Starting from Wholeness: An Exploration of Non-Dual Awareness

By

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Abstract

This manuscript thesis is an exploration of non-dual awareness and its integration into the field of counseling. The author begins with a biographical introspective, examining the significance of non-dual awareness to his well-being and personal journey, then moves to defining and discussing the ephemeral quality of non-dual awareness. Eastern and Western manifestations of non-dual awareness are described in Chapters two and three, respectively, leading to a presentation of three counseling approaches which integrate non-dual awareness into practice in Chapter four. Finally, as the thesis began, it concludes with personal meaning, discussing the implications for the author’s practice and how non-dual awareness will be woven into his counseling work.
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Starting from Wholeness: An Exploration of Non-Dual Awareness in Counseling
Chapter 1: Introduction

At the age of 31, I felt desperate. I had spent the preceding 15 years of my life trying to make meaning and find a reason to be alive. Although I did spend a lot of time lying in bed or on the couch watching hours and hours of television and treating my body poorly in many different ways, I didn’t present as a stereotypical depressed person. I also worked very hard to engage in life’s offerings to try to lift myself out of depression and anxiety. During those extremely turbulent years, I managed to get an undergraduate degree in literature and masters of education, and I spent a lot of time trying to wake myself up through hobbies. I literally and
figuratively jumped from one experience from another trying to find meaning. I was a certified skydiver and scuba diver and mountain bike enthusiast. I worked and lived in Romania, spent two years working and living in the Utah wilderness and had lots of adventure in between. I explored countless ideas and books but, when the adrenaline wore off, when the ideas crumbled in the face of my fatalism, I despaired, each major depressive episode worse than the one before. *Will this be my life, I thought ...will I carry this emptiness inside me forever?* At 31, almost ten years ago, I was exhausted by life. I had felt extreme fatigue before but as I looked at my future, I saw an endless cycle of very good moments alongside the black hole of never-ending depression. I felt like I had been walking a vast desert and I had nowhere to take respite from my fatigue, despite my constant seeking for refuge and/or escapism. Even at night there was no rest as I suffered from insomnia for years. I took medications, saw psychiatrists and counselors but nothing seemed to have any lasting benefit. The joyous experiences such as skydiving or doing something new became hollow. I knew that they were just distractions from my intense pain. 31 marks the year where I was playing loosely with my life, becoming more antisocial and was ultimately looking for a way out.

Somehow, I had the sense to ask for help when I began considering taking my own life to escape my serious depression. I called my sister to drive me to the hospital for I was giving up. I didn’t have the ‘courage’ to go through with suicide. I felt ashamed for being depressed, for asking for help and also for not having the guts to end my life. I had only two choices left: either go live in a mental hospital or die. I chose the hospital. I remember the quiet drive there. It was almost like the world had lost all color and sound. Everything was muffled and it was like a slow paced dream where objects seemed to float by in languid movements. The quiet I experienced in the car continued when I entered through the hospital doors; The silence only
got louder and pervaded everything. It almost felt like I had been transported to a different world. I did not really understand my experience until much later and I am still unraveling those introductory moments. As I conceptualized my experience over the years I realized that I was so shattered that all my beliefs came crumbling down and for once in my life I did not have to “be anyone.” My ego self was a ruined heap that lay outside of the walls of the hospital. There were no expectations of me anymore from anyone when I entered the hospital’s care. I did not have to compete or make money, find meaning, be Pino from an Italian American family who had very particular roles and expectations. I didn’t have to be a ‘somebody’. The confines of who I was had been set ablaze by my shame and utter giving up. Within this destruction of identifiers and the loss of who I had previously been, I found a freedom for the first time in my life-- the freedom to just be.

What a strange phenomenon to find freedom in what should have been a devastating arrangement, to be admitted to a hospital for mental and emotional care. I didn’t understand this silence at the time; It was a confusing experience and I felt shell shocked. I’ve spent the last ten years trying to understand this experience and am beginning to see how profound it was for me. I believe that it was the first time in my life that I experienced the inklings of non-dual awareness. “[N]ondual awareness refers to the experience of pure (or empty) consciousness and phenomena at the same time. It is the realization of one’s own nature as an unbounded expanse of subtle consciousness, pervading one’s internal and external experience as a unity” (Blackstone, 2007, p. 10). If it seems like non-dual awareness is an extremely difficult phenomenon to describe with the limits of English language, that’s because it is. My objective of this current writing is to explore the experience of non-dual awareness, as bound as I am by language, wisdom and time. In the upcoming chapters I will go more in depth into the definitions
of non-dual awareness and the problems of describing such an experience in order to continue
making sense to both myself and the reader. For, as Thomas Merton advises, “It may be
satisfactory if all one wants to describe is an experience on the aesthetic or even moral level. But
as soon as this type of language is used to express a transcendent religious or metaphysical
experience, such as mystical ecstasy, Zen Satori, and so on, it not only becomes misleading but it
involves our thought in irreconcilable contradictions” (Merton, 1968, p. 73). There is an inherent
paradox that happens when you describe a non-dual experience or even claim to have one. This
paradox haunts me through this writing and/but is an essential characteristic of non-dualism
itself.

Flashing back now to my life’s turning point in the hospital, I was so disillusioned with
my life that my mind hit a reset button and nothing made sense anymore, leaving my mind to rest
in a place without opposites, in the present moment. It sounds as though the hospital and my
treatment there made “the difference that makes a difference” (Bateson, 1972) but it wasn’t that
exactly. The hospital was my catalyst to look further into finding balance and health in my
life. In transformative experiences recorded in both Eastern and Western myths, both ancient
and modern day tales, most journeys must consist of a destruction period before birth and
renewal. With the construct of the hero’s journey, my time in the hospital was my entrance into
“the belly of the whale”, or descent into darkness (Campbell, 2008). The death of my former
identity opened the path for the birth of my meditative practice, which in turn became medicine
for my depression.

I didn’t go directly to meditation after this experience. After ten days in the hospital, I
spent three months in an outpatient program and then the next three months deciding what to do
next. I had always been interested in Asian philosophies and this was my chance for renewal and
to fulfill a dream of mine, so I packed up and headed East. I spent seven years in South Korea and most weekends I would spend hiking mountains and visiting the local Buddhist temples. I immersed myself in Buddhist thought and subsequently Daoism, Christianity, and other wisdom traditions. I finally found clarity and that my path in life lay in becoming as grounded in the present moment as I could be. From the belly of the whale I was able to journey to see glimpses of my true nature and was the most peaceful and content that I had ever been. I wondered what occupation would both satisfy my intellectual curiosity, Buddhist inclinations and my desire to rest in the here and now. Counseling, I believed, could give me the opportunity to fulfill these requirements and so I moved to Canada to pursue the rest of my life. It hasn’t been an easy ten years as it was a very difficult climb back from depression but I know for certain that if I did not have the unexpected experience of non-duality in the hospital, a place where there will always be refuge for anyone who needs it, I would not be alive today. When I left the hospital I was the same person with the same problems, but life was never as heavy or as desperate for me. I knew that inherently I was whole, despite the binaries and separations enforced by modern day life. It is a divine place inside me, a refuge I carry with me wherever I go, where, if I ever get tired again, I know that I can take respite. Through my reading I have come to believe that when the conditioned, or thinking, mind meets the unconditioned mind, that which unattachedly senses the present moment, then there is healing (Prendergast, Fenner & Krystal, 2003). That is, when one experiences non-duality and has a moment to just be- just be whole, just be aware, just be present- there is the potential for self-realization and a transformation.

My hope in this paper is to illuminate and articulate my understanding of non-duality, although the attempt is made somewhat futile by the limitations of language. My perspective mostly comes from a Korean Buddhist tradition but I have also come across the intimations of
non-dual awareness in other traditions as well. This current work explores my studies of non-dual awareness through a Korean Buddhist lens while gaining a wider perspective of non-duality from different traditions. I will compare both Eastern and Western manifestations of non-dual awareness and also explore ways that non-dual awareness might be beneficial inside a/my counseling practice. In chapter two and three, I explore Eastern and Western approaches to non-dual awareness, respectively. Chapter four will review three modalities in psychotherapy that incorporate non-dual awareness. The final chapter will discuss how I intend to integrate the non-dual approach in my counseling practice.

Terms

Non-duality has gone by many names in different traditions. Through this paper you will see it referred to as true self, Brahman, Dao, pregnant void, substance, true nature, enlightenment, truth, unconditioned, awakening, ground of being, non-dual field, satori, and God. In addition, I will use NDA to abbreviate non-dual awareness.

Defining the indefinite

To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour. -William Blake

Into blinding darkness go they who worship action alone.

Into an even greater darkness go they who worship meditation.

For it is other than meditation. It is other than action.

This we have learned from the enlightened ones who teach us

Into a blinding darkness go they who idolize the Absolute.

Into an even greater darkness go they who dote on the relative.
For it is other than the relative. It is other than the Absolute.

This we have learned from the enlightened ones who teach us. -Upanishad

Fish live all their lives in water and, as the water is ubiquitous, it would be easy to forget that the water is even there, or that other organisms live on land. Like fish in water, humans often neglect to look past the dual nature of this world. It is in our very nature to categorize and split experience into parts in order to understand them better. From beginningless time, where there has been thought, there is duality. We see Osiris vs. Seth, God vs. Satan, Good vs. Evil as pervading binaries governing society. The dualistic nature of the mind has also been reinforced through our human history by philosophers and scientists and the very language we speak.

Dualism can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle, and also to the early Sankhya and Yoga schools of Hindu philosophy. Plato first formulated his famous Theory of Forms, distinct and immaterial substances of which the objects and other phenomena that we perceive in the world are nothing more than mere shadows. He argued that for the intellect to have access to these universal concepts or ideas, the mind must itself be a non-physical, immaterial entity. (Mastin, 2008, par. 4).

To make sense of the world’s phenomena Plato was categorizing and identifying, separating and isolating matter. Descartes also reinforced the dualistic perspective of the world and introduced the idea that the body and mind is separate, that only objective knowing is true. “I am present to my body not merely in the way a seaman is present to his ship, but . . . I am tightly joined and, so to speak, mingled together with it, so much so that I make up one single thing with it" (Descartes, 1980, p. 94). Here, the way he speaks about himself as the master of his body, which is subordinate to his rational mind, gives away his belief that his being is fragmented. According
to Descartes, through scientific observation and rational thought, one can attain objective knowledge about the world. By reinforcing the mind/body and subject/object split it is difficult to feel whole or attached to the sensed environment or to the embodied experience this life offers. If I am not even of my body, then how can I be of the earth and chasm is created that splits us the ground of being. Wheatley (1999) states: “[T]his reduction into parts and the proliferation of separations has characterized not just organizations, but everything in the world during the past three hundred years. Knowledge was broken into disciplines and subjects, engineering became a prized science, and people were fragmented counseled to use different “parts” of themselves in different settings” (p. 27). The ability to categorize in order to make sense of the world is often seen as higher order thinking that has helped humans evolve, but has serious flaws as well. The perception of a fragmented existence has led humans often live in dislocation and disconnection (Alexander, 2011) and/or bound by cultural/societal norms, finding their lived lives illegitimate in the eyes of hegemonic norm-keepers.

Our main lived experience, is the one that surrounds us, that of a dualistic world where binaries abound, but this does not mean that NDA doesn't exist. Like fish who have not experienced life outside of their watery homes, so too it is hard for humans to grasp a concept that seems outside our usual awareness. Language in its nature constricts our perception and makes it more difficult to understand NDA. Through this paper it will become apparent again and again that any use of language will fail to define non-dual awareness.

We must be clear at the outset that any definition of That which is inherently whole is bound to fail. So by definition a definition of nonduality will be inadequate. How can thought penetrate the mystery of its own source? If we are honest, we must acknowledge that the best we can do is to offer a negative definition, that is, a definition of what
nonduality is not. But even this will not help us much since nonduality excludes nothing, even these pale attempts to say what it isn’t. After all, the discerning mind and its thoughts are also an expression of our true nature. If we can agree that nonduality refers to an inherent reality that is prior to a mind-created split between an observer/observed, subject/object, and self/other, we are on our way to at least some intellectual understanding. (Pendergast & Bradford, 2007, sect. Nonduality Revisited, par. 1)

Any attempt at describing this experience must be looked at as a sign pointing in the direction of the experience of NDA for further exploration. “[T]he foundation or "ground" of our existence and our awareness cannot be understood in terms of things that are known. We are forced, therefore, to speak of it through myth—that is, through special metaphors, analogies, and images which say what it is like as distinct from what it is” (Watts, 1969, Ch. 1, para. 19) Through this paper myth, metaphor, story, etc. will be employed to try to point towards the experience of NDA.

There are many dangers when exploring the realm of the non-dual because the ego defines itself through boundaries and does not want to dissolve into the pregnant void of NDA. So, the ego hangs on any way it can to hold onto some form of identity. For instance, a danger in understanding non-dual awareness is when the experience of NDA is taken as something that is separate from our thinking experience. This create a binary that eludes the final understanding of NDA. In NDA there is no witness to experience, witness and the witnessed are one. The ego sometimes takes more and more ‘evolved’ persona in order to hold on to some identity. Pendergast calls this a place that is ‘notdual,’ a place where the ego identifies with the boundless qualities of NDA but a witness still exists, which inherently is in
contrast to nonduality. This ‘notdual’ place becomes another concept that may stop some from understanding the fullness of NDA.

This corresponds to what Ken Wilber calls the causal state because it is the source or cause of all manifestation: This… causal state… is often likened to the state of deep dreamless sleep, except that this state is not a mere blank but rather an utter fullness, and it is experienced as such—as infinitely drenched in the fullness of Being, so full that no manifestation can even begin to contain it. Because it can never be seen as an object, this pure Self is pure Emptiness. Yet in the “causal state” there still remains a subtle yet distinct sense of a witness separate from what is witnessed and the world therefore appears to be something separate. This eventually gives way to complete nonduality: The sense of being a Witness “in here” completely vanishes itself, and the Witness turns out to be everything that is witnessed. The causal gives way to the Nondual, and formless mysticism gives way to nondual mysticism. “Form is emptiness and Emptiness is form.”…You don’t look at the sky, you are the sky. (Pendergast & Bradford, 2007, Nonduality Revisited, par. 2).

This is another aspect that can be confusing in non-dual awareness. The everyday experience is that we are witnesses to our lives but in understanding non-duality this distinction falls away and there is no difference between the seer and the seen.

Non-duality is not a new concept. It is inherent in all our experiences from the birth of our universe. “[Non-duality is] rooted in the direct experience of countless sages through millennia, is at the heart of Hindu Vedanta, most schools of Buddhism, and Daoism, and mystical Christianity, Judaism, and Islam” (Prendergast, Fenner & Krystal, Ch. 1, Para. 2, 2003). All over the world, people have had common experiences of non-duality, recorded
mostly through religious experiences. Throughout all ages and many cultures there are common philosophies, or religious beliefs, or ideas that, at the heart, honor non-duality, even if named differently. For example, Zen Buddhism, a Japanese manifestation of Buddhism, is Non-dual Philosophy. As DT Suzuki (1949) puts it, “Zen is the ultimate fact of all philosophy and religion. Every intellectual effort must cultivate in it, or rather must start from it, if it is to bear any practical fruits. Every religious faith must spring from it if it has to prove at all efficiently and lovingly workable in our active life” (p. 268). Here the word *Zen* is comparable to the term *non-duality*. It means quietude, peace, togetherness, connectedness, meditation and being present in the here and now. It is the great pregnant void from which everything springs. Before moving any further into the enigmatic concept of non-dual awareness, how do others understand or define it?

Non-duality has many names. For some it is God, the Atman, True Self; ground of being, essential nature, enlightenment and that is just to name a few. These are often used interchangeably to describe the experience of non-dual awareness or NDA. In contrast with non-dualism, dualism has many names as well. The thinking mind, the ego, and separative or self-reflexive are some names that might be used to indicate the dual nature of our minds. “[Non-duality] derives from the Sanskrit word Advaita which means ‘not-two’. Non-dual wisdom refers to the understanding and direct experience of a fundamental consciousness that underlies the apparent distinction between perceiver and perceived. From the non-dual perspective, the split between self and other is a purely mental construct” (Pendergast, Fenner, Krystal, Chapter 1, Para. 2, 2003). In pure awareness there is no real change in perceptual awareness. That is, the world and the circumstances of one’s life haven’t changed through NDA, but there is also an intuitive and perhaps (re)discovered understanding of a wholeness that
underlies one’s existence. There is a deep sense of connection to everything around, a sense that one is not separate from other people, nor is one apart from or different than entire universe that surrounds. With an embodied and non-dual perspective, “it is very difficult to discern, at any moment, precisely where this living body begins and where it ends” (Abram, 1996, p.47; See also, Bateson, 1972). That is, the “localization and boundaries of the self” (Bateson, 1972) are not easily discernible, and it’s difficult to understand where the self begins and ends. In contrast, the dual nature of the mind splits experience and things into categories, essentially creating a sense of distance between oneself and the world, or, as Alan Watts puts it, into socially/mentally constructed ‘skin-contained egos’ (2012). Further to the point, a student had the following exchange with Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn:

What is enlightenment?” The student asked. “Enlightenment is only a name,” [Seung Sahn] replied. “If you make ‘enlightenment’, then enlightenment exists. But if enlightenment exists, then ignorance exists, too. And that already makes an opposites world. Good and bad, right and wrong, enlightenment and ignorant- all of these are opposites. All opposites are just your own thinking. But truth is absolute, and is before any thinking or opposites appear. So if you make something, you will get something, and that something will be a hindrance. But if you don’t make anything, you will get everything, OK? (Seung Sahn, 2006, pg. 1).

Seung Sahn says that you will get everything. In a state of non-dual awareness there is only wholeness. Things are not separate in this world and it is more like one unified field. Seung Sahn here points out that words and ideas give way to binary perspectives, which blur clear vision of the interconnectedness and wholeness of the universe. Words that identify and categorize (as all words do) separate objects from one another, and once you create one concept
you automatically create its counter. If you say enlightenment, then already ignorance has come into being. If you were to stay present and experience or sense what “is” then dualities momentarily disappear and you may get access to a perspective that helps see clearly that the world of the ego and the dual nature of our mind are but part of the picture. This interconnected and whole picture, where the ego is momentarily suspended in what Thich Nhat Hanh (2007) calls “interbeing”, leads to better relationships with oneself and with the rest of the universe.

Problematizing the perfect

What is so important about non-dual awareness as an individual? The importance of non-dual awareness is simply to glimpse the knowledge of who we actually are without judgment or history, an experience of seeing the truth of this universe. It is a very simple thought but it not only has it has profound implications for our happiness as individuals but also for cultivating non-violent relationships with our communities and environment. It allows us to discern a little more what is important in life by giving us a fuller picture of it. We spend our lives in a very constricted and bound ego and once we, for a moment, escape its rigidity we have access to other perspectives that make our lives richer. In addition, it can also help us learn more about our place in this universe, our culpability and importance in global and environmental systems.

Non-dual awareness is the only thing that is truly secure in this existence. This is true because it is the one constant that cannot be changed or destroyed. It is the ultimate secure base because it is available at all times, even if that is overlooked or not consciously known. Non-dual awareness is the only thing that can never leave us or let us down in any way. Where would it go? It is the substratum of all existence! It could never reject or fail us in any way. The non-dual presence of our true being is pure love. In other
words, it unconditionally allows everything to fully be as it is. It would not be possible
for any human relationship alone to offer the same. (Lumiere, 2012, para. 12).

From the perspective of existentialism humans come into this world with a some basic existential
crisis, a seeming separation from everything else, meaninglessness, and fear of death (Yalom,
1980). In a Western-normative, Christian history (of which I am apart), many feel outcast from
the Garden of Eden, exiled by God for our sins. I question whether it is for our sins that we feel
cast out. In this case our only sin, or what feels like a damnation, is identifying too closely with
our thinking minds. That is, the underlying existential feeling that we are alone, that there is no
meaning to life, pervades and sends us out searching for meaning and fulfillment, extrinsic to our
own selves. In efforts to feel validated or to understand our lives, we try to make sense
intellectually and begin to value so greatly our intellect that it becomes synonymous with the
word “I”, harkening back to Descartes’ view of his body/embodied knowing as a ship,
subordinate to and with less legitimacy than his intellectual and separate mind. By closing off
the lived and present experience we miss opportunities to experience non-dual awareness, to
glimpse ourselves as whole already, and, in turn, create more suffering for ourselves. For,
truthfully, we are not separate from our universe- we are “interbeing” with all others and our
identities are formed by (and help to form) others, our language, society, families and
environment. Thus, “the capacity of non-dual awareness [is] to provide immediate resilience
that goes beyond regular acceptance (as it is a refuge that is not bound by time or space)” (Rabi,
2016, p. 94). So, when we realize who we are in wholeness, we are secure in this world again,
not because anything has changed but because our vision has cleared and we have a deep
embodied sense that we are not separate.
Additionally, realizing non-dual awareness may have profound implications for the safety of our planet.

Slowly, inexorably, members of our species are beginning to catch sight of a world that exists beyond the confines of our specific culture—beginning to recognize, that is, that our own personal, social, and political crises reflect a growing crisis in the biological matrix of life on the planet. The ecological crisis may be the result of a recent and collective perceptual disorder in our species, a unique form of myopia which it now forces us to correct. (Abram, 1998, par. 1).

In Abram’s (1988) paper on Merleau-Ponty, he alludes to myopia, a disillusioned tunnel vision wherein individual humans see themselves as the locus of the universe. Modern day human beings are under a Cartesian spell that makes it seem we are separate beings from every other organism or matter. We believe the myth that we are an ‘encapsulated ego in a bag of skin.’

Our civilized distrust of the senses and of the body engenders a metaphysical detachment from the sensible world — it fosters the illusion that we ourselves are not a part of the world that we study, that we can objectively stand apart from that world, as spectators, and can thus determine its workings from outside. A renewed attentiveness to bodily experience, however, enables us to recognize and affirm our inevitable involvement in that which we observe, our corporeal immersion in the depths of a breathing Body much larger than our own. (Abram, 1998, para. 11).

This “renewed attentiveness to bodily experience” opens up the possibility of sensing non-duality and lets us grasp interconnectivity and wholeness. When it’s understood that my actions, words and thoughts affect all that surrounds, impacting my own life and environment, the impetus to be kinder, more compassionate and responsible increases. We are in an
environmental crisis and the world’s health is seriously compromised by our myopia; it is if we are chopping fingers off our own hand without realizing it will eventually kill us. Seeing our true natures allows us to be better guardians of all beings that surround us, tending to them as we would tend to ourselves.

**Describing the indescribable**

Are we able to speak of ‘consciousness’ when the conscious subject is no longer able to be aware of itself as separate and unique? Then if the empirical ego is conscious at all, is it conscious of itself as transcended, left behind, irrelevant, illusory, and indeed as the root of all ignorance. -- Thomas Merton

Writing about non-dual awareness is difficult. My Buddhist teacher would ask, how would you describe the taste of honey to someone else? All the words that one could use would not be sufficient in explaining the true taste but if one were to dip a spoon in honey and taste for oneself then they will have understanding. The same can be said for non-duality. There are no words that I can use to clearly to articulate it, and yet, I am confined by the purpose of my assignment: to define, describe and categorize.

Unfortunately for me, my many readings and conversations consistently reaffirm that whenever one tries to categorize, define, or speak about non-dual awareness then one has already lost non-dual awareness. Zen Master Seung Sahn says,

[I]n the Absolute there are no opposites. Our words and speech are all opposites-thinking. So the moment you even say ‘Absolute,’ it is no longer the Absolute. The moment you say ‘substance,’ it is no longer just substance. You have already created the world of opposites. An eminent Zen master said, ‘Even mentioning Buddha is like dumping dung
on your head.’ True substance, your true nature, and truth are already beyond speech and words. So, a long time ago, an eminent teacher said, ‘The true form has no words. Truth is unmoving.’ If you open your mouth, you rely on speech and words and language, and so you have already lost the truth. Words and speech cannot describe this point. Speech and words cannot show your true nature. So we often say, ‘Silence is better than holiness.’ That is a very important point. (Seung Sahn, 1997 Chapter 4, Para. 1).

My teacher would tell me that I have already used too many words in this paper. If I told him the story of my experience in the hospital he would probably tell me that I didn’t learn anything yet… and that may be true. So, as I write this paper I encompass two worlds, embracing both the form and the formless of this world. These two constructs, and the spaces in between, are all equally valid and true perspectives, working in mutuality and totality. As Seung Sahn says, when we use words we create duality, which gives the appearance of separation from non-duality. It is an appearance of separation because even when we fully identify with a disembodied and/or sovereign ego, our true nature remains intact, if clouded. Our true nature habits the non-dual field in wholeness and without socialized forms. However, it still remains a difficult task to describe the indescribable, and to purposefully distort non-dual awareness in order to write about it.

So how does one discuss non-duality if one immediately loses sight of it when categorizing and writing its character? Those who have studied Buddhism would surely have heard the following saying, which helps allegorize the attempt to write about NDA: a finger pointing to the moon. That is, any language or teaching that tries to define NDA is like a finger pointing at the moon, the limited and small words perhaps pointing in the vast direction of and leading towards NDA. DT Suzuki says that, “Zen refuses even tentatively to be defined or
described in any manner” (Suzuki, 1949, pg. 267). The caution for students of NDA (like myself) is that when we take advice on how to achieve it or follow a teacher or teaching we may become attached to those forms, and ironically our vision of NDA becomes distorted. If we hungrily try to pinpoint NDA and any practice with certainty we have most definitely made an error and our wholeness is, for a time, lost. If we actively try to find NDA, it will disappear in our hands. We would have forgotten that a finger pointing to the moon is not a true compass and that the moon is too far, too elusive to hold in one’s palm. Whenever there is thought, there is not NDA. I offer a disclaimer, then, that whatever I have described in these pages about NDA are lies and should never be taken for truth.

Further, although this paradox abides, and there are many of us that try to describe it with words. It is a disorienting experience as the void in between spoken words is infinite and there are lots of places to get lost along the way. Buddha said that we can understand the world in a grain of sand, so how then can we get lost if everything around us is pointing us in the right direction? Explained another way,

[the Buddha himself said that he taught 84,000 different dharmas. A dharma in this context is—a device, a teaching, a method, a key, an admonition, an advice, a reward, a reprimand—anything in fact that brings someone closer to experiencing non-dual awareness. In using the symbolic number of 84, 000 the Buddha was inferring that the ways of Buddhism are limitless, but not limitless in the sense that Buddhism is anything and everything. What makes a method (or non-method) Buddhist is the fact that it promotes the final awakening that Buddha experienced—the awakening into the nature of consciousness as pure and unstructured. (Pendergast, Fenner, Krystal, 2003, Ch.2 para.5).]
And so, whatever I say after or before this is foolish. Non-duality only lives in the present.

**Four fingers pointing towards the moon**

The following discussion will include different perspectives around the theme of non-duality, tracing NDA through different religious traditions, philosophic thought and psychotherapy. To guide the reader, I feel it’s important to set out signposts, or fingers pointing in the vast direction of the moon that is NDA, that demonstrate there are similar markers in each tradition. The first marker is that non-duality cannot be expressed through words or thoughts. Non-duality is an experience of wholeness and oneness so there is no other thing outside of it. In each tradition there is the similar philosophy of wholeness that is indescribable and that which when described loses its integrity. The second marker is that non-dualism is described as the void where duality emerges. Similar iterations of this language are present in all the traditions and means that the experience contains everything and is pregnant with possibility. This is the reason that NDA has been called the ground of being. The third marker is that the language of non-duality is paradoxical and elusive. Because we cannot describe it through thought and words, there are many contradictions that arise out of discussing this ephemeral topic. It may seem that the teachings are frustratingly elusive and that teachers are purposefully being vague but it is in the very nature of non-duality to elude being described. The wisdom of these traditions lies in paradox, allegory and myth. Finally, the fourth finger pointing towards the moon, in non-dual awareness there is potential for a perspective shift. For individuals and collectives, there is a suspended moment to see the universe as whole and interconnected, and this allows for understanding, compassion and new vision. These four markers are present in all traditions written about in the following work may serve as a guide in navigating this slippery landscape.
One of my greatest teachers, Krishnamurti (1991) says, “Don’t look out the window hoping to catch [enlightenment/NDA] unawares, or sit in a darkened room waiting for it; it comes only when you are not there at all, and its bliss has no continuity” (Krishnamurti, p. 82). It is an essential, ancient paradox in Buddhist teaching: How can you gain something if you do not seek it? I do not know. All I know is that I sit down in a silent spot each day and I just try to become aware of what is happening. I do not sit for a purpose. I say to myself, I am going to sit over there for a bit and see what happens. This is enough for me.

The importance of metaphor and myth

Non-dual awareness is not created. It cannot be destroyed. It is always present and throughout history different scholars and teachers have used mythologies to garner its essence. The study of comparative religion demonstrates some similar themes pervade the messages of diverse global faiths. One of those similar themes is the experience of NDA. Joseph Campbell has written about myths from all over the globe and distilled some of the universal themes concealed in their words. Campbell says, “[c]reation myths are pervaded with a sense of the doom that is continually recalling all created shapes to the imperishable out of which they first emerged. The forms go forth powerfully, but inevitably reach their apogee, break, and return. Mythology, in this sense, is tragic in its view. But in the sense that it places our true being not in the forms that shatter but in the imperishable out of which they again immediately bubble forth, mythology is eminently untragical” (Campbell, 2008, p. 231). Through creation myths humans have tried to express the inexpressible aspects of life over history and culture. Before the world existed, there was a void- some call it a pregnant void- and out of this nothingness, form emerges and when form is destroyed, back into the void it goes. The void has no opposites. It is the world itself without dualism, before thinking.
Freud writes “that the truths contained in religious doctrine are after all so distorted and systematically disguised that the mass cannot recognize them as truth” (Campbell, 2008, p. xii). The mystical stories of religion, including those found in the Bible, are sometimes taken up as literally as truths by fundamentalist believers. However, the stories themselves are not the final destinations. In fact, they are like signposts pointing you further along. It is at the last signpost before all markers disappear and you must trust yourself to the void where there aren’t any signs. What is the truth of religious doctrine? What is the most important message in these religions and doctrines? Many, like Advaitist, Buddhist and Daoists, would argue that it is the truth of unity and wholeness found in the void, found in non-dualism. In Buddhism there is a metaphor that in order to cross the river you need a raft. Once you cross the river you don’t continue to carry the raft on your back. The raft has served its purpose; The myth has guided the way to the understanding of wholeness and unity. Campbell (2008) states, “It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into the human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth” (Campbell, 2008, p. 1). There are many rafts that lead us to the truth of NDA. Form (myths, stories, words, rafts) arises from the void and everywhere that form is expressed is the shadow of the land beyond thinking. Mythology, story and metaphor are integral to understanding NDA and/in diverse faiths and cultures. For the purposes of this study, Eastern will pertain to Asiatic schools of thought, while Western will include European and mostly Christian doctrines. The limitation in this work is that it offers but a glimpse at a very few cultures and geographic locations in the
world. However, as aforementioned, this writing is a personal exploration stemming from my immersion in Korean Buddhism and dipping into other perspectives and philosophies.
Chapter 2: From the East

There is something formlessly created
Born before Heaven and Earth
So silent! So ethereal!
Independent and changeless
Circulating and ceaseless
It can be regarded as he mother of the world
I do know its name
Identifying it, I call it Dao - Dao Te Ching, 2006

Eastern religions and thought have become more popular in the Western world in the last century. The ideas of ‘being present’ and ‘mindful’ have become almost an overused catchphrase. The proliferation of Yoga and Buddhism in North America has been incredible. Why have these religions become so popular in mainstream society even though similar themes are found in Eurocentric Western mythologies? I believe one reason could be that Eastern religions speak directly about the experience of non-duality. One of the central messages of Buddhism, Advaita Vedanta and Daoism all is to shed our ego identities, and through story this message is made very clear. Of course, being part of an American capitalist culture that values materialism (as I am), learning Eastern philosophy might be a form of “spiritual materialism,” a way to have something else, similar to how one may own the newest television set. In the following I will give an overview of Daoism, Korean Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta. For each field there will be a brief introduction to the religion and the practices that they use in order to access the non-dual field.

Daoism

Daoism, sometimes spelled Taoism, is, at its core, a non-dual religion. It is a very esoteric practice and its form varies from person to person. In fact, as I found out while studying
Daoism in Korea that many Daoists’ most highly prized practices are kept secret. I never found out why such secrecy was important but that in order for these secrets to be revealed to a practitioner, there was a particular level of dedication and practice necessary. Daoist teachings are some of the oldest mind-body healing wisdoms (Cleary, 2009) and the oldest source book is the Dao Te Ching, having been tentatively dated to the sixth century B.C.E (Watts, 2000, p.xii). “[T]he word Dao embodies two broad meanings in the English language: it means approximately the Way- in the sense of “the way to go”—and it also refers to nature in the sense of one’s own true nature. Everything is said to have its own Dao, but it is impossible to define it, to put one’s finger on it exactly” (Watts, 2000, p. xi). You cannot put your finger on the Dao because it is beyond description. Daoism has many esoteric practices but many of its teachings are centered on the ideas of non-duality, plainly seen in the Symbol of the Yin Yang. “Traditionally, this emblem is one of the basic symbols of the philosophy of Daoism. It is the symbol of the yang, or the male, and the yin, the female, of the positive and negative, the yes and the no, the light and the dark. We always have to divide the world into opposites or categories in order to be able to think about it” (Watts, 2000, p. 33). The Ying Yang represents the opposite’s world but it also represent the unity of the universe represented by the circle: a reality of totality that pervades all opposites. In the words of Lao Tzu,

When the world knows beauty
as beauty, ugliness arises
When it knows good as good, evil arises
Thus being and nonbeing produce each other
Difficult and easy bring about each

Other (Dao Te Ching, ch. 2)

Lao Tzu realizes that opposites are dependent on each other and you can’t have one without the other. Good cannot exist without evil. And like the Yin Yang there is a truth beyond duality which is represented by the circle encasing the two halves.

Lao Tzu goes on to say:

“Look at it, it cannot be seen

It is called colorless

Listen to it, it cannot be heard

It is called noiseless

Reach for it, it cannot be held

It is called formless

These three cannot be completely unraveled

So they are combined into one” (Dao Te Ching, ch. 14)

Again, there is the description of formless, of a place where words and thoughts can’t describe the experience of NDA. Like other descriptions of non duality, the Dao is the ground being, the void from which dualism emerges. The Dao houses the dualistic world. The Dao Te Ching says, “those who know, do not talk, those who talk, do not know” (Lin, ch. 56). The experience of the Dao is before thinking, before words can bind senses. It is a paradox that shows up in all NDA experiences.

I studied with a Daoist master in Korea for two years and our practice was similar to Buddhist practice but with some differences. “[Daoists’] object is to groom and enhance...the three bases or three treasures of human existence: Vitality, Energy, and Spirit” (Cleary, 2009, p
ix). These three aspects have specific correlation to our bodies: Vitality is the physical body; Energy is the electrical system inside the body that the Chinese call Chi; and the Spirit is the mind housed in the Energy body, associated with the essence of mind and consciousness (Cleary, 1991). Having practices in these three areas gives insight into true nature and the nature of the universe. My teacher spent most of his time meditating in the mountain in the open air all year round. Being close to nature was very important in harnessing chi energy from the surroundings and keeping internal chi in harmony. He had a ramshackle little hut to sit in when it would rain. He spent most of his time in meditation, breathing and circulating his Chi energy increasing his Spirit and Energy Bodies. Then there is training the body, or Vitality. Keeping it flexible, healthy and clean is important in re-aligning the balance in one’s body. Most people in the West practice forms of exercise much in line with Descartes, splitting the body from the mind. Even with the intense focus on exercise in North American culture people are not taking good care of their bodies. Daoists cultivate the body like they would a well kept garden. They abstain from unhealthy eating habits, engage in self massage of muscle, joints and ligaments, and exercise the body in various ways that cultivate mind body unity. One example of this exercise is called Ki Cheon (기천) or Heaven Energy practiced in Korea. It is a series of moves that promote body health and proper Chi circulation. Daoists believe that the mind and body are not two separate entities, and while some traditions train only the mind, Daoism believes that keeping the body healthy is important in attaining the Dao.

There are countless interpretations of religious texts, each offering a slightly different variation. The spirit of Daoism gets lost when its practitioners hold fast to their practices and the words in the book. This is the case for all manifestations of non-duality. When there is an
attachment to words or practices, NDA is obscured. Therefore, there is usually a warning in non-dual thought that even the vehicle that helps you see the ground of being must be discarded in the end in order to see clearly. In fact, there are many stories of Buddhist scholars who throw their books away because they have become a hindrance to realizing enlightenment.

**Buddhism**

Buddhism arose in India about 2500 years ago and its main purpose was the attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism has split into many different branches, with many more different rituals and beliefs since its birth. Ajahn Brahm, a famous monk trained in Thailand, says that he is often asked about the differences between the four major branches of Buddhism. He says, “that they are like identical cakes with four different icings: on the outside the traditions may look and taste different, but when you go deeply into them, you find the same taste—the taste of freedom” (Brahm, 2005, p. 11). This ‘taste of freedom’ is at the center of all Buddhist thought. It is the attainment of enlightenment, which is a non-dual teaching. In the next section, the similarities between enlightenment and NDA will be explored, as well as the particular practices Buddhists maintain to move towards NDA.

So what is awakening or, what some have translated as, enlightenment? D.T. Suzuki in his essays conjectures what the Buddha’s awakening was like and tries to point the best way he can in words to the experience of it:

It is quite evident that his, [Buddha’s] intellectual activity was not the efficient cause of Enlightenment. ‘Not to be grasped by mere logic’ (atakkavacara) is the phrase we constantly encounter in Buddhist literature, Pali, and Sanskrit. The satisfaction the Buddha experienced in this case was altogether too deep, too penetrating, and too far-reaching in result to be a matter of mere logic…. [H]is insight reached the bottom of his
being and saw it really as it was, and the seeing was like the seeing of your own hand
with your own eyes- there was no reflection, no inference, no judgment, no comparison,
no moving either backward or forward step by step, the thing was seen and that was the
end of it, there was nothing to talk about, nothing to argue, or to explain. The seeing was
something complete in itself- it did not lead on to anything inside or outside, within or
beyond. (Suzuki, 1949, p. 122-123).

The experience of the Buddha was beyond words, beyond ‘logic’. Suzuki talks of a place
of seeing. This seeing is awareness itself or true self that has been described in the last
chapter. The great sixth patriarch of Buddhism, Hui-neng, directly talks about non-duality. He
says, “Ordinary people see the body and the world as two; the wise realize their essential nature
is not two. The non-dual nature is the Buddha-nature” (Hui-neng, 638-713 C.E., 1998, p.15). At
the very heart of all Buddhist practice is the non-dual experience. In Zen Buddhism there is the
metaphor of a gateless gate in which one must cross to arrive at an awakening/enlightenment
experience. It is gateless because there is no entrance by any logical means. The doors open
only when we enter the here in now.

Some Buddhists believe it takes lifetimes in order to attain awakening/enlightenment
while others believe that the awakened state never leaves us and it is only that we identify too
much with our Ego/our thinking minds that we cannot see the wholeness that pervades
everything at all times. Most of my personal experience is with Korean Buddhism and so I will
relate how my order understands and practices the attainment of awakening/enlightenment.

Korean Seon Buddhism (선불교) and Japanese Zen were directly influenced by Chinese
Chan Buddhism. There is a belief in these schools that awakening/enlightenment is not gradual
over lifetimes but, what these schools call, immediate or sudden. In fact, these schools have been referred to as ‘sudden awakening schools.’ The gradual approach implies that there are steps to be taken in order to attain awakening/enlightenment. Those who believe in immediate awakening/enlightenment ask, how can you take steps towards something when it is already inherent and whole? If the belief is that everything is already whole, how can there be a gradual process to its realization? It is not a matter of attaining awakening/enlightenment but of burning off the illusions that obscure it through Buddhist practice. The illusion is that we are a separate identity and not endowed with Buddha nature (Sheng-yen, 1993). “The word Buddha is often designated as an awakened/enlightened person, but Buddha does not depend upon the existence of enlightened people. Truth does not depend upon the existence of the teaching of an enlightened person or not. Even the word ‘Buddha’ is just a word; you have to find out for yourself what it truly means” (Daehaeng, 2005, p. 39). This Seon Master says that truth/awakening already exists even if we do not realize it. Even without a person we call Buddha, Enlightenment/Truth already exists. At the heart of all forms of Chan Buddhism, there is an understanding that the world of non-duality is always present. We see it again in the very famous sutra of Hui-neng. “Good friends, ordinary mortals are themselves Buddhas, affliction is itself enlightenment. Deluded the moment before, you were an ordinary mortal; enlightened the moment after, you are a Buddha” (Hui-neng, 638-713 C.E., 1998, p.18). Hui-neng even calls our affliction or suffering enlightenment. Enlightenment encompasses all aspects of personhood, even the ones from which people would rather be rid, such as suffering.

There are many practices within the various ‘sudden schools’ but in my school we use mostly five disciplines: meditation, chanting, bowing, mantra, and Kong-an Practice. My teachers, both Seung-san and Dae-bong, would probably argue that the purpose of all these
disciplines is the same. Seung-san says, “[t]rue meditation is not just dependent on how you keep your body: from moment to moment, how do you keep your mind? How do you keep a not-moving mind in every situation? Thus, true meditation means mind-sitting. Keeping a not-moving mind in any situation or condition is the true meaning of meditation. That is a very important point” (Seung-san, Ch. 4, Sect. 9, par. 2). So, no matter what the discipline it is important to keep a ‘not-moving mind.’ Twice a year at Musangsa temple in South Korea there is a three-month long retreated called Kyol Che (결에). During a regular day of retreat, we wake up at 3 AM and complete 108 full body bows. We then go to the main hall and chant for 30 minutes. We do this twice: once before breakfast and again after dinner. Throughout the day we sit in meditation for an average of eight or nine hours broken up in 1-2 hour increments. We usually sit for about 30-50 minutes and do walking meditation to rest our legs throughout the one to two hour sitting period. Bedtime is early and we are in bed by 9pm. Throughout the week we are called into the Seon masters room for Kong-an (or Koan in Japanese) practice. A Kong-an is like a Buddhist riddle and it is used in order to test the student’s understanding of his true nature. An example that Seung-san would use is “what was your face before your parents were born?” This seems like a strange question but, like non-duality, this question and its answer are not rooted in the cognitive, logical mind but in the here and now. The Zen master uses the question like a tuning fork, hearing the student’s answer and using the information to guide the student to clarity. All this practice has but one purpose: to find out who we really are, to deeply understand that our nature is no different than Buddha nature.

Advaita Vedanta
Advaita Vedanta, a branch of Hinduism, is a very old tradition founded in the 7th century that gives a “unifying interpretation of the whole body of Upanishads” (Nakamura, 1950, p. 112), the Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Ghita (Taft, 2014; Grimes, 1990; Dalvi, 2006). Through this section, we will discuss parts of the Upanishads, The Bhagavad Ghita, and some modern interpretations of Advaita Vedanta in order to get a clearer vision of what it is.

Based in the Indus Valley in what is modern day Pakistan, the Upanishads were ancient texts dating back to 1500 B.C.E, a branch of the Vedic literature. The wide body of Vedic texts were orally sung or said, passed down through generations, calling on nature and gods to provide good weather, good growing and creativity, amongst other fortunes, to the people. Advaita (literally meaning ‘not-two’) is the philosophical umbrella under which many Hindu origins lie, including the modern day yoga practices that have become so prevalent in communities worldwide. “Advaita Vedanta, based on the Hindu Upaniṣads of India, is a spiritual teaching tradition that has gained attention in the West over the past century. The teachings address the fundamental spiritual question of the nature of reality by expounding on the nature of the individual, and the relationship between the individual, the creation, and God” (Tontz, 2013, p. 1). This very old tradition speaks a similar language that we have encountered in both Buddhism and Daoism. In fact, some argue that the founder of Advaita, Gaudapada was influenced by the Buddhist thought (Taft, 2014). Advaita Vedanta’s foundational purpose is to seek (or perhaps not seek) freedom in the experience of non-duality or, as Tontz states, in the nature of reality. Like all religions it has its own rituals and practices. The ways the followers of this path have expressed NDA through Advaita practice are innumerable, not surprising considering the philosophy is born from one of the oldest sacred texts and its branches are far reaching and
diversified over time. The following is but a brief glimpse into the tenets of NDA at the centre of Advaita’s foundation.

Another sacred and spiritual text which is used as a primary source book for Advaita Vedanta is The Bhagavad Gita (Tontz, 2013). This text is central and contemporarily studied in Advaita and Yogic practices and one of the great themes is the path to self-realization and true nature, or NDA. The Bhagavad Gita says,

behind the manifest and the unmanifest, there is another existence, which is the eternal and changeless. This is not dissolved in the general cosmic dissolution. It has been called the unmanifest, the imperishable. To reach It is said to be the greatest of all achievements. It is my highest state of being. Those who reach It are not reborn. The highest state of being can only be achieved through devotion to him in whom all creatures exist, and by whom this universe is pervaded. (trans. Prabhavananda, Huxley, & Isherwood, 1995, p. 55).

Similar to Buddhism and Daoism there is a vague and perhaps mystical allusion to an existence behind the manifest and unmanifest, behind the forms of this world there is a nature, a wholeness, a unity with God. Poonja (2007) also speaks to this when he says; “understanding and not understanding are all in the scheme of ignorance, just a realm of mind” (p. 51). Though the Bhagavad Gita describes the unity with God, it is unlike the Gods of Greece or the Christian God, those external deities who judge from above. The idea of God here is that God is everything and resides already within oneself, much like the Buddha Nature. “Advaita Vedanta claims that the true nature of the human individual is a non-dual Self, defined as limitless existent consciousness. This non-dual Self is shown to be one with Brahman, the Self of the entire cosmic creation. Thus, the teachings ultimately affirm a non-dual relationship between the
individual and the creation as a whole as they are both seen as manifestations of one undivided Self” (Tontz, 2013, p. 1). So, we are not only ourselves but also everything around us. As the Buddhists say, we co-arise with the entire universe around us. Or put more simply as Maharshi (2001) states, “[t]he pure mind is itself Brahman; it therefore follows that Brahman is not other than the mind of the sage” (p. 138). There is no separating myself with the entirety of the universe.

How does one practice to attain liberation in Advaita Vedanta? An important principle, which is also present in Korean Buddhism, is that ultimately there is neither path nor practices that can actually open the gate of non-duality. “Throughout his life Sri Ramana insisted that this silent flow of power represented his teachings in their most direct and concentrated form. The importance he attached to this is indicated by his frequent statements to the effect that his verbal teachings were only given out to those who were unable to understand his silence” (Maharshi, 2013, p. 9). This silence is an indication that we are already complete. There are no austerities necessary in order to find non-duality. It is already here and we are already in its presence. There are no words that could convey its meaning, but the experience can be sensed within the individual, connected to the cosmos. “Few of his followers were capable of assimilating this truth in its highest and most undiluted form and so he often adapted his teachings to conform to the limited understanding of the people who came to him for advice” (Maharshi, 2013, P. 10). Similar to Buddha, Maharshi new that there were those without faith and so instructed them differently. He devised a method of self inquiry for students who could not grasp the teaching that consciousness alone exists, who could not discern the non-dual field. And so, like the other wisdom traditions there is an understanding that there is no path and yet we still must tread the path.
Advaita Vedanta practice has austerities that one may perform despite the previous statement that none are perhaps necessary, in theory. Many of them are similar to Buddhist and Daoist practices but may differ in subtle ways based on the different lineages of Advaita. The Bhagavad Gita lists devotion to god, faith, renunciation, and karmic duty as ways to realize Brahman or NDA. Devotion to a guru is also very important in many branches of Hinduism. The guru is a person (in texts traditionally though unfortunately, a man) who has realized who he was and can help others find their divinity, a teacher. The word guru is interesting, as it means both dark (gu) and light (ru) in Sanskrit. While there are many interpretations of the word and translations of the literal meaning it is perhaps not coincidental that the enlightened teacher has the wholeness of dark and light within their title. “The guru is essentially a spiritual mentor guiding the disciple on the road to self-realization…. The Hindu tradition, perhaps more than any other, lays on the necessity on such a person. It believes that the spiritual realization, to be effective, must be communicated by a living person who is the embodiment of the truth, is well-versed in scriptures, established in the absolute, is calm, compassionate, and self-restraint and is free from and worldly motive” (Dhiman, 2010, p. 20). This meeting with a guru is called a Satsang, which literally means “gathering together for the truth or being with the truth” (Nirmala, n.d., par. 1). In traditional Advaita the guru helps their disciple on a threefold method to realization, employing listening, reflection and contemplation within teachings (Tontz, 2013), not unlike methods in some therapeutic sessions perhaps, though it serves my practice to think of the client as their own guru.

Gaining knowledge from a guru is an essential part of path of Advaita Vedanta for some and one of the beginning stages or realization. It is, however, but one of the practices of this ancient tradition. Faith, renunciation and karmic duty are mentioned as additional paths towards
NDA. Those with great faith in God and/or their Guru are very close to the non-dual world. Faith is the ultimate form of letting go, of trusting the universe and deciding not to attach too closely to one’s thoughts, feelings and preconceived notions. Renunciation of worldly things is a practice towards NDA because owning things is a process of the dualistic mind. In the non-dual field nothing is missing and so wanting anything splits the non-dual awareness. The idea of Karmic duty is similar to an idea in Daoism. Daoists say never to swim against the river. It is useless because the river is stronger than you, and it is better to swim with the river and adjust course to get to where you need. The great overarching lesson in the Bhagavad Gita is to follow your path, even if it contains suffering--Further the text alludes that each individual is connected to the cosmos, that each has selfless duty that should be performed without too much thinking or worry, that the self is God, that life is creation and destruction, both. Just so, we are all born into a certain family, culture, and cosmos with our own paths (as divine as they are). We must accept this aspect of ourselves and start from there and cannot ignore the time and place into which we were born. Fighting our inherent karmic duty, according to Advaita, takes us further away from the realization of non-duality. By accepting one’s circumstances fully, one opens up to having clear perception on what many things in life one has control over to change, and those that one must accept. The history and lineage of Advaita is a phenomenon in its immensity, and the aforementioned practices are but a few of an ancient tradition founded on non-duality.

Teaching in Korea, I would tell my students that the West still has a lot to learn from the East. Although Western (particularly North American) capitalist thought and ideology has pervaded South Korea, there is an inherent and discernible undercurrent of wholeness and synergy. This undercurrent is felt in the groups of people always eating together, families and friends supporting each other without question and the culture of agreement in discussion. It is
felt in the way people respect nature, that food and herbs are used as medicine, that people go in
droves to the mountains to receive their energy. Western cultural and philosophical thought is
not wrong but it is focused on form and individuality, separating one from another, and often
capitalist in ideology. In the next section, however, we will look at the manifestations of non-
duality that are present in the West.
Chapter 3: From the West

Non-duality is not just an eastern philosophy. It has countless manifestations all over the globe and it is a misstep to categorize its history into East and West doctrines. However, for the purposes of this inquiry in examining NDA, it is helpful to look through both Eastern and Western lens, as divisive as that may be. As previously mentioned, Joseph Campbell (2008) believes that mythology is a vehicle that can illustrate Non-dual awareness when there aren’t the academic words to do so:

The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth. Art, literature, myth and cult, philosophy, and ascetic disciplines are instruments to help the individual past his limiting horizons into spheres of ever-expanding realization. As he crosses threshold after threshold, conquering dragon after dragon, the stature of the divinity that he summons to his highest wish increases, until it subsumes the cosmos.

Finally, the mind breaks the bounding sphere of the cosmos to a realization transcending all experiences of form - all symbolizations, all divinities: a realization of the ineluctable void. (Campbell, 2008, p. 163).

If one agrees that art, literature, myth and culture, philosophy, and ascetic discipline help humankind to transcend their small egos then one can see how this drive to realize a consciousness beyond ourselves is ubiquitous. In the Eastern section, three disciplines were examined which point the way to NDA and, now in this next section, non-duality will be discussed through a Western lens by exploring Christianity (Catholicism in particular) and Euro-Western philosophic perspectives on non-duality. My inclusion of Christianity is not only because I grew up Catholic, for any of the Abrahamic religions could also be studied. However, this work is from my lens and I have more knowledge and personal experience with Christianity.
than with other Abrahamic religions. In addition, Christianity has had a great influence on European philosophy, which will be touched upon in this section as well.

**Christian Mystics**

Joseph Campbell believes that God is a metaphor for the indescribable nature of the universe and, like all mythology, Christianity is an attempt to give people direction towards ‘god.’ As I have seen even in Buddhism, some people get stuck on the form of the mythology and don’t look towards the horizon where it is directing. Christianity in particular has stressed “orthodoxy (i.e., correct belief) more than orthopraxy (i.e., correct practice) (Mcginn, par. 15). Unfortunately, orthodoxy can limit our experience of the transcendent, resulting in members of the practice fixated on the dualistic nature of its form and tradition. In order to realize NDA, we can’t hold onto our thinking minds.

As a Catholic, who went to twelve years of Catholic school and spent many Sundays at church, I have never heard or discussed any ideas of having a direct experience of God, but there are those few through Christianity history who have departed from orthodoxy and realized a different way to experience god. Throughout Christianity’s history there have been those whose communion with God have experienced a state awareness much like or that of non-dual awareness. These Christians are sometimes called Mystics. (Merton, 1968). Mcginn describes mysticism “as that part of Christianity’s beliefs and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and refection to (or effect of) what mystics claim in the immediate or direct presence of God” (Mcginn, par. 4) Mystics through Christianity’s history have described ‘the immediate and direct presence of God’ in similar ways as the other wisdom traditions describe non-dual awareness. So the present look at non-dual awareness will be confined to more mystical interpretations of Christianity.
Meister Eckhart was a 13th century monk who was tried and executed by the church for heretical teachings in the year 1328. What he found and what lead to his execution was a direct and unifying relationship with God that the church could not condone. Some would argue that the church could not tolerate his teachings because if normal laypeople could have a personal relationship with God, then the power of the church would be compromised. Meister Eckhart discussed God in similar fashion as might a Buddhist or a Daoist. He says, ‘[t]here in the inmost core of the soul, where God begets his Son, human nature also takes root. There, too, it is one and unanalyzable” (Eckhart, M. 1260-1328 C.E., 1941 p. 125-126). Here again lies the marker that it is difficult to use words to describe the experience, but it seems intuitive that when Eckhart says ‘one and unanalyzable’ that he is referring to a state of non-duality. ‘One and unanalyzable’, whole without remainder, yet elusive and abstract. He is speaking of a place beyond but also including our Egos. He goes on to say in the same passage,

anything that might appear to belong to it, and yet could be distinguished from it, would not be of that unity. But now I shall say something further that is more difficult. To live by this pure essence of our nature, one must be so dead to all that is personal, that he could be as fond of persons long dead as he is of familiar and homely friends. As long as you are more concerned for yourself than you are for people you have never seen, you are wrong, and you cannot have even a momentary insight into the simple core of the soul. You may have a symbolic idea of the truth, but this is by no means best. (Eckhart, M. 1260-1328 C.E., 1941 p. 125-126).

If we only attach or identify any part of our awareness to our ego selves we will never have “a momentary insight into the simple core of the soul”. It is outside of our ordinary awareness where we strongly identify with ‘I’, a separated self. His description, though from a Christian
lens, is very similar to the description of non-dual traditions. Further, as to make sure we are not mistaken, he says, “When both [God and you] have forsaken self, what remains [between you] is an indivisible union” (Eckhart, M. 1260-1328 C.E., 1941 p. 127) We must forget all concepts. Give up the idea of God and you as separate entities and only then will you come to the gateless gate, a place where keys and methods of opening doors fail us.

In the more recent times of the 20th century we have Thomas Merton, a Franciscan monk, who gives a modern account of unity with God. “At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is an accessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the glory of God in us” (Merton, 2007, p. 61). He illustrates that in order to communicate with God there must be absolute poverty or emptiness. Though he may be referring to economic or material poverty, he seems to be (also) talking about being without or stripped of the trappings of the inner self one acquires through being alive in society. These may include the bounds of ego, labels, categorizations, demarcations and judgments. In this emptiness, there is the experience of wholeness and totality, the experience of non-duality.

As I have said in previous passages, the experience of non-duality can be accessed in a myriad of ways-- sometimes by mistake or surprise-- and this has been expressed by the countless religious rituals and customs through the ages. My first remembered experience of non-duality came through suffering and pain, which many others, including Christians, have recorded as well. More common documented practices are prayer, meditation, and asceticism. All three methods listed are generalities to most religious cultures, though taking
very different forms. Thomas Merton gives a descriptive account of his method of coming closer to God:

Now you ask about my method of meditation. Strictly speaking I have a very simple way of prayer. It is centered entirely on attention to the presence of God and his will and His love. That is to say that it is entered on faith by which alone we can know the presence of God….There is in my heart this great thirst to recognize totally the nothingness of all that is not God. My prayer is then a kind of praise rising out of the center of Nothing and Silence. If I am still present ‘myself’ this I recognize as an obstacle about which I can do nothing unless He Himself removes the obstacle. If He wills He can then make the Nothingness into total clarity. (Merton, 2007, p. 81-82).

Merton enters into the realm of the non-dual in this passage. Faith, as in other wisdom traditions, is a path one can follow where there are no more directions. Faith gives us the strength to walk further into the realm of the abyss. At last, Merton recognizes that he must disappear as an ego identity, to experience God. This disappearance of ego is the exact same mechanism for all non-dual traditions. There has been a tradition through Christianity to describe god in all things that he is not, for how can you describe the experience of everything at once. This tradition is called apophatic theology or via negativa (the negative road). “The apophatic method, whether in our theological discourse or in our life of prayer, is seemingly negative in character, but in its final aim it is supremely positive. The laying-aside of thoughts and images leads not to vacuity but to a plenitude surpassing all that the human mind can conceive or express” (Ware, 2002, p. 124). The tradition of Apophatic theology is similar to non-dual traditions. In the first chapter of the Dao Te Ching, it says, The Dao that can be spoken is not the eternal Dao…
The nameless is the origin of Heaven
and Earth (Dao Te Ching, 2006, ch. 1)

Lao Tzu uses negative to strip our understanding and take us to the boundary where language and non-dual awareness meet. This is the experience of non-duality one might gain access to the possibility of speaking to “God” in its many forms. Though Christianity certainly has an external trinity godhead-- God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost-- there are those Christian mystics such as Eckhart and Merton who have documented their experience of non-duality within the quiet of their own hearts, regardless of the God they serve.

The Bible, one of Western religious and philosophical foundation texts, says, “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void; And god said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:1-3). The world, according to this text, was without form, and void-- the original non-dualistic perspective, where all being and form arises, including the opposite forms of light and dark. This void is the ground of being where all things merge. Humans, then, were punished for eating from the tree of knowledge. Metaphorically, according to this ubiquitous myth, we lost connection to the non-dual world at the inception of our ego identities. One might argue that God is separate from the void in this allegory and thus remains dual in nature. However, I believe that this story is just that and we mustn’t take all pieces to be relevant in order to transcend its linguistic limitations. Overall, Western religion like Western philosophy up until the 20th century has not had a full discussion of the non-dual experience. However now, there are schools of Western philosophy where non-dualism seems to be at the core of their paradigms, pushing up against the separation of dark and light, good and evil as conceived in Genesis.
Western Philosophy

Post-structuralism

The idea of non-duality is not limited to religious doctrine and experience. Several branches of Western Philosophy have some similar tenets that ring of the non-dual experience. Post-structural writers and scholars have long written about ways of thinking about the world with freedom from the structural labels and binaries constructed by society and semiotics. The post-structural perspective is one “in which difference, plurality, multiplicity and the coexistence of opposites are allowed free play” (Bannet, 1989, p. 5). First we look at how poststructuralism deals with the idea of identity. Bhabha says, “[w]hat is profoundly unresolved, even erased, in the discourses of poststructuralism is that perspective of depth through which the authenticity of identity comes to be reflected in the glassy metaphoric of the mirror and its mimetic or realist perspectives” (Bhabha quoted in Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 312). Just in non-dualism, post-structuralists offer that there is no one single self, but that “the self [is] a constellation of possibly conflicting partial identities” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, as referenced in de Freitas & Paton, 2009, p. 485). Both non-dualism and poststructuralism considers the idea of the self, the ego, to be a structure constructed by language and thought, but that the self is not limited to identity, skin, body or singularity. There is an openness to the understanding of the self, which at the same time brings complexity and simplicity to the term “I” or “self”. In non-dualism we use those terms as well, for convention’s sake so the world is easier to navigate, but underlying everything is unity.
Poststructuralists also find themselves with many paradoxes discussing what is actual. “For a start you’re here with me, as a paradox of that impossibility of which you have to be reflexively aware: ‘You and I, we will never be here, and yet here we are’” (Stronach cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 312). How can one be here and not here? In post-structuralism there is an intent to disrupt, sometimes to deconstruct and definitely to challenge the binary notions constructed through history and language. “Structuralism sought a new language that would mirror the ‘true’ depth of things. Poststructuralism casts doubt on such projects, seriously modifies their ambitions and pretentious to clarity, challenges them as utopian, or eventually totalitarian in tendency. Here’s a poststructuralist mirror to look into instead:

The mirror takes place- try to think out taking-place of a mirror- as something designed to be broken” (Derrida cited in Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 312). This idea of Derrida’s is a complex one, and one that was brought forward centuries ago in Eastern non-dualistic philosophy. A classic example is Hui-neng’s poem that brought him his position of the next and last patriarch of Chan Buddhism:

Enlightenment originally has no tree,
And a clear mirror is not a stand.
Originally there’s not a single thing-
Where can dust be attracted? (Hui-Neng, 638-713 C.E., 1998, p. 10)

One may think that there are actually things to grasp and reflections to see of an actual, true and positivist world, that our language and personhood can be annotated and fully comprehended. In fact, the separation of things is an illusion, as is the idea of true knowledge. As non-dual wisdom points, everything is one. Our language cannot ever fully mirror actual reality. So our minds are
not mirrors that reflect the world. There is no mirror. Or, as Keanu Reeve in the Matrix points out, “[t]here is no spoon”.

This paper offers but a quick glimpse of how poststructuralism and NDA may be similar, as poststructuralism is an enormously complex and well-studied branch of philosophy. My intention is to make apparent that the intimations of non-dualism are not isolated to Eastern philosophy but, in fact, can probably be traced back to the beginning of and throughout Western documented thought and belief paradigms.

**Phenomenology (in the style of Merleau-Ponty)**

As with poststructuralism, a summary look at phenomenology will point towards resemblances with Non-dualism. I am most interested in the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty and am viewing his work through a Buddhist lens, much like Park and Kopf (2011), from whom I draw much of my understanding. Phenomenologists move away from objectivism and try to understand the way we experience life more purely.

Phenomenology is . . . a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their ‘facticity,’ he further states: “It is a transcendental philosophy . . . but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always ‘already there’ before reflection begins—as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status (Park & Kopf, 2011, p. 2).

The starting point of trying to understand the world through the ‘facticity’ and ‘already there’ essence of the world is the main thought of non-dualism. A phenomenological study might
involve a recursive examination, like Abram (1996) carefully turning a clay bowl in his hands, at each point of wonder, seeing something new that makes the bowl’s essence. He says, “informed by my previous encounters with the bowl, my senses now more attuned to its substance, I continually discover new and unexpected aspects” (p. 51). He is describing the experience of phenomenology, not unlike non-duality. The bowl has not changed in any way, but sitting with the bowl with a formless perspective allows one to see the bowl differently, with new forms or sides, closer to what it really is.

As aforementioned, one of the reasons that Non-duality is so difficult to understand is because it eludes description. Alan Watts says, “so-called opposites, such as light and darkness, sound and silence, solid and space, on and off, inside and outside, appearing and disappearing, cause and effect, are poles or aspects of the same thing. But we have no word for that thing, save such vague concepts as Existence, Being, God, or the Ultimate Ground of Being. For the most part these remain nebulous ideas without becoming vivid feelings or experiences” (Watts, 2012, Ch. 2, Para. 21). So, phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Abram take up the mantle of understanding what subjective experience is, often through sensing- reclaiming embodiment with lived phenomena:

As we reacquaint ourselves with our breathing bodies, then the perceived world itself begins to shift and transform. When we begin to consciously frequent the wordless dimension of our sensory participations, certain phenomena that have habitually commanded our focus begin to lose their distinctive fascination and to slip toward the background, while hitherto unnoticed or overlooked presences begin to stand forth from the periphery and to engage our awareness. (Abram, 1996, p. 63).
Abram is alluding to principles of NDA- that there is an indescribable nature of NDA and that the element of “making sense” (Abram, 1996), literally sensing with one’s being, is important in its realization. Much like the analogy previously, actually sensing, tasting honey is the only way to come close to understanding the essence of what honey tastes like. But Abram is also speaking to another principle of NDA, that there is an element of transformed perception, which, to a counselor, is a fascinating by-product of the experience.

Abram’s predecessor Merleau-ponty offers similar theories to the Eastern wisdom traditions reflected upon earlier. ‘[T]here is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself’ (Merleau-ponty as cited in Park & Kopf, 2011, p. 185). Merleau-Ponty is pointing to the ‘inside outside’ paradox. “What you see out there is, immediately, how the inside of your head "looks" or "feels" (Watts, ch. 4, par. 27). The world itself does not contain insides and outsides, does not have real delineations with items of greater or lesser value. The whole of our reality is but one impression or, as Buddhists put it, one taste. When we see an object, is the object separate from our seeing it? The eye and object it views coexist and are inextricably intertwined that they are one and not two separate phenomena (see also Bateson, 1972, for his description of the man with a cane- where does the self begin and end?). “[T]here is no inside as psychic interior, nor outside as objective other. At the beginning of his thought in Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty says: “We must therefore avoid saying that our body is in space or in time . . . I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them” (Park & Kopf, 2011, p. 185). A great departure from the Cartesian notion of the mind/body split, phenomenology inherently presents a non-dualistic perception of the world, that the illusory constructs of language are divisive by
intention, and that to ‘make sense’ of the world is to embody it in its fullness and interconnectedness.

The intent of this chapter is not to say that post-structuralism and/or phenomenology IS non-dualistic- that would be an inaccurate and clumsy statement. The fields of post-structuralism and phenomenology are too vast, as is the concept of Non-dual awareness. However, there are points of connection in these Western perspectives that dip into non-duality, perhaps showing a universal curiosity and, although sometimes unnamed or subtle, the innate human knowing and awareness of non-duality that is always present.
Chapter 4: Non-duality in Counseling Practice

People are just as wonderful as sunsets if you let them be. When I look at a sunset, I don't find myself saying, "Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner." I don't try to control a sunset. I watch with awe as it unfolds. -Carl Rogers

The previous chapter illustrated that deep within the heart of Pan-Asian culture are self-exploration and studies of the mind, particularly centered around non-dual awareness. It is not surprising, then, that Eastern theories of non-duality have influenced psychotherapy in the perpetual search to better understand cognition and its bounds. What may be surprising is how early in psychotherapy's history Eastern non-dual practices were integrated. In his work, Oriental enlightenment: the encounter between Asian and Western thought, Clarke (2006) has detailed the history of the Eastern and Western integration, giving way to hybrid versions of psychotherapy practiced today. “The most celebrated East-West explorer in the field of Psychotherapy was undoubtedly C. G. Jung (1875-1961), though his debt to Eastern ideas in the formulation of his own has often been obscured by his followers for fear that it would tarnish his scientific credentials” (Clarke, 2006, p. 162). Although Jung studied and incorporated ideas from Eastern philosophy he found non-duality unacceptable and the escape from suffering impossibility. Amazingly though, as early as 1918, Zen meditation was put forward as a technique to temporary suspend thought to increase mental health. This profound thought put forward by Friedrich Heifer (as referred to in Clarke, 2006) has proliferated in the field of psychotherapy, and many therapists agree that meditation is one tool to use in counseling sessions. Within this work I will present three different counseling approaches that have attempted to include a non-
dual component in their lexicon: Transpersonal psychology; Buddhist psychology, and; Non-dual therapy.

Transpersonal Psychology

The concept of transpersonal psychology began when ancient spiritual traditions intermingled with the field of psychology starting in the 20th century (Bidwell, 1999) with Carl Jung, William James, and Abraham Maslow as the forerunners for contemporary transpersonal theory. Like many other fields where non-dual awareness is integral, transpersonal psychology has many different interpretations depending on the practitioner. In 1992 a literature survey was conducted by Lajoie and Shapiro in order to formulate a succinct yet comprehensive definition. After identifying and integrating definitions from 202 citations they put forward that “[t]ranspersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness' (p. 91). The authors found this definition to be an all-encompassing one that serves to legitimize and characterize the field. They also recognized that the most frequent or common themes transpersonal psychologists were working with were: States of consciousness; Highest or ultimate potential; Beyond ego or personal self; Transcendence; and Spiritual. Further, fifteen years after Lajoie and Shapiro’s review and almost forty years after the emergence of transpersonal psychology, three major themes or perhaps phases of therapy are identified by Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin (2007), which serve to define different areas where practitioners may identify themselves and their practice more than others: Beyond-Ego psychology; Integrative/wholistic psychology; and transformative psychology. Beyond-Ego psychology (see also Walsh & Vaughn, 1980) is concerned with transcendence beyond
‘ordinary’ thinking and the constraints of the ego, and often includes practices of meditation and/or mysticism. Beyond-Ego can also be considered as *transpersonal in content*. Integrative/wholistic psychology is considered *transpersonal in context*, and alludes to bigger picture thinking, the self as contextualized within a physical body and environmental and social ecology. Lastly, Transformative psychology indicates the belief that Transpersonal psychology has the capacity for transformation and change, personally and socially. This last theme is considered (by Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin, after their extensive literature review) to be *Transpersonal as catalyst* (pp. 143-144). These phases clearly delineate the areas and/or beliefs within which counselors may be working when practicing transpersonal psychology.

Transpersonal counseling is based on the ideas of a transcendent self situated in the wisdom of non-duality, the intelligence that each person is not only themselves but part of the whole cosmos. Transpersonal therapists draw two conclusions from the idea of the transcendent self. First, our nature is intrinsically healthy, good and whole. Second, our conditioned minds have the capacity to transcend the ego and to experience NDA (Davies, 2013).

Transpersonal therapy is a radical shift from more traditional therapies wherein clients are pathologized. Rather, with a transpersonal perspective, the clients are not sick, but healthy and whole individuals. A client needs only to see more clearly in order to get a vision of their deeper, broader, and more unified whole. Transpersonal therapy is not considered a spiritual doctrine in itself; mostly for the reason that it uses empiricism and both qualitative and quantitative methods to test its efficacy, but Davies (2013) suggests that maybe it is a stepping stone to a modern spirituality, a potential blending of psychotherapeutic ideas and spiritual wisdom traditions.
As alluded above, a core practice of transpersonal psychology is meditation. Meditation is used for stress relief, pain control, emotional regulation and depression in many therapies. Although the by-product of meditation is often stress relief, the central intention for meditation in this modality is to cultivate non-dual awareness, to realize the transcendent self, a self that is centered in the here and now (Davies, 2013). “Comparing the role of meditation in transpersonal psychology to the role of dreams in psychoanalysis, Walsh and Vaughan (1993) called meditation ‘the royal road to the transpersonal’” (Davies, 2013, p. 8). There are many forms of mediation indicated in transpersonal psychology but even though they look different on the surface most styles of meditation help us look through our egos to the transcendent self.

Ritual is another tool that transpersonal psychology uses in order to get in touch with the ‘sacred.’ “[Ritual] provides a means of communicating with the unconscious, with each other, with the collective, and with spirit. It gives, or reveals, a deeper significance to our actions and relationships, creating deeper meaning, and it offers a sense of sanctuary within the ritual container for exposing and exploring deep and potentially difficult or disintegrating experience” (Davies, 2013, p. 10). That is, ritual is a way to give structure and form to ideas that can seem boundless and vast. Ritual gives people a sense of safety and firm ground on which to explore their identities. It is not easy work looking into the contents of the self. In fact, many people find it terrifying to find themselves standing on the empty void of non-duality. Ritual helps contain this feeling of groundlessness, giving concrete form to the work. Additional to meditation and ritual, the practices of shamanism, psychedelic drugs, and expressive arts have also been closely linked with transpersonal psychology.

**Buddhist Psychology**
Buddhism has had many manifestations in psychology, showing up in Western writings in the 20th century. In 1951 Erick Fromm said that “Zen Buddhism has been of vital significance to me and, as I believe, is significant for all students of psychoanalysis” (cited in Clarke, 2006, p.156). Even though many ideas have been borrowed from Buddhism, many Western psychotherapists may not be Buddhists themselves and/or might not have a completely Buddhist perspective or practice. Just as there are many branches of Buddhism, there are many different branches of Buddhist psychology. Each branch will have different practices and philosophy of psychotherapy. For instance, a Zen Buddhist psychologist that I have visited never returned to the conversations and thoughts from previous sessions. Instead he remained focused and present to what was coming up in the moment. He believed that the realization of who we are and our healing happens in the here and now. It felt liberating and transformative to work in the present moment, that what was most essential was happening right there between us. I found that I began allowing myself to ‘just be’ in those sessions, to let go of the past struggles and stories and work through my thoughts and feelings that arose within our hour session. The stillness in my therapist allowed for stillness and clarity to emerge from me. In contrast, Jack Kornfield works a little differently but, I believe, just as powerfully, and I will use his work as an example of a Buddhist psychology practice.

Jack Kornfield is a Buddhist psychologist in the Theravada tradition of Buddhism. He was a Buddhist monk in Asia for several years until he came back to the United States and studied psychology. He wrote a terrific book called *The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology* (2009). This book is beautifully accessible for anyone, giving both theoretical and practical wisdom, offering practice meditations to accompany the chapter themes. Jack Kornfield is a great storyteller and as in the Buddhist tradition uses stories to teach
about aspects of Buddhism, taking ancient principles and shaping them for the modern reader and client.

Kornfield says, “[B]uddhist psychology believes that healing occurs as we learn to move from the realm of concepts to the world of direct experience...Direct perception drops beneath the names of things to show us their ephemeral, mysterious nature” (Kornfield, 2009, p. 88). This direct experience and direct perception is rooted in the experience of NDA, and is also at the center of Buddhist psychology. Buddhist psychology is “a radical and positive approach to psychology and to human life” (Kornfield, 2009, p. 7) The foundation of Jack Kornfield’s work, and what makes it a “radical and positive approach” is the idea that we have Buddha nature. People are inherently whole and, as Kornfield says, with ‘inner nobility’. “But often we give so much attention to our protective layers of fear, depression, confusion, and aggression that we forget who we really are” (Kornfield, 2008, p. 15). In order to help clients, Kornfield uses what he has learned as a Buddhist monk and a mediator of almost 40 years to first and foremost see their true nature.

Additionally, and not surprisingly, mindfulness is a major component of this type of therapy. Kornfield teaches different types of meditation such as paying attention to the breath and/or practicing loving kindness, depending on what the client needs. “Mindfulness brings perspective, balance, and freedom” (Kornfield, 2008, p. 97). Through Buddhist psycho education and meditation, people come to rest in the freedom of the Buddha mind.

Kornfield also helps people understand the nature of the world as presented by Buddhists, perhaps allowing for a substantial shift in perception about the world around them. For instance, he explores the roots of suffering and how to find freedom from/within it. He discusses with his clients what desire is, describing and exploring the difference between healthy and unhealthy
desire. He offers wisdom on attachment and how to let go the tight grasp of unhealthy desire which leads to suffering. Additionally he teaches about the four noble truths of Buddhism and the eight-fold path that leads to an understanding of the Buddhist truths, or to freedom and happiness. According to Kornfield’s Buddhist psychology, the path of one who understands their true nature is laden with virtue, compassion, and love for other beings. If we lose our way on and integrity with this path than it is harder to see our bright Buddha nature and it is the goal of Buddhist psychology to shine a lamp on the way.

**Non-dual therapy**

Non-dual therapy is a new style of therapy that is emerging in Western psychotherapy. One of the main differences between conventional schools of therapy and non-dual therapy is the belief of a separate self. Conventional psychotherapy believes that a person’s ego is a solid object that can be ‘fixed’ (Theriault, 2011). Whereas, as in other wisdom traditions, non-dual therapy believes that the self is whole and complete at all times and it is only our perception of it that is skewed (Foster, 2011). Also, unlike Transpersonal psychology and much like Buddhist psychology, non-dual therapists do not believe that NDA is a rarefied experience, or something to be attained. In fact, NDA is present and accessible all the time; It is that we are not aware of it or, as Buddhists say, we are ignorant of it, like the sun behind dark clouds. The sun is always there, even in stormy weather, simply hidden by the dark. Blackstone (2007) makes a distinction between non-dual experience and non-dual realization. Non-dual experience is simply being an experience of non-duality without any fundamental change to consciousness where non-dual realization is a fundamental change in the nature of one’s consciousness (Blackstone, 2007).
In the fundamental book on non-dual therapy, *The Sacred Mirror: Non-dual Wisdom & Psychotherapy*, Prendergast, Fenner and Krystal (2003) thoroughly explore what non-dual therapy may look like to different practitioners in a series of case studies. In each section of *The Sacred Mirror*, each therapist discusses their ideas of non-duality, its benefits and how they practice it in their counseling session. One therapist describes non-dual therapy as: “a relinquishment of attachment and illusion, not a promotion of positive mindsets and self-images. It is growth through letting go, rather than an accumulation of new ideas” (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 392). Or as Judith Blackstone describes it, “[N]ond-ual realization refers to the experience of pure (or empty) consciousness and phenomena at the same time. It is the realization of one’s own nature as an unbounded expanse of subtle consciousness, pervading one’s internal and external experience as a unity” (2007, p. 1).

Non-dual therapists also believe that It not only makes for a more present, empathetic therapist but also leads the client to healing by experiencing NDA themselves (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003; Blackstone, 2007). Another aspect that may help the therapist be more effective is letting go of the pressure of being the one to have heal someone else. “i’ cannot heal ‘you’, because healing is the space in which the dualistic split of ‘I’ and ‘you’ arises in the first place. And so there is no longer any burden on the therapist to ‘heal the client’” (Foster, 2011, par. 14). The therapist does not have to look for anything to fix. The client is whole already and the stance of wholeness welcomes NDA.

As was seen previously within the ancient traditions that honour NDA, there are no true disciplines or words that can help or make another person realize NDA. At the outset, non-dual therapy sets out this fact as a guiding principle. “Non-duality can never be confined by any philosophy or psychospiritual practice, although such practices may play a vital role in preparing
the ground for awakening or facilitating a glimpse of our true nature….It is both no-thing and
everything, empty yet full of pure potentiality. It is immanent and transcendent, formed and
formless” (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc 191). Just as in the wisdom traditions,
having procedures and an actual practice of non-dual awareness is an illusion. To many a
Western mind not having a solid foundation or concrete problem solving structure (such as the
very structured Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) seems illogical but for the the non-dual therapist,
taking a confident step on the ground of nothingness is a great foundation. In non-dual therapy
reality is so complex that we cannot totally grasp it logically. So, just like the previous traditions
of practice discussed so far, how does one proceed if there isn’t a process to be followed?
“When asked how therapists can facilitate awakening in their clients, [one therapist’s] response
is direct and uncompromising: ‘Be awakened yourself.” Therapists should know the territory of
NDA firsthand if they are going to invite their clients to inquire into their true nature”
(Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 321). So, the only real method of non-dual therapy
for counselors and therapists is to be awakened ourselves, to cultivate this awareness in ourselves
so that we can be present for our clients. “As the therapist rests in non-dual awareness with an
empty mind, without attending to any inner commentary other than an intuitive impulse or
direction, entrainment or therapeutic resonance can occur. The therapist’s empty, peaceful and
quiet mind is contagious and clients begin to experience their own peace and truth” (Prendergast,
Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 354). Clients are drawn to a deeper sense of themselves, beyond
the conceptual mind, or ego, and here they find healing and contentment. Just as my experience
with my Buddhist therapist, a person can become a tuning fork drawing essential nature from
someone, becoming another signpost that gently directs one to experience their true nature for
themselves.
Another essential tenet that non-dual therapy holds is that it presents a fundamental shift in what therapy is. It is not an attempt by a therapist to diagnose and then help resolve client issues.

True therapy is more of a rediscovery: that this broken, incomplete, separate 'me' is not who you really are, and that in fact you are not a 'self' at all, but the wide open space of awareness in which all thoughts, sensations, feelings, sounds, smells, arise and pass. You are not a separate person looking out at the world, but the wide open space in which the world appears and disappears, an open space which is ultimately inseparable from that very world. True therapy, therefore, is not about working towards a future wholeness – it is the rediscovery of that very wholeness in the midst of every present moment experience (Foster, 2011, para. 6).

This tenet allows for therapists to truly embrace the idea of ‘unconditional positive regard’ (Rogers, 1961). Even a person’s problems are looked at differently within this model. The person sitting in front of a therapist is perceived as a whole person and need not be fixed. Rather, a therapist’s purpose is to help illuminate a client’s essential whole nature, while maintaining her or his own non-dual awareness and centeredness.

The paradox remains that we still continue to use methods in order to prepare the ground for the awakening of NDA. When a teaching method or a therapeutic technique is used to lead someone to non-duality it is not meant as something that is solid or sure. All methods should be thought of as a sign pointing to a direction of awakening. Preparing the ground for this experience can take many forms. Described in a Buddhist lexicon, “[w]ithin the Buddha dharma there are, as the Buddha said, countless different dharmas—schools, traditions, approaches, etc. The term “non-dual therapies” similarly indicates that within the vast range of therapeutic
approaches there are approaches that are explicitly sourced in the non-dual experience. And
within this there are a countless number of possible approaches” (Prendergast, Fenner, &
Krystal, 2003, loc. 516). What this means is that there are many different approaches in non-
dual therapies with no one right way to approach counseling and work with clients. In fact, I
would argue that many of the counseling therapies happening today are preparing the ground for
NDA. Wherever there is openness, kindness, flexibility of ego identification, then there is fertile
ground for a look into the non-dual field. A non-dual therapist can spontaneously help clients
see the illusion of their limited self and help deal with any obstructions that come in the way of
this awareness. “Awakening non-dual awareness adds a depth dimension to any of the existing
schools of psychology, regardless of their orientation, through the psychotherapist’s deepening
awareness. Whether their model is neoanalytic (object relations, self psychology,
intersubjectivity), Jungian, cognitive/ behavioral, humanistic/ existential, or Integral/
Transpersonal, awakening psychotherapists bring a quality of awareness that transforms their
work” (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 207). Non-dual therapists may come from
different approaches and use different methods but their purpose is the same. For instance, John
Prendergast explains that presence cannot be created in a therapy session but it can be invited. In
order to do this he uses what he describes as ‘relaxed, largely silent, nonintentional eye gazing’
in order to welcome NDA. This happens spontaneously and can bring up defense mechanisms
that then can be acknowledged (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003).

Therapists using the non-dual (non) approach can have a myriad of techniques that they
can pull from but they must be cautious. “[H]olding any orientation or goal or promoting any
approach other than selfless, nonjudgmental compassion can trap therapists in their own
thinking, binding them to the mind instead of enabling them to rest in Presence in which the
deepest healing resonance occurs” (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 1975). So, the most important aspect of non-dual therapy is the presence of someone that can tune into their true nature. “Hunt [a counselor in The Sacred Mirror] identifies two main ways that healing manifests: by simply being together without any agenda to go anywhere or change anything and by continually inviting the direct experience of the moment as it is” (Prendergast, Fenner, & Krystal, 2003, loc. 382). Like Foster’s (2011) definition of non-dual therapy as ‘therapy without a therapist’, practitioners in this field are actively resubscribing the therapist-client relationship, and the responsibility of the therapist her or himself. Rather than the stereotypical image of the therapist sitting objectively and hierarchically over the damaged patient on the couch, the non-dual therapist is an interacting, dynamic part of the interconnected system of the two individuals. “When two people encounter each other in non-dual consciousness, the intensity of their mutual contact helps open each other; it assists in expanding each other’s realization. For example, if one person is more open in the emotional aspect of non-duality than the other, the individual who is less open will find that he or she has more emotional openness as a result of the encounter. This phenomenon is called direct transmission in the Asian literature” (Blackstone, 2007, p. 41). This form of therapy is dialogic and dynamic, and as it inherently values interconnectedness and dissolution of the fragmented self, questions the traditional role of therapist.

This section was a brief look into previous attempts/gestures within established psychotherapeutic approaches to accommodate NDA. There are many more examples and non-dual awareness continues to grow in mainstream discussions. For example, psychotherapists are including yoga, Tai Chi, and shamanic ritual, etc., all to expand our sense of self. I find it encouraging to see so much diversity in practice because at least right now, one approach may not appeal to everyone. In Escape From Babel, the authors clearly state that therapeutic
orientation may contribute as little as 15% to the outcome of therapy (Miller, Duncan & Hubble, 1997). I would be naive then to think that my orientation is what makes the biggest impact in therapy. Actually it’s “[e]xtratherapeutic factors [that] make up the single largest contributor to change in psychotherapy” (Miller, Duncan & Hubble, 1997, p. 80). Consequently, I want to make sure that I do not impose a therapeutic approach that is not appropriate for my client. I would like to offer my clients an eclectic approach and be able to adjust to each person. My hope is that each person may find a signpost that best suits their needs to point them further on home.
Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts and Implications for (my) Practice

So it is not a matter of building up the awakened state of mind, but rather of burning out the confusions which obstruct it. In the process of burning out these confusions, we discover enlightenment. If the process were otherwise, the awakened state of mind would be a product, dependent upon cause and effect and therefore liable to dissolution. -Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

O Nobly Born, O you of glorious origins, remember your radiant true nature, the essence of mind. Trust it. Return to it. It is your home.

-Tibetan Book of the Dead

Through this paper I have reviewed non-dual awareness from multiple perspectives, defined what non-duality is, though limited by its elusive nature, and briefly looked at some of its many manifestations throughout the world. It is an experience that many of our global mythologies point towards. NDA is a subjective experience with the potential for healing that is slowly coming into our field of vision in the counseling profession. Philosophers and scientists are beginning to wonder about the fundamental nature of awareness and it is becoming an integral aspect of psychotherapy. The mindfulness movement, ACT (Acceptance and Commitment) therapy, Buddhist psychology, and Non-dual therapy are examples of the integration of non-dual awareness into mainstream psychotherapy. Although, mindfulness has recently become a catchphrase in psychology, I hope that it will someday be linked to the broader idea of NDA. Non-dual awareness is an aspect of ourselves that needs to be remembered; It is a place of wholeness, health and the potential to offer meaning for us as humans. It seems only right, then, in my concluding thoughts to ask myself: how will non-dual awareness be cultivated within my counseling practice?
As a therapist, I feel I am most present with and receptive to clients when I have a balanced life and I am seeing who I am clearly. This seeing clearly is a firsthand knowledge of who I truly am. I don’t always have clear vision but one of my life’s aims is to be more fully attune with my true self. In a session with a client, being in tune with my true nature will make me more empathetic and present. Or as Carl Rogers puts it,

I find that when I am closest to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me… whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then, simply my presence is releasing and helpful to the other. There is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me… it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present (Rogers, 1995, p. 129).

Getting as close as I can to my inner, intuitive self is my primary goal in my life, including in my counseling practice. A therapist lives beyond the office and his or her personal life influences the counseling session. For instance, Irvin Yalom (2005) states that psychotherapists themselves are the greatest tools in the therapy room. We must be able to be attentive and emotionally aware. If you lead a lifestyle that is in contrast with what happens in the room then you might not be as effective. Non-dual awareness is not just a therapeutic stance but a way of life. So, in concluding, I will talk about my personal practice and lifestyle that has an influence on what happens in session.

One of the greatest gifts I received through my journey of meditation and Buddhist study in the last nine years is a practice of self-compassion, cultivating kindness and gentleness for myself. As is its nature, my mind has many judgments and self-criticisms. I still get pulled into
thinking that I am not good enough or wish things were different, but my time in Korea has taught me how to be kind and gentle with myself during these times. Remarkably, this usually drains an unfavorable experience of its negative and shaming aspects and I am able to see a little more clearly, sitting in the moment more comfortably. ‘Be kind, be gentle’: It’s a mantra that I say to myself when I notice that I am identifying with my thoughts too much. The fruit of my practice is the realization that everything is okay in this moment. I do not have to change...I am whole...Amazingly, when I tune into this intuitive sense, whatever I am feeling lightens and I can both feel my full emotion and simultaneously know that I am okay; I sense my true self and sense my non-dual nature. There is no need for striving and struggling to change the situation when I have accepted what is; I realize the moment is perfect and there is no need for change. This sensing and feeling in the moment, whatever the circumstance, allows me to relax into the present and once again, I find myself not having to be anyone, not trying to grasp for a secure foothold against existential wonderings. I invite this perspective for both myself and my clients. This place of embodied non-duality is where I begin in my own philosophy, personally and professionally. In a Buddhist story, “a dunce once searched for a fire with a lighted lantern. Had he known what fire was, he could have cooked his rice much sooner” (Reps, 2009, p. 7). Those who seek an experience that is different than what they have may have not noticed it was there for the taking all along. I remind myself often that I have a lighted lantern already and there is no need for more searching.

In addition, daily meditation is an important factor in cultivating the ground for NDA. Although sitting meditation has been my most significant practice for the last nine years, it is important to bring what I learn in meditation to every aspect of my life, inhabiting more and more of the day. I do this by being more mindful when I am doing daily activities like washing
dishes, for example. My teacher would sometimes say “what are you doing in between meditations is probably more important than your sitting practice” (Daebong Sunim, private correspondence). If our goal is to be more and more present in life, how am I responding to people on the street? Do I notice my surroundings or am I too busy worrying about a presentation. In addition, I think it's beneficial to disassociate any purpose to meditation. I will say to myself that I am just going over there to sit for awhile. I have no purpose but to notice what happens. I am not looking for a particular experience. This allows whatever wants to unfold to unfold and there is less of a chance of getting fixated on a state of mind or a particular type of moment. My meditation is a practice in accepting and allowing things to be as they are.

As I mentioned earlier, the most important aspect of working in a counseling session for me and my practice is to be awakened, or be awakened to the best of my ability, but I do plan to use other more structured techniques in session with clients. I do not have one therapy model that I will use. I plan on practicing eclectically and using any resource that might be helpful to a client. As pointed out in *The Sacred Mirror*, any modality can be deepened when a therapist comes from a non-dual standpoint (Pendergast, Fenner, Krystal, 2003). Buddha had ten thousand teachings for his different disciples so too are there many different ways of helping someone come closer to the non-dual experience. Anytime a person lets go of rigid thinking or of a defense mechanism he or she comes closer to inhabiting the present moment and sensing the wholeness that has been waiting for him or her. I want to encourage people to be able to pursue activities that foster a more authentic self. Clients will come into my office not interested in their ‘True Nature’ and that is fine. I believe as Maslow believes “that what a [person] can be, [they] must be, this need we call self-actualization” (1954, p. 93). In short we are all moving towards awakening and there are infinite paths in that direction; We are all looking for relief from our
sufferings. If we can create a little relief, then there is a potential to see more clearly and step towards the non-dual field.

I am aware that my work as a counselor (and the work of my clients) has far-reaching effects and that as citizens of the world we have responsibility to consider social justice. How does a non-dual perspective connect with social justice intents, if it does? For me and my practice, I have come firmly to believe that the only lasting and real change that I can make is a personal one. The violence and suffering I see around the world is the very same one in my own heart. I have created this world with what is in me. My first step in living an ethical life is to not look outward for change in the world but inward.

Krishnamurti (1996) talks about the awakening of intelligence. This awakening is similar to what Buddhist describe as awakening/enlightenment. Awakening, in the Buddhist sense of the word, “is a state of perfect knowledge or wisdom, combined with infinite compassion” (Ricard, 2010, p. 1). The process of trying to understand and move toward this awakening, this enlightenment, is my ideal ethical view and social justice stance. Letting go of personal history, schooling and judgments helps to be as ethical as I can be. “Ultimately, any system, any set of laws or procedures, can only be as effective as the individuals responsible for its implementation” (Dalai Lama, 2014, p 63). We can have all the laws and ethical codes we want but without inner values what do these laws amount to? “Very few of us listen to directly to what is being said, we always translate or interpret it according to our own point of view, whether Hindu, Muslim, or communist” (Krishnamurti, 1996, p. 178). We all have judgments and these judgments color what we do and the decisions we make in our life. Is there a way to be clearer, to allow all my history, prejudices, and opinions not stand in the way of seeing and
acting that is harmful to others? Obtaining this type of clarity is not impossible and is an ideal to work toward in making ethical decisions. Krishnamurti goes on to say:

> What brings about understanding, surely, is to listen without anchorage, without any definite conclusion, so that you and I can think out the problem together, whatever the problem may be. If you I know the art of listening, you will not only find out what is true in what is being said, but you will also see the false and the truth as false; but if you listen argumentatively, then it is fair to say that there can be no understanding, because argument is merely your option against another opinion, or your judgment against another, and threat actually prevents the understanding or discovery of the truth in what is being said (Krishnamurti, 1996, p. 178).

Krishnamurti is talking about listening but I believe he is also describing a complete way of being. If you can listen without prejudice then you are embodying wholeness. A place that allows space for all possibilities. This space of possibility is a more encompassing place than most of our everyday views, with all our judgments. To put it another way, Korean Zen Master Seung San says that [a]ttaining my true self simply means that from moment to moment I keep a correct situation, correct relationship, and correct function in this world” (Seung S., 2012, Chapter 1, purpose of Buddhism, para. 13). If I can act from the place of my true self then I am acting as the situation needs. It is not as much that I am acting but Everything together is working in conjunction toward the correct action for that moment. In Daoism the idea of wu-wei (literally, “no effort” or “no work” in the sense of production) is central—the idea of non-doing. A psychotherapist in this state of non-doing is not passive. She is still, in the sense of being so potently and fully open that presence and attention do not waver. She is alert, energetically centered, responsive, and able to engage with whatever comes in the way that makes sense and
takes account in-the-moment of self, other, and context” (Cohen & Bai, 2004, p. 55). In this centeredness a person is more present to make clearer decisions. We can be less likely to make mistakes because our own views get in the way. Our own egos fall away for moments in the attempt to help us make more rounded ethical decisions. Ethics, then, is a living experience: changing, including all aspects of the situation, the people, time, place, future implications and so forth.

Although, the view I set out is the view I would like to live by, I don’t want to seem like an isolationist, only working on my own views and values. The hope is that when action is needed, I will be clear enough to see it and be able to stand and act for what is necessary.

Finally, there is a question or Kong-an that some Korean Buddhist’s ask themselves; It is like a great Buddhist riddle: Who am I? or; What am I? The writing of my thesis was like the asking of this question. Asked oneself as a Buddhist would ask, this question brings us back to our original homes, to NDA. I carry this question, who am I?, like a talisman. The question and the answer, a constant refrain, an echo from the pregnant void….I don’t know or, as God said in the Bible, “I AM”. The question is too big and can only be understood with an intuitive awareness of NDA. I take inspiration from the ‘I don’t know’ mind of a Buddhist monk who has the great wisdom to realize the infinite and ever changing depth of consciousness. Krishnamurti speaks of the same thing when he says, “[l]ife is a movement, an endless movement, and to inquire into this extraordinary thing called life, with all its innumerable aspects, one must ask fundamental questions and never be satisfied with answers. However satisfactory they may be, because the moment you have an answer, the mind has concluded, and conclusions is not life--it is merely a static state” (Krishnamurti, 1996, p. 182). And so I end the thesis with not knowing. Not knowing leaves me open for what is and although I have used a lot of words and tried
sincerely to show my learning and what I think I know, I think it is more authentic to conclude with the question: _Who am I?_ and subsequently, _who are you?_ I earnestly ask this question daily, in hopes of never having getting stuck in an answer, knowing that any fixed or spoken answer is only part of the whole. The only whole answer is in the pregnant void that is ever present.
Bibliography


