake, a pond, and a beach. There are rocks, fish fossils, and a gorge. It's kind of windy. I feel the sun, and the water, especially on my face. I feel the sand, especially on my toes. My skin is tanned, my hair very blond from the sun, and curly. I smell the water, the fish. It is a pleasant smell. I hear the bells, and belltower chimes. I am by myself. And I am different from the others."

When asked why this memory image was significant, she answered: "To me this memory means freedom and exploring. It's a place where I went through a lot. I was independent, and no one judged me. It was also a safe place to be in." As to whether it contributed to self-understanding, or

well-being, she replied: "It helps me understand where my feelings of independence, freedom, and critical view of things come from." "Does remembering this image make a difference, if at all?" I asked. "This image is me, the way I was, and still am. I know I've always been the way I am. I've always been different from others, I've always been independent. I like being this way."

Three months later she was contacted by mail again. We met again, but the conversation was a little longer than the other cases. She still had the same expressionless look on her face. She was asked whether the image continued to be the same one. She said: "Yes, it is. Sometimes I'm not really sure that this is the most significant one because I keep getting flashbacks from things that have happened to me." She paused, and continued: "I've had a lot of traumatic experiences. I was raped when I was seven. And I've been beaten by my last boyfriend very badly. My mother was cold, and cruel, but my father was good to me. I was his favorite girl. (Pause) Yes, that image is the most significant one. It's just that these flashbacks keep intruding." At this point, the author understood why her face seemed so expressionless. Apparently, Ms. C. has been going through post-traumatic stress, with frequent intrusion of traumatic flashbacks. However, because she possesses ego strength, and the ability to distinguish between common memory images, and traumatic flashbacks (because they were

negative, and intrusive), she was able to come to a conclusion as to the memory image she had described. She seemed very sincere, and did not give the impression of wanting to please anyone.

I did not pursue the issue of her traumatic experiences. She told me that she was in counseling, and that it was helping her. I thanked her, and told her: "I hope you are not feeling too troubled by the recollection of the flashbacks." "Don't worry, I get flashbacks all the time. At least I have one good memory in me. I thank you for helping me bring it to my mind." Her face was still expressionless, but the tone of her voice seemed to be warmer. This calmed me down a little.

4.1.10 "The Best Guitarist in the World"

This last memory image is of a twenty three year old, single, Puerto Rican man, who has dedicated most of his life to the guitar. He was contacted personally by the writer. He lives in the Hispanic sector of Springfield. Mr. S. is a tall, husky, dark skinned person. He looks strong, and tough. He was told once that he "would make a good bodyguard." He has a good sense of humor and seems to be sensitive. S. lives with his parents, who, he says, "have always helped me in becoming a guitarist." In the following he describes a recurrent, vivid, colorful, visual, and

auditory memory image. In the image he is eighteen years old, and is attending High School in Orlando, Florida.

Mr. S. arrived a little late to the session. He excused himself by saying: "Musicians are always late for things." He smiled and laughed, in a sort of chuckle. I offered something to drink. He asked for water only. Mr. S. seemed like a very friendly, but powerful looking individual. There seemed to be a certain softness about him, though, in his hand and arm gestures, even though he seemed so overpowering. After some laughing, and light talk, which reflected that he had much pride in being a guitarist, I began the interview questions.

He began talking, sometimes smiling at the same time. "I am on the stage with my guitar. There is an orchestra in the background. I am going to be announced to the audience. Suddenly, the orchestra director says: 'I want to introduce to you the best guitarist in the world. He's better than anyone I've ever seen.' This was one of the best orchestras in the state. The director was famous and respected."

In terms of its meaning for him, it has had a "tremendous impact." He said, with some excitement: "I've always loved the guitar, and I've played it for a long time, and people have always liked my music. But I've never been through an experience like this before. I totally freaked out. The fact that such a famous director would say that in front of so many people... I really freaked out. It meant

being accepted by a famous person. From now on I would really dedicate myself to the guitar." For Mr. S. it meant acknowledgement, and legitimization of himself as a guitarist, if I'm permitted to say so.

When asked whether it contributed in any way to self-understanding, or well-being, he said: "Up to that point, I was always depressed and nervous. I've been criticized too, you know. Some people like to do that. But they're cheap. They don't know. When the director spoke, I was no longer depressed, or nervous. That moment comes a lot to my memory, and every time it does, I feel happy, proud, I want to play the guitar, and play with other musicians, especially if they're good, and have a good attitude."

As to whether the image made a difference, he said: "If I wouldn't have had that experience, I would still be depressed, and afraid someone would criticize me. Every time this memory comes to me, I feel powerful, like a god."

He was contacted again for the follow-up. He was asked whether the image he had chosen continued to be the most significant one. He replied: "For now it is. But who knows; something else may happen that might take its place. It's hard to say right now. But for now, yeah, this is really the most important one." I thanked him. He seemed very content. Always smiling, happy, and powerful. The image seemed consistent with the presentation of self.

4.2 Analysis of the Data

The analysis of the ten cases is based on the inductive method, the basis for this being the individual reports, or each individual's experience, as expressed in the subject's own words.

The inquiry begins with the author's general hypothesis that there are phenomena which might be called main memory images (in other words, most significant memory images). This hypothesis arises from the fact that the idea of a main memory image does not exist in the literature, eventhough there are indications in the life, and clinical work of the author, that they could exist (It's possible that someone would want to give them another name too). It is then asked whether these might be meaningful, lead to better self-understanding and/or healing. The subjects are questioned in a standard format, and the results are compared. The results are grouped according to the particular content of each case, and general conclusions are made. A possible philosophical, and psychological interpretation of the results is then considered.

Although all subjects report having a main memory image, they occur at different ages, and there are variations as to meaning, and personal impact. The follow-up reveals that the image continues to be the same in all cases but some replies are qualified, such as the

participant of the Chautauqua episode, in which there is some confusion with traumatic flashback imagery, and in the last subject, whose answer suggests that the image can change if more significant life events occur in the future.

Eighty percent of the images refer to a time before the age of twelve. Of the ten cases, four images refer to a period by age five, four between the ages of twelve and eight, and one at age twenty-two, and another at age eighteen. Most main memory images occur during the latency age period.

All the images are colorful. Ninety percent are clear and vivid. One image ("A Beach in Southern Italy") was "somewhat vague."

Ninety percent reported one main or most significant memory image. One subject (the Jewish participant) reported three images, all occurring during the latency period.

All the images were meaningful or significant, and all were conducive to well-being, healing, and/or self-understanding. They are all located in a particular place of special significance and occur during a specific life event. In the images, the subject him or herself is the focus (e.g., "The Fantasy Castle," "The River Valley,") or a relation with a significant person in the focus (e.g., "At a Procession with Father," "The Back Porch"). In the case of "The Invulnerable Boy" a "lesson" is learned, a fact reminiscent of the fairy tale, as in Aesop, for example.

The use of metaphors is also present in such cases as the one about the Italian physician, in which he describes his experience as "hell", or as compared to the image of "breaking through a coal mine." The "fantasy castle" is also an example. Here a tropical hill forest becomes a "fantasy castle," and a place of "refuge."

All are visual images, but some are mixed (e.g., "The Best Guitarist in the World," "A Beach in Southern Italy'), or multi-sensorial (e.g., "Summer Camp at Chautauqua").

Two of the memory images are reminiscent of "peak" experiences. These are "The River Valley," and "The Invulnerable Boy" (specifically the one occurring at age eleven or twelve). According to Maslow (1968) someone going through a peak experience may feel "integrated," "more able to fuse with the world," the person may feel "at the peak of his powers."

All the images are associated mainly with positive experiences. One is especially decisive in a dramatic way: the image of the guitarist. This image represents an important turning point in the subject's life. All the images are sources of inner support with some variations in degree. They continue to be a resource for the participant in the present. The image of the woman of "The Back Porch" serves as a supportive memory, which alleviates her feelings of sadness. The image of the guitarist reminds him of the talent he really possesses. The image of the girl at

Chautauqua reminds her of her "individuality" and uniqueness. The man of "The Terror" is reminded of the fact that there were "happy" times in the past and that, therefore, there is always hope of feeling "good" in the future.

All the images are associated to feelings. Some are intense, such as the case of "The Fantasy Castle" and the physician's image. These two images, for example, are related to experiences of hardship and stress, but they are also connected to feelings of "relief," "accomplishment," and "compassion."

Some descriptions are also accompanied by gestures of the face, arms, and torso, such as the physician's image, the "castle" image, and "The Terror" memory, in which he frequently smiles and moves his legs. The woman of "The River Valley" was excited during most of the interview, smiling frequently, appearing to be sometimes in deep thought, then suddenly expressing a series of ideas in a row.

Themes of philosophical concern are also present in the sample, such as is seen in "The Invulnerable Boy" and "The River Valley," in which the participant is reminded of Greek philosophy and a fragment of Heraclitus. It is interesting that it is these two individuals the ones who present a more reflective countenance and personal disposition. In all the cases the memory images elicited were syntonic with their

personalities and views of the world. The images have occurred in the past, but they are not alien phenomena; on the contrary, they appear to be in tune with the person. They are connected in different ways with their present lives. In this sense, the images are significant existential links within the life continuum. The meaning they have for all the cases is that they are connected to the self through overt (e.g., the guitarist image) or covert character traits (e.g., the image of the Jew, the image at Chautauqua) and distinct views of reality. This means that the images are connected to the present and expressed in more obvious, less obvious, or outward ways, depending on the individual's personality and world views. For example, the more philosophical individual may appear to be introverted, while the guitarist or the fighter may seem more extroverted.

The images appear to be a potential resource of inner support, self-knowledge, healing, and well-being. They seem, not only, to represent the individual's personality and view of the world, but may also be a source of energy in dealing with self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and daily circumstances. All of these ideas are merely tentative (since this is only an exploratory inquiry), but the data may suggest them.

4.2.1 A Philosophical Interpretation

Main memory images belong to the realm of psychological phenomenology. However, since they are part of the person, and exist within the soul, they are ontological entities. They belong to the individual's being. They can contribute to the development of personality because they are recollections of significant historical moments of the self. The internalization of significant life events (or any life event) is possible because of Dasein (being-there). The individual exists in a world of people and objects. This existence is historical in nature.

Being-in-the-world is a dynamic process that takes place within time and space. The individual is placed within a world of people and things. He or she is also exposed to a horizon. However, horizons are really infinite phenomena. Therefore, the person is exposed to infinity. The individual is placed within a context of a number of possibilities. "The world is wide and alien," says the Peruvian novelist Ciro Alegria. In it there are many possibilities.

Existence is characterized also by its transcendent nature. Being can go beyond itself to another. Imagination is one means by which the soul transcends.

We saw that in Kant (1973) imagination synthesizes the diversity of appearance and perceptions. It also makes

possible the application of concepts to sense experience. In Werner (1973) we examined briefly the syncretic function of mental imagery. Through Zubiri (1982) we came in touch with the idea that intelligence is sentient. The memory image we were exploring has these qualities. It has a synthesizing and syncretic function, and it is a form of sentient intelligence. It is synthetic and syncretic because it unifies the manifold of personal experience and meaning through a particular historical moment of the self. The idea of sentient intelligence would explain why emotionality accompanies the memory and the concepts that underly it. Memory images are, then, no light matter. If these things apply, then mental imagery is surely worthy of philosophical consideration. Sartre was aware of this and dedicated various books to the subject.

If one were to take any one of the memory images studied, it would not be difficult to see the application of these ideas to understanding their nature and significance. For example, "The Fantasy Castle" image, not only synthesizes this woman's experience in terms of childhood actions (going on a hill, taking refuge, playing), but it also represents a cognitive experience through the experiencing and intellection of such concepts as freedom, refuge, and solace. It represents a special place in the world where she can be herself and think freely. It is also a sentient experience because the image elicits feelings of

happiness and compassion for others. As an adult she became a missionary, and was really alone, although she basically served others, lead (as she continues to be) by deep feelings of compassion for others.

A similar situation is seen in "The Best Guitarist in the World" image, in which the experience of being publicly acknowledged by an important figure synthesizes this person's sense of identity and place in the world. He is a guitarist, and this is the most important thing of his life. Cognitively he understands his position in the world, and he sees that it is a specific position. At the same time he feels proud, happy, and important. He sees himself, through the memory image, not as an anonymous entity, but as someone that can make a difference through his music. As a recurring image, it seems to have the psychological function of positive reinforcement, as a reminder to himself of who he really is in this world of multiplicity.

In summary, the main memory image appears to be part of an ontological dimension which explains why these images tend to be deep-rooted and meaningful, and part of a whole person structure, not an isolated thing. It also partakes of the psychological realm in the form of mental phenomenology. Its phenomenological character is seen in the totality of the image and in the elements which compose it. It is a form of picture language, but it is more than language. In reality, it affects the whole person.

4.2.2 A Psychological Interpretation

As an element of mental phenomenology the main memory image would form a part of the person's psychological and somatic system. This includes thinking, feeling, and action within the context of the world. It appears to be a phenomenon of long-term memory. It then seems probable that a lesion to brain areas of long-term memory will affect its recollection. A lesion to the visualization areas will affect the ability to see it in the mind's eye. However, if the main memory image is essentially tactile or auditory then it can be experienced. But, at this point, it seems that most memory images are basically visual. Experiencing them, then, involves local neuronal areas, higher cortical functions, and the general organism.

The experiencing of this image involves a number of psychological and somatic functions. This explains why feeling is accompanied by ideas, why body movements are also present, and why mixed senses may be involved. In our sample "Summer Camp at Chautauqua" is an example of the presence of various senses, along with concepts and physical movements. In all ten cases the eliciting of the image involved the participation of the entire person. It is as if the image had a central function and meaning for the person. Although it may give the impression of being static (as in "The Terror"), underlying its meaning there is an

intense dynamic which, again, involves the whole person. Here, once more, its centrality is suggested.

The image is a picture, and as such it conveys a message. It is a message that the person gives to him or herself. What is interesting is that the individual is represented in the form of a picture. But it is not an abstract representation of the self; actually, it represents the person within the context of a world, which can include symbolic elements. In fact, the image itself represents a world, just like a painting by Rafael or Cezanne represents a world. In the case of the painting, the image is depicted on canvas while the memory image remains in the mind's eye. However, they can both be dynamic and meaningful. They also have the synthetic and syncretic functions previously mentioned. It is even probable that the memory image will also have aesthetics of its own which, in part, may explain why in these cases it seems so pleasing to the mind and the senses. For example, the philosophical meaning of "The River Valley" and "The Invulnerable Boy" are accompanied by deep feelings of intellectual and sensorial pleasure and appreciation.

The memory image may be useful in a clinical context. It could give another side of the person. It can shed light on an individual beyond the presenting clinical symptomatology. The woman of "The Back Porch" suffers from severe anxiety and depression, but the memory image seems to

transcend these states by taking her to a time of happiness with her father and family, all this represented by a back porch scene in her home town in Puerto Rico. The woman of "At a Procession with Father" suffers from agoraphobia and recurrent depression, yet the image transports her away from the symptoms to a time and place of happier moments, which she actually experiences during the recollection, as noticed in her smile and the somewhat elevated energy level. The man of "The Terror" has an explosive disorder with symptoms suggestive of a schizoaffective disorder, but the image changes his facial expression to a smiling one, and he also becomes more talkative, while also appearing to be more relaxed.

Finally, it is important to mention that the will has an important role in the eliciting of the image. It takes an effort on the part of the subject to elicit the memory. The individual must scan, classify, and identify the most significant memory image. Even though one that is not as significant may be chosen, the person can always attempt the recollection again through effort. This is another instance that suggests the participation of the whole person in the process of remembering, visualization, verbalization, and overall experiencing. Individuals with profound emotional disturbances (such as major depression combined with melancholia or psychosis) may present with a low energy level which will affect motivation, concentration, and the

will. Perhaps the inability to elicit the image in these individuals may have the diagnostic usefulness of understanding how profound an emotional disturbance really is. But these are possible topics to future speculation.

To tap into a significant image that represents an aspect of the self may have clinical meaningfulness. If used correctly it could be a useful clinical tool in exploring and understanding any individual, whether it be in a clinical setting or in any circumstance of life.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary

Interest in mental imagery has a long history which begins with Greek philosophers such as Aristotle (1967, 1986) and Plotinus (1964), and continues to this day in the cognitive psychologists. It has been the object of much dispute and research. It has been called a "sham" by Ryle (1965), but considered a therapeutic tool by Horowitz (1983) and Lazarus (1984), for example. Piaget and Inhelder (1966, 1969) have studied it in children, and Milton H. Erickson (1989) in hypnosis.

The purpose of the second chapter was, not only to review the literature, but also to place the memory image we were studying within a tradition and historical context. The reason for this being that the literature does not appear to give a detailed and general description of the history of mental imagery, a void which could mislead the reader into thinking that imagery is a contemporary phenomenon or a trivial and unworthy subject. This review serves as background in our exploration of a particular

kind of mental image which I have called a main memory image (or images). This image is the most significant image, or images, a person can recall. A three month follow-up was included to see whether the image chosen continued to be the most significant one.

Three basic questions guided this study: 1. Do main memory images exist? 2. Are they meaningful for the subjects? 3. Do they contribute to self-understanding, well-being, or healing? In an attempt to answer these questions ten subjects were chosen, and asked, in an open-ended, and standardized manner, to elicit the most significant memory image, to state whether it was meaningful, and to discuss whether it had any impact on self-understanding, well-being, or healing. All three questions were answered in the affirmative in this sample. The three month-follow-up revealed that the image had remained the same for all ten subjects.

It was necessary to be able to safeguard against confusion with other kinds of imagery (e.g., psychotic, traumatic, or psychodelic images) during the interview, so Horowitz (1983) was very useful in this respect because he distinguishes them in his study on imagery.

The analysis was inductive and qualitative. The most important, and relevant elements of the interview were presented in chapter four. The analysis emerged from the experiences of the participants themselves, and not imposed

from the outside. It utilized their words and concepts, even the nonverbal expressions. Technical terms were avoided as much as possible in order for the reader to at least get a feeling for the subject's experience, which frequently was very rich in events, feelings and concepts.

The study also had an underlying philosophical intention. Is this main memory image an ontological entity? Although such a thing cannot be proven empirically, it can, nevertheless, be hypothesized and discussed. This may seem a vain issue, but it has concerned the author because mental imagery has been considered an "epiphenomenon" by some writers. If it is ontological then it may not be an epiphenomenon at all, but an important and necessary part of being and existence. This, however, can be a subject for further argument and investigations. At this point, the intention was only to point out the issue in the manner of a question for possible future speculation.

5.2 Conclusions

A question may arise: Why study mental images? They are not tangible phenomena. Descriptions of them are always subjective. Verification is really impossible. Unlike quantum theory and astronomy, a mathematization of them is not possible at this point in history. They seem to be part of a mental realm that is not subject to direct measurement.

However, we believe we experience them frequently. Images appear in dreams, psychosis, psychedelic experiences and the visions of mystics. Research and neurosurgery indicate that mental images have a neurological basis. Experience would suggest, then, that mental images exist. In what form or manner do they exist, and what are they in reality, are possible questions for the future.

This inquiry suggests that there are such things as mental images. That although they are subjective entities, they are real for the subject. They can also have meaning for the person, and they can have an impact in terms of well-being and healing. This study also could suggest that there may exist a most central or meaningful memory image, which among many possible images, is the most significant one of all. The results of the study may also suggest that a person can have more than one main memory image. This seems to occur when more than one image is of equal importance to the individual. However, the majority (ninety percent) chose one image in this initial inquiry.

These images seem to be accompanied by emotions that vary in degrees. They can be vivid or vague, be related to a five year time span (as the physician's image is), have philosophical meaning or say something significant about personality and view of the world. They seem to link the past with the present in a way that, although the image refers to a past event, it is still the same individual, the

same existence, it is the same being. In other words, there is ontological continuity. This may carry the psychological and philosophical suggestion that the person is in reality an integrated dynamic whole, influenced by daily life events, the environment and the existence and thoughts of others. This is only a step away from Ortega y Gasset's (1976, 1982) idea that "I am myself and my circumstance." To guarantee the continuity of life the individual interprets the circumstance in which he or she has to be, and interprets him or herself within this circumstance by defining the horizon in which he or she has to live.

The main memory image can be seen as an instance which links the inner world of the individual and his or her self-representation with the external world. It is a phenomenological instance within Dasein (be-there) or existential circumstance. It can be seen as having a positive narcissistic function in that it reflects, as in a mirror, a part of the individual's personality and its self-representation within a particular self-historical moment which has special meaning in the present. It could reflect the person in part or in synthesis. It not only reflects the body, but the soul also. Its power to synthesize and condense is reminiscent of the dream. We know from Freud (1965) of the work of condensation in dreams, and that memory images are aroused in dreams, along with affects and intellectual activity.

Besides representing one's self and circumstance the main memory image has a transcending function. In the cases presented in this inquiry this was notable. Through the image the individual is taken beyond current feelings of depression, anxiety or phobia, as is apparent in the cases of the back porch scene and the procession scene, for example. The individual is reminded of a deeper level of the self, unhampered by subsequent pathological or neurotic strata. The person is given the opportunity to see a more original or pristine self.

This particular self-historical moment can be seen as an instance of "inner independence" ("innere Unabhangigkeit"). I have borrowed this term from Jaspers (1962), who considers the possibility of "inner independence" within the "spiritual space" which a genuine Humanism can create. However, "inner independence" is possible only in the context of existential struggle. Since the individual cannot know the totality of things life can then only be a continuous search. This search includes the inner and external realms, or self and circumstance (as in Ortega y Gasset). Since the person is never completed the individual is always open to the future, which is full of possibilities. But the individual is also part of a historical continuum and should endeavor to understand the importance of historical consciousness. Jaspers laments the decay of historical memory, the lack of a sense of

existential grounding and the feeling of loss regarding the future. One is reminded of Lasch's (1979, 1984) studies on the narcissistic character of contemporary culture, which sees the past as "irrelevant" and lives only for the moment because it has no sense or vision of the future, while thriving on a world of "appearances."

Although the main memory image is a mental image representative of a moment of the self, it is not just a matter of a self image in alienated isolation, nor is it ahistorical. It cannot be a monad or ahistorical because it is an existential and ontological entity. It is rooted in Dasein, with its complex object relations with their underlying dynamics and its historical structure.

If one observed carefully, the images briefly examined in this inquiry represented the subject always in relation to objects (objects in the psychoanalytic and object relations sense). What can this mean? Can these mental images tell us something about the person's world of self and object representations? If the individual is self and circumstance, and if circumstance includes the world of objects, then these memory images are also representations of self and objects and, of course, their dynamic relationships. In the following subsection I will briefly examine the possible relationship between the main memory image and object relations theory and certain psychoanalytic concepts.

5.2.1 Implications for Object Relations Theory and Psychoanalytic Theory

In all the memory images we have examined the subject sees him or herself within a world of objects. When I say objects I mean to use this word in a psychoanalytic and object relations sense. According to Kohut "objects may suffice to describe other people, animals, pets, interests in things one pursues, such as art, music, or whatever it may be" (1987, p. 5). This is the general sense in which I employ the term here. Another important term, for our purposes, is object representation. In Sterba (1968) object representation is the "intrapsychic unity of ideas and memories." These originate as perceptions of stimulating objects in the external world. "Psychic relations, changes of attitude, increase or decrease of interest...take place on the object representation" (Sterba, p. 37). If we look close at any of the images of this study we will notice the presence of objects and object representations.

The image entitled "A Beach in Southern Italy" is an example. In this memory image the subject is in a beach in Southern Italy. She is five years old, and she is with her mother. She recalls the warm water and the pink bathing suit she wore. The subject also remembers her mother telling her that she could not go to the beach in just a bathing suit and that she had to put on a cover. Then she

recalls telling her mother that she didn't want to. This brief description alone contains a number of objects (e.g., mother, beach, bathing suit, warm water). For this participant the memory image makes her feel "sad." She then adds that she feels this way "perhaps because some people there are dead now." The idea of death, the feeling of sadness and the people associated with the beach scene are examples of an object representation unity. In the sadness revolving around the idea of possibly dead people-which were alive at that time-is the feeling of loss, while also suggesting an elegiac motive. One may be reminded of the elegiac classical tradition of *Et in Arcadia Ego* ("I am in Arcady," according to Dr. Johnson) present in the painters Guercino and Poussin, for example (Panofsky, 1955).

Objects and object representations can be very rich in content, meaning, and implications for the individual and others. I say others because the person lives within a web of interpersonal relationships. Being aware is also being aware of the surrounding world. Although object representations are intrapsychic, they originate in the external world and can be projected unto it. In the above example, persons of the past generate feelings of sadness, loss, and are associated with the idea of the passage of time and death. The image also says something important about the personality. In the image the child wants to have her own way. This is a trait she still presents in

that she tends to do things her way, even if it means opposing authority figures. But fundamentally, the image represents the first incident she recalls of ever "being alive," while also producing in her feelings of warmth and relaxation.

The third image of "The Invulnerable Boy" can be taken as another example to illustrate the presence of object and object representation in a main memory image. This memory image takes place in New York City. The subject is Jewish and he is eleven or twelve. He is riding in a truck while his father is driving. The truck stops at a light and the boy looks out the window and sees the sky, bridge, water, and birds flying. Suddenly he felt "blended into the scene, merged into what I was seeing." This image represents for him the first understanding of how everything is interconnected. Later on in life he develops religious and philosophical concerns. The image gives him a sense of reassurance and it represents an affirmation of his feelings of attachment to the world. With this image one is reminded of Maslow's (1968) idea of "peak experience" because it seems that this is the kind of experience he has actually had, although he has not called it by this name.

In terms of objects there is the truck, father, flying birds, water, sky, New York City, driving, bridge, and other things. Some object representations are merging into the scenery, interconnectedness of things, riding with father,

New York City, merging into, religious and philosophical ideas (whatever their content may be), and so on. This image represents a world and it is formed by the objects and object representations. Since he describes it as vivid and colorful, these facts are also included within the representation.

In the present, the subject always rides a truck, he is introspective, philosophical, relaxed, and has deep respect for religious concepts. A continuity of self through object and object representations from the past is apparent in this case. It is the objects and object representations which contribute to the formation of personality structure.

We know through the work of Jacobson (1964) of the role that object imagery (of parental figures, for example) plays in ego and superego formation in the child. According to Jacobson the "earliest wishful fantasies of merging and being one with the mother (breast) are certainly the foundation on which all object relations as well as future types of identification are built" (1964, p. 39). Even when the child reaches the stage of full self-awareness the complete separation of maternal and self images is prevented because of the need to satisfy instinctual needs and execute ego functions. For some time the parental images continue to be an extension of the child's image of his or her self. Jacobson considers that fantasies of merging with mother are a normal phenomenon up to the age of three.

The role of object imagery in the development of the superego is also examined by Jacobson (1964). She points to three types of object imagery in this process. First, there is the archaic imagery, derived from the child's instinctual strivings, which induce irrational fears that lead to physical retaliation. Then, there is the object imagery more closely related to reality, to parental prohibitions and demands. And finally, there is "the child's narcissistic, omnipotent, and eventually moral-perfectionistic strivings" (p. 124). These are examples of instances in which object imagery organizes to form psychic structure, in this case, the superego.

Although this is a general developmental schema, it may be inferred that the main memory image could represent a moment of formation, not only of ego structures, but also of superego structures. Already in the image of the girl in a beach in Southern Italy the mother is telling her not to go to the beach uncovered. The age of five, of course, is a relatively later period of superego development, but the point is, nevertheless, that the image contains object imagery and object representation which contribute to the formation of the subject's personality through the development of psychic structures.

It is significant that the element of object representation as ego ideal is also present in some of the images. The object representations in "The Back Porch" are

an example of idealization of the past, the father and the family in a unitary way. The freedom, ambience, and play situation of "The Fantasy Castle" is another example of idealization of object representation. So is the happiness and sense of power of "The Terror."

It is interesting that Mahler et al. (1975), following Rubinfine, noticed that children when briefly separated from the mother during the practicing subphase (from the age of ten or twelve months to sixteen or eighteen months) entered a low-key state of inwardly concentrated attention and reverted to an inferred "imaging" of mother, a state reminiscent of a "miniature anaclitic depression." This represents perhaps the earliest known instance of the use of mental imagery in early childhood. Noticeable is the fact that already at this age there is object representation and the capacity to form mental images. They appear to be employed by the child, at this subphase, during a time of need, when the mother is absent, although they are accompanied by a brief state of anaclitic depression. Even at an early age, imagery appears to have the function of recreating an object when it is absent and when there is a need to be close to it or possess it.

In the present historical period the inner world of object representations and object imagery is strongly affected by intense feelings of anxiety. According to Rattner (1974) the neurotic is afraid of life. For him

anxiety (Angst) is responsible for the production of all neurotic and psychosomatic symptoms. It is at the root of the individual's character. Character traits have the purpose of eliminating anxiety. An anxious mother will have anxious children. The problem of anxiety has an extensive history which we find discussed in Kierkegaard (1944), Rollo May (1979) and in the idea of "ontological insecurity" of Laing (1969), for example. Much of our world of object relations and object representations is so imbued with such profound anxiety and despair that the psyche is forced to employ massive amounts of defensive energy in the form of continuous stimulation through drugs, violence, compulsive sexuality and the avoidance of the sense of a historical self.

A great deal of our memories are only vague remnants of rich childhood experiences, if amnesia has not totally obliterated the entire memory. The "conventional schematization of experience and memory" has become even more prevalent during the present historical period. Memory is filtered through these schemas and only "occasional signposts and milestones" are recollected instead of the "landscape through which the road has led" (Schachtel, 1955).

Ours is an age of intense anxiety because of the fear of overkill and total ecosystems destruction. This is perhaps the main reason why thinking of the future is so

dreaded and avoided. Therefore, we prefer to live for the day. The past is also avoided because, as one rock song has it, "history teaches nothing." This form of timeless pseudo-existence can only lead to profound feelings of emptiness and a sense that life is meaningless because there is no horizon to look forward to and no historical reference points that can help us understand the present and give us a sense of ontological continuity. A timeless self is a pseudo-self, a self without perspective.

The work of the French novelist Marcel Proust is an example of a heroic attempt to recapture the forgotten past and establish a sense of existential continuity. In the process of recovering the past he feels an intense satisfaction and profound happiness. If we recall the cases of this inquiry, we may remember that in most instances the recollection of the most significant memory image was accompanied by feelings of happiness and well-being, even when hardship (e.g., the physician's image) or sadness (e.g., the beach scene in Southern Italy) were themes of the image. According to Schachtel (1955) "each genuine recovery of forgotten experience and, with it, something of the person that one was when having the experience carries with it an element of enrichment, adds to the light of consciousness, and thus widens the conscious scope of one's life" (p.223). As we look into ourselves we will find that there is an inner universe of possibilities. We have within

the ground to find solutions to our feelings of anxiety and despair. This is why it is imperative that we look within and take seriously the Upanishad dictum, "Know thine own Soul," which is later echoed in the Delphic oracle and in the thought of Socrates. For Tagore (1918) this saying means, "realise the one great principle of unity that there is in every man" (p. 27).

In the process of coexistence we must realize that "our world is necessarily the world we bring forth with others" (Maturana and Varela, 1988, p. 245). The world will change only if we change it. There is no absolute world according to these authors. There is only the world we create together. This fact is understood by them to be biologically and epistemologically rooted in the human being. This conception is also applicable in the understanding of the object images and object representations of the main memory image, since not only is the external world a product of mutual human interaction, but also the inner world of the individual, as I have attempted to point out.

In the Dhammapada (1984) we read the following: "What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind" (p. 35). This work was probably compiled in the third century B.C. Its thoughts continue to be relevant in the present, especially within the context of

the "culture of narcissism" which is characterized by the need for continuous self-gratification, the measurement of trivia, the negation of history, superficial interpersonal relations, and the credibility and admiration of fleeting appearances, among other things. If we are not to lose ourselves in a vacuum of despair we must reconsider fundamental existential matters that many philosophers, sages and religious thinkers of the past have time and again pointed out as necessary issues to be addressed and examined seriously.

One way of achieving this is to look into ourselves, into our memories, especially those that are most meaningful. Our capacity to mentally visualize can aid us in understanding our self-history because we would be able to actually see it. Other senses can participate and help in further clarifying our inner world of objects. This way we see ourselves as in a picture, within the context of meaningful objects and ideas. Coming into contact with significant memory images is instructive in that we see ourselves in a more pristine light. It allows the individual to introspect and better understand the self and its relation to the world.

Coming into contact with meaningful object images and object representations can serve as a form of inner support (as the images of "The Terror" and "The Back Porch" are) and well-being. They are also moments of truth for the person.

5.2.2 Implications for Diagnosis and Treatment

If main memory images are mental phenomena made, in part, of objects, and object representations, then they may be used as diagnostic tools. Our observations strongly suggest that emotions, ideas, and physiological responses are included in the experiencing of these images. If they are ontological, then they include the whole person. These images can give significant diagnostic information in the sense that the clinician can "observe" (through suspension of judgment, empathy, and neutrality) the individual's image (or images), and be better able to analyze the quality of object relations and object representations, conceptual associations, self-image, ego ideal, personality traits, ego strengths, and view of reality. Memory can be assessed, especially long-term memory. A person's neurotic, or psychotic status can be evaluated in observing that the person may not be able to elicit a memory image, or may only be able to elicit a confused or weak image, which may be associated with lack of motivation, fatigue, mental confusion, lack of concentration, intruding irritability, and post-traumatic flashbacks. This inability to recollect can be immediate diagnostic information. Recollection time may also be an indicator of depression, anxiety, neurological impairment, or other disorder.

We have mentioned that Adler (1980) employed early

childhood recollections as diagnostic material. It gave him information about the patient's character, life style, and view of the world. Adlerians, such as Mozak (1958, 1965), have employed early recollections as projective technique. They help in uncovering a person's unconscious attitudes. They can be useful in vocational and educational counseling. Early recollections can facilitate the development of diagnostic, and treatment hypotheses, before other significant historical, and psychological data emerge. Possible future reactions to treatment, and predictions regarding the patient's relationship with the therapist are also possible.

Mozak points out that all memories have distortions, and omissions. The important thing is not whether the memory image is accurate, but the fact that it has been remembered, or thought to be so. Remembering is not so much a process of reconstructing, as it is a process of construction. Assuming the unitary structure of the self, memory images likewise follow a meaningful pattern, and are consistent with each other. If one gathers a series of these rerollections, a clearer picture of the individual emerges. A better understanding of inner dynamics is made possible. One is reminded of projective techniques, such as the Thematic Apperception Test, which has a similar function, in certain respects. Main memory images can also be employed as diagnostic tools. They are similar to early

recollections in some ways. Many may even be earliest recollections themselves. However, they are perhaps more central in the sense that they are the most significant memory images. They reflect, not only the person's character, life style, and view of the world, but also what is most meaningful in the life of that individual. The dimension of meaning is emphasized. This dimension adds the crucial element of existential meaning.

One way in which this meaning can be found--this inquiry suggests--is through significant memory images. What seems to facilitate the recollection, and understanding of their content and meaning is the fact that it is visual, although it may be accompanied by other senses, as some of the cases in this study exemplify. Mozak emphasizes that early recollections must be visual in order to be considered recollections. This may also be true of main memory images. All the cases I have seen up to now report visual images. Lesions to visualization areas of the brain appear to hinder seeing the images in the mind's eye. These may be the only exceptions. Further research is surely needed in this area. The incapacity to visualize is obviously also a diagnostic datum, suggestive of brain damage.

It is significant that the depressed and anxious individuals of this inquiry were quite able to elicit main memory images. These images were vivid, positive, and meaningful. What can this signify? What are the

implications? First, it signifies that these persons are capable of eliciting meaningful memory images. They are present in memory and consciousness, even when an individual's mood is chronically dysphoric or when anxiety is pervasive. The individual may feel depressed or anxious, but the memory image does not necessarily contain depression or anxiety in its content, or meaning. This implies that the image is beyond the dysphoria or anxiety. It has a transcending dynamic to it that makes it a potentially powerful treatment tool. It is as if the individual were transported to another area of the self that is unhampered by current pathological inner states. This also implies that the person has the inner resources that can significantly contribute in healing of the soul and perhaps even of the body, if we assume that the person is a unity of mutually interacting and dependant elements.

We know from the literature that imagery has frequently been used as a healing technique. Remen (1984) has employed imagery in medical treatment. She has found that it can be a decisive factor in healing. She says the following: "I see imagery as related to that process of movement toward wholeness mentioned above. It is that process made visible. The process will cloak itself in pictures that are not random. They are unique to each individual; they are purposeful. They come from within the person. Perhaps they come from the soul. Because, it seems to me, much illness

is a result of not being transparent to the soul. The friction of the soul on the body may contribute a great deal to illness. Thus, imagery is the process of movement toward wholeness made visible. So we can nurture it" (p. 86).

The reader may remember that as the depressed and anxious woman of the back porch scene described and expressed what the memory image meant to her, the right leg stopped trembling. She also left with a smile on her face, as was the case with most participants. She was not trying to please the researcher or anything of the sort. She did not plan on stopping the trembling leg in order to please or gratify the author. Nothing suggested such a thing at all. It occurred during the process of visualization and meaning association. A calming effect seemed to have taken place, perhaps independent of the medication she was on. If the tranquilizer was calming her, why was her leg trembling? If the trembling was a side effect of the medication, then the recollection process may have had a psychophysiological calming effect, in which mind and body are calmed, even to the point of chemical or physiological levels. Nothing of this is conclusive, but there are some suggestions that these may be possibilities.

Significant memory images can be employed as healing phenomena. Visualization does not involve a long and complicated program. It is an economic and achievable process that most individuals can experience.

5.3 Future Research

If there are such things as main memory images, then it may be worthwhile to further explore this mental phenomenon. If it can contribute to self-understanding and well-being, then it may be useful as a therapeutic instrument. If it is meaningful, then perhaps it is something that should not be ignored.

Possible future studies can employ larger samples and other populations, such as children, persons with serious emotional pathology or developmental pathology, the elderly, the handicapped, and persons in other countries. The research method may be a classical design, with pretest, posttest, and controls, including a follow-up of greater length. The questions may be altered or updated, even the goals can be revised. Heuristic measurements can be statistical. Replications can also be performed.

However, the future researcher should be reminded that main memory images are not one-dimensional, tangible, and necessarily measurable phenomena. Memory images (especially significant ones) can be rich in intrapsychic dynamics and meaning. They are part of the inner world of object images and object representations, which, by themselves, can be complex, especially because of their intricate dynamics within the self, and because of their origin in the ego's relation to the external world.

There are also ontological, historical, and psychodynamic factors to be taken into consideration. In order to avoid the pitfalls of reductionism and the temptation of psychologism, which Husserl (1964, 1970) has warned us against, it is important to look at memory images within a broad perspective, always taking into consideration its historical background. One can take the easy route of considering mental imagery within the confines of the laboratory setting, particularly if the researcher is fixed on the "experimental" psychology mode and measurement. Although this approach may seem "scientific" there is always the danger of turning the psyche into a caricature and a trivial phenomenon because of the reduction which may take place. For example, the issue of object representation alone can be terribly complex, while at the same time it could leave the student with the impression that there may be an indetermination factor involved in the whole process of inquiry because of the nature of mental imagery itself, and because the investigation is partially based on interpretation on the part of both participants.

However, these problems should not deter the future researcher from inquiring. On the contrary, they should represent a challenge, precisely because of their intricacy and potential significance.

5.3.1 Final Words

This inquiry into significant memory images has asked one basic question: Assuming the individual has had meaningful life experiences, can they be recalled and brought to bear in the present in a positive way? The data suggests that it is possible and so does the literature we have reviewed.

The study of imagery has a long history. It would take many volumes to cover it. Why has it been the object of much speculation and theory? It has not been taken seriously by some writers. Yet this has not impeded researchers like Shepard and Kosslyn from studying images. Interest in mental imagery seems to lie, to a great extent, in the fact that, although it is an apparently elusive phenomenon, imagery pervades the mind and daily life. Mental images are present during sleep, daydreaming, hallucinations, thinking, fantasy, creativity, and many other activities of life. They are crucial in the creation of certain scientific theories and in the creation of works of art. Their healing potential has been acknowledged by a number of writers. Images are representations of the self, of its objects, and object representations. They are created through the collaboration of mind, body, and daily interaction of the ego with the external world. We are frequently guided by them in daily life and they help us

understand ourselves better, while also potentially contributing to well-being and healing of body and soul.

They appear to be preconscious entities and belong to the realm of mental phenomenology. They also partake of the ontological dimension of human beings because they exist within the psyche and affect the body in many ways. They can make us happy or sad. They can give us strength or they can depress us.

However, main memory images appear to have the potential of enhancing the individual toward higher levels of well-being and knowledge of the self. They seem to be mainly positive images, although the possibility that negative images may be as significant cannot be overlooked. Nevertheless, they may contribute in understanding ourselves better and in understanding our relation to the world. This is suggested by daily experience, clinical data, and the results of this inquiry.

It is quite possible that individuals interested in the topic of imagery may find a number of applications unknown up to now. We notice that in the literature there are many applications. Sheikh's (1986) anthology is only one example. Psychosynthesis may see in main memory images a source for the application of many of its ideas. In my own clinical work they are proving to be worthwhile. What they may reveal about a person may be no light matter, especially because of the objects and experiences they represent.

5.4 Epilogue

Since the completion of this inquiry I have continued to employ the technique of eliciting main memory images in clinical work. I have found that it may be introduced at the end of the mental status examination, and that it can be very revealing of the person's significant inner object and object representational world in a relatively brief period of time. However, it can also be used during the treatment period itself. Its introduction may depend on the client's mental status. If the client is actively psychotic (even if he or she can follow instructions), it should not be employed because the memory image may be confused with the hallucinations, or the eliciting may not be possible because of the thought disorder. The clinician should wait until an adequate degree of mental stability is reached at some point during the treatment process. A similar caution should be taken with seriously traumatized individuals because of possible confusion with flashbacks. If it is attempted with traumatized persons, the clinician should be able to distinguish between significant memory imagery and traumatic flashbacks. Although flashbacks are memory images, they tend to be very painful because these experiences cannot be totally buffered by the ego. They tend to be sudden, piercing, and inexplicable. The total mind is abruptly hit. The unconscious is immediately forced to cope with it, as an

unbenign foreign body. The ego cannot analyze it because it is shocked. The superego will attempt to judge it and form an attitude toward it, but this could take place within a state of perplexity because it also is hit by the event. I will later discuss a case which presents a problematical situation because of the client's past history of physical and psychological abuse, all occurring within contexts of violence during childhood and adulthood.

The technique of using significant memory images is uncomplicated and economic. It can be a window to the individual's soul. Even when treating individual's under severe emotional distress, the clinician can be given the opportunity to experience (through empathic attunement) moments of significant self-history in the form of memory images. It is as if the clinician were given the chance to see through the distress or anguish, to another, perhaps deeper, region of the self, that sheds new light on the individual's inner experience, while at the same time, serving as a possible prognostic tool. I say prognostic because it may indicate where probable healing sources may lie, or perhaps what should be avoided, or simply handled with care. I will briefly describe some examples which are active clinical cases.

H. is a 19 year old Puerto Rican male. He is divorced and has two children. Presently, he is struggling to become a recognized jazz piano player. Most of his friends are

musicians. He is usually playing in night clubs, parties, or shows. However, he abuses cocaine and marihuana, two drugs which he uses daily. He is frequently depressed, becomes irritable, and, at times, feels like quitting the piano, and abandoning music altogether. He came to therapy in a state of depression and anxiety. H. is very sensitive to criticism and has a difficult time coping with it. Nevertheless, he presents as perceptive, understanding, and intelligent, besides being talented. But he has difficulties dealing with frustrations that result from conflicts which arise from work in his profession. The danger that I perceived was that persistent frustrations in his work would continue to undermine his self-esteem, which was already being affected, mainly by criticism from other musicians who prefer another style of playing, but who themselves are not jazz players.

It was during the second evaluation session that I asked him to elicit the most significant memory image. He thought for about three minutes, and described what he considered to be the most significant event of his life. It was a vivid and colorful image. He was seventeen years old, and had been invited to play in a night club with a well known guitar player. The most significant aspect of the image was the response of the audience. "The audience applauded for a long time. Some guys whistled and said they wanted more. I was never happier in my life." He added

that the club owner wanted them to return and play again. What is interesting is that, as he described the image, he would smile and make more frequent eye contact with the therapist. His attitude shifted from depression to feelings of pride and a sense of accomplishment. The shift took place in about ten minutes. The eliciting of the image became a prelude to a dialogue (which covered various sessions) concerning his love for music, his accomplishments, and plans for future work. He said he had seen the movie "Amadeus," a film about the life of Mozart. In this movie Mozart is persecuted by the hypocritical and envious Salieri, who by diverse machinations, contributes to the composer's premature death. Mozart was frequently criticized by fellow composers. But this did not deter him from writing and playing his music. H. identified with Mozart, and, with the recollection of an important (if not crucial) successful event, was thus able to understand, and more effectively cope, with criticism. Therapy was brief (eight sessions). By the eighth session his depression had improved significantly, and he made the decision to move to New York City, where he knew a number of musicians. His use of cocaine and marihuana had also decreased. "I hardly do drugs now because I have to practice more. The guys I'm going to play with are really good. So I have to practice every day." This was our last meeting. The eliciting of the main memory image appeared to be the turning point in

the treatment. It represented a source of inner support, especially because it was something that really happened, and had been a very positive personal experience in an area important for his life and sense of well-being.

Another client with whom I have employed the technique of eliciting a main memory image is a twenty seven year old woman. She lives with her mother and her two daughters. However, the mother has custody of the two daughters because the client says she cannot cope with them. But they all live together. The client is very much attached to the mother and visa versa. She will not make major decisions without the mother's consent.

M. (the client) gets "nerve attacks" with some frequency. They were thought to be epileptic attacks, but this was subsequently ruled out by her primary physician. These attacks had begun at the age of eleven when she was separated from her younger sister for the second time in her life. The first time the client was one year old. She has been diagnosed as having a histrionic personality disorder (following the DSM-III-R criteria). In session she tends to be somewhat seductive, dramatic, and impressionable.

At age one her father was sent to prison on charges of sexually assaulting a boy. The client says he was falsely accused. At the end of the initial evaluation (which includes the mental status examination) I asked her to recall the most significant memory image and describe it.

It did not take more than three minutes for her to recall it. It is a vivid and colorful image. She is four years old, and her father has been allowed to visit his children during a pass. "He was tall, dark skinned, and he was good to me." When I asked her how the image makes her feel, she said that it made her feel "sad." When I asked her whether this was an image she would like to forget, she jumped up on her seat and stared at me. "Oh no, I don't want to forget it," she said. "Why remember it if it makes you feel sad," I asked to see what she would reply. "No, I don't want to forget it because it's the best thing I can remember. I love my father very much. I want to see him again." I did not pursue this sort of inquiring any further. Then, she smiled, and lightened up. She had come into contact with something really important to her. And I, as an observer, learned where much of her strength was located. I also understood much of her tendency to seduce and be dramatic. It seemed to be related to the fantasy of keeping the father with her, in this case through oedipal seduction. In the transference with the therapist she is acting out the seduction of the father whom she wants to keep with her and not lose. In this case the memory image has helped in understanding the transference dynamics, among other things. For her, it represents an inner support and a way of keeping herself from a more severe psychological breakdown, while it is also an object of introspection.

Finally, I will briefly discuss a case of a woman with an extensive history of trauma. It will illustrate the problem of deciding whether a traumatic memory image can be considered a main memory image. Mrs. F. has two sons, ages eight and four. The older boy beats the younger one frequently, doing it in a very sadistic manner. This older boy is currently in therapy himself. The parents have separated. The client says the husband beats her and threatens her all the time, even though they are separated. The boy is triangulated and manipulated by the father, who uses him to get information about the mother. The boy is thus caught in the middle, between allegiance to both parents. The client presents as fearful, depressed, as having frequent nightmares, and as having different flashbacks of beatings by her husband and her father.

She was referred to me by her primary therapist during a crisis. Mrs. F. had recently been beaten by her husband, and had to be taken to the hospital with a broken jaw. This had occurred five days before the referral. I attended to her by listening, responding and by being supportive of her efforts to deal with the fear and dysphoria she felt.

After more than an hour of crisis intervention, and when I had noticed that she was more relaxed, I asked her to recollect the most significant memory image, and describe it to me. What she described was difficult to distinguish from a traumatic flashback.

In the image she is four years old, and her parents are arguing and fighting. It's night time. There are other persons involved, but she does not remember who they were. There is a lot of violence going on, and during this experience she becomes terrified. The image is colorful and vivid. Knowing she has a history of trauma, I become skeptical about whether this is a real main memory image. I asked her, "Is this really the most significant memory image of your life?" "Yes it is," she replied. "I've never forgotten it. It always comes to me. It's been going through my mind for a long, long time." Just as this image represents conflict, violence, and terror during her childhood, it also seems to have predicted, or predisposed her in some way, to continue to live in conflictive and violent interpersonal relationships. It seems that her entire life has been a life of violence and terror. Her sisters live in similar situations, but this client seems to have been the most affected one. It is significant that she was the oldest of the children, a situation that put her in a position of vulnerability because she was supposed to be "the more knowing one."

Although this image is traumatic, its recollection has allowed her to understand herself better. It has allowed her to connect events, thoughts, and feelings. She understood rather quickly that the present crisis was a part of a series of dangerous and terrifying experiences. She

realized that she was caught in a vicious cycle of violence and fear that was being transferred to her older son, who was already abusing the younger brother. The recollection seemed to help the client understand that she had been caught in a trap for many years. At this point, a treatment plan was initiated with the primary therapist that would address the need to stop this vicious cycle which had been going on since early latency. Contact with myself extended to three sessions because it was necessary to give her time to reflect, and employ her own inner resources, and follow-up on her situation. She was a very intelligent woman, but she needed some time to deal with the knowledge she had recently acquired.

The use of main memory images can elicit representations of significant objects within the context of important life events. They can be a source of self-understanding, healing, and well-being. At times it may be difficult to identify them. But they can be identified by the degree of meaningfulness they have for the subject. Their meaning is not limited to incidental events. There is a pervasive quality about it, and it can interact dynamically with other psychological and somatic structures of the person. Frequently, they are recurrent, and can be observed and thought about by an observing self. Even if they are traumatic they can be a source of learning, especially if they are interpreted within a context of

empathy, open-mindedness, and understanding. Although they are not "real" in a tangible, empirical sense, they are real in the sense that they are representations of the individual's self-history and of his or her object representations. Eventhough memory imagery may be painful, it is still a potential source of self-understanding. After all, mental images are really forms of representations of ourselves.

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