

**THE USE OF INTUITION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
INQUIRY**

MATHIEU FORTIER

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Counselling Psychology
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain insight into the phenomenon of clinical intuition from the perspective of two therapists. It was driven by the following research question: How do therapists experience their use of intuition in the context of psychotherapy? The study adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological orientation and was structured using a revised version of Pietkiewicz and Smith's (2014) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. To achieve its aims, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two experienced psychotherapists, capturing their lived experiences of their use of intuition in a psychotherapeutic context. The resulting themes and subthemes from the analysis were compiled and reported as individual narrative accounts, structured around four areas of inquiry: (a) relevant background information, (b) understandings of intuition and its origins, (c) its use in clinical practice and perceived outcomes, and (d) its educational and professional development. The two accounts showed both overlap and divergence, while each account remained internally consistent across these four areas of inquiry. A broader interpretive, literary, and philosophical discussion was interwoven into the presentation of the findings, providing deeper insights within the immediate context. These findings reaffirm the context-dependent and idiosyncratic nature of clinical intuition and may inform therapists' reflective engagement with their own intuitive capacity, while also contributing to its professional development and stimulating broader discourse on its safe and effective use.

Acknowledgements

“Trust the process”: a phrase that appears to be permanently etched into the minds of all those who have had the pleasure to be acquainted with Dr. Nicolas Gazzola. A professionally reserved yet warm, remarkably engaged, and hardworking individual, he somehow always seems to find time to be available to his students. Over the four years of my Master’s program, he has acted as my Research Supervisor, Counselling Professor, and Program Coordinator, among other roles, excelling in each. It would be no exaggeration to say he had the greatest formative and positive influence on my educational experience at the Master’s level.

I initially reached out to Dr. Gazzola while I was deciding which University Counselling Program to attend and in what capacity (as a researcher or only as a course-based student). Many of the ideas that would constitute this research were already percolating in my mind, alongside a growing disenchantment with more traditional approaches. Finding a supervisor open to qualitative research and to my philosophical orientation was, therefore, a prerequisite for pursuing these ideas in a research context. In the end, this search pointed to a single candidate. Perhaps imprudently, I threw all my eggs in that basket, reaching out only to Dr. Gazzola, and focusing all my efforts on gaining admission to the University of Ottawa program. Fortunately, he was intrigued by the project and felt my passion behind it.

In this regard, my intuition proved well placed. I was met with a flexible, open-minded supervisor who provided the space and time necessary to develop these ideas both creatively and rigorously. Dr. Gazzola seemed to immediately grasp that what mattered most were the ‘laissez-faire’ conditions that would allow the project to unfold on its own terms, with minimal interference. This was no small feat, given the ever-expanding form this project would take. Meanwhile, I could only offer minimal reassurance and vague explanations of how the materials would come together, which would not be evident until all parts were fully written and compiled. In this way, he masterfully embodied the phrase “trust the process,” an attitude doubly fitting for a thesis concerned with intuition.

Of course, I, too, often had to draw on this wisdom, as this project was not without its inherent challenges, which themselves existed in the context of broader life challenges. Yet throughout, even without frequently seeking guidance, I felt Dr. Gazzola’s supportive presence

as someone who could be relied upon if needed, and whose character was instrumental to the completion of this work. For this, I am sincerely grateful.

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Introductory Preface

This study focuses on how psychotherapists experience their intuition within the context of psychotherapy. It is guided by the following research question: How do therapists experience their use of intuition in the context of psychotherapy? The term ‘use,’ as it appears here and in the title, is intended to emphasize both the practical utility of intuition and the practicability of this inquiry, in contrast to a pursuit of objective Truth, and does not narrowly delimit the study’s scope. Broadly, the study examines, from a first-person perspective, how therapists conceptualize intuition, how it features in their psychotherapy work, and how it may be developed and discussed in professional contexts. It also explores the personal and professional contexts that shape these experiences. The inquiry as a whole is framed phenomenologically, with a hermeneutic orientation.

While some seek answers, others seek understanding. The main body of this thesis serves a more functional purpose for readers primarily interested in the study’s methodological design and findings, providing a condensed framework for engaging with the project. It has been streamlined to its core components (e.g., Literature Review, Methodology, Results/Discussion) and structured using a formalized research methodology (Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis).

Readers wishing to undertake the full intellectual journey will find, in the Appendices, a compilation of theoretical work developed over several years. These chapters trace historical currents of thought, the development of phenomenology, and crucial philosophical concepts that provide the background context to clarify the complex ideas featured in the Methodology section and underpin the project as a whole. They also support deeper engagement with ‘phenomena’ in general. In addition, the Appendices offer background (or peripheral) context for engaging more fully with the phenomenon of intuition, specifically through a treatment of the topic of the Self (or Being, more broadly).

Taken together, the chapters in the Appendices, which I will henceforth refer to as the Theoretical Chapters, can be understood as an extensive exercise in reflexivity while also serving as a guide for readers through the conceptual landscape that underpins this study.

Readers primarily interested in the study's essential core may proceed directly to the next section, as no further elaboration is needed. For those wishing to explore the full intellectual-philosophical context, the original full-length introduction to this project, which also serves as the introduction to the Theoretical Chapters, is included in Appendix G (Chapter 0). This preliminary overview of the broader conceptual landscape sets a rich tone for the remainder of the intellectual voyage.

Literature Review

As will become evident, depending on the context in which the study of intuition takes place, and the characteristics accounted for, there are many ways to conceptualize this phenomenon (beyond what I can hope to capture in this text). These conceptualizations also shaped the approaches researchers have used to study it. Depending on the field of study, even the fundamental assumptions underlying the research endeavours sometimes differ. For this reason, the only coherent way I have found to capture the vast and diverse range of frequently incompatible theories is by starting with presenting some of the predominant schools of thought, as represented through the work of some of their proponents, to paint a picture of the complexity of the phenomenon, and to show the challenge in even agreeing to an adequate or consensual definition of the phenomenon. Only after this will I discuss some of the empirical findings that constitute the literature.

Theories of Intuition

First, here are some examples of the various conceptualizations of intuition I have come across in taking a broad look at the subject.

Field of Study: Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive. Within the field of Cognitive psychology, studies relating to intuition often focus on better understanding reasoning and decision-making processes. Unsurprisingly, in this field, intuition is conceptualized primarily as a psychological phenomenon, focusing on the individual's mental processes. The probably most well-known proponent of this view is Daniel Kahneman (and his close colleague Tversky), who theorized and researched within the subfield of behavioural economics and whose ideas were popularized by his best-selling book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011). Kahneman (2011) conceptualizes the mind as having two

different modes of processing information (one is intuitively-based, and one is analytically-based); in essence, intuitive judgements and decisions (system 1) are fast, effortless, automatic/unconscious, and emotional, which contrasts with analytical processes (system 2), which are slow, effortful, deliberate/conscious, and logical. The takeaway is that our intuitive thinking (system 1) operates using rules of thumb (or mental shortcuts), and it is highly efficient, but prone to systematic errors of judgment (called cognitive biases) (Kahneman, 2011).

Cognitive and Environmental. Later theorists have challenged the Heuristic and Biases (HB) approach described above because of its heavy focus on thinking errors (perhaps in response to the unflattering picture it paints of the human mind) and have proposed alternative conceptualizations of the intuitive process. Gary Klein (who primarily studied experts in their respective domains) is the forerunner of one such competing theory, the Naturalistic Decision-Making framework. In this framework, Intuition is conceptualized as a Cognitive and Environmental (situational or contextual) phenomenon: “The Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM) community defines intuition as based on large numbers of patterns gained through experience, resulting in different forms of tacit knowledge” (Klein, 2015, p. 164). The focus here is primarily on ‘expert intuition’ and can be understood as follows: “The situation has provided a cue; this cue has given the expert access to information stored in memory, and the information provides the answer. Intuition is nothing more and nothing less than recognition.” (Simon, 1992, p. 155). Kahneman and Klein (2009) note that the conditions for these types of expertise-based intuitive judgements to be trustworthy are that the environment must be regular enough to be predictable and that the person has had enough contact with it (in the form of practice) to learn its regularities (with the conditions of having received fast and adequate feedback from it).

Field of Study: Interpersonal Neurobiology

Now, we turn to different kinds of conceptualizations of intuition that originated primarily in the field of Interpersonal Neurobiology (Relational Neurobiology). This field uses an interdisciplinary approach that combines knowledge from over 12 scientific disciplines (accounting for relevant findings, such as research on mirror neurons and neuroplasticity) (Siegel, 2006). Within this field’s scope, intuition can be conceptualized in many ways and further subcategorized, leading to a sometimes complex construct with many nuances. A prominent proponent who captures many of these views is Marks-Tarlow.

Relational/Interpersonal. First, in one of these forms, we can conceptualize a relational view of intuition as similar to the environmental view described above (i.e., as intuitively gathering cues from the environment, but in this case, from a person). Marks-Tarlow states: “Given its priming time and context-dependent nature, it may be most useful to view all intuitive products as intersubjective products of the relational unconscious” (Marks-Tarlow, 2014, p. 234). In a simple sense, intuition could be considered one’s ability to pick up on cues from another person at a subliminal/unconscious level, such as registering their microfacial expressions or paralinguistic cues (e.g., tone of voice, speech pace, postures, gestures, etc.).

However, depending on the theory, the view of intuition as a relational (or interpersonal) phenomenon can be much more complex. For instance, Marks-Tarlow (2014) studies clinical intuition from a developmental psychology framework grounded in our evolutionary history. In her view, the individual/Self first emerges from a relationship (with the primary caregiver) rather than the other way around (by which a formed ‘individual/Self’ seeks out relationships). Accordingly, she integrates Bowlby’s Attachment theory with Allan Schore’s Regulation theory (an integration beyond our current scope) to explain how our early experiences (i.e., our interactions with caregivers) calibrate and determine our mind-brain-body system’s future health and functioning (Marks-Tarlow, 2014). The concept of ‘attunement’ thus becomes essential given the importance placed on the ‘relational other.’ Attunement (or Resonance) mainly involves the ‘process’ rather than the ‘content’ of a person’s speech: it involves immediacy and synchronicity with them (Marks-Tarlow, 2014). Other researchers have also theorized that ‘Resonance’ is one of the components of a therapist’s intuitive capacity (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022).

Somatic (Senses and Sensations). Marks-Tarlow also emphasizes the embodied nature of intuition: “In all forms of intuition, the body aspect is key. Because intuition is subcortically driven and originates in early developing, somatically based sensing and feeling, all kinds of intuition involve embodied perception and knowledge” (Marks-Tarlow, 2014, p. 224). Intuition can also be subdivided further into various bodily components and functions.

Visceral Sensation (Bodily Awareness). In its everyday use, intuition is often portrayed as a felt experience. For instance: “Being aware of the input of our body, especially information from the neural networks surrounding intestines (a ‘gut feeling’) and our heart (‘heartfelt feelings’) enables us to be open to the wisdom of our non-conceptual selves” (Siegel, 2006, p.

252). Accordingly, Marks-Tarlow states that “the enteric nervous system is evolutionarily older than the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord)” (Marks-Tarlow, 2014, p.225). She notes that “the guts have a brain of their own, being part of the enteric nervous system (in charge of digesting food)” (Marks-Tarlow, 2014, p. 225). She also provides a few examples of recent research to demonstrate that the gut is also ‘socially sensitive,’ meaning it reacts, for instance, to emotionally tinged words (Marks-Tarlow, 2014).

Other forms of ‘bodily awareness’ could be included here as well. For example, an intuitive capacity would consist of proprioceptive awareness (consciously perceiving one’s posture, balance, movements, muscular tension, etc.) and interoceptive awareness (consciously perceiving one’s inner sensations such as heart rate, breathing, physiological changes in response to emotions, etc.) (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022). However, note that the concept of ‘bodily awareness’ is much more complex than this once we begin to include the cognitive factors (e.g., past experiences, expectations, beliefs, context, etc.) and other forms of social or cultural factors, which would occasion an even more elaborate picture (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022).

Perception via the Senses (or Outside of Conscious Sensory Awareness). The literature contains many examples (Charles, 2004; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019) of people experiencing intuitions through one or more of the five senses (visual, auditory, olfactory, etc.), though some are more frequently occurring than others. In contrast, others have attributed their intuitions to sources not consciously accessible to the senses, for example, reporting sensing the presence of something without having consciously perceived it (Charles, 2004; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019).

Emotional Sensitivity (Somatic Countertransference) [Empathy]. Another commonplace intuitive function is the ability to tune into an emotional experience. Researchers have connected intuition to ‘Empathy,’ a construct that can be conceptualized as three types: first, there is ‘Cognitive empathy’ (mentalizing), which can be recognized as ‘putting oneself in the other person’s shoes’ to attempt to grasp another person’s experiential reality (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022). There are also two types categorized as ‘Emotional empathy’: Emotional contagion, which is the automatic taking on of another person’s emotions, and ‘Emotional disconnection,’ which is the ability to self-regulate in order to avoid distress and pain by creating some distance from one’s emotions (Marks-Tarlow, 2014). Spagnuolo Lobb et al. (2022) suggest

that ‘Empathy’ (in its three distinct forms) is one of the three components constituting a therapist’s intuitive capacity (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022).

Right Hemisphere Process. Many people have commented on the holistic nature of intuition, describing intuitive insights as arriving all at once and in their entirety (Charles, 2004; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). These observations have led researchers to conceptualize intuition as predominantly a right-brain process (Charles, 2004; Siegel, 2006; Marks-Tarlow, 2014). Broadly speaking, the right hemisphere is associated with modes of information processing that are holistic (e.g., perceiving the whole and extracting its essence), non-linear (e.g., drawing on implicit context), and non-verbal (e.g., sensitive to timing, tonal, and gestural information); it synthesizes information from multiple sources (holistic), interprets ambiguous or fragmented input (non-linear), and attends to environmental cues (non-verbal) (Siegel, 2006). Given these characteristics, what may be described as intuitive experience mirrors the right hemisphere’s processing mode. These observations provide explanatory power by highlighting the right-hemisphere processing that may underlie intuitive features often associated with novelty and creativity (Marks-Tarlow, 2014).

Field of Study: Gestalt Psychology

Aesthetic Relational Knowledge (ARK). Some researchers have attempted to better capture the multifaceted construct of intuition by encapsulating the majority of the characteristics and conceptualizations we have discussed.

One such example is Spagnuolo Lobb et al. (2022), who developed a scale to measure therapists’ intuitive capacity through their construct of ‘Aesthetic Relational Knowledge’ (ARK). ARK refers to the therapist’s intuitive experience that emerges from the phenomenological field, understood here as the intersubjective ‘experiential space’ between therapist and client (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022). As conceptualized by these researchers, ARK comprises three components: ‘Empathy’ (in its three forms: cognitive empathy, emotional contagion, and emotional disconnection), ‘Resonance,’ and ‘Bodily Awareness,’ each as described earlier (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022).

As illustrated in this example, intuition can be depicted as a complex amalgamation of many diverse, perhaps related, phenomena.

Field of Study: Miscellaneous

Unconscious. The implicit properties of intuition have led many theorists to speculate about its nature and to develop various theories. As Marks-Tarlow put it: “Because intuition processes social and emotional cues below the threshold of awareness, its implicit operations tap into Freud’s concept of the unconscious” (Marks-Tarlow, 2014, p. 224).

Carl Jung was one such theorist who took a keen interest in the phenomenon and conceptualized it as a form of unconscious perception. Charles (2004) summarizes Jung’s take on the construct as follows:

(1) a form of perception that employs the unconscious; (2) a means of accessing unconscious information held within the psyche; (3) a way of taking in information at a subliminal level about an external object (or person); (4) a process by which the links between perceptions are unconsciously found. (Charles, 2004, p. 14)

Interestingly, this conceptualization of intuition forms part of the theoretical foundation of the well-known and still widely used Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which is based on Jung’s theory of psychological types (Charles, 2004).

Spiritual (Transcendental). Unsurprisingly, intuition’s elusiveness gives it the power to capture the imagination of a diverse range of people, and, as a result, it has become a staple in many distinct worldviews. Beyond contemporary scientific disciplines, pseudo-scientific fields such as parapsychology and transpersonal psychology have been interested in the phenomenon. Plenty of independent contributors, such as novelists, have also made it the topic of their works. In addition, there are plenty of historical figures, such as philosophers, theologians, and ancient orators, who have theorized about it within their respective philosophical traditions, religions, spirituality, or mythologies, and have generated unique conceptualizations influenced by the underlying assumptions of their respective paradigms. The possible conceptualizations seem limitless and are often fused seamlessly with their overarching belief systems. Stickle & Arnd-Caddigans (2019) inadvertently illustrated this in their book, as they inquired into the experiences of almost two dozen therapists regarding their relationship to intuition. Some dominant themes captured in the book are the following: the idea that we are connected to something greater than ourselves, that intuition is derived from a source beyond our immediate

selves; which could mean a connection to an ultimate being or divine beings (i.e., God/Gods, spirits, etc.), or perhaps an interconnection between all things (to a greater whole), such as a universal reservoir of energy, a collective consciousness, an immaterial realm, etc. (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigans, 2019). There are many more belief systems than I could ever hope to represent here.

Empirical Research

The conceptualizations we have discussed so far have come from various sources: some from general knowledge, some from informal searches, and some from academic sources. So far, the goal has been to provide the reader with a comprehensive tapestry of existing conceptualizations of intuitions from diverse traditions of thought. At this stage, we are now better informed to contextualize and understand what academic research in psychotherapy has revealed about intuition.

In the Fall of 2022, I reviewed the existing scholarly literature. In my search, I solely included articles on intuition that pertained to psychotherapy. The focus was on empirical data originating from studies, and I disregarded the theoretical articles (including dissertations) on the subject, despite their greater prevalence. I used keywords such as “intuition in psychotherapy” or “clinical intuition” to search through the University of Ottawa’s Online Library and Google Scholar. After reading some articles and books on the subject, I found additional pertinent sources in their reference sections. I proceeded like this until I found nothing new. In the end, I found only seven empirical studies (two of which were full-length books), indicating that this phenomenon is under-researched given its widespread familiarity.

It is worth noting that, in my search, I also came across many studies on ‘clinical intuition’ from other fields, especially in the medical field. However, I often found that their conceptualizations of intuition were too narrowly defined for my research purposes (through their operationalization of the phenomenon). Nonetheless, this literature provides evidence that ‘clinical intuition’ draws interest, has implications, and is useful in various contemporary fields beyond psychotherapy.

Finally, in the Winter of 2026, I conducted a follow-up search using the same empirical criteria, search tools, and keywords to note any new developments in this area of research. In this

search, I identified only a few additional publications (articles and books) meeting the original criteria. Despite these contributions, the conclusions of the original review remain unaltered: intuition in psychotherapy remains significantly under-researched, despite continued signs of interest in the topic. Because these additional publications were identified at a late stage in the thesis writing process and do not affect the structure or rationale of the study, they were not incorporated into the literature review or discussed further.

Most of the studies gathered employed distinctive methodologies and often diverged in their underlying epistemologies and ontologies, or metaphysical assumptions. Nevertheless, a substantial number of interesting findings have emerged from them. Due to various constraints, we will discuss only some of the most prominent and intriguing emerging themes. But first, we must briefly elaborate on the methodologies used in these studies.

Methodologies of the Gathered Studies

The researchers studying ‘clinical intuition’ had to be creative in their research designs to capture this vaguely grasped, under-researched construct. Across all the articles (in the context of psychotherapy), only one study had attempted to quantify and measure the phenomenon of intuition. As mentioned earlier, Spagnuolo Lobb et al. (2022) developed a measure of intuitive capacity by equating it with a construct called Aesthetic Relational Knowledge (ARK); they then constructed and validated the ARKS, a scale to measure it. Witteman et al. (2012) operationalized the construct of ‘clinical intuition’ in psychotherapy (similarly to in other professional fields), as one’s automatic responses derived from textbook knowledge and clinical experience, which rely on expertise; the researchers clarified that they aimed to re-establish it as a credible source of knowledge for clinicians. Three out of the seven studies (including the two full-length books) took an inductive approach, using either Grounded Theory (Charles, 2004; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022) or Thematic Analysis (grounded primarily in social constructivism theory) (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019), in which researchers allowed a definition or a theory of intuition to emerge from the data set: that is, they proceeded from the therapists’ definition, experience and understanding of intuition. Two indicated that they used a phenomenological approach (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Tantia, 2014). However, I would argue that most of the seven studies embraced at least some phenomenological tenets in their research approach. It is important to note that there are many variations within phenomenological

approaches. For instance, Jeffrey and Stone Fish (2011) were interested in gathering experiential data by capturing the lived experience of Marriage Family Therapists (MFTs), so they began by ‘bracketing’ their worldviews and pre-conceptions to allow the data to ‘reveal itself’ to them (in keeping with Husserl’s original tradition). But, they modified the approach to capture MFTs’ ideas and concepts, resulting in a methodology that appeared, at least in part, to resemble ‘Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis’ (IPA). Others, such as Tania (2014), argued that by using an approach such as IPA, researchers were not capturing the full extent of the phenomenon, which she assumed to be embodied and more easily felt than expressed. Correspondingly, Tania (2014) approached the research from an embodied psychology perspective; she adapted Gendlin’s interview method, ‘embodied focusing,’ and modified ‘Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Analysis’ (a combination beyond our scope) to account for participants’ gestures and non-verbal behaviours.

As is made evident here, even when researchers were working from within the same set of metaphysical assumptions and using similar methodological approaches (e.g., experiential and inductive approaches), they still ended up with vastly different study designs depending on variables such as their initial conceptualization of the phenomenon or where they placed their point of emphasis (i.e., due to various theoretical or practical factors).

Findings and Implications

Now that we have covered various approaches to the study of ‘clinical intuition,’ we will look at a few of the findings that have emerged from them.

Most of the conceptualizations and experiences of intuitions presented so far were shared by at least some of the participants across the various studies. To give a few examples, most studies found support for a commonly shared conceptualization of intuition as an alternative way of knowing (direct or immediate knowing) that is often automatic, inductive, non-conscious or pre-verbal, constituted despite missing information, and does not dependent on, but is rather complementary to rational processes (Charles, 2004; Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Witteman et al., 2012; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022). Many studies also found support for various characteristics, such as its embodied (e.g., kinaesthetic, gestural, non-verbal), interoceptive or visceral (e.g., gut felt), sensory (e.g., visual, auditory, etc.) or emotional qualities (Charles, 2004; Witteman et al., 2012; Tania, 2014; Stickle & Arnd-

Caddigan, 2019; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022). Notably, Spagnuolo Lobb et al. (2022), in validating their construct of Aesthetic Relational Knowledge (ARK) and its corresponding scale (ARKS), found statistical support for the three-factor model (ARK), comprising Empathy, Bodily Awareness, and Resonance (Spagnuolo Lobb et al., 2022).

Beyond support for various conceptualizations of the phenomenon, the literature has produced many significant findings and important resulting implications from these accounts. Here are a handful of them. Most intuitions tend to occur in the presence of a client, such as when first meeting them, but they can also arise spontaneously between sessions, for example, during reflection (Charles, 2004). Intuition can be used at every treatment stage of therapy (i.e., in building, maintaining, and ending the clinical relationship) (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019); it can be used, for instance, to speed up the process of evaluation and treatment (Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022), and it can impact both the immediate session and the future course of therapy (Charles, 2004). Intuition plays a role in strengthening the therapeutic relationship and, thus, aids in the overall process of change (Charles, 2004; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022) by, for instance, bolstering clients' and therapists' self-awareness (Charles, 2004; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022) or by deepening therapists' understanding of their client (Charles, 2004; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). At a more primary level, intuition can support therapists' clinical decision-making (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019); it can assist therapists who find themselves 'blocked' or help narrow down possibilities toward an optimal course of action (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019; Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022). In practice, many therapists use it concurrently with other more theoretical-empirical approaches; for example, some participants viewed the use of clinical intuition as a means of generating hypotheses (Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022) or intuitions, themselves, as being hypotheses (Wittelman et al., 2012), that are not immediately acted upon, but instead kept in the back of a therapist's mind for further consideration (Charles, 2004; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). Many MFTs and other therapists (across multiple studies) continue to use clinical intuition in their practice, despite the scarcity of literature on the topic and the lack of adequate training in its use (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). Beyond this, despite recognizing its value, some therapists have expressed a need to exercise caution in discussing this topic in academic or professional contexts to avoid professional repercussions; they warn that in some environments, others, such as colleagues or supervisors, either frown

upon it or are otherwise unsupportive of its use, due to a variety of factors (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). This observation extends to clinical practice, where therapists may share their intuitions with clients, where tact, timing, and wording become essential considerations (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). Many interviewed therapists believe intuition can be learned and developed (and therefore, should be taught) through various means, such as discussions, clinical practice and supervision (Wittman et al., 2012; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). Therapists were often aware of potential associated risks with its use, such as accidentally exhibiting tunnel vision, projection, confirmation bias, and countertransference, to name a few (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011; Wittman et al., 2012; Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). Despite these considerations, many therapists tend to view the outcomes of intuitive interventions as overwhelmingly positive for the client (e.g., increased self-understanding, reduction in symptoms, better life management, etc.), as well as for themselves (e.g., more profound understanding of the client), and report that most of their intuitions have been accurate and helpful (Charles, 2004). Furthermore, others have suggested that therapists often use intuition in ways that are not always explicitly recognized: across theoretical orientations (Muñoz-Cobos & Postigo-Zegarra, 2022); as a process necessary for building therapeutic relationships and thereby performing therapeutic work (Charles, 2004); or as a continuously operating aspect within their work (Wittman et al., 2012).

This small selection of findings should be sufficient to illustrate the relevance of studying intuition in psychotherapy. One can refer to the ‘Contributions and Implications’ section for a reframing of these topics as they relate to the aims and rationales of this study.

Methodology

Theoretical Foundations

Articulating the theoretical underpinnings of this approach is inherently challenging. It requires thorough engagement with complex, sometimes obscure philosophical topics, many of which are deeply embedded in their historical context. A central difficulty is that these underlying assumptions differ significantly from those that typically structure contemporary psychological research.

In anticipation of potential misunderstandings of this methodology's purpose, I assembled an extensive theoretical framework necessary for understanding this research project as a whole. Accordingly, the Appendices H to L (see Chapters 1-5) provide the background required to fully grasp what follows. The Theoretical Chapters in the Appendices conclude precisely where this section begins. Chapters 4 and 5 were originally conceived as a comprehensive 'history of thought' that retraces relevant philosophical currents, delineates key phenomenological traditions, including their founders and pivotal ideas, and outlines additional philosophical constructs essential for deeper engagement with the study. In practice, this narrative structure ends with Husserl's method of analysis. The discussion then resumes in this methodological section, albeit in a structurally different form, focusing on the principles of Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology that are most relevant to this methodology.

For readers seeking deeper engagement, Chapters 4 and 5 focus on background 'processes' necessary to understand my engagement with phenomena in general, whereas Chapters 1 and 2 address background 'content' related to how I contextualized the phenomenon itself (this specific phenomenon). To this end, more inquisitive readers are advised to consult the Theoretical Chapters before moving on to the next section, principally Chapters 4 and 5.

At the same time, as noted in the introductory remarks, I have also sought to accommodate readers preferring a more concise overview by providing a simplified, structured template for engaging with the work. Therefore, the following methodological section presents the study primarily through the lens of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), with minor modifications. Explanations are deliberately kept minimal, sufficient to provide an accessible overview of the study's structure and to guide readers wishing to engage primarily with the participants' responses. More specifically, the theoretical content included in subsequent sections, up to 'Results/Discussion,' is restricted to concepts directly necessary for understanding this modified IPA framework and, more broadly, the practical research design (e.g., participant selection, recruitment criteria, research instruments, analytical procedures, etc.).

Rectifying Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Overview of the IPA Critique. As intimated earlier, I employ IPA's methodology to facilitate communication and provide readers with a comprehensive structural framework for this project. This use, however, is preceded by a critical engagement that addresses specific limitations by returning to the foundational philosophical principles from which it has diverged. Accordingly, the aim of this section is not to reject IPA, but to realign it with the very philosophical assumptions it already presupposes.

As noted earlier, my decisions regarding research design were guided foremost by philosophical principles, with considerations of structure following thereafter. Something that initially drew me to IPA as a potentially suitable framework was its flexibility and its restraint in what it claims to accomplish. Yet these same features have also invited much criticism, some of which warrants particular consideration. Van Manen (2017) makes a compelling argument when he states that, by its own author's description, IPA, geared toward the researcher making sense of another's sense-making of their situation, essentially amounts to a psychological analysis rather than a phenomenological one; the latter would aim to emphasize the phenomenon itself more directly. This limitation, while perhaps not entirely overcome, nonetheless motivated an exploration of ways to deepen the inquiry.

Moreover, I agree with Gyollai's (2020) criticism that Smith's IPA misinterprets fundamental principles of Heideggerian and Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, and consequently, falls short of itself in multiple respects. For instance, it mistakenly avoids the explicit use of a theoretical framework and instead permits the unprincipled adoption of external psychological theories at the researcher's discretion, when it could coherently ground itself in its own underlying philosophical principles (Gyollai, 2020). It also fails to recognize the problematic nature of a methodological device such as 'bracketing' and the attitude it presupposes, all of which run contrary to the philosophical principles underpinning the methodology, namely, the hermeneutic branch of phenomenology (Gyollai, 2020).

Ontology as the Methodological Foundation. Fundamentally, IPA's methodological approach lacks explicit clarity regarding its ontological commitments, leading to incoherence. Thus, it necessitates the introduction of Heideggerian and Gadamerian principles to establish a genuinely hermeneutic phenomenology. Since ontology precedes and informs methodology (see Chapter 4), understanding the limitations of IPA's methodological stance requires first examining

the ontological assumptions it implicitly relies on, so they can be realigned with its methodology. Therefore, the first step is to examine the type of beings we fundamentally are, beings that are always in an interpretive relationship with the world and inseparable from it, since it is such beings that engage through the methodological practices we employ.

Heideggerian Ontological Foundations. The following subsection unpacks the most relevant structures of ‘Dasein’ for our current purposes.

Dasein. Heidegger (1927/1962) writes: “Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it” (p. 32). To clarify, ‘Being’ (capitalized) refers to the state of existence itself that is common to all beings, while ‘beings’ (lowercase) are individual entities with particular characteristics that exist in the world (Walton, 2016b). Dasein (being-there) is not a specific person, but a kind of being for which its own Being is always a concern; in this sense, it is an existential being (Walton, 2016b). This concern, which Heidegger calls ‘care,’ is an ontological reinterpretation of Husserl’s notion of intentionality (see Chapter 5) (Walton, 2016b). It is the fundamental, unifying structure of Dasein, shaping how it engages with the world and relates to its own Being (Walton, 2016b).

Being-in-the-World. For our purposes, the most relevant of Dasein’s structures is ‘being-in-the-world,’ evident in its everyday engagement with the world (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Walton, 2016b). Crucially, Dasein is always ‘embedded’ in the world; being-in-the-world is not a choice, but a condition of its very existence (Walton, 2016b). This embeddedness reflects Heidegger’s rejection of the object-subject dichotomy characteristic of Cartesian Dualism (see Chapter 4). For Heidegger, the world is not a mere collection of independent objects observed from the outside, nor is it purely a subjective realm (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). Instead, he introduces the concept of ‘worldhood of the world,’ which captures the interrelation between these perspectives: the meaning, utility, and concern that Dasein attributes to the entities in the world are themselves part of that world (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). In this way, Dasein does not merely inhabit the world, but is inseparable from the meaningful context through which entities are already intelligible; a context that shapes how Dasein experiences and interprets the world (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

Fore-Structures of Understanding. As a result, Dasein never encounters entities of the world in a presuppositionless or detached manner; its engagements are always informed by prior familiarity developed through ordinary, everyday interactions (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). As Heidegger (1927/1962) explains, Dasein possesses “fore-structures of understanding” (p. 192), reflecting its pre-existing knowledge, or pre-understanding, of the world (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). Interpretation, therefore, never begins from a completely neutral stance; it always emerges from Dasein’s capacity for pre-understanding (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

From Descriptive to Hermeneutic Phenomenology. From this perspective, interpretation is not an optional methodological device; rather, it is a foundational structure of understanding (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). Once grounded ontologically, rather than merely epistemologically, the idea of a presuppositionless (or neutral) methodological stance becomes untenable; in other words, this is not possible according to Dasein’s existential situation (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

Heidegger identified fundamental ontological-methodological issues in the transcendental phenomenology of his mentor, Husserl (see Chapter 5), which ultimately led to the development of hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Husserl’s phenomenology is epistemologically oriented: it relies on bracketing, which aims at neutrality, and reduction, which aims at describing phenomena (see Chapter 5). By contrast, Heidegger’s phenomenology is ontologically oriented: it relies on the hermeneutic circle, which aims at interpreting phenomena (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

These differences are not only methodological; they reflect a significant ontological shift. Husserl’s approach assumes that consciousness can be studied in isolation without reference to context, reflecting its residual traces of Cartesian Dualism (see Chapter 5). By contrast, Heidegger’s analysis emphasizes Dasein’s embeddedness in the world and its concerned interpretive interactions with other entities and itself (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Walton, 2016b).

Husserl’s methodological device, the phenomenological reduction (see Chapter 5), assumes a presuppositionless stance and cannot account for Dasein’s embedded, interpretive engagement with the world. Therefore, Heidegger’s hermeneutic shift becomes necessary.

Gadamerian Hermeneutics. Building on Heidegger's ontological account of interpretation, Gadamer further develops hermeneutic phenomenology by emphasizing the dialogical, historically situated, and socially mediated conditions of understanding, all mediated through language: each person engages with prior in-world knowledge and brings a unique worldview and various prejudices to dialogue, which can then be challenged and refined (Gyollai, 2020). These factors constitute the totality of contextual background through which any phenomenon is interpreted, forming what Gadamer calls the horizon (applied here to the person's mind rather than the object of inquiry, as in the Husserlian horizon) (Gyollai, 2020). In this context, Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons becomes relevant, as an extension of Husserl's notion of the horizon (see Chapter 5). In discourse, each person attempts to transpose themselves into the other's horizon in an effort to grasp their perspective and arrive at a common understanding, during which prejudices are implicitly brought into play and can be challenged by new information (Gyollai, 2020). Consequently, initial positions are readjusted, culminating in a co-created interpretation, which is the fusion of horizons (Gyollai, 2020). These interpretations are partly familiar and partly novel to both parties, and, in turn, they form the basis for future prejudices in subsequent dialogues, producing a perpetually evolving perspective on phenomena (Gyollai, 2020).

Rejecting Bracketing: Foregrounding Prejudice. Accordingly, the first logical modification is to reject IPA's traditional association with bracketing (or the *epoché*) (see Chapter 5), given its implications for interpretation. Before proceeding, it is worth noting that Gadamer substitutes the term 'prejudices' (without negative connotations; from the old English 'pre-judgement') for Heidegger's concept of 'preconceptions' (Gyollai, 2020). While IPA tends to downplay the role of prejudices or treat them as a risk to interpretation, Heidegger and Gadamer take a contrary view (Gyollai, 2020). For Heidegger and Gadamer, all understanding and interpretation are fundamentally dependent on prejudices; indeed, the very mode of analysis they employ, the hermeneutic circle, relies on them (Gyollai, 2020).

While IPA rightly acknowledges that certain forms of prejudice may influence interpretation, it does not follow that they are hostile intruders to be hunted down and confined within imaginary brackets (Gyollai, 2020). Gadamer, in agreement with Heidegger, makes it clear that such 'parenthesizing' of oneself is not only impossible but would not serve our

interests even if it were achievable (Gyollai, 2020). Instead, Gadamer suggested that prejudices be appropriated (see Gadamer section) and foregrounded (see Hermeneutic Circle section), thereby highlighting the shift from an emphasis on neutrality toward reflexivity (Gyollai, 2020).

Rejecting Atheoretical Interpretation: Grounding IPA in Phenomenology.

Heidegger's and Gadamer's theoretical concepts, such as the fore-structure of understanding and the fusion of horizons, have significant implications for research analysis, particularly regarding how meaning and interpretation are possible at all. One consequence of this is that meaning can only be derived from a text (understood here as a person's experiential account) if it is interpreted in relation to a broader interpretive frame of reference (Gyollai, 2020). It is also the basis for Gyollai's (2020) criticism of IPA's atheoretical stance: IPA seeks to develop theory from the ground up, but this is based on a misunderstanding of the interpretive process, which is always guided by the researcher's prejudices (preconceptions). It is our external theories that drive the interpretation, rather than the other way around (Gyollai, 2020).

Gyollai's (2020) suggestion, which follows directly from this, is to ground IPA in phenomenological philosophy rather than psychological theory, which it currently relies on predominantly through the researcher's theoretical knowledge, professional experiences, or even personal whims. It also has the added advantage of making the approach more 'phenomenological' than it currently is, thereby partially addressing van Manen's (2017) earlier criticism that, in its typical form, IPA is psychological rather than phenomenological. Consequently, my subsequent theoretical modification to IPA is an implementation of this advice, reflecting a stronger grounding in phenomenological philosophy and a return to Heidegger's and Gadamer's first-hand principles.

The Hermeneutic Circle as an Analytical Framework. The Hermeneutic Circle is Heidegger's model of interpretation, which replaces Husserl's phenomenological reduction and underpins the overall analytic procedure (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). The Hermeneutic Circle is a cyclical process in which understanding emerges through the interplay between parts and whole; comprehension unfolds through repeated movement across a phenomenon's individual parts, their interrelations, and the phenomenon as a unified whole (Malpas, 2022). This interpretive framework provides the foundation for any specific set of procedural guidelines, such as those employed in IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). For a schematic representation of

the Hermeneutic Circle and its application in qualitative interpretive analysis, see Jedličková et al. (2022).

As Heidegger emphasizes: “This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 195). That is, the Hermeneutic Circle is not an optional methodological device that can be implemented or suspended at will; rather, it is ontologically grounded, reflecting the existential structures of Dasein’s being.

As previously established, Dasein is a self-interpreting being, always concerned with its existence, and inevitably situated within a co-constitutive network of meaning through which Dasein and its world are mutually shaped (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Jedličková et al., 2022; Walton, 2016b). By extension, Dasein’s existential situation ensures that it always already understands itself and its world in a particular way, not neutrally, thereby providing the ontological grounding for interpretation (Jedličková et al., 2022). From this, it follows that interpretation merely makes explicit that which has already been grasped implicitly (Jedličková et al., 2022). Dasein’s pre-understandings of itself and its world drive analysis; without them, the Hermeneutic Circle would be vacuous, and they cannot be bracketed (Gyollai, 2020). This reflects a point that IPA, in its conventional form, overlooks, as it continues to view bracketing as central to analysis (Gyollai, 2020).

Analytical Steps in IPA

Although the analytic procedure can be explained through the Hermeneutic Circle alone, a more concrete outline is offered here for clarity, as a practical scaffold built into the theoretical foundation discussed above. Practically speaking, IPA analysis can be considered in roughly three stages, which I outline below. The following description of IPA’s analytic procedure is drawn entirely from Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), whose article provides a comprehensive and concise account of the IPA methodology.

Their first step involves multiple conscientious readings of the interview transcripts alongside the audio recordings, aiming to immerse oneself completely in the data while considering the interview context. The goal at this stage is to become thoroughly acquainted with the material while noting reflections and important points. These may include observations about

context or content, notable language use, participants' reactions, or the researcher's reflexive considerations (e.g., noting a potential influence on a participant's response).

Their second step focuses on working with these exploratory notes (rather than the transcripts) and transforming them into initial themes. Portions of raw data (e.g., participants' descriptions or explanations) may be concisely labelled using more abstract formulations that capture their central ideas.

Their third step involves exploring the relationships among emerging themes and clustering closely related concepts into broader, unifying descriptive labels. This stage also includes pruning less significant themes. For pragmatic reasons, emerging themes are generally compiled in their entirety before connections and clusters are identified. This process typically results in multiple subthemes organized under fewer overarching themes.

As one of their suggestions illustrates, the analysis can be conducted via pen and paper, with comments and themes noted in the margins. A list of representative participant quotations is then compiled to provide textual support for the central themes and sub-themes in the final write-up. They also recommended including numerical indicators with extracts (e.g., timestamps) to mark their location within the transcript, making context easier to access.

As the authors explain, once the analysis is complete, the findings are communicated in narrative form. Each theme is typically described one at a time, supported by participant quotations, and paired with the researcher's analytic commentary. This approach allows readers to evaluate the researcher's interpretations in relation to the participant's own words. Thus, the final report reflects both the participants' sense-making of their lived experience and the researcher's interpretive contributions, which constitute IPA's double hermeneutics. A discussion section typically follows, situating the findings within the broader literature while also addressing the study's implications, limitations, future directions, and any additional reflections.

The steps and guidance described above are drawn entirely from Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014). In the next section, I describe how these procedures were applied and adapted to meet the specific goals of the present study.

Flexibility and Creativity in IPA

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) indicate that IPA is a flexible and adaptive approach, noting that the researcher's creativity is an asset; their proposed guidelines are merely suggestive and exemplify one possible way of approaching the analysis. An illustrative example of how IPA's inherent limitations can be rigorously addressed through the researchers' adaptability and creativity, making use of the approach's flexible stance, can be found in Jedličková et al. (2022).

In the present study, I broadly followed Pietkiewicz and Smith's (2014) model as described above. Notably, I moved through its various stages cyclically, with frequent back-and-forth between stages, rather than progressing sequentially. In practice, this involved continually revising and reorganizing emerging thematic categories as my understanding of the participants' accounts of the phenomenon evolved through an ongoing interpretive movement between individual parts of the accounts and a developing understanding of the material as a whole. I returned to this framework whenever guidance was needed for the next concrete analytical step. As the analysis progressed, the procedure was further adapted. For instance, initial analytic cycles were conducted directly on the transcripts using a pen-and-paper approach, as suggested above. Subsequently, following Dr. Gazzola's advice, primarily for organizational purposes, all emerging themes and supporting quotations were transferred into Excel spreadsheets, which then served as the primary analytical workspace for the remainder of the analysis.

A further adaptation concerned the structure of the results and discussion section. After exploring different ways of presenting the emerging themes, either as complete participant narratives or organized by thematic sections, I ultimately elected to use a hybrid approach. The analysis was structured thematically, with participants' narratives constructed and presented in alternating order within each section, allowing thematically derived narrative segments from both participants to appear side by side within each area of inquiry. Analytic discussion was integrated directly into the presentation of the findings, so that results and commentary appear together in context rather than in separate results and discussion sections.

These decisions were guided by what best served the aims of the present study, including considerations of clarity, cohesiveness, and authentic representation of participants' accounts, as well as the narrative's rhetorical quality and aesthetic presentation. All decisions were made in keeping with IPA's emphasis on flexibility and creativity, drawing on practices observed in qualitative research more broadly, while maintaining consistency with the philosophical

principles underpinning this project. These philosophical concepts, articulated throughout the Methodology and Theoretical Chapters, also served as the primary interpretive framework, contributing to the project's distinctive 'meta' orientation.

Specifics / Practical Implementation

Research Question

The driving research question guiding this study was: How do therapists experience their use of intuition in the context of psychotherapy? This formulation was suitable for an IPA methodology as it satisfied its ideographic emphasis on rich experiential accounts of the phenomenon under investigation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In this way, the therapists' lived experiences, namely their accounts of using intuition in clinical settings and the sense they made of it all, were central to the inquiry.

The interview questions reflected three broad areas of inquiry: first, how participants understood the phenomenon of intuition and its origin; second, how they used it in their work and its perceived outcomes; third, how they approached and suggested developing it, including facilitating dialogue surrounding its use. In addition, questions addressing participants' personal and professional backgrounds, where relevant to intuition, were included to contextualize their accounts. During analysis, this contextual aspect proved sufficiently rich to constitute its own area of inquiry within the presentation of the findings. The refined peripheral questions, developed to achieve these objectives, are included in Appendix E.

Participants

Before proceeding with the practical decisions, let us briefly re-situate ourselves within IPA's theoretical grounding. IPA is derived from three distinct bodies of knowledge: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, and Ideography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The first two developments have been addressed in depth in the 'Theoretical Foundations' of this methodological section. The key takeaway is that participants, by virtue of being human and always embedded in their world, are fundamentally meaning-making beings, concerned with the content of their world (i.e., people, events, and objects), as these relate to their existence, including their own sense of self (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Accordingly, the primary concern of IPA is the participants' meaning-making processes as they pertain to a select phenomenon

(Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This directly informs the third influence of IPA: its idiographic commitments. IPA prioritizes insight into individual cases over generalities across cases; whether through a single narrative or multiple participants' accounts, each participant's unique lived experience remains central, emphasizing depth of analysis over breadth (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Building on this idiographic commitment, small sample sizes (typically ranging from one to fifteen participants) are common in this type of methodology (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). While there are no strict rules regarding the number of participants, considerations include how deeply each account will be analyzed, the quantity of meaningful material generated by each case, the degree to which the researcher wishes to contrast cases, and other practical constraints (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Consistent with IPA's ideographic orientation, samples are typically homogeneous, selected based on shared commonalities predefined by the research goals; because IPA seeks in-depth insight into individual lived experiences rather than to generalize results to a population, representative or random sampling is inappropriate for this type of research (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Nonetheless, the degree of homogeneity may vary depending on interpretive concerns (e.g., desired variation or similarity) and practical considerations, such as the rarity of access to the phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Accordingly, participants were recruited as follows.

This qualitative study used purposive (convenience) sampling to recruit psychotherapists located in Ontario to discuss their experiences using intuition in clinical settings. The initial intent was to recruit four participants on a first-come, first-served basis. However, after analyzing the data from the first two participants, a decision was made, in consultation with Dr. Gazzola and the thesis committee, to discontinue further participant inclusion, despite having begun arrangements to interview an additional participant. This allowed for a more in-depth idiographic analysis of the two participants featured in this study than would otherwise have been possible, ultimately better aligning with the study's aim.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: first, participants would have to consciously recall having used intuition at least once in their clinical practice and be willing to talk about it; second, they would have to speak English; third, they would have to be psychotherapists or counsellors registered with a licensing body; fourth, they would have to have at least five years of clinical

experience. The last criterion was to mitigate the potential confounding effects of professional inexperience (i.e., to avoid selecting therapists who were not yet secure in their role), which might have altered the ‘qualia’ of the experiences of intuition, as well as the extent of their willingness to use it and how they reported on it (e.g., due to self-doubt, anxiousness, fluctuating approaches to therapy, overcautiousness about professional liabilities, etc.).

The recruitment process began in the Winter semester of 2025 (after REB approval). The original plan was as follows. First, electronic requests (Appendix A) were to herald the spread of the recruitment text (Appendix B). This step was initially devised as a three-pronged approach: first, recruitment documents would be forwarded to professional associations (CCPA, CPA) for posting on their websites or email lists for potential candidates to see. Secondly, requests would be made to mental health clinic directors to post the study information for their members to observe. Third, I would have professionals play the ‘telephone game’ (i.e., snowball sampling) until enough willing participants were located (i.e., by word of mouth). Candidates who responded to this call to action would be honoured with a formal invitation (Appendix C) that exhibited the terrain in greater detail and would have the opportunity to pledge their (revokable) commitment to the cause via the informed consent form (Appendix D), also featured in the email. After the initially planned approximately 90-minute ‘dialogical experience’ (Appendix E), which is depicted in more detail hereafter, a follow-up debrief form (Appendix F) would have wishfully provided them with enduring memorabilia of a blissful time.

In practice, in part due to an unforeseen circumstance that would have delayed the recruitment process, the three-pronged approach was dropped in favour of a solely word-of-mouth approach (proceeding directly to phase 3). The interviews, initially intended to be flexible in duration, ultimately lasted the full two-hour blocks scheduled for each participant, with the remainder of the procedure unchanged.

Procedure

Data Collection. The research instrument selected for this study was the semi-structured interview. This format is well-suited to IPA, as it provides a guiding structure while maintaining flexibility to accommodate the unpredictability of dialogue (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In practice, this involves preparing a set of open-ended questions and prompts in advance to support

a fluid conversation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA interviews typically last an hour or more and are generally audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The primary data collection method was thus the recorded interviews conducted over Microsoft Teams between each participant and me (the primary researcher). These interviews were estimated to last approximately 90 minutes, with flexibility to extend or schedule additional time if needed. In practice, each interview took up the full two-hour block scheduled, and no additional sessions were required. Following REB approval and after recruitment texts had found their kindred recipients, and since those candidates met the criteria and provided their consent, interviews were scheduled per participants' availability in the late winter of 2025. Before the interview began, there was a check-in to review the consent form and time to answer any additional questions. The interview aimed to be open and flexible, allowing participants to elaborate on the topic in their own direction and scope, consistent with the objectives of a phenomenological inquiry. However, there were some ready-made open-ended questions to ask participants and prompts to use as needed (Appendix E).

In developing the questions and prompts, I initially drew on Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan's (2019) areas of inquiry as a guiding template, given their alignment with the aims of this study, and then adapted and expanded them to capture the phenomenon more comprehensively, reflecting the study's phenomenological objectives. I sampled some of these questions in a graduate qualitative research course while interviewing two graduate-level psychotherapists-in-training about their use of intuition in first-year practicum clinical settings, making adjustments and additions thereafter. As previously emphasized, I sought to ground the present inquiry in a deeply phenomenological framework. In developing the interview questions, I aimed not only to capture participants' firsthand interpretations and experiences of the phenomenon but also to identify the underlying experiential and interpretive structures shaping these experiences and conceptualizations.

While this was not the initial plan, following REB feedback, I shared the questions and prompts with participants beforehand, providing a preliminary framework to help situate the discussion and allow time to reflect on their intuitive experiences. This likely contributed to the depth of responses and ensured that important areas of inquiry were covered. However, a trade-off was that participants relied more heavily on the predefined structure than I had initially

intended, limiting opportunities for more spontaneous discussion. This possibility had been anticipated, and attempts were made to mitigate it through accompanying emails that encouraged participants to treat the questions as optional prompts rather than rigid investigative categories, though this had only a limited effect. Providing a large number of interview questions in advance, even when framed as optional, may also have increased participants' perceived preparatory burden in the lead-up to the interview. Informal participant feedback collected during the debrief suggested that, while having the questions beforehand helped structure their thoughts, it could feel overwhelming for others. One participant suggested adopting a fully open interview style, a possibility I had briefly considered for this project and which may be worth exploring in future research.

A few relevant demographic questions were asked at the start of each interview to establish a preliminary participant profile and to inform later interpretation of the phenomenon. To minimize potential risks to participants' livelihoods, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained through randomly generated pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information. Interviews were recorded using Microsoft Teams and automatically transcribed. Video recordings were converted to audio and securely deleted. Audio recordings were then used to manually review the transcripts for accuracy, with identifying information removed during this phase. All research data, including the audio recordings, verified transcripts, analysis documents, signed consent forms and the master key linking pseudonyms to real identities, were stored on a securely encrypted, password-protected external hard drive at the primary researcher's residence. The data were then analyzed according to the modified IPA guidelines described earlier.

Issues of Rigour (Quality Assurance)

As previously discussed, Chapter 4 examines in depth and contrasts the assumptions that underlie this type of interpretive research endeavour. One takeaway is that this kind of research does not accept the possibility of, nor does it aim to arrive at, a single objective Truth; rather, it deals with relative or situated truths (i.e., a diversity of views on reality) and seeks to be useful and meaningful to those who engage with its findings (Laverty, 2003). Therefore, it does not speak of reliability or validity, which belong to altogether different traditions, but rather attends to matters of rigour (or quality assurance) (Laverty, 2003). These, instead of attempting to ensure

correspondence with objective reality, are guided by considerations of values and ethics (Lavery, 2003), which are discussed further in Chapter 4.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, there is still a need to establish the study's credibility; yet there is no unanimous consensus on how issues of rigour should be conceptualized or assessed (Lavery, 2003). Nonetheless, researchers such as van Manen have tried to systematize these concerns, proposing four main categories of quality assurance (Kafle, 2013). These are Orientation (i.e., the researcher's immersion in the participant's views and narrative), Strength (i.e., a convincing representation of the underlying meaning), Richness (i.e., a skillful use of rhetoric), and Depth (i.e., a profound grasp of participants' intentions) (Kafle, 2013). Kafle (2013) also places great emphasis on language, elaborating on rhetorical considerations for this type of research and highlighting the need for language that effectively conveys the experiential meanings participants intend to disclose, often in an appropriately informal style (e.g., vivid imagery or memorable sayings).

In the present study, these considerations of rigour were applied throughout the research project; they functioned more as preventive measures than as retrospective evaluative steps confined to the concluding phases. As the primary researcher, I sought to satisfy these criteria in several ways.

Orientation was pursued through continuous immersion in and engagement with participants' accounts across all phases of the research, including interviews, transcription reviews, and thematic analysis. I consistently aimed to understand each participant's depiction of the phenomenon from the vantage point of their lived experience.

Strength was cultivated through repeated hermeneutic movements, during which I sought to represent participants' meanings as accurately and authentically as possible. In practice, this sometimes involved many hours of painstaking engagement with a single ambiguous but significant utterance, working cyclically to clarify its meaning in relation to its broader context.

Richness is evidenced through attention to the aesthetic and rhetorical qualities of the depictions. This consideration is crucial, as the reader gains access to the phenomenon only through the medium of language; its disclosure is always constrained by the participants'

accounts and the researcher's use of language. In this sense, richer expressions yield wealthier accounts.

Depth was sought through efforts to uncover the most fundamental intended meanings, including those that may lie beneath participants' explicit verbal accounts, while remaining closely grounded in the textual evidence.

Results Overview (Tables)

Table Orientation

The tables that follow preview the structure and summarize the findings of the Results/Discussion section. They are positioned here primarily to help readers orient themselves before immersion in the narrative data, which contains a wide array of subthemes. In this sense, the tables function as a map, which is why the summary appears before, rather than after, the results. Importantly, the tables are not structured to exactly mirror the sequence of the Results/Discussion section. Instead, this configuration keeps each participant's narrative unified. This decision was made to help readers better visualize the continuity and interconnectedness of ideas within each individual account. Such a comprehensive picture is more easily conveyed in table form than within the expansive text.

A secondary purpose of these tables is to provide an accessible summary of findings to which readers can return after engaging with the full Results/Discussion section. They are not intended to replace the narrative, as doing so could be misleading. As in the rest of the study, interpretation plays a role in formulating the themes, which are at times condensed, reworded, and occasionally extended into broader statements or implications. Some variations in phrasing reflect the different functions the tables serve and the distinct contexts from which the themes were originally derived. Thus, the tables are meant to serve as conceptual anchors to aid navigation, recall content, or trace connections, rather than as literal or definitive truths extracted from the study. They are offered as a practical tool to support engagement with the research.

Table 1: Gloria

Themes

Subthemes

Part 1a - Background Context.

Gloria's Demographic Information	• Ontario (CRPO) • MA and PhD (related to counselling) • About 20 years of clinical practice • Eclectic, Humanistic, Existential • With supervisory experience
Self-Described Personal Characteristics	• Open to experiences • Self-aware/reflective • Conceptual synthesizer/systematizer • Life-long learner/collector of wisdom • Go-with-the-flow/intellectually curious • Self-development-oriented/growth-oriented
Personal Experiences	• Importance of focusing on personal experiences • Maternal intuition as a formative influence • Intuition about familial illness/death as a formative influence • Exploration of intuition sparked vicariously • Trust in the intuitive process developed through becoming a counsellor
Theoretical Orientation	• Experiential (process-oriented) therapy relies on intuition; it supports its development

Part 2a - Conceptualization.

Definitions/Descriptors of Intuition	• Embodied wisdom: knowing something from 'somewhere' without being able to pinpoint it (a gut sense/feeling that nudges one to follow a particular lead) • Unconscious knowing/a gut feel: knowing/feeling that something is off, before having made sense of it logically • Hunches; things you're drawn towards; an element of serendipity
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Forms of Intuition	• Intuition conceptualized/experienced as two forms of energy: Form 1: something feels off; Form 2: something draws one in • Bodily part: a sensation or energy/feeling {Form 1} • Feeling/sensing people's emotions via the mirror neurons {Form 1} • Awareness of one's behavioural changes {Form 1} • Creativity/ideas part: the brain's process of generating novel ideas {Form 2} • Positive-energy/emotions part: the felt vitality, inspiration, engagement, creativity, curiosity {Form 2} • Unconscious, positive force that draws one in a particular direction {Form 2}
Characteristics of Intuition	• Intuition starts and is sensed in the body • Intuition is quieter (subtler) than anxiety • Intuition has an element of serendipity • Intuition can feel like a spiritual experience • Intuition is unconscious: not explicitly thought of when it is used (immediate experience) • Intuition has a temporal dimension (it unfolds over time) • Intuition is part of a dynamic system: it is irreducible to 'one particular thing' • Holistic reframing of intuition (a reconceptualization)

Part 3a - Application.

Uses of Intuition	• Intuition is a part of the therapist's toolbox • Intuition can prompt further exploration • Intuition can provide a hypothesis/direction to investigate • Intuition can bring awareness to one's blind spots
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	• Intuition can be used in the context of suicidality (in high-stakes situations) • An accurate intuition can be positively impactful: it can save a life
Risks of Intuition	• Therapists are more effective when they take some risks (calculated with safeguards) • Three categories of risks: ethics, professional standards, rupture in therapeutic relationships • A strong therapeutic relationship helps mitigate risks • Therapists should not rely 'blindly' on intuition • Overconfidence in one's intuition can do damage • Less leniency for intuitive errors made by therapists
Verifications/Safeguards of Intuition	• Need to test the validity and accuracy of one's intuitions • Direction of one's attentional focus (flexible and open mindset; paying attention to the order of information and omissions; recognizing patterns; following emotions/meanings; maintaining self-awareness) • Procedure for a sophisticated use of intuition (slowing down, staying open, noticing details; collecting data, staying objective; alternating between scientific and intuitive modes; being mindful of blind spots; reflecting and learning from the experience) • Follow-up processes (ongoing refinement; discussing it with others) • Whether to act on one's intuition is generally a pragmatic decision
Navigating/Facilitating Intuition with Clients	• Cultivating a favourable environment for clients to explore their intuition • Conditions for intuitiveness: creativity, openness, non-judgmental

	• Respecting the client's agency and avoiding being directive • Discussing one's intuitive processes more explicitly/transparently with clients • Sharing the content of intuitions with clients
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Part 4a - Education and Development.

Patterns of Intuition	• Intuitions can occur inside and outside the therapy session • Intuitions occur more frequently in a conducive mental and physical space
Personal Development of Intuition	• Ritualizing a weekly time and place for active reflection (journaling) • Reading a lot in general / listening to educational podcasts • Reading an article about intuition • Taking an improvisation course • Being dynamic and adaptable: learning from everyday life experiences • Learning vicariously from others (from both positive and negative influences) • Having personal characteristics or a mindset that help develop intuition unconsciously
Supervisory Role	• Supervisors' facilitatory role in identifying (naming) and nurturing intuition as it emerges in supervisees • Example of a supervisor who is cognizant and validating of intuition • Intuitive capacity exists on a spectrum: it should be nourished, not quashed • Training the reflection/mindful piece • Fostering creativity and the courage to be creative

	• Focusing on the personal experiences (advice for supervisors, researchers, educators) • Importance of supervisors' openness/self-disclosure in fostering intuitive development • Supervisors can help supervisees discern intuition from confounding phenomena • Supervisors can help supervisees navigate conflicts involving intuition • Example of a supervisor's characteristics and approach that supports the development and use of intuition
Supervisory Cautions	• Supervisory power can negatively influence supervisees; caution around quashing intuition • Need for a broad (systematic) shift away from the notion that only evidence-based approaches are legitimate • Supervision's business model can interfere with supervisees' intuitive development • Overly-cautious supervision (fear of the college/litigation) can interfere with supervisees' intuitive development
Discursive Terminology	• Using synonyms when discussing intuition due to the pejorativeness (psychic associations) of the term

Table 2: Dalia***Themes******Subthemes*****Part 1b - Background Context.**

Dalia's Demographic Information	• Ontario (CRPO) • MA (in counselling) • 6 years of clinical practice • Experiential, Attachment/Relational-based
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	• With supervisory experience
Self-Described Personal Characteristics	• Discussing intuition helps recognize one's intuitiveness • Logical/rational • Self-reflective • Neurodivergent
Educational Background	• Educational influences that were formative to intuition (BA in psychology, minor in Women's Studies, courses in Religious Studies)
Theoretical Orientation and Training Background	• Theoretical orientation and training that were formative to intuition (NeuroAffective Relational Model) • Chicken or egg? Nature and nurture both contributed to the development of intuition • Development of intuition was a by-product of learning/training in the theoretical model • Theoretical approach helped develop skills for using intuition safely • Theoretical approach provided a conceptual/linguistic framework (theoretical grounding) for confidently using intuition

Part 2b - Conceptualization.

Definitions/Descriptors of Intuition	• Gut feeling: attunement to one's internal sense of the situation of another person (an internal sense of what's happening, what the other person is feeling, how to act in a given situation) • Vibes: the qualitative experience of intuition in action; an 'impression' of a person or situation at any given moment • Vibes can also relate to the surrounding environment (but not relevant in this context)
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Forms of Intuition	• Form 1: a somatic and relational/interpretively-based sense of connection or of another's interpersonal needs • Form 2: an anxiety-resembling sense regarding another person's safety
Breaking Down the Forms/Characteristics of Intuition	• 'Vibes' is a combination of internal and external components, or an ephemeral sense of connection/lack thereof (all is filtered internally) • Ephemeral part: a sense of connection/lack thereof, that captures all which is beyond the 'concrete' elements of intuition {Form 1} • Hard-to-articulate part: a hard-to-define or hard-to-describe sense of not feeling okay with leaving things as they are/not taking further steps {Form 2} • Reflective identification: intuition can be distinguished from anxiety (and other phenomena) through self-awareness and reflection • Somatic identification: intuition is experienced qualitatively as more 'distant' than anxiety
Dalia's Mechanism of Intuition	• Intuition as a system with three semi-conscious, interrelated components: pattern recognition of critical clinical details; pre-reflective conceptual synthesis; and an attention-directing "notifications system"

Part 3b - Application.

Uses of Intuition	• Intuition can be used to more directly/momentarily respond to clients' interpersonal needs {Form 1} • Intuition can be used to make judgements and decisions regarding a client's safety in relation to suicidal or general harm risk {Form 2}
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	• Conflict of intuition/values: an intuitive sense that enforcing suicide-related safety protocols against the client's wishes would result in a significant relational rupture
Risks of Intuition	• Risk level is acceptable for using intuition in therapy (with conditions): it is just like any other therapeutic intervention
Verifications/Safeguards of Intuition	• Form 1 and Form 2 intuitions differ in their urgency and importance (relative to their contexts); this informs whether to act on intuitions immediately or take further steps • Verification process for high-stakes situations: check-in with clients (respect autonomy/client expertise) {Form 2} • Verification processes for lower-stakes situations: reflect internally, consult colleagues/supervision, discuss with the client {Form 1}
Navigating/Facilitating Intuition with Clients	• Therapists should be cautious not to advise clients (inadvertently) when discussing intuition • Helping clients develop mindful awareness: empowering them to make choices regarding their own intuitions

Part 4b - Education & Development.

Supervisory Role	• Intuition can be developed through supervision, personal therapy, and self-reflection • Use of intuition is best taught via guided supervision (or other experiential training) • Intuition-based therapies, approaches, and interventions cannot be fully evidence-based • Example of Dalia's supervisory experience with regard to intuition
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	• Discussing and encouraging the supervisee to tap into their gut feeling • Discussing and guiding the supervisee through a self-reflective process • Helping the supervisee develop ‘clinical judgement’
Discursive Terminology	• Using both informal language and theory-based terminology (and concepts) when discussing intuition with supervisees

Results / Discussion

Part 1: Background Context (*Who are these people?*)

To make sense of any information, it is necessary to have a background against which one can interpret it (see Chapters 5 and Methodology). In this case, since we are trying to make sense of two experienced therapist’s idiosyncratic conceptualizations of intuition, how they personally put it to use in their practice, and how they would suggest going about developing it, among other things, the natural starting place would be to get to know them as better as people: their personalities, their personal and professional backgrounds, and the various experiences that shaped their views on the matter. Thus, this segment (Part 1) is dedicated to the development of our two protagonists’ intuitive characters! However, note that pseudonyms have been used, and identifying information has been removed from their accounts.

Part 1 - Gloria [1a]

Demographic Information

In terms of relevant background demographic information, Gloria is an Ontario-based therapist, regulated by the CRPO, whose educational qualifications include a Master’s degree and a PhD in Counselling, as well as nearly 20 years of professional clinical experience. Gloria practices from a theoretical orientation described as Eclectic, Humanistic and Existential. Gloria has also been in a supervisory role.

Self-Described Personal Characteristics

Starting with Gloria's personal characteristics. First off, Gloria doesn't self-describe as a highly 'intuitive person,' instead she frames it in this way: "I consider myself, kind of, I don't know, I wouldn't say I'm as intuitive as some people would say, but I think I'm open to it. [...] I'm open to all experiences." So, rather, Gloria has this attitude of openness and curiosity towards the spectrum of possible lived experiences, including that of intuition.

But there is also a very introspective and analytical side to her: "I guess I'm a self-aware reflective person." It is worth elaborating on this statement further, as it profoundly influences her overall intuitive process. There are actually two distinct ideas in this statement, which I will address using Gloria's own words (despite being used in a different context):

I read in my M.Ed., which was many years ago now, the difference between reflection in action versus reflection after action. So, reflection in action is when you're doing that self-awareness, and you're just thinking about it all in the moment, and then reflection after action is when it is that Monday morning, you go back, and you do an autopsy, which is not the right word. But you know you do that, lessons learned, what went well, and to me, I'm equally about both. So it's just being able to dynamically adapt.

This continuous, dynamic two-fold reflective process is an integral part of who Gloria is:

My brain cannot not do that. [...] Yeah, it's just who I am. If I wanted to turn off, I could probably sleep two more hours a night. If I could turn off that popcorn brain I have. But it does some good things for me. [...] Sometimes it's fun, and sometimes it'll drive you crazy, but at the end of the day, it's you, just honour what it is you know. [...] I cannot not do that right. [...] I remember thinking that, being like 3 years old.

So evidently, we will see this side of her come up throughout the rest of her account of intuition as well.

Next, a closely related idea is looking at what she is actually doing in her mind during those reflection episodes:

I'm a person who likes to synthesize things. That's my joy. I love, like, everything's got to fit in a puzzle. And I love moving around the Lego blocks. I think in conceptual frameworks. My brain loves all this creative stuff, and putting it together, and then

breaking it apart, and putting it back together again. So it's reflecting on all these experiences. So, back to my messy brain that needs to link everything with some kind of framework and experience.

So, Gloria is analytically and creatively minded, in that she takes joy in complex intellectual problem-solving. She synthesizes and classifies her experiences using various conceptual frameworks, seeking combinations with sufficient explanatory power.

There is also a consistent stream of input, from various sources, feeding into this process, given her general orientation towards life: "So I like to... I guess my hobby is to collect life wisdom from things: from people, and things I read and stories and all of that." Thus, Gloria is a lifelong learner whose sources of knowledge may be academic or anecdotal; either way, she is open to learning from them.

But her intellectual curiosity doesn't end here; it also takes the following shape:

Like, there's a theory called planned happenstance that is always about following your curiosity. And that to me is a life philosophy. I just go with it, you know, and sometimes it ends up somewhere. Sometimes it's whatever, but it's going down that curiosity rabbit hole.

In other words, Gloria is habitually 'going with the flow' whenever something sparks her curiosity; she is also naturally investigative in that sense.

But Gloria is not some reflective hermit locked up in her intellectual fortress, surrounded by towers of books. She says: "I'm blessed with more friends than I can keep up with. I'm blessed with a very social life, and just all those different people inform things."

Taking both together, this is how Gloria describes herself: "I'm very much an ambivert. So I'm an introvert with, you know, all the books and the stuff, and I'm very much an extrovert in terms of the friends. So I'm equally both."

In terms of self-characterization, the idea that comes up most in Gloria's discourse is her 'self-actualizing' tendency, as evidenced by her continuous desire to grow and her ongoing steps towards her overall self-development. As we will explore later, this is closely related to the active development of her intuitive capacity. She describes this life orientation as follows:

Like, growth and change is my passion. It's what I spend all my time thinking and doing, and I'm just happiest when I'm in that mood. [...] How do you make yourself better and how do you be better? And it's that Rogers, you know, self-actualizing, Maslow, kind of thing. Like you know, the mountain feels bigger. The older I get, the bigger the peak feels. But striving for that peak is the meaning. It's a part of the meaning of life for me.

Furthermore, this life orientation extends to her social and professional life, where she derives great joy from helping others along their own actualizing paths:

And what's most rewarding is when you help others. Like, it's what I love. I was mentoring a student that's working for me today, and just to see the light bulbs go on and help build their confidence. Like that's just the work, I love helping someone be their best self.

Personal Experiences

Opening the next theme with Gloria's wise words (addressed to researchers, educators, supervisors, and therapists alike):

I think it's a fascinating topic. I think it's very novel. I think it can really change counselling practice, teaching, and supervision. And the angle I would encourage you to take a look at is the impact of personal experiences on intuition. [...] Your own personal experiences outside the clinical room. Maybe just follow things, you know, maternal intuition and all these kinds of things. Like, there's so much more that's not just the experiences of therapists and the training.

When it comes to the personal experiences that Gloria has identified as shaping her intuition (both clinically and in general), "maternal intuition" appears to be predominant: "Things that have made me more or less intuitive: I think definitely becoming a mom." Here are a few of her personal anecdotes that illustrate how she has encountered intuition in her role as a mother. As a nurturing mother, attuned to her baby's needs:

We weren't walking around with cell phones, and you're nursing a little baby. So, the baby needs Mama. [...] I just called back my husband and said, how's the baby doing? He's like, how did you know he was upset?

Another time, related to a much darker pregnancy experience: “I just had this really, really, bad feeling about the pregnancy. I went in for a checkup, and there was no baby there, like the baby had died, and I knew, I just knew something was wrong.” And along a similar theme, but this time on a more positive note:

Or even when I went into labour on my son. [...] He’s five weeks early, [...] and it was a bad February; awful snowstorm. I’m like, to my husband, yeah, we’re going to go to the hospital. We’re going to check this out. So, there was something about that, and it could have been false labour. [...] He was born premature, but healthy. So I think being a mom really shaped intuition.

And we can even flip it from the perspective of her as a daughter:

My mom got sick during COVID, and she passed away in 75 days [...] with cancer, and she’d had the surgery. She was in another province, so I had no idea what was happening. But the night before we got the diagnosis, which was completely out of the blue, I went into my daughter’s room at like 1:30 at night. I said, I can’t sleep, I just have this really bad feeling that something’s wrong. And then looking back on it, it was like, she’s a high-energy person like me. So, the fact that she’s not walking and back on her feet almost 2 1/2 months later, like looking back, there was something behind that intuition.

So, as a takeaway, whether these are positive or negative experiences, they have been formative for Gloria’s relationship to her intuition. For instance, when she says, “I don’t blindly rely on it, but I don’t dismiss it anymore,” with this background context, the reason is practically self-explanatory. After all that experiential feedback, who would still dismiss it? But for the more theoretically oriented, there is already an existing literature (Marks-Tarlow, 2012; Marks-Tarlow, 2014), or really, a whole field of study supporting what amounts to this “maternal intuition.”

Another interesting observation that Gloria makes is that one’s relation to intuition can be experientially informed vicariously as well:

So there’s some of those experiences that, myself, I can explain them, and analyze them, and do all the mental gymnastics I love to do. But sometimes when you see it in others... So, I think that informs my experience of intuition.

Gloria shares two anecdotes with this occurring to her. The first:

I was in my doctoral program then, and there was a supervisor. I was videotaping, she was watching the videotape, these are two friends, she goes: he's going to get her pregnant. And he comes next session, and holy cow, that's what the guy comes back to me with. I mean, I was still like, I didn't even really realize they were together, together, you know. And I remember going to read up on intuition after that.

The second, occurring outside of the context of therapy:

I have another friend who's a therapist. I was going through a really tough time in my life with my disability, and she had such a knack. She would always call me at the most random time. But at my worst, deepest, darkest moments, she knew when to pick up that phone. Very empathic person. So, the scientist in me is like, how did you do that?

Thus, both events sparked her curiosity and led her to investigate the concept of intuition further, which, in turn, was instructive.

Finally, the whole experience of becoming a therapist has been formative for her intuition:

It's the whole process of becoming a counsellor in my personal development that allowed that. I was taught very much to trust, to follow the process, which has been a life mantra for me. My resume is a very horizontal career, [...] so, I've done a bunch of different things, and this one, really, this wasn't about the rules. [...] You know it was going with the flow, and it was really, I realized there were the skills I had before, but the process of counselling, like trusting the process of counselling, is trusting intuition and things like that, while still being bound by ethics and all the tools.

In short, Gloria has learned to trust the counselling process and, by extension, her intuition (within appropriate boundaries). However, if this connection is not yet made clear, it will become apparent as we turn towards the influence of Gloria's theoretical orientation on her intuition (and vice versa).

Theoretical Orientation

Regarding the connection of intuition to her theoretical orientation, Gloria says: “I think it’s because I’m experiential. I think that’s a very intuitive process. If you work from a process experiential way, it has to be intuitive. Otherwise, you’d be like, what am I doing next?” She provides an example of what she means by this:

[Intuition] has guided [...] some of my interventions. So, sometimes a wild idea will come into my head, and I’ll follow it in a session. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it falls flat, but if you have a good relationship, it’s ok, you know, as long as you’re of course within ethical boundaries. [...] Trusting yourself to experiment.

So, she is saying that when working within an experiential theoretical orientation, it is necessary to trust the experiential process itself and to trust oneself within that process (which includes trusting one’s intuitive capacities); intuition is thus essential to make it work. And the flip side is that working at that helps develop one’s intuitive capacity, as Gloria has already stated. It is a similar point that Dalia also makes, as we will later see.

So, expanding on this observation to then ask whether one’s use of intuition can be developed, in a more general sense, within the context of growing within one’s therapeutic approach, Gloria responded:

And I think it depends on the kind of therapy. So, if you’re doing CBT, God forbid, I would die in one of these studies because I would never be able to stay on the script. So again, manualized therapies and all that. So, my own personal bias is that Experiential has a lot of powerful insights with clients, and just teaching people to recognize it.

So, said differently, therapeutic approaches that are more systematic (scripted) in nature, like CBT, probably don’t rely on intuition as much, and therefore, do not have as much impact on one’s intuition overall, as opposed to something like an experiential approach, which relies on that ability to ‘go-with-the-flow,’ as it does not provide the same kind of structure, such as using pre-determined sequential steps and methods, meaning that one is required to trust oneself and the process itself, and by extension one’s intuitive sense of the situation.

Part 1 - Dalia [1b]

Demographic Information

Dalia is also a therapist based in Ontario, regulated under the CRPO, with a Master's in counselling, and 6 years of professional clinical experience. Dalia is practicing from an Experiential Attachment/Relational theoretical orientation (which we will elaborate on later). Dalia has supervisory experience, including instances focused on intuition.

Self-Described Personal Characteristics

Just like Gloria, at first Dalia didn't necessarily see herself as a 'highly intuitive' person, or at least not until reflecting on it more in the context of this interview. Then came the realization that perhaps she is:

If you asked me straight up, straight out, like I'm on the street or something, I probably wouldn't say that I am. But yeah, I mean, in reflecting on all of this, I'm like, no, I actually do think I'm a fairly intuitive person.

It is an interesting observation, as it may indicate that some therapists might be more intuitively inclined than they are actually consciously aware of, and that by doing things such as reflecting, discussing, and learning about it, one may gain clarity as to better identify the areas in which they are personally intuitive, in their own idiosyncratic ways.

As will be highlighted repeatedly throughout these narrative accounts, having an 'intuitive' side to oneself does not preclude having fundamental analytical abilities. Dalia says: "I would actually describe myself as a fairly logical, rational person."

Furthermore, like Gloria, Dalia is very self-reflective. Dalia highly values this and prioritizes it through actively spending resources on developing it: "I do practice a lot of self-reflection. I actually think that probably the best skill, or the most important skill, that a therapist can have is the ability to self-reflect."

The final characteristic that I will highlight for now is the following: "Yeah, I still think this might be relevant to mention that I am [neurodivergent]." Dalia brings up this background piece as a key factor in understanding her lived experience of intuition; or put differently, it helps us contextualize her idiosyncratic way of perceiving and processing information, which, to her, relates to her conception of intuition.

So the piece of pattern recognition, and like how my brain works through that, might be relevant. [...] So yeah, it's more just about, I guess, context on how my brain works, and that I would use the word intuition to describe this process.

We will examine these brain 'inner workings' later, as we discuss the mechanism Dalia attributes to her intuitive functioning.

When it comes to the question of Nature versus Nurture, I inquired into Dalia's suggested origins for her intuitive development. In response to having asked Dalia if she recalled always having been intuitive to a certain degree, she said:

I don't know, per se. I would say that I think I have become a much more intuitive person as a result of being a therapist. But I think this is more of a component of learning, kind of, what to look for, or how to categorize things, really. [...] Because yeah, for things that are, like again, the pieces of like detail-orientedness and like pattern recognition, I've always had that to some degree. [...] But being able to organize it into like, hey, no, I know what I'm looking for now. Or I know a little bit more about how I am understanding things. That, I think, has developed a lot more through therapy than it ever did on its own before therapy.

Thus, as is typically the case, it is likely a mix of both Nature and Nurture. Things we have just discussed, such as Dalia's inner mental workings and brain functioning, are most likely innate (Nature); however, Dalia has been able to put words to her experiences and organize them according to theoretical frameworks, which were adopted during the process of training as a therapist (Nurture). The next step is therefore to examine Dalia's overall training as a therapist and consider how it has shaped her intuition.

Educational Background

Dalia portrays her relevant scholarly background as follows:

It includes my undergrad in psychology, like my BA. But I do have a minor in women's studies, and I also did a lot of religious studies courses just because I found the topic interesting. But a lot of that was really focused on, sort of feminist theory and kind of third wave.

She goes on to explain the relevance of these two last notable mentions:

Like what I would call third wave approaches to therapy, in terms of, like, mindfulness, you know, attunement to the present, stuff like that. The feminist approach, like a lot of the theory that we read, is about the importance of the body and the way in which Western society prioritizes the mind over the body and stuff like that. So that feels like that is my scholarly background.

So, to clarify the relevance to intuition, Dalia would have had to, like most aspiring therapists in Ontario, go through one of the formally recognized educational pathways, which require spending years in university, and which typically involve taking prerequisite courses (e.g., statistics, research methods, submitting an undergrad thesis, etc.) in which one would be looking at psychology through a predominantly positivistic lens; which is the dominant philosophy within the field (see Chapter 4). By this, I refer partly to how human psychology is predominantly derived and represented ‘quantitatively’ (i.e., through a mathematical lens structured within the scientific method), which carries ingrained Western positivist philosophical assumptions, rather than being ‘qualitatively’ based, with differing underlying assumptions (as in this study). As discussed within the Theoretical Chapters, this is not problematic in itself, as it can provide valuable insights in its own right. Still, it offers only a limited and incomplete perspective on the whole of human experiences, especially since it does away with the person’s qualitative lived experience, favouring instead abstract theoretical descriptions of reality (which disguise as explanations) (See Chapter 0).

Dalia, however, has taken her own steps to develop a more rounded understanding of human psychology by minoring in a field that takes a more holistic approach to people and society. That is, within the humanities, there is a shift away from the positivistic lens, and towards interpretive lenses (i.e., influenced by the post-modern paradigm shift; which gave rise to theoretical lenses such as social constructivism, critical theory, feminist theory, etc.), which again, provide alternative perspectives always underpinned by their own set of assumptions and ways of knowing (See Chapter 4).

And once more, although there is clearly overlap here, she expanded her understanding of the world of possible experiences by engaging with religion courses, providing insight into the philosophies and modes of perceiving and knowing that originated in the ‘Eastern world,’

alongside her everyday embeddedness in the ‘Western world.’ By this, it is meant that ‘Eastern thought’ typically views the human being more holistically, leading to a closer integration (or less separation) of mind and body (see Chapters 2 and 4). Anyone who is even vaguely familiar with the philosophies of the East, and concepts such as ‘mindfulness’ and ‘attunement to the present,’ will likely immediately sense its connection to intuition.

That said, I wish to make some additional observations addressed to the reader here. While Dalia’s scholarly route is one possible route to gain more proximity to the phenomenon of intuition, by no means does it have to be replicated in this exact manner. To provide an alternative example, I have also recognized these highlighted connections in my own way, long before conceptualizing this research project. For instance, if I think of my own scholarly background, although I have not directly taken religious courses like Dalia has, I was formally exposed to these similar ideas (beyond other, more informal ways) through, for example, philosophy courses. One ‘elective’ course in particular comes to mind where the professor had us focus heavily on ‘Eastern philosophies,’ and in which we were led to recognize the significant conceptual overlaps within multiple diverse Eastern religions; for instance, identifying the striking similarities between the theoretical ideas embedded in Daoism and Buddhism, and noticing the parallels with some of the ancient Western developments, such as the philosophical underpinnings of Stoicism; which in turn, also happen to serve as a significant influence to modern psychotherapy approaches (parallels which I would draw in later counselling-psychology based courses). For example, principles of Stoicism are part of the philosophical substrate of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT); alternatively, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) draws heavily on many ‘Eastern’ ideas.

Furthermore, similar knowledge (as I have experienced firsthand) can be acquired more informally, without necessarily taking the academic route. For example, through travel, through local discussions with people about their cultures or life experiences, or by learning from general-audience books, applications, visual media, or podcasts on these topics, and probably many other sources I’m not currently aware of. I elaborate on my personal exposure to this phenomenon in Chapter 1.

Similarly, parallels can be drawn regarding Dalia’s university minor: one can still be exposed to overlapping ideas without delving into the specifics of women’s studies and feminist

theory. For instance, the influences on the lens used under those circumstances derive in part from the same kinds of sources that I have discussed in this project. The phenomenologists or existentialists (Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer) were, of course, influential in the ‘interpretive’ paradigm shift that led to these new ways of approaching the pursuit of knowledge (see Chapters 4 and 5, and Methodology). Thinkers like Heidegger played a massive role in overturning Western positivist assumptions, partly by integrating Eastern philosophies, in an endeavour to draw us closer to a more pre-theoretical, direct experience of our world.

Therefore, even through seemingly unrelated paths, such as learning more about Phenomenology, one might come to a closer understanding of the intuitive experience, particularly in the sense of ‘immediate experience.’ Interestingly, the ‘Philosophize this!’ podcast (West, 2013-present) dedicates a substantial sequence of episodes, beginning around episode 211, to exploring the multiplicity of ways in which different thinkers have historically arrived at what may be described as an experiential reframing of reality (which I have come to associate, in part, with the concept of intuition).

Notably, while in the section that we are currently discussing, we have focused primarily on one’s ‘scholarly-educational knowledge,’ these observations could apply even more forcefully, if one then put those kinds of theories into practice, whether via something like contemplative-based practices (e.g., such as meditation) or in doing something seemingly completely unrelated (at least at first) such as adopting Husserl’s ‘Phenomenological Attitude’ (see Chapter 5), or Heidegger’s subsequent ‘Ontological Attitude,’ either for research purposes or in everyday life. These would allow one to better grasp things at the experiential level, which is perhaps an even more powerful way to gain a deeper understanding of intuition. So again, while we have showcased Dalia’s specific path to her knowledge of intuition, there may be other, alternatively compelling ways of doing this; perhaps these can be largely idiosyncratic.

Theoretical Orientation / Training Background

Next, we discuss the influence of Dalia’s therapist training and theoretical background. Of that, she says:

My training background and my theoretical orientation are very based in Attachment theory. [...] The sort of current piece that I’m in the process of training, my longtime

supervisor also practices this: it's called NARM. It stands for the Neuro Affective Relational Model, which, again, it's attachment-based, it's relational-based, but basically [...] a lot of what I do is very process-oriented.

So again, although Dalia isn't training in and using the exact same theoretical model as Gloria, both of their approaches are described as "process-oriented." Thus, the first point is that Dalia's overall approach is attachment and relationally-based, and process-oriented.

Dalia continues to unpack how it is relevant to her intuition:

This theoretical packing is being aware of yourself, and of the clients, and kind of what is happening in the space between you. [...] Like, both approaches, all this stuff is very based in these elements of paying attention to what is going on in the room, which feels, again, relevant. That is a lot of the training that I've done. It's to do this as well.

As we will later see, this has immense parallels with Dalia's conceptualization of intuition, which incorporates these kinds of elements; she tells us here that it is an active component of her current training specialization and theoretical orientation. To rehash the three elements, Dalia's training focuses on noticing, first, what is happening within herself (e.g., emotions, reactions, thoughts, etc.), second, what is happening with the client (e.g., picking up on emotions, non-verbal communications, linguistic features, etc.), and third, what is happening in the room (i.e., the dynamics occurring between the two people involved).

Dalia elaborates on some of these:

A lot of it is very concerned with 'countertransference' as well. And how I am going to define that is as being aware of your own reaction to a client. [...] And so being aware of that is very important, and being aware of, like, ok, do I need to attend? Like, how can I use this information in a way that is going to be therapeutic is like a huge piece of these models.

Here, we can also see glimmers of the concept of 'attunement' or 'presence' in the sense of being attentive (not caught up in one's thoughts) to the present-moment experiences within oneself, in others, and in the surrounding environment; something that was briefly touched upon when discussing the influences of her scholarly education as well.

And finally, Dalia adds:

Oh, there's also like a theoretical term. I don't know if this is useful to you, but the idea of 'enactment.' In therapy, depending on how a client is showing up in therapy, that might be essentially a mirror of how they are showing up in the world. So, if they have a lot of trouble making friends, then I also don't feel connected to them. That might be useful information, essentially.

Thus, it reflects an existential/humanistic idea in which therapy serves as a microcosm of the real world, where clients eventually 'show themselves' as they truly are. It follows that therapists should attend closely to these interpersonal dynamics, as they provide crucial therapeutic information.

And finally, to tie it all together within the context of intuition, in Dalia's words:

All those things really inform my approach, and they also feel, like in my mind, that also is connected to this idea of intuition, of like, countertransference or enactment, is like, you're aware of what's happening in the room, and again could probably put some words to that, like, can describe it, what's happening, can explain it, but ultimately what you're relying on is this felt sense of what is present in the room.

As we will later see, this connects to a large part of Dalia's conceptualization of intuition, which is partly a felt sense of what's happening at any given moment within an interpersonal situation, which, in turn, as we just saw, is influenced by that theoretical orientation and training.

However, this raised a few questions, along the same lines of inquiry as the age-old question: which came first, the chicken or the egg? More precisely, I wanted to know whether Dalia's innate 'intuitiveness' led her to seek out a more intuitive approach for therapy, or whether learning an intuitive approach made her more intuitive. Again, the answer, as expected, is a mixture of both, but it revealed more of Dalia's training background. Dalia says:

Earlier in my career, I was a lot more cognitively focused. I practiced more CBT. I practiced a lot more ACT. I mean, ACT is also very mindfulness-based. [...] [But] that's not a relational or an experiential model. [...] Fundamentally, I found that it just wasn't really meeting the needs of my clients. And so, I think there was a component of feeling

like something was missing from my work, and feeling like I wasn't able to help my clients in the way that I wanted to. And, so, I then sought out models that seemed like they were more, sort of, depth-oriented. [...] And then, in turn, I think that helped me develop my own sense of intuition. So yeah, again, I think a little bit of both is the short answer there.

Before I continue, I want to draw a quick comparison to what Gloria has previously stated about her personal bias: namely, that experiential models offer many valuable insights to clients. Gloria has also described these kinds of process-oriented approaches as more intuitively based than approaches like CBT. Interestingly, we now have another example with Dalia here, experiencing it firsthand: intuitively feeling that she is missing the mark with clients, then seeking out an approach that feels more intuitive to her, and ultimately landing on a 'process-oriented' approach.

However, let's elaborate on this two-fold intuitive process further:

Both that, like, I guess it was a way of speaking, like an intuitive sense that what I was doing when I was more cognitively focused was not quite working, or not quite having the impact. It was also based on client feedback. [...] So then, yeah, in seeking other things, it was a bit of, like, ok, what feels correct? [...] What seems like it is helping, or what makes sense to me, essentially, and like these were the models that made sense to me. So, there's a little bit of it based on how my own brain works. [...] Yeah, like it made sense to me to go towards those models, because then again, it served that internal sense of like, ok, yeah, that makes sense, in terms of understanding, like, my own experience, my client's experiences.

So again, it is interesting to see the intuitive process unfolding on many levels. First, as mentioned here, at least some part of this may be grounded in Nature (i.e., in how her brain works and processes information). As described here, there are evidently explicit rational reasons (e.g., acknowledging clients' feedback) that are in part responsible for the changes in approach. Still, there is also that vague intuitive sense that something isn't quite working, which, as we will see, taken all together, corresponds closely to Dalia's overall conceptualization of intuition. Thus, according to Dalia, her sense of intuition helped make the switch, and afterwards, in relation to the more 'nurture-based' piece, she says: "And then also, like, as I learned more, I did training in

these ways. Like, it helped me attune more to my intuition in session.” So, it raises the possibility that naturally intuitive people may be more likely to be drawn towards means that further develop their intuitive capacity, by seeking out what feels more instinctual to them and then further developing those intuitive processes from within that space.

In Dalia’s account, external influences were also at play, clearly helping shape her intuition. And perhaps this could even relate to the “serendipitous” element of intuition that Gloria later refers to. But more importantly, it speaks to the influence of supervisors and supervisory training on intuitive development (which we will delve deeper into later):

It also helped that my long-term supervisor was also, like, moving towards... because she also started out practicing more of the cognitive things, and moved towards the more experiential models. And so, like, I was seeing the feedback that she was giving me shift. And so, it was useful to see, like, ok, the feedback is shifting. [...] I’m finding this helpful in understanding my clients more. [...] As I used that with clients, they were responding really well to that. [...] So, like, ok, it seems like there’s something here that, again, makes sense to me. It seems to be working for my clients. Let’s learn more about this.

And, of course, this also implies an active learning and development component on the part of the supervisee, as the last phrase suggests.

I also asked Dalia whether she had consciously set out to develop her intuition within that whole process. Her response was:

Like, I wouldn’t say as I was learning these approaches, that I set out with the intention of, like, becoming more intuitive, but yeah, that was a pretty big side effect. [...] And I would say that I set out with the intention of learning more about how to work with my clients, how to understand the clients.

In other words, developing intuition was simply the by-product of learning about this experiential approach, and not the end goal. It further illustrates the potential existence of various indirect paths to becoming more intuitive. Dalia’s path, despite all its unique features, also shares many resemblances with Gloria’s, who, similarly, did not have a fixed intention to become more intuitive.

So, what exactly has Dalia's theoretical approach helped with, in relation to her intuition?
For one:

This comes back to the safeguarding piece. [...] Leaning into these approaches helped me learn more about, like, ok, how do you figure out, like, what you're feeling and what separates that from, like, your own anxiety versus something that is coming from the client. So the approach has helped me figure that out.

In other words, it aided in acquiring skills for better identification and safer implementation of intuition. We will discuss this in more detail in later sections.

Next, the theoretical approach provided Dalia with another type of safeguard, in terms of having access to adequate terminology and a working framework, which has provided Dalia with a solid enough theoretical grounding to be able to use intuition in her work with confidence:

And then also, the component of just having the language, having the framework, as well. In terms of like, ok, I'm not just, like, spouting whatever. I'm not just, like, completely going off this gut feeling and nothing else. I have something that I can explain. [...] Like grounding it in a theory feels very important to me. [...] Yeah, it allows me to lean more into the intuition because I have this framework. I have these things that I can sort of reflect on as points of conceptualization, if that makes sense.

The point Dalia is making is important. I suspect that the extent of one's need for a conceptual grounding to rationally represent this experiential reality to oneself or others, as a means to gain confidence in it, would vary from person to person. Meaning that some people would be naturally more comfortable than others with the experience of 'uncertainty' or of 'not knowing' in that it wouldn't necessarily get in the way of them trusting their experiential wisdom or the flow of things more generally (this 'need' probably exists on a broad spectrum). For instance, while Dalia here says that it is highly valuable for her to ground intuition in theory and concepts, Gloria expresses that it is rather the "mystery" surrounding the phenomenon that makes it so attractive to her, and is what makes it "a power" to her, as we will later see.

However, since we are discussing the phenomenon in a professional context, these considerations may extend beyond the individual into the sphere of regulated practice. When Dalia mentions that it feels like a safety measure, "But it kind of safeguards that in a way that

appeals to me, in a way that makes that feel a lot safer than just, again, like completely going off the cuff,” we can further extrapolate and see that this statement might be an appealing point of consideration for the field at large. That is, if we acknowledge that some of its current associations, such as with “mystery” or as with “going completely off the cuff,” or any other associations with unprofessional connotations, then it naturally follows that, by grounding intuition in already existing and generally accepted theoretical concepts and frameworks, it might indeed help ‘legitimize’ intuition within the field as a whole. And suppose there were a greater confidence in it in general, in that case, it follows that more discourses and safeguards could be set into motion to guide its safe implementation (as with any other interventions).

But for now, all of this remains unaddressed. Therefore, it is up to the individual to decide how to discuss and approach it, and even how to conceptualize it. Which is why I asked Dalia if she thinks about these experiences, grounded in her theoretical approach’s framings and concepts, as the construct of ‘intuition.’ Her response was:

I do think of it more as ‘intuition.’ I would say that’s more like the default. [...] I can kind of, after the fact, be like, ok, what was I doing? Does it match with these existing concepts, these existing frameworks? [...] But in the moment, it feels... yeah, I would say that I describe it as intuition.

So, it seems that in the immediacy of the moment, Dalia goes with it, just as it appears (simply as her intuition). In retrospect, these additional reflective and categorical steps lend the phenomenon explanatory power. However, we will further address the role of reflective analysis in relation to intuition later.

Part 2: Conceptualization (*What is intuition?*)

In this section (Part 2), participants discussed their own conceptualizations of intuition. Their responses included variations of conceptually and experientially informed descriptive labels or informal definitions of the phenomenon, reflecting its various forms and characteristics, which they also exemplified through personal experiences.

Part 2 - Gloria [2a]

Definitions / Descriptors of Intuition

For Gloria, the concept of intuition is well encapsulated by the term “embodied wisdom.” She imparts this conceptualization to us by means of a personal example:

So once, I was with the client, and we were chatting, and I just got this sense of this tightness in my chest, and I had this feeling of, like, the mirror neurons are picking up the client’s anger. There was nothing in the session that fit that. There was nothing that went along there. But I could feel the tightness, and then, sure enough, I did an intervention. [...] So that was sort of that embodied wisdom, like, something I knew in my gut just said to follow that lead.

Gloria also frames this in a slightly different manner, viewing it as a kind of “unconscious knowing”: “Unconscious knowing is more like something you have in your gut, like, you just know something is off. And later, you may figure out what it is.” Equivalently, to refer to this aspect of intuition, she also later uses the term “gut feel”: “Or sometimes we say our gut feel. That’s another thing, like, the head is saying one thing, and just something is not making sense, even though you logically go through it. So that’s sort of what intuition is.”

Furthermore, she expands on this first presentation of intuition by bringing up three additional descriptors: “Yeah, and, sort of, I think, hunches, or things you’re drawn towards, or even an element of serendipity. Those are sort of the five things that come to my mind.” These have both conceptual similarities and differences, and we will highlight those aspects later, in their designated spots.

Forms of Intuition

Now we zoom in closer and look at Gloria’s conceptualization of the ‘Forms’ that intuition can take. First off, according to Gloria, intuition is a form of energy. However, it can be further broken down into two primary Forms by which it presents itself to her: “There’s something that’s [off], [...] there’s a niggles in your stomach, or the other thing is that there’s an idea or an inspiration, something you’re drawn towards. I’m curious about this thing, I’ll go and check it out.” For the sake of simplifying our discussion, from here on, we will call the sense/feeling that “something is off or the niggles in your stomach” as Gloria’s ‘Form 1,’ and the experience of a force/energy that propels or attracts, such as “something you’re drawn towards,” as Gloria’s ‘Form 2.’

As a quick overview, Gloria tells us that intuition has various mental, emotional, and bodily components. However, we will examine these parts separately for the time being. Thus, in this ‘two-forms’ picture, the first Form appears to encompass mainly those somatic and sensorial properties. For instance, when she describes the “niggle in your stomach,” she describes it as “there’s like a pumping in your gut,” which is evidence for her description of a physiological sensation of intuition. But, if we were to add even more nuance, we could draw attention to the biological-relational aspects of the bodily response (and perhaps even the perspectival ones), as her example showcases: “I just got this sense of this tightness in my chest, and I had this feeling of, like, the mirror neurons were picking up the client’s anger. [...] I knew I was feeling her anger that she was feeling.” We can clearly see her description of a somatic feeling, a “tightness in my chest,” which she interpretively attributes to a biological mechanism; namely, the mirror neurons, which are involved in the unconscious processing of interpersonal data. Finally, she has attributed her own felt response (anger) as originating in the other person, which may also relate to one of the subtypes of ‘empathy’ laid out in detail by Spagnuolo Lobb et al. (2022).

I will add here that upon her later verification of the intuition (according to her descriptive account), she was indeed accurate in that latter attribution as to the source of the anger. Thus, this example may also reveal a cognitive-perspectival component to intuition. In other words, it highlights the partly inferential character of the intuitive experience.

I will digress here to elaborate on the intended meaning of this specific observation. It seems to me that this ‘interpretive’ component may heavily alter the phenomenon’s overall apparent constitution. This last paragraph is a perfect example of where numerous levels of interpretation come into play, both in the therapist’s firsthand experience and in their later reflective analysis and description of the phenomenon. But furthermore, it is also necessary for me, as the primary researcher, to make interpretations when generating the ‘interpretive descriptions’ of those accounts, having received these ideas second-hand, through the medium of language, and having to accurately recommunicate these ideas, while simultaneously weaving them into coherent narratives for a comprehensive delivery of the findings. And finally, third-hand, for the reader themselves, who must encounter the phenomenon through the framing of my assessments of the accounts of the participants’ experiences, and thus, leading to this interpretative maze. The Methodology section elaborates on many of these ideas. I mention this

here as I can best showcase it via this example, but note that these implications extend to the whole text.

So, if we take the example of this feeling of ‘anger,’ a therapist in that situation would immediately have to interpret that feeling as ‘something’ (such as anger) to make any sense of it; this interpretation might be very crude and perhaps even unconscious. Furthermore, the therapist would have to attribute it to a potential source (e.g., to oneself or the other person); maybe that interpretation could become more sophisticated upon later reflection (after the fact). In addition, the therapist would need to use an interpretative theoretical lens (which could be implicit) to make sense of that specific feeling analytically. In this case, it would be the explanation of mirror neurons picking up on another person’s emotion, along with a conceptual understanding of intuition that accounts for it. In other words, more general interpretations influence the circumstantial interpretations of phenomena (which occur at different levels of interpretation and varying levels of consciousness). It is worth noting that any of these interpretive judgments could vary significantly in their accuracy; however, this is not the primary concern of this study. Instead, within this more phenomenological framing, I aim to highlight how these various kinds of interpretation might affect participants’ experiences of the phenomenon (and everything that follows thereafter).

As I mentioned earlier, the matter is further complicated by the additional layers of interpretation that fall outside the participants’ experiences, both due to the nature of discourse in general and the ‘research circumstances,’ or more specifically, the format by which this data was obtained. As the primary researcher, I am responsible for designing the overall ‘research context.’ Every step of this process inevitably influences the later results (e.g., the theoretical lens I use, the research methodology, the participant selection methods, the data collection methods, the specific interview questions I ask, the data analysis format, the data selected to represent the accounts, the way I write up my results, the way I interpret them, etc.).

While these are mostly inevitable, there are certain kinds of interpretations that I wish to bring to our attention here, as they relate even more directly to the participants’ conceptualizations. Naturally, I have taken precautions to accurately grasp the intended meaning of my participants’ accounts (e.g., by continuously revisiting the surrounding context of the words, rereading the data transcripts multiple times, reinterpreting and reclassifying the ideas,

etc.). Despite this, in this example, we may take note of some of the ambiguities present in the discussions of these concepts such as feeling(s), sense(s) or sensation(s) (even concepts such as energy and knowing); namely, I am bringing attention to the fact that these linguistic terms hold multiple referents, and the context does not always aid to clarify them (e.g., to feel or sense can refer either to a bodily experience or to one's meaning-making process). These linguistic complexities are evidently more pronounced in a study dealing with such an obscured construct as that which is presently under investigation. Thus, I am also forwarding the observation that, given our knowledge that one's linguistic framing of the world and our perception of reality are intricately connected, I wonder if these might not have a significant impact on a person's direct experience of intuition as well. Especially if one's first deep encounter with intuition occurs via 'language' (e.g., through a written document such as this rather than through direct experience). This reflection is intended as an offering to the reader (if anyone is learning about intuition through this text), as I cannot directly comment on how the linguistic features themselves might have influenced the participant's interpretations.

Incidentally, these insightful participants have had minimal exposure to any formalized theoretical conceptualization of the phenomenon (although this, of course, does not exclude their awareness of informal theories gathered through their everyday lives). Of course, while this may be a positive attribute from our perspective (allowing us to view it more directly; as a little less theoretically constituted), this is also partly due to the modest availability of research on this topic, and a general neglect with regards to systematic discussions, education and training in this domain (something this study seeks to rectify). So, instead, these participants, at some point, have engaged with their intuition introspectively, reflected on these moments, and are now articulating their understanding of it to us. Therefore, these descriptive accounts more closely reflect a pre-theoretical, experiential knowledge of intuition (at least in the segments where they share their lived clinical experiences). Thus, language itself may be less formative or influential on these accounts of the intuitive experience. But of course, there is always the risk, on my part, regarding the possibility of misrepresenting or misclassifying participants' communicated experiences, which is also true in the reader's case when trying to make sense of these writings as well. It is true for all sense-making endeavours. But then again, the point of this study is not to seek out the ultimate 'Truth.'

Finally, regarding the interpretive endeavour of ‘classification,’ Gloria mentions a type of intuitive experience that is rarer for her, and that does not seem at first glance to embed itself neatly into either of the Forms:

And then, also sometimes, less often, but I look at my own behaviour, and I’m noticing there’s a change in my behaviour. I don’t know how to describe it, but I’m always kind of scanning for data, and just kind of pulling into it, like, what is different. I look for the exceptions. Why am I acting differently, or feeling differently, or thinking differently than normal?

I propose that these perspectival-behavioural elements may simply be an extension of the mechanics of this first Form, as Gloria still appears to be sensing (albeit more consciously) that something is amiss, but is instead focusing on her own behaviour, feelings, or thoughts rather than those of others. However, the evidence from this caption does not necessarily suggest that it is somatically or sensorily based; it may be purely cognitively and perceptually based (e.g., pattern recognition).

With that aside, we can now proceed with the rest of Gloria’s account of the Forms. So far, we have examined Gloria’s Form 1, which incorporates the more somatic, or sensorial-based aspects of intuition. Now, we transition to Gloria’s Form 2: “So it’s kind of ideas and creativity, and that kind of energy, versus there’s like, a pumping in your gut.” Thus, this second Form incorporates these closely related mental (ideas and creativity) and emotional aspects of intuition:

So there’s the creative part where my brain is like popping up new ideas. [...] Or a thought. Yeah, I guess there’s a creativity piece, [which] is what I’m trying to get at. There’s very much a creative-idea-generating, positive-energy piece. And there’s the emotional part when I feel, like, very engaged. [...] A positive energy, like, I feel creative, I feel inspired, I feel energized. [...] It’s sort of like I’m drawn to pursue something.

As we will recall, according to Gloria, intuition is ultimately a form of energy; here, in Form 2, it is described as a positive energy akin to creativity and the generation of novel ideas. The emotions that go with that are the pleasant feelings of being inspired, energized, creatively engaged, and anything else along those lines, which, of course, is different than the feelings

discussed earlier: “So, it’s not just something is wrong. It’s sort of like I’m drawn to pursue something.”

This phrasing, of course, implies that these feelings have a directional component. They attract or pull her; in other words, intuition has a sort of influence over a person that moves them. Gloria provides a beautiful analogy for this experience:

It’s like a true north magnetic compass. [No matter] where you go, you keep being drawn that way. That’s how I describe it. It’s almost like there’s some kind of compass pulling in a direction: imagine if you’re in the woods, there’s a stream there, it doesn’t make sense to go that way, but something is drawing you that way. [...] Unconsciously. And then, you know, you’re not going to be stupid. You’re not going to go in the pond and get your feet wet, and it’s freezing, it’s -40, but it’s standing back from it, right. It’s not blindly following it. It’s honouring it without being a slave to it.

So, a possible takeaway from this analogy is that intuition can take the form of an impelling positive force, but one that we could consciously choose to override; that is, it is not so compelling as to draw us like moths to a flame; instead, it’s more like it urges us (nudges us) to go somewhere. There we have Gloria’s base conceptualization of intuition, presented in its two primary Forms. Now we can focus more on its characteristics.

Characteristics of Intuition

For Gloria, it appears that intuition originates somewhere in the body, granted we use that term in a loose sense: “Well, I think for me, [...] I feel connected to the body is one thing I’ve realized. So, it probably starts in the body, you know, some change in sensation, or something that’s paying attention, or ideas.” For example, this may appear as something somewhat undefined: “There was something that I felt in my body. And it’s just something that told me to go down this path and explore this at the right time.” Or put differently: “They’re just, like, that hunch, right. You’re sort of drawn to something, right. So it’s very quiet, you know.”

Prying further into this, I inquired about differentiating properties that could help us recognize it as distinguishable from other phenomena with overlapping characteristics, such as anxiety. Her response:

Sometimes intuition is quieter. Anxiety is louder. [...] It's just something very subtle, like anxiety tends to be big, this tends to be quiet. Quieter, but niggling. I think because it is so unconscious, you know, and so subconscious, right.

So, in addition to this identified characteristic of being subtle, the rest of the picture remains consistent despite all of this ambiguity, since, as we can recall from Gloria's earlier descriptor of the phenomenon as "unconscious knowing," these intuitions do not appear as 'particular things' that are fully revealed to us; at least not during our firsthand encounter with them. Besides, if it were otherwise, they would most likely be representative of phenomena other than our intuitions.

As was also briefly mentioned earlier, Gloria attributes an element of happenstance to intuition:

But there was that serendipitous part. Like, we just literally were talking about her and hadn't seen her in months. So, it was kind of wild to walk out of the office, and boom, who's there! [...] And both me and my supervisor were like, Whoa!

In other words, in cases like these, the intuitions are not premeditated; instead, they have this quality of seemingly appearing out of nowhere, as if they were a fluke or universally predetermined in some way (depending on one's attribution of the source). Perhaps they also appear as being perfectly timed. So naturally, they would lead to this kind of expression of bewildered amazement.

This may perhaps also help us make sense of the experiential framing of another one of Gloria's intuitive experiences:

I found it to be a very kind of spiritual experience, and I don't know how to describe it. I almost felt helped. [...] It was like the words came to me when they needed to come, and the ideas flowed through me. It's almost like I was a conduit. Though it felt very spiritual in that way, like it was me formulating the sentences and doing the theory, but it wasn't quite me. You know, I don't know how to describe it.

So, while this specific portrayal showcases those elements of serendipity we just discussed, we can also pick up on the underlying feelings of ease and flow, which she describes as a vague sense of being guided (by something undefined), as if she were only responsible for instantiating

words or ideas that were sent her way (from this unidentified source). So, here again, we get the sense that intuition is a phenomenon shrouded in mystery, with sources fueling it that are difficult to pinpoint, or at the very least, that are hard to describe through existing language or theoretical concepts.

Although I've interpreted Gloria's description of a "spiritual experience" through a secular lens, I acknowledge that this could be a potential source of ambiguity. Thus, I am elaborating with a commentary to help the reader make their own sense of it and form their own interpretation of whether Gloria's 'spiritual experience' of intuition is to be understood more secularly, or as having elements that are spiritual or faith-based. By extension, I suspect that this would also alter whether a person experiences intuition as being in some way predetermined, as if an external force had 'planted' the intuition for some purpose, or if it is experienced as being the product of more randomized, chance-factors, or perhaps even as a mix of these attributions, such as them being naturalistically-determined in a rationally explicable way, but not as existing purposefully; or maybe even as something else altogether.

A larger point here is that, in this phenomenological study, we have acknowledged that a person's underlying, cognitively based organizational structures influence one's experience of the phenomenon. Thus, the interpretations we make are significant to understanding it. That is an equally valid consideration if one wishes to reflect on the constitution of one's own experience of intuition, but also if one wants to understand what occasions another person's unique experiential reality. In this light, I will provide additional background information shared by Gloria, allowing the reader to make their own interpretation of the description.

So, regarding her religious stance, without delving into the details (suffice to say the experiences referenced were negative), Gloria says: "I was raised very Catholic, but I guess, I don't know where I'm at with my faith. [...] Experiences really changed the religiosity I grew up in." In terms of her 'spirituality,' she similarly says:

Ironically, at the time in M.Ed., I felt very spiritual, and when I went back to the PhD, I was kind of hoping to recapture that sense of spirituality. So, I'm not really sure how I would describe that, you know.

But she elaborates on this by saying:

My definition is that, like, I wrote this up in my M.Ed., I felt like the sense of expansiveness and connection with people, while still feeling small. I felt like a small pebble of sand in a big world, but that this pebble could make the waves, if that makes any sense. [...] It's a sense of connectedness to something bigger. At different times in my life, I feel more tied into that.

We will also later see another way in which Gloria conceptualizes and tends to her 'spiritual growth,' in a clearly secular sense (as in the growth of her 'Self' in general).

Returning to the main account, all of this also segues into another critical characteristic that we have already briefly touched upon: the attributed unconscious nature of intuition. Gloria does not allude to this in some esoteric sense; instead, she describes it as the kind of unconscious processes that we all likely experience regularly:

It's not like necessarily in that Freudian unconscious, but there are probably data points that you collect that you don't even know about. Like you're driving, and then a person pops out in front of you with a bike, and you just know to steer away, [...] just from all your years of driving. You have a little radar up there that you're not thinking about.

Essentially, she is referring to the built-in unconscious processes that enable us to act instantly and unreflectively in certain situations (i.e., bypassing our conscious, analytical processes).

This feature of intuition helps elucidate why the intuitive process is often described as an immediate or direct experience. As Gloria puts it, in experiential terms:

I don't even think about it. It's just something you use. You know, it's like your body, right, you don't think about it, unless it's not working, I guess. I'm just going with the flow, so I don't even really feel like I have to name it sometimes. Like, afterwards I might think about it, but it's more [...] it's happening in the moment, so you're just kind of going along with it.

Once again, in this example, we can pry out an idea of flow or an 'in-the-now' presence, which are generally associated with those more primary, pre-theoretical and non-linguistic framings/experiences of reality (e.g., this is an essential point of focus for Buddhists/Taoists, Existentialists/Humanists, 3rd wave therapists, etc.).

However, Gloria does not completely reduce intuition to this quality of immediacy; instead, for her, intuition is a process that also has a temporal dimension:

So, it's not just a time-bound thing. It's over time. So, I'm always kind of learning and evaluating experiences. So, I think that's a part of an intuitive piece. It's not just something that happens in the moment. It's refining your knowledge and your growth all throughout time.

So, what she is alluding to is a reflective and developmental component of intuition, which generally takes place outside the immediacy of the moment. While in this statement her 'reflectively informed intuition' is clearly associated with her more general growth-oriented personality and attitude (we will delve further into this later), she additionally refers to a time factor with regard to the data-collection and perspectival meaning-making processes, which, of course, are also influenced by one's growth over time:

But even then, it's not just like in that moment. Say, if I had a client and there was something, say, if we were in a session and I explored that. Like six months from now, something might happen with another client, I might read an article, I might read a book, and that might allow me to come back and reflect on my experience with you.

This is an example of how one's everyday experiences and active personal development can inform one's intuition when consolidated through reflection.

She further comments on the various underlying temporal, perspectival, interpretive structures that underlie one's data-collection and sense-making endeavours, and thus, are also constitutive of the content of the reflections:

An analogy I would use, [...] when I lecture on meaning, it's like there are seven stars that connect together in the Big Dipper. But it's almost like all those stars aren't necessarily on at the same time. You don't often see the pattern because they're at different points in time. So sometimes something will strike me, and I'll go back and look at that, and it's like, oh, I remember I was too idealistic at this stage of life, or I missed this, or I knew this, but I didn't go with my gut, like, something in the interview told me it was off. I just, because I wanted to see this, I was so whatever.

I elaborate in depth on the theoretical constructs underlying Gloria's phenomenologically principled analogy, which we can refer to as 'perspectival viewing.' Namely, her illustration highlights the symbiotic relationship among one's pre-understanding, interpretation (sense-making), and perception (see Chapter 5 and Methodology).

Thus, beyond Gloria's most evident premise that we are active participants in developing our own intuitive capacities, Gloria also acknowledges the existence of various mental structures that play a constitutive role, perhaps in the sense of shaping the explicit content of a given intuition, or alternatively, as being responsible for the sudden explicit arrival of any given intuition, if not both simultaneously, or in other ways (the exact relationship to the intuition is not fully clear from this example). Thus, in Gloria's view, reflection seems to act as a consolidating force over time, and the result is that intuitions related to a specific event might make their presence known, in their given shape, at any possible time (sometimes a long time after the initial event).

To summarize up to this stage, it should be clear that, for Gloria, intuition isn't just some phenomenon that appears at any given moment and then disappears. Instead, at least in the case of "sophisticated" intuition, active work is required (e.g., through self-development, reflection, and attitude shifts), and this entire process unfolds over an indefinite period. Interestingly, in a very Husserlian-Heideggerian reminiscent fashion, Gloria has infused life and realism into her descriptions of the phenomenon by allowing for expansive contours and layers of depth; so far, by means of those temporal and interpretive dimension (concepts well situated within these philosophers' theories), and enables us to envision the phenomenon's constitutive expansiveness over time, which of course, goes far beyond a merely static timebound profile of what intuition is; therefore, providing us with a much more dynamic perspective.

But I also bring this phenomenological influence up in another sense. In a sentiment that mirrors Heidegger's rebuke to Husserl's phenomenological approach (see Chapters 5 and Methodology), Gloria warns against the dangers of reductionism (see Chapter 4) in relation to trying to grasp her individualized experience of the phenomenon:

It's in a system, I guess, is my point. It's that phenomenological [approach], breaking it down into its elements, and I guess it's more systemic. It's sort of nothing wrong with it, right, but it's just how my brain is. It's how I experience it.

To clarify Gloria's comment here, it is a clear warning against the reductionist tendencies of 'Transcendental Phenomenology' (see Chapter 5), which has features that mirror the underlying philosophy of the empirically (positivist) based scientific method (see Chapter 4). I wholeheartedly agree with Gloria here, which is one of the reasons this study is grounded in a hermeneutic phenomenology, following Heidegger's and Gadamer's philosophy instead, which also takes this into account (see Methodology).

The implication is that, as much as we have been portraying Gloria's conceptualization of intuition so far by highlighting its various elements for conceptual clarity, as if our task were solely to identify, catalogue, and amalgamate all these apparently distinct and distinguishable components, it is clear that, if we left it at that, we would be missing the mark completely. As she points out, it's not necessarily wrong to do this (e.g., it may provide us with another perspective that contains helpful information). Instead, her point is that it is not actually how she experiences or conceptualizes intuition at all. That is, to grasp it, we have to picture it as one all-encompassing experience (i.e., as Gestalt psychologists say: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts). She captures this anti-reductionist and perspectivist view by means of analogy:

It's just like if you took yourself, and you're trying to take out one part of yourself. Like, you can't, all these things are just so... [...] It's like the blind man and the elephant. Intuition isn't just the trunk. And your logic is not just the tail of the reflection.

To further add to this, in Gloria's view, this experiential and conceptual 'inseparability' is not perceived as a problem:

Actually, for me, I think what works for me and who I am, so I can't speak for all therapists. I think the messiness and the inability to break it down to this 'thing' is what makes it special. It's what makes it a power.

It is a comment I have referred to, albeit indirectly, in an earlier section as well, and it may have further implications beyond this specific context. For instance, I also suspect (at least anecdotally) that this enigmatic (mysterious) aspect of intuition is primarily responsible for captivating people's interest in this phenomenon across various disciplines or even belief systems. But this line of inquiry would only lead us into speculation at this time.

Most importantly, from the perspective of this holistic reframing, we now follow Gloria's lead and examine her overarching experience and conceptualization of intuition:

It's a dynamic process, is my point, and honouring that process. And I think what makes it powerful, as I listen, is if you just let it emerge naturalistically, and you keep adapting it over time. And again, I can't separate that from the process of learning to be a better therapist. It's in a system, I guess, is my point.

In other words, Gloria's intuitive process is an integral, dynamic part of her being. Then, according to her, it's a matter of recognizing that it is there, allowing it to make its appearance, refining it accordingly over time, and acknowledging that it is intricately and inseparably embedded within herself, so that growth in other areas of the 'Self' may also contribute to its development, and vice versa. It also implies that discussions about intuition must be foregrounded against the contextual backdrop of the 'Self' (or more accurately, of one's Being). It is also why Gloria emphasizes the importance of getting to know the whole of a person, including relevant experiences outside the realm of therapy, to gain a better understanding of their 'intuitive capacities.' This is a position that I have similarly acknowledged, even prior to the conceptualization of this research project (see Chapters 1 and 2).

Part 2 - Dalia [2b]

Definitions/Descriptors of Intuition

For Dalia, the terms "gut feeling" or "vibes" adequately encapsulate her conceptualization of intuition. But let's clarify: while Dalia uses a similar terminology to Gloria's "gut feel," she means something quite different by it, and she ascribes a different set of underlying mechanisms to its function (although we can also identify a few similarities). So, as we proceed, we will focus on understanding Dalia's conceptualization of intuition on its own terms.

Dalia describes the meaning of "gut feeling" as such: "If I were going to define it a little bit more formally, I would probably call it attuning to my own internal sense of the situation of another person; of my own reactions." She provides us with an informal definition as well: "So it's that internal sense of either what's going on, or what the other person is feeling, or what the

appropriate thing to do is in a given situation.” Finally, she reframes it from a slightly more experientially based point of view, with differing terminology:

I also wrote down the word ‘vibes’ because I feel like that’s also a word that I use. Again, more informally, to sort of describe what is happening when my intuition is kicking in: of like, oh, what’s the vibe of a situation, or of a person or, yeah, what’s going on in any given moment.

As we can see, these two terms can interchangeably refer to the same set of ideas; therefore, we will unpack their meanings as if they all had the same referent.

The essential concept here is that her conceptualization of intuition involves being responsive to what is happening inside oneself; still, it is in relation to what is happening with the other person or in the situation more generally; in other words, paying attention to how one is internally responding to any given interpersonal situation (as the therapeutic situation always involves another person). Therefore, one could say that one has a certain “gut feeling” about something (that is interpersonally-informed) or, equivalently, that the interpersonal situation is giving off certain “Vibes” that one can opt to tap into (it is just a matter of framing and phrasing).

I want to bring attention to one more observation at this point. I had asked Dalia to clarify whether “vibes” could also refer to something outside of a person, such as the therapy room, or something similar. Dalia’s response was as follows:

I would say yes. Like, again, I’m trying to speak mostly to the realm of therapy. Just because that’s what is relevant here, and like within that, you know, I control, like, I have my own office, I control the environment there. Like, I would say, yes, it can play into intuition. It just doesn’t. Like, in therapy, that aspect of the environment seems like less of an impact, partly because, again, I control that.

Therefore, the focus in Dalia’s account will be on the person’s situation, rather than the environment that encompasses it (although it is acknowledged to be relevant in theory, under different circumstances).

Perhaps a quick comparison is warranted at this stage. I will briefly note here that this has conceptual similarities with what we have already addressed in Gloria’s account, specifically as a

component of her Form 1. As will be recalled, Gloria has said: “I just got this sense of this tightness in my chest, and I had this feeling of, like, the mirror neurons were picking up the client’s anger. [...] I knew I was feeling her anger that she was feeling.” Similarly, as we have just observed in Dalia’s account, there is an acknowledgement of internal somatic or sensorial feelings that are interpersonally informed.

Furthermore, in relation to that passage (in Gloria’s conceptualization of Form 1), I wrote a lengthy commentary that also applies here. There, I observed some cognitive and perspectival aspects of intuition that emerged in Gloria’s account, which I framed within a broader discussion of the role of interpretation (occurring at multiple levels) and of language itself in the overall constitution of the phenomenon. I will not repeat it here; I will only point out that the commentary is just as relevant to Dalia’s conceptualization. That said, in relation to this example, I will add that, despite these evident conceptual similarities, Dalia does not discuss mirror neurons directly, so there is no clear evidence that she associates this exact mechanism with the somatic-sensorial-relational-based aspects of intuition. However, we now return to unpacking Dalia’s account.

Forms of Intuition

Just like Gloria, Dalia experiences intuition in two primary Forms, which we will refer to from here on as Dalia’s Form 1 and 2.

Dalia’s Form 1 mainly refers to that which we have just described; it is an internal sense of connection to what is needed by the other:

That internal... like the somatic sense of connection, I feel maybe a warmth, kind of lightness, maybe, or affection, even. [...] I mentioned that specifically with regards to the experience of like, connection, and like an intuitive sense of connection, or sometimes of like, somebody needing something in particular, if that makes sense.

Evidently, Dalia’s intuitive sense of connection is at least somewhat somatic, manifesting itself in this example, either as a type of sensation or an emotional reaction. Dalia provides us with a clinical example of what is meant by this:

So, one of the things that comes to mind is: most of the time in therapy, I speak pretty normally, like how we are speaking now, but sometimes, if a client is dealing with something particularly hard, I will slip into more of a stereotypical therapist voice. And so, something that is a little bit softer, a little bit slower. You know, something that's more, at least in my mind, sounds a little bit more caring. And that is usually based on, I have gotten some kind of a sense that this is what they are needing in that moment.

What is important here is that Dalia is picking up on some interpersonal cues, at some level of consciousness, and acting upon them, according to a sense of clients' needs, felt somatically within her body (e.g., warmth, lightness, affection, etc.).

Now, I would suspect the presence here of some implicit underlying cognitive processes and content (e.g., such as implicit judgements, values, beliefs, etc.) that are constitutive of these bodily-based feelings (as being part of the internal 'filtering' components of intuition, as we will later see). However, the primary cognitive influences I wish to draw the reader's attention to in this example are the interpretative processes operating at some undisclosed level of consciousness, which are necessary for making sense out of felt sensory data. Of course, these processes occur in relation to the broader context of the specific interpersonal situations one finds oneself in, which are, in turn, shaped by one's general understanding of how to proceed in these circumstances. Finally, I note that both these specific and general groundings are themselves informed by ever-broader layers of horizons (see Chapter 5). I won't further expand on the role of interpretation here, as I elaborate on it in many places elsewhere; for example, in a commentary on Gloria's conceptualization of Form 1, as well as in Chapters 5 and the Methodology. It is sufficient to point out its relevance concerning Dalia's Form 1.

Dalia's Form 2 is conceptually similar, but with a few differences as well:

And the flip side of that is that sometimes the intuition is about something like bad or scary. I also rely on my intuition a lot when it comes to client safety, and when there's a question of suicidality, or sort of, general harm. There is this, like, internal sense that I check in with, which I would say is honed over years of working with clients.

So, once again, Dalia is referring to that internal sense of what is happening in any given interpersonal situation; however, in this case, the content constitutive of the intuition is more

anxiety-inducing given the situational context. Therefore, we would expect the qualitatively manifested ‘felt sense’ of that intuition to be negatively altered as well, which is consistent with her story:

I know I described earlier, the connection as something that’s like warmth and light; lightness and things. But if it’s a scarier situation that my intuition is related to, it’s more of that sense of, like, anxiety that I’m listening for. But yeah, also at the end of the day, in the moment, there is this like extremely hard-to-define sense of, like, I don’t feel ok letting them leave without taking more steps. I don’t feel good about that. That doesn’t feel safe to me.

So, on the one hand, it appears to have anxiety-resemblant characteristics, but, again, despite its overlaps, conceptually it would need to be differentiated in at least some way to be truly identified as something else. This ‘something,’ while difficult to define, according to Dalia, appears to be increasingly recognizable through experiential means, such as skillfully delineating its contours over years of paying attention to it in one’s accumulated interpersonal work with clients. However, since we are working through the medium of ‘language,’ we will continue to unpack these ideas as best we can, despite the evident limitations of our abstractions and language itself. Meaning that, as Dalia points out here, this Form might only lend itself to being grasped from the perspective of direct experiential knowledge, honed over time. We will unpack this process of ‘identification’ of intuition more comprehensively later.

As a final remark on this point, I’m cognizant that I might be imposing an artificial distinction here in terms of positing multiple Forms where such division doesn’t actually take place, as I do acknowledge the fundamentally shared nature of these two presentations, and recognize their separation as being mainly qualitatively based (i.e., as a positive or negative sensation). Still, there appears to be enough conceptual difference to warrant speaking of them separately (even if this turns out to be primarily a linguistic separation). But for now, we continue as if they were distinct Forms.

Breaking Down the Forms / Characteristics of Intuition

At this stage, we break down these Forms into their various components; of course, just as we have done so far, acknowledging that it is just a conceptual division, and that in actuality,

its parts are interdependent, inseparable, and irreducible from the whole of the phenomenon (see Chapters 2, 4, 5 and Methodology).

Dalia breaks down the construct of “vibes” as follows:

I would say that [vibes] covers that combination of internal and external, like, everything gets filtered through the internal, right. Everything gets filtered, like, through my own sense of the world, my own interpretation of things, how I’m feeling at any given moment, how I’m thinking about things; like, everything gets filtered through that. But there is an external component to it as well of, like, what I’m picking up on, whether that’s body language, or tone, or word choice, and sometimes it’s just a very ephemeral sense of, ok, is this somebody that I feel a connection to, or not, that’s hard to kind of put words to.

Thus, Dalia’s main point here, is that while there are both internal and external components to intuition, they are co-constituting (interdependent), since everything that we would consider external sense data (e.g., linguistic usage, tone, bodily language, etc.), must be filtered through one’s various structures of consciousness (e.g., interpretations, knowledge and experiences, momentary moods, etc.), which are constitutive of the way the sense data appears in one’s own mind. It is a very phenomenological/existential/post-structuralist-influenced way of viewing one’s world of sense data (see Chapters 4, 5 and Methodology).

In addition, Dalia is inadvertently illustrating a variation in the level of consciousness at which these components of intuition are experienced. In this example, while the level of conscious awareness of the internal interpretive processes remains unaddressed, when it comes to the external contents (e.g., body language, tone, word choice, etc.), they appear at least possible to identify (whether in the moment, after the fact, or just theoretically). However, in that third situation (the ephemeral sense), the referents appear to be unidentified, and instead the ‘vibes’ are experienced as merely this fleeting sense of connection, or lack thereof.

I further pursued this inquiry for clarity, and this is Dalia’s fuller breakdown of the more enigmatic and ephemeral side of intuition (note: this is related to Dalia’s Form 1), in keeping with the last point about the degrees of consciousness. First, she redescribed this “ephemeral sense of connection” as follows:

If you put me in a room with somebody and asked me to describe, I'll use the word connection, speaking in the interpersonal lens of therapy. And if you were to ask me, ok, like clients that I feel a strong sense of connection to versus ones where I don't, I could probably come up with some reasons, or like some explanations in terms of, like, body language, how they communicate, stuff like that. Like, I could come up with some concrete thing, but there would also be just, like, a piece of this that I would not necessarily be able to explain why.

So, in simple terms, it is the feeling of whether one connects with a person, or not (an experience we can probably all relate to). If one were to look inside of oneself and try to understand what is ultimately responsible for that sense of feeling connected or not (i.e., engaging in an introspective endeavour to uncover the possible internal and external sources), one would evidently be able to find a rationale for some of it, in the shape of these identified external sources (e.g., body language, communication style, etc.). Dalia introduces the term "concrete" to label those consciously identified ones, which can subsequently be categorized as internal or external sources of intuition. However, some remain unidentified; in other words, one is unable to provide a logical explanation or attribute an adequate source for them: these are what constitute the "ephemeral part of intuition".

If we were to stretch this out across a temporal dimension, the picture would look more like this:

Obviously, it's sometimes easier in the moment to describe that internal, like the somatic sense of connection, of I feel maybe a warmth, a kind of lightness maybe, or affection, even. So, that can be easier in the moment to describe, maybe, a somatic sense of it. After the fact, it can sometimes, maybe be easier to apply more logical or interpretive words to a situation, of saying, ok, upon reflection, I can say that this person was sitting... like it was a very open way of sitting, or they were always making eye contact and connecting with me like that. That can be easier to do after the fact.

Here, we have various modes and depths of interpretation, with the first occurring in the moment of intuition, as a more immediate, bodily, sense-based interpretation, and later through one's more reflective, analytical (word-based, logical, abstract) mode of interpretation.

And to clarify, the level of difficulty involved in uncovering the source of the intuition takes no part in Dalia's classification system:

All of those pieces I think would fall into the concrete, because like even the somatic stuff, like, is sometimes harder to explain or call to mind, but, I would still consider that to be more concrete data, let's say, then, you know, if I'm just saying like, oh, yeah, I really liked this person; I can't put my finger on why, but I did. Or, you know, the opposite of that, like, oh yeah, I just couldn't quite connect to this person, I just can't quite put my finger on why. That is more the role of what I would call the ephemeral part of intuition.

Thus, the main distinction is whether one can consciously identify the sources of that intuition. Therefore, the ephemeral part covers that which remains unconscious (unidentified) regarding the intuition's constitutive origins, even after one attempts conscious reflection.

Despite these observations relating to the 'sense of connection' featured in Form 1, there are also some clear parallels to Dalia's Form 2. Firstly, as we will see, there are some identifiable "concrete" elements underlying that second form of intuition as well, and again, what we are discussing here is another 'sense' that is fleeting and hard to put words to. We will highlight those parallels using Dalia's example. First, we lay out the scenario:

This is where it becomes hard to describe because I was thinking about it again, in this case, where I have a client who's expressing some level of suicidal ideation, and I'm trying to make the call: Are they safe to go home? Are they OK to leave my office, or do I need to call someone? Do we need to take further steps than just leaving with a safety plan?

The following lines illustrate the first point:

Again, I think if I'm sort of deconstructing it after the fact, there's the component of, you know, how they talk, their own fear, the words that they're using. One of the big things I look for is, like, impulsivity.

So, here we can find various examples of this external "concrete" data (e.g., clients' linguistic patterns, word usage, fear, impulsivity, etc.). Those pieces of data can be identified and reflected

upon after the fact. These are the warning signs that therapists might theoretically know they should look for, informed by their training, education, and years of clinical experience. In other words, they can be identified through analysis via wording and concepts, and they are also part of what constitutes the intuitive process (those external elements that get filtered internally), even if they are not conceptually identified immediately in the moment.

However, there is also this more difficult to capture element:

But yeah, also at the end of the day, in the moment, there is this, like, extremely hard-to-define sense of, like, I don't feel ok, like, letting them leave without taking more steps. I don't feel good about that. That doesn't feel safe to me.

That part occurs instead in the immediacy of the moment; therefore, it is most likely accessed and grasped experientially. It is, of course, the part that Dalia described as the “internal sense that I check in with” and as something that is “honed over years of working with clients.”

So, now we may ask, what could it mean for this sense to be honed? In one sense, Dalia implies that it has become easier to identify, meaning it has become easier to delimit its parameters and recognize it as distinct from something else to which it is comparable. First, let's capture Dalia's sentiment regarding the difficulty of this process:

I feel like this is all very nebulous in some ways. [...] This is such a hard thing to put into words. It's because it's so... it feels so internal, that difference between, like, what is mine and what is the client's, like, what is happening in the room. And because the only words that come to mind are, like, oh, I just know. I know when it's mine, and I know when it's the client's. Yeah, trying to actively describe that difference is hard, like, trying to put that into words is difficult.

Interestingly, Dalia is referring here to a similar kind of “unconscious knowing” that Gloria discussed earlier. Again, behind that sentiment, there is that kind of blurriness, inseparability, and interdependence that is always hard to verbalize and which is associated with those phenomena best accessed through one's experiential reality. The difficulty of Dalia's predicament should not surprise us, given that language itself is a medium that does just the opposite thing: it divides everything that exists into distinct and independent entities (see Chapters 2, 4, 5, and Methodology).

The similarities between the two therapists and their accounts don't end there. Dalia says: "But I do practice a lot of self-reflection. I actually think that's probably the best skill, or the most important skill that a therapist can have is the ability to self-reflect." Thus, similarly for Dalia, self-reflection (or self-awareness) plays a significant role in identifying intuition, or at least in distinguishing it appropriately from other things. Here is an example of what this process may look like for Dalia:

It's a little bit of awareness of, like, ok, what is going through my mind as I'm seeing this client. What is fueling this anxiety? Like, if it is anxiety, again, is this mine? Am I worried about this client? Or am I picking up on the client's or my own?

Furthermore, it can also be identified more directly by paying attention to the qualitative 'feel' of the somatic experience instead:

And I think it feels a little bit more distant. Like, if it's more of a clinical judgment sort of piece, it feels less intense than if it's like a sense of anxiety about myself or about a client that isn't necessarily based in intuition.

So, on one hand, we home in on the 'intensity' of the experience. As we will recall, Gloria has also qualitatively described 'anxiety' as being "louder," and in contrast said that intuition is "very quiet" (subtle). But on the other hand, clarifying what is meant by the "distance," Dalia says:

I have less of this, I would say now, but I have more years of experience. But when it was earlier in my career, it was more like, oh God, is this client going to be ok? Is it going to reflect badly on me if they aren't? That felt very immediate. Whereas, there is a bit of a distance, even if I would describe it as anxiety because it has similar pieces, if it's intuition-based. And it feels more like a response to the situation and attunement to the client. There's a distance from it.

So, the "immediacy" of anxiety, described as this intense feeling that something could result in adverse consequences to oneself, is juxtaposed here with the "distance" of intuition, where one remains aware that one is responding to something picked up within the interpersonal situation (the other person), which could result in harm for the other, rather than it being self-directed, and thus leading to that less intense felt sense.

Here again, I want to draw attention to that interpretive factor underlying the sensation of intuition. Furthermore, as is evident in Dalia's example, the reflective piece aligns with the awareness of one's internal sensations. Thus, in reality, this act of identification is a comprehensive process with interrelated components. It is consistent with Dalia's experientially based observation:

Yeah, but it's hard because it does feel like a marriage of both. Like, it does feel like both, sort of feelings, and the sort of intellectual piece. Like, they do feel very married, I guess they do feel very connected.

Dalia's Mechanism of Intuition

Now that we have covered some means to identify intuition, let's examine Dalia's conceptualization of her own mechanisms of intuition. I will begin by providing an overview of the system's components that we will investigate.

For Dalia, intuition involves the pattern recognition of critical clinical details that get pre-reflectively synthesized into a conceptual whole (e.g., as an emerging clinical theme) before presenting themselves to her; a system that operates semi-consciously, but which is qualitatively experienced by her as if she had a "notification system" directing her attention to the outputs of these background processes. Thus, this system comprises three semi-conscious elements, which we will now attempt to elucidate.

First, there is an element of that intuitive process that is about pattern recognition. Of this, Dalia says:

Like, I do think that there's a big piece of the intuition that is, like, I don't know, pattern recognition, a little bit, of, ok, I've seen this before. Maybe not this precise thing, but like this is what it feels like when... these are the signs of a client who is, like, quote-on-quote, legitimately unsafe, or is liable to hurt themselves for real, versus these are the signs that they are probably going to be ok.

It also refers to external data the therapist picks up from the client (interpersonal cues from the situation), which are always filtered internally through the therapist's structures of consciousness, such as experiential shaping or theoretically based interpretations (as discussed

earlier). As we have already addressed, this can happen at any level of conscious awareness.

Dalia says of these:

These are all the things that are like firing, I'm going to say semi-unconsciously, or like, kind of going on in the background a little bit, that form what I'm going to call intuition; of like, ok, this is the situation.

So, if this pattern recognition is happening in the background, what is actually taking place in the foreground? In other words, we may ask, what is Dalia's conscious attention attending to while all of this is happening? Dalia says:

I think it's partially a part of, like, you know, when I'm in the moment with a client, I am very present with them, or at least I'm trying to be present with them. So, like everything else, like the pattern recognition, the sort of memories or all of the things that kind of form the basis of that, those are all operating more in the background.

In other words, while Dalia is attuning to the client, present in the moment, these perceptions and cognitive processes continue to operate without her having to pay much attention to them. Yet, that is not to say they go unnoticed:

So in the moments where I'm making a clinical decision, [...] it's not quite unconscious because I am conscious of it to some extent. It feels like a program, again, running in the background. It's not the focus. It's not the primary process that's going on.

If we further dissect Dalia's mental processes, while maintaining a sensitivity to the interrelation between the parts, it would look something like this. First, there is a component that searches and notices important clinical details: "Yeah, the sort of background process, like it feels like there's a part of my brain that is always looking for details, and like, paying attention to details." Secondly, there is a "conceptualization piece" that amalgamates all these details into a coherent insight (e.g., a clinical picture):

There's this conceptualization piece, I would say, that is intuitively based as well, of, you know, oh, this client hasn't explicitly said that they struggle with self-esteem. But you know, I'm picking up on all these, like, little things that they have said, and the sort of

complete picture I am forming is one in which, like, their main issue might be self-esteem, let's say.

Third, there is a “notifications system” component, which Dalia describes experientially through this analogy:

And it feels like, I don't know, maybe this is a weird way to conceptualize it, but that's the process running in the background, and it will, like, slip me a notification of, like, hey, don't let this client leave, or, hey, this client needs you to be a little bit gentler with them in this moment, or, hey, the thing that they just said, that's important, maybe you should narrow in on that. It feels like a little notification popping up. The processing has happened in the background, and then it's, like, hey, here's the important piece of that information. And then, like, afterwards, I can audit that. I can audit that process. But in the moment, it's more of just, like, ok, this is the important stuff.

Dalia is referring here to an attention-grabbing function that points to a ready-made conceptual package of relevant clinical information, occasioned from the operations of the first two processes. This whole set of processes, as we can see from this example, is equally applicable to Form 1 and Form 2 intuitions. Finally, if we examine the entire mechanism, with all its components working in tandem, as one system. Dalia says of it:

It's like the process that's going on in the background is always, sort of, like, looking for details, and then, kind of, assembling them into discrete conceptions or ideas, and then feeding me, sort of, the output of that.

However, I'll mention once again that we should not make the mistake of thinking that all these parts truly exist as distinct and independent entities. We are simply facilitating our comprehension here by taking a more reductive perspective: dividing up the phenomenon and examining the interrelationships among its parts. As mentioned earlier, this is merely an additional perspective to help grasp Dalia's conceptualization and experience of this phenomenon through a more typical lens of linguistically constituted, conceptual-rational abstractions. We are certainly not seeking to devalue the other perspectives presented in these accounts, such as the descriptions of the direct lived experience of clinical intuition.

Part 3: Application (*How do I use my intuition?*)

In this section (Part 3), participants discussed how they utilize intuition in a therapeutic context, elaborating on how they employ it safely and effectively, and describing how they broach the topic of intuition with clients.

Part 3 - Gloria [3a]

Uses of Intuition

According to Gloria, intuition is a potential tool in the therapist's repertoire:

So that to me is just one part of what you bring into any counselling interaction. [...] Like, intuition's a tool, something you can use. But it doesn't necessarily have to be something that you blindly follow. [...] It's just a big resource there when you need it.

So, if it is a valuable resource that is always available to therapists, we may want to know more precisely what it can be used for. Gloria highlights the following uses: For one, intuition can prompt the therapist to explore something further. As discussed in Gloria's Form 2, it can push or pull one towards something, as these examples will showcase: "I couldn't just leave it there. [...] I knew I had to follow it. [...] I had to... my intuition was strong enough that I decided to navigate all of that [supervisory and ethical] stuff." In other words, Gloria's intuition compelled her to investigate something further and to take some additional steps. But beyond being a catalyst that initiates the exploration, one's intuition can also deliver some directional guidance: "My intuition provides me with a hypothesis. It provides it with meaning, gives me some direction." In other words, one's intuition also directs the therapist toward a relevant path (it points the way).

As we shall recall, Gloria's intuition is an active process involving a great deal of reflection as well; therefore, it contributes the following to her as well: "It lets me know my blind spots too. [...] Like, do I have a bias here? Did I make some assumption?"

Finally, just like Dalia, Gloria uses intuition in high-stakes scenarios, such as helping her spot the warning signs of suicidality: "I was in an environment where you didn't typically have suicidal clients. [...] I was picking things up."

And to comment on the potential positive impact of an accurate use of one's intuition, here is an exemplary outcome of one of Gloria's intuitively based interventions:

My intuition was right. [...] My goal was just to bridge her to resources. I bridged her to another counselling department. [...] The intake person at the other part of the counselling group, she said, like, you really saved a life, was her words. So, it was powerful.

The implications cannot be understated: intuition seems to be a fundamental process (therefore accessible to all therapists) that could potentially even save clients' lives. How much more evidence of its utility is needed before we start taking it seriously as a viable resource for therapists?

Risks of Intuition

Nevertheless, the reference is to an 'informed' use of intuition, as intuitively based interventions also involve some potential risks. First, commenting on risk-potential in general, Gloria says: "I've learned that it's better to take a few risks. You're going to get further than the totally 100% play it safe." Furthermore, it is worth noting that this is coming from someone who tends to be more risk-averse by nature: "I'm definitely not a risk taker. I live in fear of the college. I'm better at that than I used to be, but it's more, it's taking [...] those calculated risks. It's taking that and just having some safeguards."

Gloria classifies the risks according to three categories: "There's ethics and professional standards; that's one bucket. Then, there's the risk to the relationship with the client." Of course, when it comes to ethics and professional standards, these are more self-explanatory, as therapists should be accounting for them in all their interventions (i.e., not just intuitively based ones).

In relation to the 'therapeutic-relationship' category, Gloria says: "And to me, a lot of what you do with that is you build a strong relationship, and then you do rupture and repair. You're always being mindful." Furthermore, it is through taking those calculated risks that one can identify the limits within each interpersonal circumstance, and one can learn to adapt accordingly:

And the more of that you do, you kind of know what that boundary is, and you also know your client. Like, some clients, you know, I'd hate to be one second late on the computer, because I know they need that. [...] So, it's just adapting basically.

When weaving all of this together, we get the following picture:

But the number one thing is the relationship. Like, you can get away with stuff; like, I've done creative things in sessions. Sometimes they work, and sometimes they flop. But if the relationship is good, you can do that. So, the point is this stuff is messy, random, creative, all over the place. But as long as you're rooted in that relationship, who your client is, ethics, and if that relationship is strong, and you have an ethical compass, you can try things.

To summarize, as with any intervention, the therapist must be guided internally by ethics and adhere to external professional standards. But beyond this, therapists will be able to take more risks, and safer ones at that, provided they focus on first building and maintaining a strong therapeutic relationship. It will allow for the occasional missteps that creative and novel approaches are prone to. The upside of this is that taking these cautious risks will allow the therapist to "get further" than playing it entirely safe, which, of course, is the idea behind any worthwhile therapeutic intervention (e.g., if something is safe to do, but has minimal tangible effects, what is the point?).

Now, let's focus more specifically on the risk associated with intuition itself. An idea that recurs on multiple occasions in Gloria's account is the idea of not relying "blindly" on intuition. For example: "I don't follow it blindly, but I'm always comparing. So, it's a very active process" or "But I don't act blindly on it. You know, I still took the supervision." Thus, Gloria is not relying 'solely' on intuition; she is using it in conjunction with safeguards or extra verification steps.

Essentially, the risk she is alluding to is embodied in the following observation:

Some people are very intuitive, but they rely too much on them. You can't assume just because you're an intuitive person that everything's always right, because it's not. [...] Those therapists, I think, can do damage. They can do damage in relationships. They get it wrong, and they just believe in their stuff. [...] They form judgments quickly, and even if they're 90% right, we're always taught to check our assumptions. [...] And they can be harmful too, if you make the wrong bet. [...] So again, when anything is high emotional

stakes, like suicidality or any of these bigger things, you always should be seeking supervision or consultation or something anyway, right.

Gloria's cautionary tale is derived mainly from observing multiple cases of intuitive people in her life, both within and outside a therapy context. A couple of examples of this are: "One's a counsellor, and she forms opinions very quickly. And like sometimes they're just too quick. And it's like, no, you're barking up the wrong tree here, right." Or: "Another is a friend who's a professor in sciences, I'm like, you don't have kids, sorry, your conclusion you're drawing here is not right, you know. And like, I know that objectively, I'm open to the advice."

But there is also a crucial observation that she makes here relating to therapist-specific risks: "And I find that with friends, if a therapist did that to me in a session, I'd be done and not back anymore." Therefore, ultimately, in addition to the higher stakes involved when it comes to therapists' use of intuition in a clinical setting, as compared to intuition use in general, the leniency afforded to a therapist's off-base or impulsive judgment is much less than the tolerance typically granted to members of the general public (i.e., such errors are far more detrimental to the therapeutic relationship), as Gloria expressed succinctly.

Verifications/Safeguards of Intuition

Now that we have identified potential risks with its use, we can focus on how to address them. Gloria raised the idea of testing the validity or accuracy of intuitions by framing them as hypotheses. With regards to the content of the intuitions, she says:

It might be nothing, or it might be, but just be curious and open, and kind of collecting data points if you will. [...] You know, just keep testing the theory, testing the hypothesis, but trusting it more, like, very go with the flow.

To clarify what she means by "trusting" it: "So, it's trusting, but it's not like you act blindly. [...] I don't blindly rely on it, but I don't dismiss it anymore." In this sense, it is more about trusting the intuitive process itself and knowing that one's intuition may lead to something important. It is not in the sense of having 'blind faith' in its content. Really, it is more like the 'faith' of the 'scientist' (i.e., the trust and belief that undertaking a specific research endeavour will lead to a worthwhile outcome in the end).

So, let's say, at this point, someone decides not to dismiss their intuition the next time around, but also knows better not to 'blindly' trust it. What would be the next step? A suitable place to explore would be Gloria's procedural implementation of her "sophisticated" use of intuition. However, to better understand her procedure, it would first be helpful to consider the mindset Gloria brings into therapy (as it relates to these steps). And more specifically, probe into where Gloria focuses her attention during the sessions.

First, regarding her general therapeutic approach, she says: "With the process, like, we're taught: what do you want to talk about today? [...] I'm completely, 100% flexible, whatever they want." As we can see, she brings openness and adaptability to the sessions; she is ready to 'go with the flow' and follow the client's lead.

When it comes to what Gloria pays attention to in a session, she says: "I always pay attention to the order people talk about things." Furthermore: "I pay a lot of attention to what's not said. [...] So, it's the stuff that's omitted." So, beyond the presumed relevancy of the actual content of the client's words, the order in which it is presented to her is of interest, in addition to taking note of that which is absent (not present) in the discussion (but which one would expect to be). This latter point is a distinctly Husserlian, Heideggerian, and Gadamerian-inspired sensibility. I elaborate elsewhere on this original Husserlian idea that what is omitted or absent forms part of the horizon of any given phenomenon; that is, a phenomenon at any given time is only ever partly revealed to us, with some aspects remaining concealed (see Chapter 5). But Gloria does not stop at that:

So it's the stuff that's omitted, or there's a pattern, or there's something different. [...] So, I pay a lot of attention to that. I'm always comparing the patterns. So when I write my notes, I compare; I write the themes in the order they come up. My note-taking informs that, and when I see a change in pattern...

So, the takeaway is that, within her standard routine of note-taking, which evidently comprises reflection, she is on the lookout for patterns in the clinical data, in any of the various forms listed above, that stand out to her in some way.

In addition to these, Gloria says: "I chase the emotion, like, I follow the emotion a lot. I follow the meaning, right." In other words, she is not exclusively looking at the content of a

person's speech but also seeking relevant information in other, more immediate forms of data (e.g., uncovering the meaning of perceived emotions).

Finally, she is not only looking for clinical data externally, but also turns inwardly: "I look a lot at what's happening in my own self, in my own body, my own reactions: What's this bringing up for me? What experiences come to my mind? Is there something I've read?"

Thus, we can also see, by examining the 'direction of her attention' (itself grounded in her therapeutic stance), that there is a similar kind of interplay between the internal (with its 'filtering' properties) and external sources of information, as Dalia described earlier. This description of Gloria's 'attentional processes' appears vastly compatible with that more 'somatic-interpretive-interpersonal' based conceptualization of intuition, which appears across both Gloria's and Dalia's accounts, which is an expected congruence given the conceptual overlap in theoretical underpinnings informing their therapeutic orientations.

Now, with that section in mind, let us examine Gloria's "sophisticated" use of intuition by breaking it down into its procedural elements, presented sequentially for illustrative clarity.

Phase 1: "I slow down a bit, but I just keep staying open and noticing, like, I'm just paying more detailed attention." This phase concerns the attitudinal standpoint one takes toward one's intuition and the direction of one's attentional focus (i.e., open and observant to details), as we have just discussed. Notably, even at this stage, we can already see overlap with some elements of Dalia's mechanism of intuition (e.g., open mindset, paying attention to details, noticing patterns).

Phase 2: "And I just keep, like, collecting and staying objective." In this phase, Gloria implies that she is applying the 'scientific method' to further 'study' her intuition; primarily by adopting an "objective" scientific mindset, "collecting data," and, as noted elsewhere, "testing the hypothesis" (all understood, of course, in a looser, even metaphorical, sense).

Phase 3: "And then I'll switch back to intuitive mode, scientist mode, intuitive mode, scientist mode. Like, I just, I don't really know how to do it." In the most straightforward interpretation, this statement could be understood as the alternation between the two phases just discussed, which correspond, in order, to her 'intuitive' and 'scientific' modes. Nonetheless, we will adopt a higher-resolution (more complex) perspective. Firstly, the core of this procedural

element is the repeated cycling between two of her modes of consciousness ('intuitive' and 'scientific'). Secondly, Gloria states that she knows how to do this from experience, but she has a hard time putting it into words. As one might recall, Dalia also encountered a similar difficulty: not only is the intuitive process itself characterized as an interplay between processes occurring at the level of 'immediate experience' (which are accessed experientially) and analytical/reflective processes (which are linguistically constituted and thus easier to verbalize), but the honing of this intuitive system is done through years of practical, experiential application rather than through theorizing about it. This adds yet another layer of complexity when trying to put words to it or pry it apart descriptively. The qualitative experience is that one just 'knows' how to do it (just as Gloria corroborates here). But suppose I try to help put words to Gloria's experiential process. As mentioned, Gloria is alluding to the act of swiftly alternating between two distinct ways of framing one's experience. This process, in turn, produces an elaborate synthesis of perspectives (i.e., a 'fusion of horizons') (see Methodology), in which each perspective arises from one of these two vantage points, and simultaneously reveals and conceals different facets of the encountered experience or phenomenon (see Chapter 5). As an analogous exemplification, Gloria's description mirrors, in significant ways, a shift from the 'Natural Attitude' (or Ontic Attitude) to the 'Phenomenological Attitude' (or Ontological Attitude) (see Chapter 5). By this I mean that one consciously sets out to shift one's mental framework (along with its underlying assumptions) from a more typical scientific or naturalistic framing of reality to one that is more attuned to direct experience (one that is open, receptive and attentive to how experiences or phenomena appear in one's consciousness). If one wished to examine more closely the specific contents of Gloria's 'intuitive' or 'scientific' modes, it would be theoretically possible, given our deep analysis of Gloria's mental processes, to classify each according to this dualistic framework (i.e., immediate vs. scientific/naturalistic processes). We have already done this implicitly, albeit very crudely, in our earlier low-resolution (simplistic) interpretation. It portrayed some of Gloria's attitudinal and attentional processes as generally representative of her 'intuitive' (immediate) mode, and some of her 'objective' analytical processes, including her investigative and verification steps, as constituting her 'scientific' mode. This rough division is sufficient for our purpose of understanding the procedural mechanism of this phase.

Phase 4: "And then, I'm always mindful. Who knows if I have a blind spot around something? What if I totally just missed the boat?" Here, we have a process of paying deliberate,

ongoing attention to what is unfolding in relation to one's intuition, which we could refer to more generally as 'reflexivity.' The focal point, however, is Gloria's embodied awareness that intuition needs to be continuously verified rather than followed "blindly." That reflexive stance, alluded to in both participants' accounts (captured in the umbrella term 'internal verification processes'), requires a turning inward to examine the inner structures that give rise to one's intuition (e.g., mental framings, theories, values, beliefs, moods, experiences, etc.). As Gloria previously noted, even highly intuitive people make occasional judgment errors, and therapists, in particular, must account for this, given the higher stakes involved and lower tolerance afforded. Gloria is simply reiterating the importance of actively and regularly inspecting one's inner workings to detect potential judgment errors or "blind spots."

Phase 5: She elaborates on this whole system as follows:

So it's just basically, it's a lot about reflecting and learning from your experiences, is my point. It's not just in the moment. It's thinking about it afterwards, and that allows you to go back and be more, you know, appropriately [intuitive]... appropriate intuition. More sophisticated intuition, I guess.

The reference here is to the dimension of 'temporality,' or put differently, to the 'reflective' or 'developmental' components of intuition discussed earlier in her conceptualization. It will suffice to showcase the example she provides of this:

Say, if you had a bad experience. You hired somebody in an employment situation, or you ended up working for someone that turned out to be an absolute nightmare to work for. Then you go back and say, what pulled me? Well, this is the thing that pulled me in. And now next time I'm going to be aware of that silver-tongued narcissist. Or you know...

The point emphasized is that by reflecting on one's intuitive experiences (after the fact) and making that kind of learning and growth a part of one's intuitive development process (or developmental process in general), one's overall intuitive process (and the resulting intuitions) will, over time, become more "sophisticated" (or more "appropriate" for therapy).

With regards to her follow-through on intuition, Gloria mentions: "I guess my follow-up process is I just keep collecting more data. I watch for evidence. I'll top it up sometimes with people. I'll bounce it by." This description reflects the cyclical and ongoing nature of the

verification process. In other words, the procedure we have examined should not be viewed as a clearly delineated, time-bound, sequential set of steps; rather, it is far more dynamic and integrated. One can monitor and refine it indefinitely by revisiting any phase, and further support it through external verification methods, such as consulting others.

Again, this extends beyond merely verifying the intuition in question. As the following example illustrates, extensive data collection and evidence testing can also help enhance one's ability to recognize and identify future intuitions:

I think, with time, because I'm aware of, you know, when something's an intuition, when something turns out to be nothing. [...] So you, kind of, have the data point. When it turns out to be nothing, then you kind of file that away.

This strongly corroborates Dalia's point about honing intuition over years of experience, deeply engaging with it.

But beyond the introspective part of the process, which relies primarily on one's self-awareness and reflective capacity, we may further comment on the 'external' verification piece. Of this, Gloria says:

Supervision, talking it out with people. [...] Just bouncing off different people, while maintaining that confidentiality. [...] That's part of my process. [...] I'm blessed with more friends than I can keep up with. I'm blessed with a very social life. And just all those different people inform things.

As we will recall, Gloria described herself as an "ambivert" (i.e., both introverted and extroverted in some ways). Furthermore, Gloria had mentioned that this whole process of intuition is simply an extension, or rather a single aspect of herself, interconnected and inseparable from the entirety of her being. As a Heideggerian-influenced thinker would likely acknowledge, in addition to her having actively shaped the 'Self' through her 'Self-actualizing' tendencies, Gloria has also recognized that her friendships and other acquaintances in her life are a co-constitutive factor that have also helped shaped her being, and thus, by extension, have influenced her intuitive process (e.g., even the reflective-discursive act of engaging in this interview, and later reflecting upon it, could potentially influence her intuitive process). In other words, Gloria recognizes that intuition does not have a fixed, independent identity: it is co-

constituted, like all other phenomena. Furthermore, this line of thought may prompt the reader to consider how they might also alter their views, in reevaluating their own intuitive process in light of the information provided by Gloria, who has elegantly shared her personal procedures. One may adapt as needed.

As a final thought, we may also want to know how Gloria actually decides when to act on her intuition. Her answer is unexpectedly simple:

There's a part of me that's very pragmatic, like, there's all this messy stuff, but at the end of the day, I'm very pragmatic. I just go with the situation. Do I have the energy to deal with this right now?

She provides an example that most people could likely relate to:

You know, if I'm in a conversation with a friend and I have to leave in 15 minutes, ok, well, I'm not going to go there because I don't want to do the counselling. It's like the counselling doorknob, but I don't want to open up something I can't take care of, you know.

Evidently, this same reasoning would apply to bringing something significant up in the concluding minutes of the therapy session. It seems to boil down to matters of common sense. But now, I can't help but wonder whether it is ultimately her intuitive sense of the situation that informs her decision whether to act on it. Or put differently, does one's intuitive judgement guide one's pattern of use of intuition? Something to ponder!

Navigating/Facilitating Intuition with Clients

To Gloria, helping clients make use of their own intuition is about enabling the conditions under which it can flourish:

It's creating space so clients can take advantage of their own intuition, too. [...] Because at the end of the day, their trust in the process is their trust in themselves. [...] You're providing the space to hold them through all that vulnerability and all that exploration.

Thus, consistent with how Gloria views intuition as an inseparable part of herself that is always available to use if desired, she adheres to these principles by creating circumstances that help intuition manifest within the client, which they can then choose to use. The advocated 'space' is

an interpersonally safe, supportive, and encouraging atmosphere that is conducive to its development, as her clinical example shows:

Sometimes I'll try this other thing, and the client will just laugh their heads off because it was so stupid and so silly; it so flopped. It doesn't hurt the relationship if you're doing it in a good way. You ask for consent, and when they get to know you, then clients will come up with their own stuff too.

It is a space that fosters creativity, inspiration, and positive energy: elements that constitute Gloria's Form 2 of intuition, permissibly unfolding out in the open. The client can therefore learn vicariously and risk experimenting with themselves, further building trust in those innate aspects of their being, while bolstered by the reassuring conditions the therapist provides.

And suppose the Rogerian influence wasn't evident enough, Gloria put forth the following formulation: "You know, you have Roger's conditions for the therapeutic environment; empathy, genuineness and all this kind of stuff. I think the conditions for intuitiveness, I think it's got to be creativity, openness, non-judgmental." Furthermore, as we will see later, particularly when we unpack the rest of this quote (in our discussion of the supervisory role), the integration of Rogerian Humanistic principles doesn't end here but is interwoven throughout her account. One may recognize it even now as we move on to explore Gloria's approach to broaching the topic of intuition with clients.

For context, I had asked Gloria whether she ever 'advised' clients about using their intuition, and her response was in line with the Ontario professional guidelines:

I don't tend to do a lot of that. The CRPO tends to want you not to be too directive and to appreciate the client's autonomy. So, I'd be careful. I probably am a little bit more reticent there. I could probably do that a little bit more. So, both of those things tell me I could make intuition more of something I'm talking about with clients. So, transparency about that process there, and not get that CRPO thing in my head. I think I could probably be a little bit more explicit.

So, while this specific response was largely influenced by an error on my part, having misled with the term "advise" in my question, the outcome was still informative in showing just how much power these external bodies can have over the dynamics of the therapeutic process itself.

As this example illustrates, external forces can limit therapists' and clients' use of intuition by inadvertently inducing fear or introducing additional risk factors associated with these interventions. As Gloria mentions elsewhere, even the regulatory push for 'evidence-based' approaches likely interferes with the use of clinical intuition, and this seems especially true for more risk-averse therapists (e.g., it could prompt them to use it far more discreetly, or perhaps avoid it altogether).

Suppose we ground all of this in a clinical example, when directly addressing the client's use of intuition, Gloria cautions against doing the following:

Because I'd be careful [with], what is your gut telling you? If I ask that question, you know: should I be in this relationship or not? If I ask the question that way, I'd be worried that I'm telling them to leave that relationship. So, I think, just because I'm a little bit cautious not to influence or direct the client.

Instead, Gloria might consider reframing it as follows:

I should probably think about it. I'd say something like, yeah, there are many things that can help you make the decision, I'm wondering if one of these things is intuition. So, I could frame it that way. Just like my supervisor did to me and said, what's your intuition? He asked that question. Like, what's your gut telling you? You know, and my gut was clear as a bell.

The difference here is that Gloria avoids suggesting to the client that they directly act on their intuitive outputs (intuitions). Instead, she is guiding them to seek their inner counsel; that is, to take note of their own intuitive process and consider whether it provides any valuable insight.

When it comes to therapists sharing their own intuitions directly with clients, Gloria describes the process as follows:

Sometimes it's just a matter of bringing it up, and then they can come back and see what they do with it. You throw it out there. It's like it's an offering: you plant a seed, sometimes it blossoms, sometimes it's nothing, and sometimes it'll come back four or five sessions later.

The process is not so different from sharing one's general therapeutic insights, which can sometimes be helpful, while at other times are not, or perhaps only become significant much later (e.g., recall Gloria's Big Dipper analogy). However, if Gloria does this, it is tentative, and again, she is cautious not to be too directive. She only does this when a solid interpersonal relationship has already been established. While it is not a common occurrence for her to take that route, in practice, if she were to, she said that she might frame it something like this:

I just had a wild thought that came into my head. Would it be ok if I shared it? Or, not a wild thought, I'd use my language, but you know, I just had this thought that came into my head, and I could throw it out there.

Thus, these are some ways to navigate discussions about intuition with clients in the clinical context, while also facilitating the development of clients' own intuitive capacities.

Part 3 - Dalia [3b]

Uses of Intuition

Now, we look at how Dalia uses Form 1 of intuition (i.e., one's felt sense of connection). As we have mentioned, Dalia uses it to attune and respond more immediately (in the sense of both 'directly' and 'momentarily') to a client's interpersonal needs. Dalia breaks it down as follows:

There is the explicit, or like, the more obvious concrete reason, but it also comes down a little bit to that felt sense of what they are needing and a sense of like attunement to: ok, this person needs me to be a little bit softer right now; this person needs me to be a little bit gentler with them. Because some people will just sort of throw out random details, and they're not prepared to go into that, or they're not prepared to receive that softness. And that's like 100% just like a split-second decision I have to make.

So, this split-second 'intervention,' if we wish to refer to it as that, occurs in the immediacy of the moment and is best understood as a form of appropriate therapeutic responsiveness that emerges from one's attunement to the present interpersonal situation. By 'intervention,' we refer to the therapist's follow-up to these intuitive processes; the therapist still retains the choice of whether to act on their sense of the client's needs at that specific moment; that is, whether to trust

this process. By definition, this informative ‘intuitive sense’ lies beyond one’s conscious reasons for acting in a particular way. It is felt and acted upon before one has the opportunity to reflect on it analytically. It is therefore immediate in both senses of the term: it is a direct response and occurs in the moment. As Dalia puts it:

And so, like after the fact, I can reflect on it and say, like, ok, would I have done that differently? Why did I move to that way of being? But in the moment, I would say, I trust my intuition of what they need in that moment.

Again, it does not preclude later reflection. But it is used at a time when analytical reflection is not yet possible; the therapist is responding directly to the flow of the present events, which, as Dalia says, requires this “split-second” decision-making (e.g., just like landing a timely joke). Now we turn our attention to Dalia’s second Form.

As will be recalled, Dalia’s Form 2 of intuition encapsulates having a negative feeling/sense about a client’s safety, in the context of suicidality or general harm. The use of this second Form might look like this in practice:

Do I feel that this client is safe to leave my office? Like, do I feel ok letting this client leave my office? If the answer is no, then it’s time to call someone. If the answer is yes, obviously, there’s still safety planning I will do and things like that, but...

Notably, this internal ‘feeling’ is a significant factor in Dalia’s assessment of the client’s safety and decision on the appropriate response. As outlined, if Dalia has the intuitive sense that the person is not safe to leave, there will be a follow-up in accordance with standard protocols regarding suicidality. If Dalia determines it is safe for the person to leave the office, then this will be the course of action, albeit with some additional precautions in place.

Now, however, seems like an appropriate time to address a pervasive conundrum: This general approach to suicidality and general harm does not entirely align with what Dalia believes is most beneficial for the client. In fact, this is the only type of scenario where Dalia described her intuition potentially coming into conflict with something external:

The only thing that comes to mind is, very occasionally, with like the CRPO, like the ethical requirements, [...] and this might be more of a value piece than an intuition piece.

[...] But specifically, around the response to suicidality, [...] and the need to go against the client's wishes. [...] And like I said, I've never been in a situation where I have had to do that. Luckily, I've always been able to get the client's buy-in. [...] But you know, it is my intuition, or like, it is my sense, that if I were to call 911, or do something against the client's wishes, that it would form a pretty significant rupture. [...] So that is the only piece of conflict that sort of emerges.

I think Dalia makes an important point here, and I indeed share her intuitive sense about the outcomes of that kind of situation (I have even elected to broach that specific topic in a past student assignment). However, as Dalia has also alluded to, I believe this observation is better suited to a discussion of therapist values rather than to the idea of intuition itself. Therefore, I have refrained from commenting directly on this topic. However, I will offer the following observation in relation to our larger discussion: I presume that the conflict that Dalia raises here would be a more pervasive concern for therapists who, like Dalia and Gloria, take a more process-oriented approach to therapy (for example, Humanistic approaches) and for whom solidifying the therapeutic relationship is a primary concern, given their understanding of it as a central therapeutic mechanism underlying significant human change. What I mean to suggest is that therapists oriented in such a way are likely to be more sensitive to issues involving a transgression of human agency. Such transgressions have the effect, among others, of making the unequal power dynamics between therapists and their clients painfully evident; a dynamic that has been historically abused and is widely recognized as obstructive to effective therapy in various ways. It is, in part, why many therapeutic traditions have sought to rectify this imbalance. Therefore, for a therapist oriented in this way, it would feel entirely counterintuitive to impose measures that run counter to their established principles and expect to avoid repercussions within the therapeutic relationship.

Notably, Gloria's account mirrored many of Dalia's points, which are fundamental to her approach. It is also clear that Dalia inherently values these principles (regardless of their shared commonality with the CRPO's guidelines), such as respecting the client's agency and their ability to make choices:

Ultimately, they're their own people. Like, they have agency, they have the ability to make choices. [...] So even in those situations where it is high stakes or there is a more

intense thing going on. I still check in with them. I still ultimately leave them as, like, the experts.

So, we can observe that Dalia seeks to respect the client's free will as fully as the therapeutic context allows, regularly checking in on the client's wishes. Fortunately, this has been sufficient so far. As luck would have it, no value conflict has yet arisen that would legally obligate her to act otherwise (i.e., a conflict generated by values externally imposed through broader socio-cultural forces). Either way, we will later see that this general approach to the client-therapist relationship also shapes how Dalia broaches the concept of intuition with clients.

Risks of Intuition

What is Dalia's view on the potential risk of using intuition within the context of psychotherapy? Here is what she says on the matter:

And I do think it is an acceptable level of risk. [...] And just also in the fact that like everything we do in therapy comes with some level of risk. [...] So I don't fundamentally see it as any more or less risky than any other given intervention. [...] Yeah, I mean, obviously, like with anything, there are elements of, like, human error. [...] I do think there is risk, as there is with any therapeutic intervention, that somebody might be using something without really putting the thought into it, without having the guidance.

So, as we can see, Dalia acknowledges that every intervention in therapy carries some level of risk and that using one's intuition is no different. However, this is not a grave concern for Dalia, as it can be mitigated, just as with other interventions, through adequate reflection and training on its use. We will later examine the supervisor's role in relation to those processes (for both Gloria's and Dalia's accounts). But for now, we will focus on Dalia's individualized processes for implementing intuition in a professional context.

Verifications/Safeguards of Intuition

Naturally, since there are two Forms of intuition in Dalia's account, we would expect at least a few minor differences in terms of one's interaction with them. We will highlight this divergence first by examining how Dalia decides to act on a given intuition in the first place. Her

answer to this relates to intuition's temporal dimension, by which each of the Forms differs in terms of 'urgency' and 'importance.' Dalia puts it as follows:

So obviously, a situation where a client is expressing suicidal ideation: that might be a more immediate situation. [...] Versus something where... I don't know, a lower-stakes example is like: oh, a client is talking, and there's just something about the way that they talk about, like, their relationship with a sibling, let's say, that kind of just pings something. [...] Those things are more, like, lower-stakes, less immediate, you know. Like nobody is going to die if I don't bring that up in this moment.

As we can see, Dalia's Form 2 concerns matters that are more 'urgent' and 'important.' Thus, they tend to be acted upon in the immediacy of the moment, such as deciding whether it is safe for a client to leave. Form 1 intuitions can be put on hold, as the potential consequences of delaying the response are not as severe; thus, they do not necessitate one's immediate action. Hence, they lend themselves better to analytical reflection and can be revisited later or even in a different context with the client. Now that this division is clear, let's examine the verification processes that Dalia attaches to each.

First, in the case of Dalia's Form 2 intuitions (relating to high-stakes and immediate situations), the process is as we have already discussed. Dalia checks in with the client and respects their autonomy and choices, as much as possible, given the circumstances:

So even with that, there is quite a bit of, like, checking in with the client. [...] There has still been a level of being able to say, like, hey, how are you doing with this? Or, like, is my intuition about this correct? [...] Most of my clients, at least in my experience, will tell me if I'm totally off-base or something. [...] So even in those situations where it is high-stakes, or there is a more intense thing going on, I still check in with them. I still ultimately leave them as, like, the experts.

In other words, Dalia seeks clients' feedback out of respect for their agency and innate ability to make decisions about events that concern them, as well as from the knowledge that clients are best equipped to know what is happening within their own experiential reality. This contrasts with a therapist's attempts to interpret clients' states of mind from an outsider's theory-based perspective; therefore, just as Dalia stated, clients are considered the true experts in these specific

internal matters, not the therapist. That is not to say that the therapist's perspective is without value, but it provides an alternative type of information (revealing and obscuring different features of an experience); it does not simply overrule the client's perspective (see Chapters 4, 5 and Methodology).

Now moving on to Dalia's Form 1 of intuition, those relating to less urgent or severe matters, which allow for additional steps before implementation. So, the overview of what Dalia does with these is as follows:

Those are things that I tend to keep on the back burner, more so, and I will reflect on them again once I have time to do that audit, or I will bring it to supervision, or bring it to a colleague. [...] I would, yeah, check in with the client, check in with other people, you know, double-check my own work internally.

This statement contains multiple noteworthy ideas, which we will continue to unpack. For one, there is the earlier-mentioned idea of holding off from acting immediately on the intuition and reflecting on it first. Part of that reflection is directed towards oneself, which is the internal check-in just mentioned, and which Dalia also phrases as follows: "I try to implement it as safely as possible in terms of, you know, I do a lot of self-reflection."

Evidently, the practice of self-reflection, despite requiring one's focus to turn inward, can also be bolstered by external guidance and benefit from the safeguard of having one's work externally verified by a third party (i.e., the aforementioned check-in with other people). As Dalia highlights, one possibility is for this audit to be routed through the established formal channels, such as within the context of supervision:

And I do a fair amount of consultation, and, like I said, I don't need to seek supervision, because I have an independent practice, but I still do meet with my supervisors semi-regularly and participate in supervision, because I think it's important.

Referring to both the internal and external checks, Dalia says: "And so, I feel like those are two of the big safeguards." However, as we discussed earlier, there is another crucial type of external check-in, which is with the clients themselves. This is evidently a late-stage verification method, as it requires bringing the intuition to the client's attention in the first place to receive the feedback.

Here is a preliminary illustration of Dalia's application of this in practice:

But also, if I do put it to a client, I know this is maybe the realm of another question, but if I do put it to the clients, I usually do so very tentatively. [...] Of like, hey, I'm just wondering if you think maybe there could be something more to this, or if you think that this would be going on. Or even you know, if I'm reflecting it a little bit more directly, I will still check in with them and say, you know, hey, it sounds like there's maybe some anger there towards your brother, or whatever. I will always check in with the clients, so it's like, that sound right? Or how does that land for you? So, if I'm using my intuition, yeah, I usually try to have some degree of external check-in. I don't usually just, like, go without anything else.

But now we turn to that "realm of another question," as Dalia has much to say about how she broaches the topic of 'intuition' with clients.

Navigating/Facilitating Intuition with Clients

First of all, for reasons similar to those stated by Gloria, Dalia does not 'advise' clients. She also takes comparable precautions, both in the linguistic cautiousness she displays and in the kind of deliberate 'tentativeness' we have just observed, to avoid inadvertently steering the client toward a specific decision (which, as we have previously mentioned, is part of the CRPO guidelines). Or, as Dalia puts it succinctly: "And so, I mean, I don't advise clients. As a rule, you know, I don't tell them what to do."

So, instead, this is how Dalia works with clients in relation to their intuition. We will first examine this process in Dalia's own words, before dissecting and analyzing its components:

I do want to mention that one of the things that I work on with clients a lot is what I would call, like, mindful awareness. But it is similar to what I would describe as how I experience intuition. At least, you know, of having the awareness of like the thoughts, the feelings, the impulses, and what we do with that. [...] Yeah, to be sort of, like, nonjudgmentally aware of these things. And then the idea that if we are aware of these things, if we are able to kind of hold them without getting into them, we can have, you know, more choice. We can choose what we do with them. And I want to know how a

client feels about an intuition, or a feeling, or a thought, or whatever; how they relate to it.

Those who have closely followed Dalia's narrative thread up to this point will recognize the strong continuity between her scholarly background, her conceptualization (and experience) of intuition, and its application in her work with clients. I have already drawn on these parallels in an earlier commentary. Readers who are even vaguely familiar with long-established Eastern religious and philosophical ideas (see Chapter 2), such as those Dalia encountered in her university studies and further honed through her theoretical training, will likewise recognize their influence on her approach to helping clients develop their own intuition. Still, I wish to further 'enlighten' the reader regarding what Dalia is attempting to help the client achieve in the scenario outlined above, particularly in relation to these well-established theoretical concepts. I will do so by presenting them as a synthesis of mindfulness and phenomenology, grounding the terminology in what has already been discussed elsewhere (see Chapters 2 and 5).

Suppose one has undergone the perhaps prerequisite process of 'self-emptying' and has, at least temporarily, come to identify with the immediate, pre-theoretical awareness of what is unfolding within one's own body and mind, an awareness that, within this framework, also encompasses the phenomena of the 'external world.' From this vantage point of 'detachment' from the ego's narrative identity, it becomes possible to do what Dalia describes: to attend to the stream of consciousness (composed of thoughts, feelings, impulses, etc.), observing the phenomena as they arise and pass, without identifying with them. Such awareness can be cultivated by creating conditions conducive to noticing experiences, such as practising intentional focus, maintaining present-moment attunement, and refraining from denial or avoidance, often through contemplative disciplines like meditation. By adopting this 'mindful' stance (open, attentive, and receptive), as the 'unattached' observer of this stream of experience, one can notice its content without judgment and without feeling compelled to intervene (e.g., suppress, avoid, or alter it). In turn, this places the person in control. Since enough distance has been created between one's pre-theoretical awareness and the flux of phenomena, one is no longer automatically driven by them and is free to choose how to respond to what is perceived.

Now, how does all this relate to the concept of intuition? As Dalia points out, with mindful awareness, the client can bear witness to the various processes occurring in their

consciousness (e.g., thoughts, feelings, intuitions). The therapist's role, according to Dalia, is to explore how the client relates to these phenomena and to guide them through the process of understanding and deciding how to respond. Importantly, this is not about telling a client to act on their intuition; rather, it is about helping them become more aware of their intuition and supporting them in using the information it provides.

Dalia's example will help clarify these ideas, which perhaps seem esoteric, by illustrating them in practice:

If somebody has the intuition or a gut sense that they just, like, they're dating somebody new, and they just have some sense that, like, there's just something off about the situation. You know, I'm not necessarily going to tell them, oh, you need to break up with this person, also, because that would be unethical and outside the realm of therapy. But what I would want to bring to that client is, ok, well, how is it to feel that discomfort? What are you taking from that discomfort? Or how are you interpreting that? What do you want to do with it? So, those I consider part of what I do in therapy. To be like building that kind of skill, which to me feels like it is based around, or like, similar to this piece of how I manage intuition and how I conceptualize intuition. [...] Which you know doesn't mean that they have to follow those intuitions. It just means they are aware of them.

When framed so practically, it seems far less complicated!

Part 4: Education & Development (*How can I improve my intuition?*)

In this section, participants discussed ways to actively learn and develop intuition, as well as how it might be applied more broadly within the practice of psychotherapy. Beyond self-development approaches, this section primarily highlights the supervisory role in this process. Each account concludes with a brief reflection on the terminology used in these discussions.

Part 4 - Gloria [4a]

Patterns of Intuition

At this stage, we know that it is possible to turn one's passive experience of intuition into something with a bit more sophistication. But one may still want to know whether to just wait

around for an intuition to make its presence felt, or whether one can be an active participant in this process as well.

For a bit of context, let's first examine Gloria's patterns of intuition, starting with the 'where' they occur for her:

It can be during the session. My general creative process [...] is just like things come to my head in the shower, when I'm out for a walk, when I move; I learn a lot from moving. So, sometimes it's all different places.

Thus, they can occur more immediately during the session or at a later time, under certain favourable conditions. Furthermore, we can see the connection to Gloria's Form 2, where her typical patterns of creativity overlap with these intuitive occurrences.

In terms of conditions that affect the frequency:

And it mostly comes to me when I'm at my best: when I'm at my creative, relaxed, curious, kind of self. [...] I'm at my best when I'm more mindful, like all of us. When I'm more mindful, and I have more time, you know, in that space; other times, when I'm pressed for time, not as much.

So, the message is clear: while we may not be able to force intuition to emerge, we can create conditions that facilitate its more frequent occurrences. Some of these involve fostering some conducive mental conditions, as we have discussed throughout both accounts. But Gloria doesn't mean only that one should create a 'mental space' in a figurative sense. She means this quite literally as well, and notes an increase in her intuitive insights by routinely putting some time aside to reflect, distraction-free, in her favourite physical space: "And a lot happens to me at Starbucks, it's where I spend way too much time and money; it's my place. And yeah, so a lot of conscious reflection."

Additionally, Gloria turns to more traditional settings, such as seeking guidance when the opportunity is there: "Supervision sometimes as well, depending on who the supervisor is." There will be more on this latter point in a section dedicated entirely to the supervisory role. However, for now, we continue to discuss the concept of creating an intuition-conducive space, as we turn our focus to one's personal, active development of intuition.

Personal Development of Intuition

In terms of personal development, adding to what was previously said, Gloria elaborates:

I'll write my journal once a week, and I'll process, well, my week, my goals, and all that kind of stuff. What I need to work on. So that's my Sunday morning Starbucks. That is sacred. More sacred than going to church for a priest.

Thus, Gloria is highlighting a crucial aspect of her weekly routine, which allocates dedicated time and space for deep introspective reflection, aimed at the overall development of her person, which is akin to her spiritual growth (which can be understood secularly). Practically speaking, this is how she uses that space with regard to intuition:

It's just that Starbucks kind of is a place, sometimes, where I can take all of those thoughts and put them together because I'm not distracted by people needing my time or attention, or dishes, or any of this other stuff.

Thus, she is not necessarily deriving intuitive content from within that space; instead, it provides her with a distraction-free environment in which to reflect upon and synthesize the accumulated information that underlies her intuitions.

According to Gloria, the content of those intuitions can come from various informative sources, which we will look at now:

I read a lot. [...] Like, this iPad's popped up about seven or eight books, [...] on the vagus nerve, [...] and all that stuff. [...] So as I'm reading these books, I'm always reflecting a lot too. If I'm listening, I have a podcast that I listen to when I walk. Now I get ideas from this stuff.

So, the format doesn't seem to matter too much, as long as it provides something substantial to reflect on. Furthermore, these sources don't have to cover the topic of intuition directly.

But that is not to say that they couldn't:

I remember looking up and reading an article on it. I don't remember much about it, but I remember coming away with the conclusion of that embodied wisdom. I don't know if it

was in the article or not, but this idea of embodied wisdom, like it's there, it's just unconscious.

So, those are some of the more theoretically-based ways to develop it, but according to Gloria, there are also other ways to do so: "I learn a lot from life experiences. A lot of it is just being dynamic and adaptable, I guess."

And, for those who do not have a natural predisposition for this "dynamic and adaptable" approach, Gloria suggests that it can be developed as follows:

I did a couple of courses in improv, and it's sort of that kind of thing. Like, you just go with it, and sometimes, yay, it's good. Sometimes it flops, but most times it turns out in a different way than if you just stuck with the script, say in a play. So, it's trusting that improv side, I guess, is what I often say.

She also provides an example of how everyday events can themselves become learning experiences, if one has a particular kind of attitude towards them:

Even dealing with the boss, [...] that's like having a toddler again, but still trying to make the most of this situation. What can I learn from the differences in his style and mine, and what can I manage, and how do I manage this person? If I go here in the conversation, he'll maybe finish this, so I can get off and do the thing I need to do.

But in addition to learning 'through' others, one can learn 'from' others in a more positive sense of the meaning as well: "I'm always learning from others. I'm a big vicarious learner. Like all the Bandura stuff. It's like, I learned a lot from others."

For instance, Gloria describes how she vicariously learned about the use of intuition from a supervisor: "This person was an amazing therapist. I mean, the person didn't teach me, but I could tell she was an amazing therapist. It's like I could see that. But again, I'd have to do it in my own style." This therapist, through her inadvertent role modelling, helped open Gloria up to the potential of intuition. Gloria's curiosity was sparked by her supervisor's intuitive abilities, which led her to take steps, such as finding and reading the article mentioned above. Thus, these methods can also co-exist and interact with one another, accelerating one's intuitive development.

Furthermore, the other person doesn't need to have perfected its execution to be influential, as Gloria's experience showcases:

Yeah, and that person did jump a little sometimes, and did form opinions quickly, and sometimes they were right or wrong, but the person was open, so it didn't really matter. If they formed it like that, you could say: I know that might be a case of the point, but I really don't think here, and here's ABC why.

But it is clear from her account that certain personal characteristics (or in this case supervisory characteristics) can be either conducive, such as having this 'openness,' or be detrimental to one's intuitive growth, which is why Gloria put a qualifier to her earlier statement, saying "depending on who the supervisor is." As a contrast to the above example, she depicts a different supervisor with some unaccommodating characteristics:

Whereas some people would be like the other supervisor and say: No, this is how it is, it's a dysfunctional thought, it's not to do with the childhood, it's not the nurture, it's that he was bad, he wasn't neglected. Ok...

A final important point is that, although we have portrayed this section in terms of one's active development of intuition, it should not be understood in the sense that one necessarily develops it consciously. Regarding this, Gloria says: "My passion is collecting wisdom and trying to piece it all together. [...] So, I think, I haven't consciously developed my intuitive capacity, but because I'm oriented that way, I think my intuition has developed." In other words, Gloria did not set out with the intentional goal of developing her intuitive capacity. Still, by doing the kinds of conducive things mentioned above, her intuition has developed. That is, by being or becoming a certain way, through doing what she typically does (as described throughout this whole account), Gloria became a more intuitive therapist. As we have previously discussed, Gloria's intuition is not experienced by her as a separate part of herself; it is intricately connected to her whole being.

Thus, these are methods therapists can apply at their discretion to develop their intuition. Now, what if 'therapist intuition' were to be fostered on a larger scale? What would the education and training surrounding its use potentially be like?

Supervisory Role

According to Gloria, broadly speaking, intuition is not necessarily ‘taught’:

I don’t know if you teach intuition as much as I think everyone has parts of their intuition. It’s how you nurture it. So, it’s kind of like Roger’s conditions for growth and all of that. It’s setting that stage, I think, and naming the concept of intuition. [...] Give people permission to have it, to go there, but I think some of it is just being mindful of what it is.

Evidently, the ideal environment for this process of identifying and nurturing intuition would not be within traditional academic educational settings. Instead, Gloria describes a preferable environment and goal as follows: “I think a supervisory role is a good place to do that, and I also think giving people permission to trust their instincts. Again, it’s what you do with them.” And Gloria provides an example of having experienced this first-hand (as a student in training):

I went back and talked to my supervisor, and he’s like: Gloria, your gut, what does your gut say? So, my intuition was right, and I really credit that supervisor for knowing and trusting me and allowing me to go down there.

More specifically, in this intuition-recognisant and validating scenario, the supervisor (or others) would play the following role:

It’s almost like naming it when you see it, and a supervisor or somebody, I think that’s a big part, will identify the fact that it could be there. I think a lot of it is just to recognize it in the teaching, like, tell people it’s there, and to recognize it.

So, again, without directly teaching anything, it’s about helping the supervisee to recognize and identify it within themselves. This point is brought home through Gloria’s analogy:

Like, could you teach someone how to be funny? Not really. But could you set the stage so they could be more funny, or be more themselves? It would be hard to teach someone how to be funny, but when they’re naturally funny, you can nurture it.

Gloria elaborates on what this process of nurturing intuition may look like:

And it’s a spectrum. I think we all have a spectrum. So, it’s just a matter of, as you get into that supervisory teaching role, I mean, I’m just a big believer, find someone’s natural

talents, and just pour water and sunshine on it, because they're going to blossom. Or at a minimum, make sure you don't cover up the plant.

Thus, Gloria indicates that, after recognizing and identifying supervisees' intuition (and making them aware of it), one is tasked with validating it and, perhaps, supporting it in other ways, or at the very least not obstructing it (which we will discuss later).

In terms of supporting its growth, Gloria mentions a few structural changes that could take place on a broader scale, but that could maybe also be self-driven:

I think training would be good. I really think one of the areas where I don't think the counselling programs are as strong as they could be is training that reflection piece. But it's training people how to be reflective, how to be mindful, how to do that process. And not just, like, I write a reflection because I'm going to get graded on it. But really, because at the end of the day, these skills are just going to get developed with experience and openness to experience. And so that's what I would suggest.

These points overlap considerably with Dalia's comments. Furthermore, as we will later see, within her supervisory clinical example, Dalia has actively taken it upon herself to rectify this while working with her supervisees (integrating it very naturally into her general supervision approach).

But besides the 'reflection training,' Gloria comments on the following 'creativity bolstering' piece: "And as a supervisor, when you notice it, like you foster creativity, you've got to learn to foster these things." Gloria expresses what she means through an illustrative 'parenting' analogy:

One day, my daughter, [...] she was never a sleeper like her Mama, but I put her down for a nap, and she took Q-tips, and made a sculpture out of Vaseline. [...] And thank God it didn't get on the carpet, but it was like, she was a creative being. So, how do you nourish that creativity without having to change all your carpets? So that's a metaphor I use for parenting. It's how do you let them explore and stuff; this is probably a better one, without running across the street and getting hit by a car.

And of course, the nurturing of these facets of intuition (e.g., the creativity aspect) takes place within a broader context of adhering to therapeutic principles, internal ethical guidance and

a strong therapeutic bond, all of which also support the supervisee in feeling safe and encouraged:

But I think the main thing is just to warm that person up. [...] It's thinking outside of that box, and more importantly, having the courage to act within those bounds. [...] As long as you're bound by ethics, and you're bound by best practices, and all of that stuff.

Which brings us full circle to the "conditions for intuitiveness" that Gloria has presented earlier: "I think the conditions for intuitiveness, I think it's got to be creativity, openness, non-judgmental." This time, though, we will also pay attention to her immediately following lines: "But I think that disclosure in that relationship, that sharing, the bringing the personal into the clinical, not in an inappropriate way, but allowing space for that in supervision and teaching, I think is part of doing that." So now let's expand on this idea.

Gloria states this for two important reasons. The first is a practical point: "And the angle I would encourage you to take a look at is the impact of personal experiences on intuition. Your own personal experiences outside the clinical room." Her stated reason for this is: "If you can make something relevant in someone's personal life, then you can make him do it in a work setting. So, hack the personal to get to the work. That's where the person's motivator is." Regarding its relevance to the development of intuition, Gloria says:

So, digging through that intuitive piece, I think is important because, in my experience teaching and supervising, the person you are outside really much comes into the room. [...] If you wanted to teach someone intuition or openness to intuition, what I would say is look for it in other parts of their lives.

In its practical application, it would look something like this:

I try to find the exception, like where in their lives are they intuitive. Just be listening and scanning for that, and then tap into that process to bridge them to a therapeutic process. [...] They might not be as intuitive as a therapist, but man, they can whip up a recipe from scratch. They don't need the cookbook. They don't need the TikTok. Whereas in other things in life, they might have to follow every rule.

And this segues directly into Gloria's second point: "And that's why I think it's important to have those relationships." That comment is, in part, directed toward the process of self-disclosure itself, in which the supervisor's stance in relation to that can either facilitate or hinder intuitive development. For instance, Gloria highlights the following obstacle:

But we're so... there are so many norms around self-disclosure and knowing your stuff, and it's like I'm about embracing. It's what you do with it. But in your head, it's all data. And sometimes you can be objective or not, but I think sometimes we try to leave ourselves at home, and kind of, it's like this idea of work-life integration.

As an alternative to that opaqueness, let's look at Gloria's former supervisor's approach:

My longtime supervisor, [...] she knew about your kid, she knew about this and that stuff, and like it's bringing that whole person, we knew a lot about her life. So, as opposed to this blank slate, nobody talks about anything about themselves.

According to Gloria, if done appropriately, this has some advantages. For one, it turns the supervisor (or therapist) into a regular, relatable human being, further solidifying the relationship, which, as we have seen, leads to numerous benefits for supervisees' intuitive development.

Furthermore, it provides the necessary contextualization for the supervisee to better understand the supervisor's modelled therapeutic processes, including those directly related to intuition. She elaborates as follows:

When people understand your process, and you share what you went through and what you're figuring out, it's like you can't separate some of these experiences. Trust it. Go with it. It's to bring out that relational piece. Because you've got to be vulnerable. You've got to be out there. You've got to be sharing. That's where some of the growth happens. [...] But this growth happens on the thin edge of experience, and I think that if you can do that in a clinical setting, you're modelling that for the client in their life, you're modelling that for the supervisee. So don't be afraid to go to that thin edge. [...] It's taking that risk, you know, the calculated. [...] It's just always push it that little bit more, and I think that's how you develop the capacity for intuition. Because it's creative, it's a risk, it's there. It's a process of human growth and development.

As we can see, this second point essentially incorporates many of the ideas discussed so far, such as the supervisor's openness (disclosure), role modelling, and the setting of conditions that support intuitiveness. These occur within the context of a strong therapeutic relationship and include the various elements that contribute to an overall sense of courage and safety, fostering creative experimentation. Of course, this also entails some level of vulnerability and risk for both the supervisor and the supervisee (or client) alike. Therefore, not only does this promote supervisors' development of their therapeutic processes (e.g., navigating the disclosure of personal experiences), including those related to intuitive capacity (e.g., one's willingness to take creative risks), but it also provides the ideal training ground for supervisees (or clients) to learn vicariously and to safely work on their own developmental processes, including those related to intuition.

In terms of the specific areas where supervisors can offer assistance, Gloria highlights their potential role in helping supervisees distinguish their intuition from other possible sources: "Sometimes I think what might not be intuition might be your own stuff you need to work through." Here, again, I am reminded of the striking overlap with Dalia's example of her approach to clinical supervision (which we will elaborate on later), particularly in how she helps the supervisee in that example identify and parse out what is intuition and what is not. This, in turn, is a natural extension of the concepts broached earlier in her broader conceptualization of intuition (e.g., distinguishing it from anxiety).

Next, Gloria notes that supervisors can assist supervisees in exploring and navigating situations in which their intuition conflicts with external factors, including other people's assessments. Gloria's personal example (from her time as a student in training) suffices to illustrate this point:

When I went to internship class, no one thought I should go see her. [...] I couldn't just leave it there. And then everyone said, well, this is your termination issues, and you find it hard to say goodbye to clients. [...] I was getting conflicting advice. [...] I went back and talked to my supervisor, and he's like, Gloria, your gut, what does your gut say?

Thus, unavoidably, one's intuition is bound to clash from time to time with something external. Evidently, as this case illustrates, the external pressure to ignore that intuition can be compelling. In this situation, Gloria's internal sense proved even more potent than the other influences,

leading her to seek supervision. The supervisor then validated her internal sense and helped her navigate that conflict; a process made possible by his general orientation and by fostering the underlying conditions that allowed it to unfold (which we will explore in more detail next). Ultimately, this chain of events led to a positive outcome for the client (i.e., potentially preventing suicidality): “So my intuition was right, and I really credit that supervisor for knowing and trusting me, and allowing me to go down there.”

So, evidently, there was something distinctive about Gloria’s internship supervisor and his approach, which made him stand out from the counsel of the majority (i.e., her internship seminar professor and classmates), who cautioned against this course of action and attributed her internal sense to her ‘termination issues.’ Gloria describes her experience with this supervisor as follows:

He was very hands-off, Socratic. [...] He was the master of Socratic, which is how I remember him. And he goes like, how do you know, how do you know? [...] And he really knew and trusted me. So, he had me doing stuff that they probably wouldn’t have an intern do, but he would see areas where you had interests and skills and abilities. So, I trusted him to be mindful of my development and to help me navigate if there was anything ethically. [...] And he gave different advice than the supervision I was getting from the university and my classmates.

Corroborating Gloria’s overall account, this supervisor appeared to be a strong advocate of promoting reflection (through his use of the Socratic method). He clearly allocated resources to build a strong therapeutic relationship with his supervisee, as evidenced by the mutual trust that developed. He likely promoted something like openness (or other conditions facilitating self-disclosure), as he is described as knowing and trusting his supervisee through familiarity with her individual skills, abilities, and interests, which is also reflected in the leeway he provided; presumably from being deeply attentive to her whole being (e.g., her mindset, special talents, personal experiences, etc.). In other words, this does not appear to be a superficial type of knowledge about Gloria, filtered through psychologically based theoretical lenses and limited background context, as seen in the contrasting case, which resulted in the shallow interpretation of her ‘gut sense’ as indicative of her ‘termination issues.’ Finally, Gloria’s description suggests that ethical considerations were also taken into account during this process. Overall, the

supervisor embodied many of the characteristics and methods considered so far to be supportive of the development of intuition. As a whole, this experience clearly informed Gloria's views about the intuitive process (i.e., another example of vicarious teaching).

Supervisory Cautions

Obviously, the proceedings of this extract could also have taken a turn for the worse, and therefore what it also showcases is that supervisors have a lot of influence over the use of intuition in psychotherapy, even as things currently stand: "At the end of the day, I was told: well, if there's a conflict, just go back to, you know, your field supervisors." So, if this onus ultimately falls on supervisors, we should also consider what actions to avoid when a supervisee presents with such a conflict regarding intuition.

But really, Gloria is making a broader point about supervisory power in general:

There can be negative experiences. I had a negative supervisory experience. [...] It really changed the whole course of my career; it's been many years. I've reflected on it. I don't know how many years later, maybe, I don't know, 15 years later, that experience has still shaped who I was, even though intellectually I know, right. So, the other point is: supervisors have a lot of power.

Of course, that supervisory power can also lead to positive outcomes, as we have just seen. But with regard to its potential negative influence on intuition (or on supervisees more generally), Gloria says: "And they have a lot of power [...] even with someone who's coming in a bit more confident and able to do things. So, a lot of it is, I think things can quash intuition." Again, this approach would be the opposite of the validating and nurturing tendencies discussed earlier; it amounts to suffocating or extinguishing intuition (metaphorically, stomping on the seedlings!).

But as Gloria points out, there are also systematic obstacles to the use of intuition. First, she identifies an obstacle to the acceptance of intuition in therapy altogether:

I think a broader thing we have to do is to get away from this notion that evidence-based is the only way to go. [...] And actually, I had a great CCPA workshop on that. [...] It's like evidence-based is just easier to research. [...] It's hard to do evidence-based testing

of go-with-the-flow therapy, right, unlike manualized CBT. [...] So again, manualized therapies and all that. [...] I think there's some of that bigger research funding in that.

If we extrapolate, because it is difficult to demonstrate its effectiveness through the pre-established empirical methods and channels, intuition is often prematurely discarded (i.e., treated as unacceptable for professional use). As we will later see, Dalia makes a similar observation.

I will add here that I concur with Gloria's (and Dalia's) point: Intuition does not lend itself easily to evidence-based testing. I also have firsthand experience with some of the challenging systemic hurdles Gloria mentions, and I have resisted the absurd notion that only 'evidence-based' knowledge or approaches are valid. In fact, I have already laid out the bulk of my philosophical reasoning for this throughout the Theoretical Chapters of this research project. For instance, I addressed many of the problematic assumptions underlying the positivist movement that drives most empirical research (see Chapter 4). Therefore, it is also an overreach to claim that empirically based research is more rigorous or inherently superior, or that it is somehow 'truer' (i.e., more accurately representative of the world in itself) than other research traditions grounded in different philosophical assumptions. If anything, empirically derived knowledge often appears quite superficial from my perspective.

That said, I can also understand the strong desire to have something upon which to ground one's knowledge and approaches. I suggest there may be a compromise regarding the ongoing push to legitimize 'knowledge' through various research endeavours. For example, this research project demonstrates that although it may be more challenging to obtain funding, support, or to execute this type of research (as it falls outside the most widely accepted paradigm), it is not impossible. Granted, it can be difficult to devise adequate ways to capture a phenomenon as fleeting as that examined in this study, but with greater flexibility in what constitutes valid research methodologies and 'legitimate knowledge,' researching them remains feasible. Systematic changes need to start somewhere!

Returning to the account, Gloria identifies another obstacle, this time regarding the supervisory context:

I think a lot of supervision right now is a whole business model. Like, there are interns working in private practice, and there's a lot of making money, and supervision as a

business, and I totally get people have to make money and do that, [...] but sometimes I feel that can kind of get in the way.

Furthermore, she mentions many other sources of external pressure that can also negatively impact a supervisor's effectiveness:

Or people are very cautiously supervising because they're so worried about [...] the college. They're worried about all this liability. Not that you don't. [...] It's like you don't want to be the helicopter parent supervisor, to use that analogy.

To be clear, Gloria is not suggesting that these external pressures are without rationale. Rather, she highlights their potential negative influence if left unchecked, particularly when they become exaggerated and overshadow other, more fundamental considerations, such as supporting supervisees' growth and well-being.

So, these are some key points to keep in mind. Even if one does nothing else to support supervisees' intuitive growth, simply refraining from quashing the process may be enough. Similar to the idea that, by not stomping on a wild seedling in the woods, you are already doing plenty to support its growth, as it will receive its nurture from elsewhere!

Discursive Terminology

I inquired into the terminology that Gloria would use in these discussions. Gloria responded:

I think most people know what intuition is, but I think having different synonyms can help do that. [...] There's a lot of pejorativeness with the term intuition. It just sounds like I'm being psychic. [...] You know, if you took out the word intuition, put the word psychic in there, that would have different connotations. So I'd actually shift towards something like creativity.

In alternative vernacular, words carry baggage (metaphorically speaking), and being mindful of this helps ensure that the intended meaning is communicated correctly. This is especially true for intuition, which often carries a mysterious overtone.

Part 4 - Dalia [4b]

Supervisory Role

As we have already alluded to, Dalia also believes that supervision is one of the primary ways to develop intuition:

In terms of like developing intuition, I mean, again, [...] I'm a big believer in supervision, I'm a big believer in self-reflection. [...] I do my own therapy. I encourage other therapists to also do their own personal therapy. And yeah, having the kind of like guided process of attuning to ourselves. And also, how to do that, you know, ethically in practice.

As we will recall, this self-reflective process, combined with external guidance, serves as a safeguard for the use of intuition. This external guidance is instructive not only in how to employ intuition effectively in therapy but also in how to do so ethically. In addition, as noted earlier, Dalia serendipitously found herself in a favourable position for the development of intuition: her supervisor had transitioned to a more intuitive-based therapeutic approach and guided her through a similar shift by adjusting the type of feedback provided, which Dalia then successfully implemented in her work with clients.

We now examine Dalia's view of the supervisor's role in this intuitive development process. First of all, she believes that supervision is an excellent place for this because it is a valuable therapeutic process to learn, yet one that can perhaps only be 'taught' through guided experiential means; that is, through training under supervision:

But yeah, it occurred to me, like, no, I think that's an important process to have, and also that, like, this is a hard thing to teach. Like, I don't know how you would teach this if not through just, like, experience, really, and a guided process like that.

Dalia's reasoning for this is strikingly similar to what Gloria has previously highlighted regarding the study and teaching of this phenomenon. Dalia says: "It's a hard one because, fundamentally, intuition can't really be, like, quantitatively assessed. Like, we can't ever really have a fully evidence-based approach to, like, intuition therapy and intuition-based therapy or interventions, in my opinion."

So naturally, since it is a crucial process to learn about despite this, the task then falls to those best situated to help with it, namely those involved directly in experiential training rather than solely theoretical teaching, which formally includes supervision but is not confined to it:

I mean, yeah, I'm a huge proponent of supervision. But also, yeah, like, I think you could establish it through other similar situations of, like, active coaching, or other types of experiencing. Like, having some sort of a guide, kind of, helping you to tap into your own experience, and your own intuition, and how that relates to a situation, and what to do with that. But, I think all of that would potentially fall under the umbrella of what supervision/teaching essentially is: training.

The key component is having a qualified person who can provide experiential guidance and training, whether through established channels or other external resources. Eventually, the field could address these gaps creatively, for example, through workshops or other resources to help develop these skills, if it were to become more widely recognized as an essential therapeutic skill, as Dalia and Gloria have recognized.

For now, therapists must personally take the initiative and be resourceful in finding such training opportunities. As we have seen, some supervisory guidance is already informally offered by select supervisors, such as Dalia's own supervisor. Fortunately for us, Dalia has acted as such a resource for one of her supervisees, giving us illustrative insight into this process:

But yeah, I mean, I'm thinking too about, like, my supervisee. I was supervising a student at the [University] program. There was a fair amount of discussion of, kind of, the gut-check, and I think this came up the most, actually, in consultations.

We now examine how Dalia approached this topic in practice with a supervisee. First, we will familiarize ourselves with the background context of Dalia's clinical example, and then break it down into the ideas of interest:

So, one of the things, because I'm in private practice, right. So, we decided that the thing that made the most sense was for them, like my student, to do consultations with people before they actually took them on as a client. So, doing a consultation to figure out what the person was coming with, and then we would have a conversation about, like, ok, should you take this person on? And obviously, there was a component of that that was

based on, you know, the competency. There was a large piece of this that was competency, of you know, do you have skills to work with this person? Are they an appropriate client for a student to work with? But also, another big chunk of it was, like, ok, how do you feel? How did you feel in talking to this potential client?

For our current discussion, we are particularly interested in that last part. Here, Dalia goes beyond a typical competency fit assessment and also asks them to check in on their sense of internal, interpersonal alignment. Regarding this, Dalia says:

Like obviously it was only 15 or 20 minutes, but [...] I did very much lean into the experience of it, or the emotional piece of it, like, what is your gut telling you about this client and about how you will work together? [...] One of the things I was encouraging them to do was to check in with their internal sense of, you know, what it is like to talk to this client.

In this illustrative passage, Dalia guides the supervisee to turn their attention inward and attend to how they feel about the interpersonal relationship. As we will recall from Dalia's conceptualization, she is helping them locate what is encapsulated by her Form 1 intuition (the sense of connection), described as a 'gut feeling' or the 'vibes' of the interpersonal situation, which may amount to a feeling of warmth, lightness, affection, or a lack thereof. As we have seen, however, this experience is ultimately informed by external information derived from the other person and filtered through one's own mental processes, with some of its sources potentially remaining unidentified even upon later reflection. That is, Dalia is guiding them to notice their own internal sense of the relationship, which, granted, may be qualitatively different from her own. What matters here, however, is their engagement in this inward-turning process, which enables them to derive valuable data. So, this is the first step.

The second step is the reflective-analytical follow-up to this:

It was a super interesting discussion. It was a really interesting exploration. This process of piecing out, like, ok, is this your discomfort, or is this something that you are intuiting about the client or about a potential working relationship? It was an interesting process to work with. And you know my student was also, like, very self-reflective, and like, it's pretty easy to do and to figure out, like, ok, what is theirs and what is not.

As we can see, this inquiry can be enthralling for both parties, and by engaging with it, Dalia ultimately guides the supervisee through that self-reflective process. She is helping them develop better general self-awareness through explorations such as inwardly mapping the borders between ‘self and other,’ as well as guiding them in adequately attributing these feelings to various possible sources.

Now, Dalia mentioned that it was easy to do with this student because they were already very self-reflective. However, it may turn out to be even more beneficial with supervisees who struggle in this area. As one might recall, both Gloria and Dalia believed this to be one of the most critical skills for therapists to develop. Gloria further noted that counselling programs are somewhat lacking in this regard, namely in guiding people through this self-reflective process. Therefore, this statement extends beyond merely reflecting on the use of intuition; it represents a crucial skill for therapists to possess in general. As also noted, Dalia had worked on this ability for many years before becoming skilled and comfortable in distinguishing what belonged to her and what belonged to others, which eventually enabled her to more easily identify intuition as distinct from other phenomena, such as her early-career anxiety. Even for a naturally self-reflective student, which seemingly makes this kind of discussion easier, there is still much to learn and develop under the guidance of a supervisor experienced in this process.

But this is not the only related skill that Dalia seeks to help supervisees develop. Dalia also targets their “clinical judgement”:

I would also consider, at a level of, like, I think I might have used this term earlier, of ‘clinical judgment,’ or like, sort of your own perception of things as a therapist. Knowing what to use when, because you usually don’t have the opportunity to break it down, like, oh yeah, let me just pause the session right here, and think about what is going to be the best intervention to use, or you know, how I should phrase this, or how I should approach this. Like, generally speaking, we can’t do that right. So having this internal sense of like, ok, generally speaking, this is how I’m going to do this; this is really important.

It follows from what Dalia had brought up earlier that, when using intuition in scenarios requiring split-second decisions, an intervention is needed that can address the immediacy of the situation. Here, Dalia makes a further point: in a therapy context, one usually does not have the luxury of stopping to reflect on how best to proceed (e.g., which intervention to use or what

wording to choose). In other words, most decisions must be made immediately, and one must know how to make an appropriate choice within that limited timeframe. Naturally, under these circumstances, decisions are more intuitively derived than analytically led, and Dalia guides the supervisee in refining this type of intuitive-based judgement.

Now, Dalia doesn't explicitly describe the specifics of helping supervisees develop better 'clinical judgment,' which we have already posited as necessarily more intuitively-based. Still, I will offer a few literature suggestions for those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of these decision-making processes (see Chapter 2 and Literature Review).

Of the two possible sources that come immediately to mind, one is Kahneman's (2011) *Thinking Fast and Slow*, which discusses the sometimes biased, rule-of-thumb, automatic, effortless, fast-paced judgments we tend to make most of the time, juxtaposed with the more conscious, deliberate, effortful, analytical judgments we make in other scenarios (Kahneman, 2011). It nicely contrasts intuitively-based and analytically-based processes, which we have often alluded to within both participants' accounts. Also, one can examine Klein's (2015) alternative framework, Naturalistic Decision Making, which views the accuracy of intuitive judgments as derived from one's experience and expertise, rather than being mainly relegated to one's cognitive functions. This is another perspective that seemingly aligns with Dalia's account, for example, in affirming the role of years of professional experience in improving intuition, and one that Gloria would also likely empathize with, given her emphasis on actively developing expertise through examining experiences. Of course, one could gain perspective on both, as these two suggestions are not necessarily contradictory, a point the same authors concede in a conciliatory article (Kahneman & Klein, 2009).

However, at this point, I would like to note that this observation applies to all the sources referenced in this research document: many of these conceptual frameworks can provide theoretical concepts and terminology, and support the conceptualizations these therapists have shared with us. For example, Marks-Tarlow's book (Marks-Tarlow, 2012) and her article (Marks-Tarlow, 2014) show significant parallels with how these participants have conceptualized intuition (e.g., internally and interpersonally based, involving unconscious elements, related to creativity and novelty, etc.). Numerous established theories and research methodologies also support many of the ideas presented in these accounts.

Granted, my intention for this project has not been to provide evidence or support in relation to existing data and theories, but rather to stay as close as possible to the accounts of our participants, who have offered many valuable insights of their own. That said, one can still benefit from engaging with the theoretical frameworks and conceptualizations referenced throughout this document (or even by exploring others beyond those I have covered). One can either find a theoretical lens that suits oneself, try experiencing the phenomenon pre-theoretically, develop one's own personal conceptualization, or approach it in any other way that helps the phenomenon make sense. Just know (and this is important) that, as discussed primarily in the Theoretical Chapters and as reflected in the internal consistency of each account, the way one conceptualizes intuition directly shapes how one experiences it. More importantly, it affects how one ends up putting it into practice: in relation to oneself, in its use with others, and even in one's mentoring approach, whether in guiding supervisees or clients. These have been illustrative of some possible ways to go about it.

Discursive Terminology

I also asked Dalia about the terminology she used in these discussions. Her response was:

Yeah, that's a good question. I don't 100% know if I use the word intuition, because, like, maybe I didn't say this explicitly, but I tend to, I think, more commonly use the term of, like, a gut feeling or, like, a gut sense. But in how I define it, that's the same thing. [...] I think I also talked about countertransference, because I think it's important to ground this in, like, theoretical stuff as well. [...] But I do think I use the term, like, yeah, gut sense. Like, 'what's your gut feeling about this?' as part of that discussion.

In a similar way to Gloria, Dalia uses synonyms recognized as descriptive of intuition. However, the reason for this differs slightly; it is not directly about its pejorative associations. Rather than addressing the term's potential negative associations head-on, Dalia seems to sidestep the issue by grounding the concept within established theoretical frameworks or in discursive proximity to closely related concepts, such as countertransference. This strategy allows the conversation as a whole to be legitimized, without concern that a single word might prove problematic.

This is likely a wise approach, but I also wanted to clarify whether the conversation as a whole was framed around intuition or if it was instead relegated to the more readily established theoretical concepts mentioned above. Dalia's response was as follows:

I think it was both, and I apologize if that's unhelpful, but I think it was a combination of having that piece of, like, ok, there is maybe a countertransference component to this. But also that sense of, like, fundamentally, therapy is an interpersonal thing. And so, I do think there's this important piece of like, can you see yourself working with somebody? Will you always be uncomfortable with this person? If not, maybe that's not a good fit. I think we did both. But, I think, we definitely did talk about intuition. We did, definitely, like, that was a framework that we were using in those conversations, around you know, do you feel like you can take this person on?

As we can see, Dalia was indeed using her own conceptualization of intuition to frame the entire conversation; moreover, this conceptualization represented the conversation's ultimate goal: other concepts, such as countertransference, arose within the discussion, but primarily as tools to help distinguish between them during the process of capturing the "gut feeling" itself. Consequently, it would have been sufficiently clear to the supervisee what they were ultimately trying to achieve. The terminology, despite the use of synonymous terms, reflected that overarching goal. The final result of this interaction was that the supervisee was able to locate their gut sense, reflect on its origins, and decide whether to work with a specific client, taking this insight and other considerations into account, all with Dalia's mentoring guidance.

Contributions and Implications for Research, Education, and Practice

The project's primary goals and rationales are as follows: whether the aim is to facilitate intuition's more widespread use, increase its overall effectiveness, or take preventive steps (e.g., creating safeguards around it), psychotherapists are currently, and will continue to use it. Therefore, it is imperative to examine it more closely and broaden discussions surrounding its use, lest we willfully ignore aspects of psychotherapeutic reality within the broader context of Being. We can begin by enriching the quality and frequency of our discourses, reorienting our attitude toward intuition, eliciting new conceptual depictions of the phenomenon, and generating more descriptive and diversified terminology. These, however, are only preliminary steps.

This study of intuition is not intended to replace analytical processes or established theories of psychotherapy. Rather, it seeks to give voice to a part of experiential reality that has been disproportionately neglected. Rather than framing it as an ‘either/or’ opposition, intuition can complement rational processes, ultimately offering therapists a more comprehensive view of ‘Being’ and promote a holistic approach to psychotherapy.

I anticipate that this research will resonate primarily with psychotherapists. However, the academic literature and my presentations to date suggest that the topic’s relevance extends well beyond this immediate audience. Its insights may also prove valuable to other helpers of humanity; that is, professionals directly involved in promoting the development and well-being of others, such as health practitioners and educators. By extension, the study has pedagogical value, informing discursive and teaching practices, professional training, and the supervision of students and practitioners.

In a regulatory context, these findings are particularly pertinent to qualifying psychotherapists and policymakers in Ontario. Here, the general concept of the therapist’s ‘Self’ is already defined, yet perhaps prematurely, by the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO), and candidates must demonstrate competence in the Safe and Effective Use of Self (SEUS) to practice psychotherapy (CRPO, 2022).

From an academic perspective, the novelty of this research suggests that its theoretical approach and final rendering could serve as a preliminary model for future studies on psychotherapist intuition. Subsequent research could expand on this foundation in several ways, including diversifying perspectives by selecting participants from varied backgrounds and orientations, and by adding methodological elements, such as incorporating bodily sources of information alongside linguistic descriptors. Future studies could also seek to capture clients’ intuitive perspectives, thereby enriching professionals’ understanding of client experiences and potentially informing the development or use of new therapeutic techniques and practices.

Delimitations

This study aimed to capture the lived experiences of a select few psychotherapists regarding their use of intuition. It prioritized depth over breadth, idiosyncratic and situated meaning over generalizability and unifying principles, and practicability over Truth.

Readers applying an inappropriate paradigm (i.e., a positivistic outlook) and expecting outcomes such as exhaustibility or universal representation might perceive limitations in the study's small, relatively uniform sample and its limited geographical scope. They might also question its empirical grounding, objectivity, or mistakenly apply traditional metrics such as reliability, validity, or verifiability. Such critiques, however, misconstrue the purpose of this study entirely.

The methodological decisions were deliberate and specifically chosen to align with the study's aim. While practical constraints, such as research context, time, and resources, inevitably shaped the study's scope, this framework can serve as a foundation for future research, enabling the inclusion of a broader range of perspectives and additional dimensions of inquiry. The study nonetheless achieves its objectives: its scope was intentionally delimited to ensure depth of insight. This research project will have served its purpose if readers find meaning and utility in these findings according to their own individualized modes of existential engagement.

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**Appendix A: Email to Professional Psychotherapy Associations
and Regulatory Bodies**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mathieu Fortier, and the purpose of this email is to invite you to share the recruitment text of a study I am conducting with your members. Conducting this study is one of my requirements to complete a master's degree within the concentration of Counselling Psychology at the University of Ottawa's faculty of Education. My research will be supervised by Dr. Nicola Gazzola.

The purpose of this study is to look at psychotherapists' use of intuition in the context of their clinical practice by asking participants to share (1) how they conceptualize intuition and its origins, (2) how they use it in their work and its outcomes (3) and how they would facilitate discourse and its development.

Please find the recruitment text attached to this email (Appendix B).

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mathieu Fortier, M.A.[Ed] Candidate, Counselling Psychology
University of Ottawa

Appendix B: Recruitment Text

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mathieu Fortier, and the purpose of this email is to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting as part of my requirements to complete a master's degree within the concentration of Counselling Psychology at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education. Dr. Nicola Gazzola, professor and research supervisor, will supervise my research.

The purpose of this study is to look at psychotherapists' use of intuition in the context of their clinical practice by asking participants to share (1) how they conceptualize intuition and its origins, (2) how they use it in their work and its outcomes and (3) how they would facilitate discourse and its development.

The criteria for participation in this study are as follows: 1) are willing to discuss their experiences using intuition within psychotherapy settings, 2) speak English fluently, 3) are located in the Ottawa region, 4) are currently registered with a governing college or national association, 5) have been practicing psychotherapy for a minimum of five years. Participants can expect to participate in an approximately 90-minute (with flexibility) semi-structured interview conducted using the online videoconferencing platform Microsoft Teams, during which they will be asked about their experiences using intuition within psychotherapy settings.

The interview will be conducted in English and will take place virtually using the Microsoft Teams platform. It will be recorded and transcribed to ensure that the data used for the study is accurate. Any automatically generated video recordings will be kept for a maximum of one week while they are converted into audio-only format (which will be retained on an external hard drive and USB). After this, all videos will be discarded using 'secure deletion.' Please note that all identifying information will be removed during the transcription stage and that the primary researcher and his thesis supervisor will be the only individuals with access to the data. To ensure complete confidentiality for participants, all identifying information will be removed from

the data that is collected. The data will only be accessible to the primary researcher, Mathieu Fortier, and his thesis supervisor, Dr. Nicola Gazzola.

If you are interested in participating in the study, believe you might benefit from an opportunity to reflect on how your intuition might play a role in your clinical practice or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at [email removed] or my supervisor at [email removed].

Please note that a maximum of four participants will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis, depending on whether candidates meet the inclusion criteria.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mathieu Fortier, M.A.[Ed] Candidate, Counselling Psychology
University of Ottawa

Appendix C: Formal Invitation

To whom it may concern,

In our previous email correspondence, you expressed an interest in participating in a qualitative study I am conducting on the use of intuition in psychotherapy. I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to participate in the study. This email is your formal invitation.

Attached to this email is an informed consent form that further discusses the details of the study. Please review this consent form, electronically sign it, date it, and return it to me via email at your earliest convenience. The interview will take place virtually, unless requested otherwise. Please confirm whether you are comfortable using Microsoft Teams for the interview. Please also let me know when you will be available to conduct your interview for the study so that we may schedule the meeting as soon as possible.

As a reminder, The purpose of this study is to look at psychotherapists' use of intuition in the context of their clinical practice by asking participants to share (1) how they conceptualize intuition and its origins, (2) how they use it in their work and its outcomes and (3) how they would facilitate discourse and its development.

The criteria for participation in this study are as follows: 1) are willing to discuss their experiences using intuition within psychotherapy settings, 2) speak English fluently, 3) are located in the Ottawa region, 4) are currently registered with a governing college or national association, 5) have been practicing psychotherapy for a minimum of five years. Participants can expect to participate in an approximately 90-minute (with flexibility) semi-structured interview conducted using the online videoconferencing platform Microsoft Teams, during which they will be asked about their experiences using intuition within psychotherapy settings.

The interview will be conducted in English and will take place virtually using the Microsoft Teams platform. It will be recorded and transcribed to ensure that the data used for the study is accurate. Any automatically generated video recordings will be kept for a maximum of one week while they are converted into audio-only format (which will be retained on an external hard drive

and USB). After this, all videos will be discarded using 'secure deletion.' Please note that all identifying information will be removed during the transcription stage and that the primary researcher and his thesis supervisor will be the only individuals with access to the data. To ensure complete confidentiality for participants, all identifying information will be removed from the data that is collected. The data will only be accessible to the primary researcher, Mathieu Fortier, and his thesis supervisor, Dr. Nicola Gazzola.

If you are still interested in participating in the study, please email [email removed] with the signed and dated consent form and indicate when you are available for the interview with the researcher.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mathieu Fortier, M.A.[Ed] Candidate, Counselling Psychology
University of Ottawa

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Researchers

Mathieu Fortier	Dr. Nicola Gazzola
M.A. Candidate	Professor, Thesis Supervisor
Counselling Psychology	Counselling Psychology
University of Ottawa	University of Ottawa
Email: [email removed]	Email: [email removed]
	Telephone: 613-562-5800 ext. 4030

You have been invited to participate in a study called The Use of Intuition in Psychotherapy: A Phenomenological Inquiry. This research will be conducted by Mathieu Fortier as part of his requirements to complete an M.A.[Ed] degree within the concentration of Counselling Psychology at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education. The research will be supervised by Dr. Nicola Gazzola.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to look at psychotherapists' use of intuition in the context of their clinical practice by asking participants to share (1) how they conceptualize intuition and its origins, (2) how they use it in their work and its outcomes and (3) how they would facilitate discourse and its development.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed about your experiences using intuition in psychotherapy settings. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes (with flexibility) and will be conducted in English using the online videoconferencing platform Microsoft Teams. It will be recorded and transcribed to ensure that the data used for the study is accurate. Any automatically generated video recordings will be kept for a maximum of one week while they are converted into audio-only format (which will be retained on an external hard drive and USB). After this, all videos will be discarded using 'secure deletion.' Please note that all identifying information will be removed during the transcription stage. The researcher may also

take notes during the interview. Data from the study will be used to write a research report that will be shared with the public. The direct quotations of participants may be used in the report, provided they do not include any identifying information.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

Speaking about the experiences of using intuition in psychotherapy could result in feelings of discomfort. Although minimal risk is associated with this, you can inform the researcher of any discomfort you experience at any point during the interview. Breaks are encouraged if you would like a minute to reflect or pause from answering questions. The researcher has the priority of ensuring your comfort. At the end of the interview, you will be provided with a debriefing form containing services you can access if the interview causes discomfort. To mitigate any social risks, participant identities will be protected by assigning pseudonyms, and all data will be kept in a password-encrypted Word document, saved on an external hard drive, as well as a backup USB key owned by the primary researcher, that will both be kept in a secure location in the researcher's home office, throughout the duration of the study and ten years after the study is completed. After ten years, all data will be destroyed by secure file deletion.

Potential Benefits of Participation

Participation in this study will help elucidate how therapists experience using their intuition in the context of psychotherapy. The information collected from this study will have implications for counsellor education and supervision, as well as for future research in the area of psychotherapist intuition. Ultimately, participants may gain more profound insights into their own intuitive practices and help shape the future of effective use of intuition in psychotherapy.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To ensure complete confidentiality for participants, all identifying information will be removed from the interview transcripts. As well, any information obtained that could compromise the confidentiality of participants will not be shared with anyone other than the primary researcher and the thesis supervisor. To maintain anonymity, all identifying information will be removed from the interview transcripts, and each participant will be assigned an interviewee number (and

pseudonym). Only the primary researcher, Mathieu Fortier, and his supervisor, Dr. Nicola Gazzola, will know the identities of participants in this study.

Data Collection and Storage

Data collected for the study will consist of recordings and transcripts of interviews, as well as any notes taken by the primary researcher while conducting interviews (any automatically generated video recordings will be converted to audio and destroyed within one week). All original data will be stored in a password-encrypted Word document, saved on an external hard drive, and a backup USB key owned by the primary researcher, which will both be kept in a secure location in the researcher's home office. The data files, including the audio recordings and the transcriptions from each interview, will also be stored on this external hard drive and USB key when not in use. Dr. Nicola Gazzola, the researcher's supervisor, will store all research data under lock and key in his office for a period of 10 years. After ten years, all data will be destroyed by secure file deletion. The data will only be accessible to Mathieu Fortier and Dr. Nicola Gazzola.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. If you choose to withdraw your participation, your data will not be used in the study, and it will be destroyed and disposed of immediately. At any time during the interview, you may ask questions to the researcher, refuse to answer any questions, and/or request to take a break. None of these actions will result in any negative consequences.

Two copies of the consent form have been provided, one for the researcher's records and one for your own. If you have any questions, you may contact either the researcher or his supervisor. Any questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research study can be forwarded to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, at 613-562-5800 ext. 5387

Funding Sources

The current study is funded by an award provided to the primary researcher by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) (2022-2023).

Would you like the researcher to send you a copy of the transcribed interview for revision purposes? Yes___ No___ (please indicate).

I, _____, understand all information contained in this form and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Personal Experiences of Therapists Conducting Online Psychotherapy

Date: _____ **(D/M/Y)** **Time of Interview:** _____ **Interviewee #:** _____

A. Information for Participants

The purpose of this study is to look at psychotherapists' use of intuition in the context of their clinical practice by asking participants to share (1) how they conceptualize intuition and its origins, (2) how they use it in their work and its outcomes and (3) how they would facilitate discourse and its development.

The information collected from this study will have implications for counsellor education and supervision, as well as for future research in the area of psychotherapist intuition.

B. Review Consent Procedures

Before beginning the interview, we will review the informed consent document and sign the document if this has not already been done. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. We can address your questions now and as they come up during the interview. You can also feel free to contact me after our meeting today with any additional questions you may have.

C. Collect Demographic Information

To start our interview, I will ask demographic questions to help describe and analyze my participant sample when interpreting the results.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your gender?

I identify as (please specify) _____ Rather not say _____

3. In what city do you currently reside? _____

4. What are your educational qualifications? _____

5. Are you a member of a regulatory body for professionals who practice counselling or psychotherapy?
 1. What is the name of the regulatory body? _____
 2. How long have you been a member? _____
6. How long have you been practicing counselling or psychotherapy? _____
7. Are you currently practicing counselling or psychotherapy? _____
8. What is your theoretical orientation? (E.g., psychodynamic, humanistic, eclectic, etc.)

9. Do you have any religious/spiritual affiliations or beliefs? _____ Which are? _____
10. Have you ever been in a supervisory position? _____ Has the topic of intuition ever come up in your supervision? _____ Have you ever witnessed or addressed anything that may relate to intuition with your supervisees? _____

D. Contextual Interview Questions

We will now go through some questions regarding your conceptualization of intuition and your experiences with it. If you are experiencing any discomfort while you are being asked or answering these questions, please let me know. We can take a break or stop the interview at any time. This interview will be recorded and later transcribed to ensure that the data used for the study is accurate. All identifying information will be removed during the transcription stage. Ensuring your confidentiality is my priority. At the end of the interview, you will be provided with a debriefing form containing services you can access should the interview cause discomfort.

Interview Questions

[Some questions may not apply to you. Feel free to skip them.]

Conceptualizations and Ascribed Origins

Q: What is intuition to you? (what are intuitions to you?)

P: How would you define it? (how would you define them?)

Q: Tell me about a time you used your intuition in psychotherapy.

P: What did your experience feel like to use it?

P: What were some of the outcomes? Can you elaborate on them?

(e.g., were they beneficial or harmful to you or the client?)

Q: What is your current knowledge about intuition?

P: What do you wish you knew about it?

Q: What is it about yourself that makes you more/or less intuitive? (what about others?)

P: What personal characteristics/traits do you think expand or limit intuitiveness/ or the use of intuition during psychotherapy?

P: What values do you think expand or limit intuitiveness/ or the use of intuition during psychotherapy?

Q: What is your theoretical orientation in psychotherapy? In what ways does it influence your use of intuition in practice?

P: In what ways does your theoretical orientation conflict with or facilitate your use of intuition?

(Can the use of intuition be assimilated within your theoretical orientation? Are there contradictions?) (Could it hamper/enhance the theoretical approach?)

Q: Where do you mainly orient your attention during psychotherapy sessions?

(What aspects of the therapeutic situation do you mainly focus on?)

P: What sort of information does it provide to you? How do you use it?

Q: Reflect on whether your understanding of intuition relates to some mythical, religious, spiritual, or supernatural beliefs. If so, how might these beliefs influence your relationship with your intuition?

Q: Tell me about a time when your intuition has conflicted with something else. [If applicable]
(e.g., theoretical concepts, education, training, personality, values, beliefs, etc.)

P: How did you resolve this dilemma?

Characteristics and Clinical Use

Q: What form(s) do your intuitions take for you?

(What do they appear like? Resemble?)

Q: How do you recognize one as distinctly being an intuition and not something else?

(e.g., what makes it distinct or distinguishable from something else, like from a randomly generated thought or irrelevant sensory experience, or an anxious feeling, etc.)

P: What is your process for verifying this? What kind of knowledge helps you do so?

Q: What level of risk is acceptable for 'intuition-related' errors in the context of psychotherapy?

(e.g., need complete certainty, high probability of accuracy, a possibility that it is correct, error is not concerning, etc.)

P: What safeguards or cautionary markers do you have in place to prevent error?

Q: How important is intuition to you in your psychotherapy practice?

(e.g., a central part of your practice, a mere afterthought, actively avoided, etc.)

Q: What kind of meaningful information does your intuition provide you with?

P: What purpose does it serve? What can you do with it?

P: Who does it serve? In what ways?

(e.g., helpful for you? for the client?)

Q: At which times or in what patterns do intuitive insights come to you?

(e.g., during, before, or after therapy sessions, etc.) (e.g., randomly, at predictable times, after specific events/activities, etc.)

P: What are you typically doing when intuitive insights come to you?

P: What are your methods to facilitate the intuitive process?

Q: At what frequency do intuitive insights come to you? How often do you act on them?

(e.g., every session, once in a while, it is a rare occurrence, etc.) (e.g., most of the time, from time to time, rarely, etc.)

Q: How do you decide whether or not to act on your intuition or intuitive insights? What does your decision process look like?

P: Reflect on whether the decision process differs when deciding whether to follow your general intuition or whether you are debating using specific intuitive insights. What are the procedural

differences, if any?

Q: Tell me about your follow-up processes after implementing intuitively based decisions or insights. [If applicable]

P: Reflect on whether your ‘follow-up’ is systematized, even if done informally (i.e., implemented consciously and regularly). If so, describe your typical approach.

Development and Discourse

Q: In what way(s) have you attempted to develop your intuitive capacity? [If applicable]

(e.g., improving the effectiveness of your use of intuition, your understanding of it, etc.)

P: What kind of guidance did you have from others?

P: What resources did you have access to?

Q: Tell me about an experience from within your supervisory or teaching role when the topic or an issue relating to intuition arose. [If applicable]

P: How did you address it? What were the outcomes?

P: In hindsight, what would you like to have known? What would have facilitated your task?

Q: How could the ‘use of intuition’ be taught to others?

(e.g., personal development, discussions, academic settings, training/supervision, etc.)

P: Whose responsibility should it be to teach or guide its use in psychotherapy?

Q: Tell me about a time when you discussed your ‘use of intuition’ with other professionals. [If applicable]

(e.g., educators, colleagues, supervisors, etc.)

P: What was the reception like?

(e.g., was it positive, negative, indifferent, etc.)

P: Was it beneficial to you? (Harmful?) In what way?

P: Were there obstacles to these discussions?

Q: Tell me about a time you discussed your use of intuition with your clients. [If applicable]

(e.g., let them know you use it in practice, that you had an intuitive insight, etc.)

P: How did they respond?

P: In what ways was it beneficial (or unfavourable) to them? How do you know this?

Q: Under what circumstances do you advise clients to pay attention or follow their intuition? [If applicable]

P: What sort of guidance do you provide them regarding its use?

P: How could it benefit clients to connect more with their intuition?

Q: What are some possible concerns about a more widespread use of intuition in psychotherapy?

(e.g., regarding its validity, safety, regulation, etc.)

P: What needs to happen for it to be integrated prudently into existing psychotherapy practice?

Q: What could be done to promote the legitimacy or acceptance of the phenomenon of intuition?

P: What could be done to reduce some of the negative associations (stigma) with using intuition in a professional context?

P: What must be addressed to foster a more profound engagement with intuition in psychotherapy?

Q: How could the current terminology be improved for discussing the phenomenon of intuition?

(e.g., as it stands: is it insufficient or too expansive, diversified or precise enough, ambiguous/confusing, or provides clarity, etc.)

Q: Reflect on whether language is a sufficient medium to depict the phenomenon of intuition when communicating with others. What are some preferable alternatives to linguistic discourse?

Interview Conclusion/Check-in Questions

1. Is there anything you want to add that I didn't ask you about?
2. How was the interview for you?
3. Did anything stand out to you?
4. Was there anything distressing to you?
5. Is there anything you would like to add?
 - a. You can always email me at [email removed] if there are any comments you would like to make after the fact.
6. Do I have your permission to contact you later on for clarifications, to verify the transcript with you or anything of that sort concerning the study?

Mention Appendix F to participants: Available resources to aid with any discomfort caused by the interview.

Appendix F: Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this study. We greatly appreciate the time and energy you put into it.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me, Mathieu Fortier, by email at [email removed] or my supervisor, Dr. Nicola Gazzola, by email at [email removed] or by telephone at 613-562-5800 ext. 4030. As noted on the Consent Form, any questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research study can be forwarded to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, at 613-562-5800 ext. 5387.

Below are some services you can access in case the interview caused you any discomfort:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region

Offers 24/7 phone-line services to individuals needing help due to crisis or distress. Further information can be found on the Distress Centre Ottawa and Region website.

Distress Line Telephone: 613-238-3311

Crisis Line Telephone: 613-722-6914

Website: <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic

Offers free, single-session counselling services to community members. Counselling sessions last approximately 1.5 hours. The location and times for this service vary and can be found on the Walk-In Counselling Clinic website.

Website: <https://walkincounselling.com/>

Please feel free to contact me at [email removed] if you require information on additional services available within Canada.

Appendix G - Chapter 0: Original Introduction

As the author of this paper, I wish to invite you on a journey. One, in which some of you may recognize your surroundings. In contrast, others will feel displaced and estranged as they lose their customary bearings, and may thereby lack that comforting sense of familiarity. But I invite you, for the time being, to simply ride along and experience a general mood with me, as detached as possible from one's pre-conceptions and judgements, as I exemplify novel possibilities for us to explore. You can rest assured that a deeper explanation of these concepts will be provided and will be available for further scrutiny later in this document. But for now, I want to share the broad thematic of the research paper, a general portrayal of the topics that will be covered. In addition, I shall present you with an alternative set of attitudes and assumptions that may be necessary for a deeper understanding of all that proceeds.

Perhaps I, too, rightly belong to the line of thinkers that have made the absurd their home (the phenomenologists, the existentialists, the humanists, etc.). I, too, have lost confidence in the supposed redemptive power of 'Reason,' with its end invariably concluding in paradoxes and contradictions, faced against unbreachable walls, as its limited range becomes manifest, and its impotence reveals itself. And all of that is before even considering human irrationality! I, too, find myself in the wake of the collapse of scientific optimism and its promise of objective truth (of comprehensive knowledge; of enlightenment). I, too, have grieved the death of Metaphysics and now dwell in the post-Nietzschean wastelands.

So, what is left to do now? That is, for those who cherish their intellectual integrity. Perhaps all that is left is the full embrace of this absurdity (À la Camus!). Of course, that implies a full engagement with the paradoxes, the contradictions, the limits of our irrational human rationality, the suffocating relativism (or perspectivism), the acceptance of the universe's eternal silence, and so on.

Sure enough, this whole project seems somewhat paradoxical. Perhaps the greatest irony is that my Methodology (Phenomenology) uses the very phenomenon (intuition) that I am trying to illuminate to illuminate itself.

Intuition itself appears so intricately connected to the ‘Self’ that readers probably wouldn’t protest much even if I were to suggest defining it solely as the ‘use of the self’ (one would have to concede that this is partly true). Yet Phenomenologists (theoretically grounded within these same absurd lands) have used a version of this faculty of the ‘Self’ (e.g. immediacy) to study the underlying structures of the ‘Self.’ Yet, since Phenomenology is the study of how phenomena appear within human consciousness (i.e., how they appear to the ‘Self’), that very ‘Self’ is also an intrinsic part of the Nature of that phenomenon. Strangely then, I am simply here reversing the formula.

The project, therefore, can be summed up in this paradox: I will be using a conceptualization of the ‘Self,’ derived partly from intuitive knowledge, to guide the study of part of the ‘Self’ of others (therapists) and, from there, abstract and formulate conceptualizations that reflect the understanding that therapists have of their use of intuition (thereby elucidating the phenomenon in the process).

Of course, ‘Reason’ does not need another voice; it already has one. It is praised and given priority, at least in the Western world. The non-material, non-observable, non-articulate, and unintelligible, by contrast, have been tremendously devalued within our historical value hierarchy, which is often subsequently unquestionably embodied.

So, this is the pledge: To give intuition its rightful place in our hearts and minds; to treat it as an equal; to provide it with our time and attention; to get to know it and understand it, in its various qualities or characteristics; to grasp its story; to validate its being. The objective is to bring it back from the shadows, rinse its stigma, and rebirth it. We extend an invitation for its acceptance as part of our discourses. We welcome its intricacies and the kaleidoscopic forms by which it appears. We will see what it has to offer and whether it can work for us.

As far as this research project is concerned, it will not suffice to examine the means (the method) without considering its end (the purpose). Nor will this end be comprehensible within our most prevalent contemporary understanding of what is currently considered valid scientific knowledge. To express this differently, we cannot strictly divorce the products of this inquiry (i.e., the knowledge produced) from the process used to obtain it (e.g., assumptions, sets of attitudes, methods used, etc.).

For instance, the scientific enterprise, using as its primary tool the Scientific Method, aims to produce knowledge of a specific kind: it seeks explanations to ever further approximate universal truths, laws, or principles through positing theories, seeking out empirical data, and opening itself up to scrutiny and falsification, as a means of verifying such theories. Of course, Psychology, as it is currently conceptualized, has firmly established itself within these strict parameters. As a result, the knowledge produced is largely delimited by the Quantitative Methods that often accompany it. The result is that we generally end up with a numerical (or statistical) representation of human beings, rather than one that more closely resembles a relatable experiential (or qualitative) reality. If we look at the scientific-psychological project as a whole, from its early inception as a scientific discipline, to observers, it may seem like there is a disconnect or that something important has been lost in our pursuit to understand and represent ourselves. What could be the culprits then? For one, we have lost our individuality! That which, ironically, has such a universal character. I am talking about a human being's consciously manifested experiential reality, including all the qualitative content, that, on one hand, is so concrete and substantial that our existence would be unrecognizable without it, and yet so intangible that we may tend to ignore it (passions, desires, sensations, etc.). We do not need an extensive stretch of the imagination to see the immediate consequences of neglecting the intangible (insubstantial) in favour of a unidimensional focus on the material, or rather, the measurable. Or in more technical terms, I am describing the inevitable consequences of reductionism.

To give a brief analogy, it would be as if we were confusing the weather channel's representative numbers for the weather itself. It would be absurd to walk out in the rain, feel the drops on our faces, and conclude that it is not raining because the designated weather experts have declared it improbable. On the one hand, we are not denying that these statistics have practical uses (e.g., making informed predictions and decisions about what clothes to wear or which activities to pursue). On the other hand, we cannot credibly claim that the representation of a thing (or its explanation) is more valid (or has a greater claim to reality) than the event itself (despite our modern society's tendency to do this with a lot of things). To exhaust the point further, hypothetically, if an alien species had never experienced weather on Earth, but had gained access to the information on our weather network channels, could we say that it had an exhaustive grasp of what earthly weather was, or would there not be something essential

missing? No doubt, the thing that would be lacking is the experiential reality of the event: the conscious perception of the weather events, for example, a thundering sky in all its sounds, vibrations, colours, shapes, and so on. Something that a series of numbers or causal explanations could never hope to capture and represent fully. Thus, the appearances themselves are informative!

If we apply the same logic to the Humanities Studies, the problem is even more pronounced. In modern Psychology, as we discussed, the participating subject in a study is generally reduced to a mere number, who then forms a statistic that hypothetically represents a larger group of people with shared characteristics. In addition, these statistics are matched with theories generated by researchers, which are generally assumed to correspond to universal principles and laws. The Universals must, as a rule, be founded on the assumption that we live in an ordered, pre-determined universe, and that these phenomena are set into motion by their respective cause-and-effect influences. That is, even this self-proclaimed objective and value-neutral scientific enterprise must presuppose and smuggle in a host of assumptions that are always beyond the possibility of verification (as in, these cannot be validated even according to the movement's own selection of empirical methods). That is, these assumptions are a prerequisite for the Scientific Method's very existence. And we may ask, who are these 'select beings' who determine, and espouse these universal laws? We ascribe to them the title of 'researchers,' who, when fully demystified, are simply human beings with a boundless curiosity who have dedicated their time and developed expertise in trying to understand themselves and the world they live in, through the means of their interpretive activities. Yet they must inevitably operate within the same constraints that bind them to the rest of humanity, and through this human world's inescapable subjective character. These products of knowledge, therefore, can only ever take the form of a human interpretation, since no tetrapod has risen to the challenge before us. Thus, the assignment rests with the carrier of the rational cortex, equipped and armed with its perceiving central nervous system and its transducing organs of flesh, that must carry this burden and set out to unlock the mysteries of the universe; and meanwhile, in the process, to discover itself. Of course, these limitations can be accommodated to some degree through human innovation and technology, but they can never be transcended, as that would require becoming something other than a human being, like a jellyfish. Still, studies produced by jellyfish can only ever be comprehensible to invertebrates. To further appeal to the ideals of scientific objectivity, it

would be preferable if these researchers originated from another planet that is in no way recognizable to Earth, or at least if they were diagnosed with some form of retrograde amnesia beginning at birth. That way, they could avoid our biases and presuppositions. Even so, even if these hypothetical results would seem objective to us (as in wholly uninfluenced by our shared common knowledge), that scenario would only give us another kind of subjectivity (we could witness another perspective on life, as experienced through the lens of an exotic ‘other’).

Now, of course, none of these are to be considered original ideas; I am simply relaying points of contention that philosophers have agonized over across many centuries. That is, thinkers have long challenged the very possibility of objectivity (given that everything is filtered through a human lens) and disputed the very possibility of arriving at ‘Truth’ (doubting whether we could ever discover and verify that we have indeed arrived at an undoubtable piece of ‘True’ knowledge). As a result, there have been many divergences in how thinkers and seekers of knowledge have pursued their endeavours.

Now, I am not advocating returning a half a millennium into the past to a pre-enlightenment era. Just as anyone else, I can appreciate the merits of the Scientific Method and all the breakthroughs and positive outcomes that have been possible because of it. But I also don’t think that it’s wise to shovel the snow out of the driveway with a pitchfork. There are more effective tools for the job that will better capture what is most essential. There is thus no need to ignore critical phenomena simply because they are difficult to capture, all while using questionable tools for the job. That is, we shall not go the same route as the Logical Positivists (or reductionists), who have decided to ignore the non-measurable and non-observable (for practicality and many other reasons). Instead, we stretch back in time and follow the line of inquiry first proposed by the Phenomenologists, which many successive traditions would later take up.

What that means for us, as it relates to the field of Psychology, is that we go back to its very inception, where it shall be reborn afresh from the womb of Philosophy. We decide that we will not follow the lead of the early Behaviourists, who deified the laboratory and eradicated the Mind in favour of observable behaviour. Instead, we imagine the *Zeitgeist* of the last century to have been that of the opposite force. We instead honour Wundt’s holistic aspirations for the field. While we appreciate his experimental work, we are in keeping with the spirit of Psychology (that

is, we do not remove the ‘psych’ from the ‘logy’). As a result, our inquisitive sensibilities most closely resemble those of Gestalt psychologists, as we originate intellectually from the same source and are carried by the same undercurrent. It is where I meet you for this journey, in the wake of the work of Phenomenologists and those who later followed their lead (e.g., existentialists, humanists, post-modernists, etc.).

Persuaded by criticisms of enlightenment ideals, we are dismissive of Cartesian Dualism (itself a recurring phenomenon in the history of Western thought) and seek a different kind of knowledge. One that is practical, useful and ethical for the individuals who will use it and be impacted by it. We cherish individuals’ subjectivity; we seek out the particular! We recognize that the quest for arriving at universal and objective ‘Truths’ is futile, that it has proven to be a mere illusion, and that it now rightfully belongs to the relics of our past. Nietzsche had proclaimed it! But undeterred, we march forth, because we thirst to learn more, we are insatiable, because we are of this world (an inhabitant of it); we recognize our crushing responsibility towards it. We cannot live without structure, and yet the knowledge we create affects us all. We know that we are condemned to hold structural beliefs, whether or not they correspond to any ultimate Truth, and that they will always impact ourselves and others. We can no longer speak of validity in the same manner, as it is no longer tied to any criteria of truth. What sort of practical impact do we want our work to have? What sort of consequences would be preferable? How do we ultimately want to perceive or understand ourselves and our fellow human beings? These are the sort of questions that must sprout in the wake of the destruction.

We know we are cut from a different cloth! We accept its logical consequences. As a matter of course, we do not follow the recent decade’s trends toward Manualized Therapy, Empirically Supported Treatments, and Evidence-based Practice in Psychotherapy (Wampold & Imel, 2015). We have heard the euphemisms! We can now see that ‘evidence-based’ therapy is a buzzword appropriated by proponents of the Medical Model (Shedler, 2018). We chuckle at the irony that the necessary empirical evidence to posit ‘evidence-based’ therapy’s effectiveness as being superior to other types of psychotherapy is basically unavailable (Wampold et al., 2011). And we denounce its ramifications, as this sort of outlook also downplays the findings that therapists’ characteristics or behaviours have a greater impact on patient outcomes than the specific techniques they use (Wampold & Imel, 2015).

The proceedings of this movement don't concern us much. After all, we are ambitious; we are chasing something more grandiose! We are reaching out for the ungraspable, the unobservable, the insubstantial: the unintelligible. Yet, what we seek is pervasive. It taunts us with its ubiquitous presence, but forever eludes us; it is also ephemeral. What is it that I speak of? It is yourself; plain and simply, it is the 'Self.' Is that not the central intrigue that first and foremost has drawn us into the discipline, having kept us occupied all these years? Is that not what so many clients seek to discover as they walk through their therapist's door? And yet, what concrete answers do we have to offer them? Some might try to define it according to some pre-understanding, others might suggest that the 'Self' is more personal, that it is what you deem it to be, or even what you want it to be. As for its origin, one might suggest that it is self-discovered, self-created, or perhaps even posited by an outside force (e.g., God, biology, culture, parents, etc.). Yet look how instinctively we trust in this 'Self' of ours, and that of the client! The verdict is clear: the 'Self' will continue to have an impact on the therapeutic process, whether we decide to give it our attention or not. It would be pointless to ignore its existence.

In this instance, we are lucky, as a large body of literature already points to a 'relational Self' that is difficult to conceptualize (Chen et al., 2006). This elusive, mostly indefinable therapist's 'Self' has long been recognized as therapeutic, as external observers intuitively grasp it and is central to many psychotherapies (Lambert & Bergin, 2013).

In Ontario (perhaps way too prematurely!), this concept of the therapist's 'Self' has been legislated. The Safe and Effective Use of Self (SEUS) is defined by the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) as follows: "the psychotherapist's learned capacity to understand his or her own subjective context and patterns of interaction as they inform his or her participation in the therapeutic relationship with the client. It also speaks to the psychotherapist's self-reflective use of his or her personality, insights, perceptions and judgments in order to optimize interactions with clients in the therapeutic process" (CRPO, n.d., Definitions section). It is, in fact, a requirement mandated by the CRPO to demonstrate one's competence in SEUS to practice as a Registered Psychotherapist in Ontario (CRPO, n.d.). In other words, not only does an aspiring Registered Psychotherapist in Ontario have to grasp this elusive concept of the 'Self,' but they also need to prove to a licensing board of other 'Selves' that it has been adequately shaped and developed. No small task, indeed!

But how can we, as the aspiring idealists that we are, recoil from such a challenge! Let's throw our hats into the game and leave our marks! Let's overlook for a moment that theorists have attempted to define the 'use of self' for over a century (they have tried to capture the human side of therapy or ways of being that are therapeutic) (Tracy-Raeder, 2014). Not to mention the thousands of years of philosophical debate resulting in vastly diverse and distinctive conceptions of the 'Self' itself. And let's pay no heed to the fact that because everyone has one of these 'Selves,' or perhaps I should say, 'is' one of these 'Selves,' we could probably never find a conceptualization that would be agreed upon unanimously. In other words, let's not let these inconvenient obstacles deter us from the task! After all, we don't have to define the universal 'Self' of humankind; we only need to elucidate those 'Selves' in the role of 'Therapists.'

I am currently part of a research team under the supervision of Nicola Gazzola at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education, whose goal is to gain insight into various aspects of SEUS. I presuppose the use of one's intuition to be a closely related concept to the use of one's 'Self.' In this instance, I am more specifically referring to psychotherapists' intuition, which is the primary focus of this project.

A brief general definition may help situate the reader with respect to the topic of inquiry. Stickle and Arnd-Caddigan (2019) provide an inclusive definition of intuition, which emerged from their study: "Clinical intuition is the acquisition of information about or relevant to the client and/or course of therapy, attained by means other than overt communication, and used to advance the goals of therapy and the client's well-being." (p. 2). While this definition is not exhaustive, it is vague, but specific enough to capture the essence of what we are interested in.

While therapists would most likely intuitively understand the construct, it isn't easy to conceptualize, comprehend, or know when (or how) to apply it to improve clients' therapeutic outcomes. Despite acknowledging its use, few studies have explicitly focused on psychotherapists' clinical intuition (Stickle & Arnd-Caddigan, 2019). It is here that I come in to further scrutinize and build upon this foundational knowledge.

Appendix H - Chapter 1: My ‘Self’ and the ‘Origins’ of this Project

Intuition and my ‘Self’

This project’s early origins can be traced to a conflict of the ‘Self,’ or, put differently, a tension between two seemingly opposite modes of ‘being.’ I can trace its inception back to a much earlier time when I was especially intrigued by two opposing tendencies within ‘myself.’ I first discovered this through discussions with friends, and only later became aware of a general knowledge gap in this general area. I recognized that I had touched upon something that remained enigmatic to most people. Yet, through observation, I concluded the repercussions on one’s life seemed unmistakable. People acted in vastly different ways based on which aspects of their ‘Self’ one emphasized or neglected.

It all seemed doubly confirmed when I observed my own tendencies. In those days, I was also very inquisitive: I liked to embody respective ideas experientially and had no qualms about following them to their most extreme conclusions (a risky test of validity indeed!). In that way, I experienced its results firsthand, which were, for the most part, favourable. This whole conflict played out quite theatrically, and perhaps most comically, when I was backpacking abroad with a childhood friend, who, at least at that time, was guided primarily by the opposite tendency (in a seemingly polarized manner also). That is, every time a decision had to be made, he approached it guided by his rationality (and morality), in other words, more analytically, whereas I led more spontaneously, adaptively, and was guided by moment-to-moment feelings, themselves being fueled by passions and desire for adventure; in other words, more intuitively. When faced with a pressing mutual decision, all we could do was smile at each other in anticipation, then arbitrarily choose one of the two ways of being. In some of his moments of hesitation, I would advise him with a simple statement: Just follow your gut! (and things did often seem to work out well for him). But what was I ‘actually’ saying? I had no idea. I only knew this worked because of my own past lived experiences.

Later in life, perhaps having seen the limitations of my own dominant tendency (and having observed people who had embodied it too confidently, to both their detriment and that of others), and having gained more confidence and trust in my analytical abilities, I eventually fluctuated toward the very opposite tendency (analytical reasoning). Similarly, I embodied it almost just as severely for a while. I became what I may call a hard ‘skeptic’ juxtaposed with an

increased desire for ‘scholarly’ pursuits (i.e., a logical, critical debater of ideas). Here too, I experienced its drawbacks and virtues. Naturally, over time, I learned to navigate these conflicting realms less dramatically, but not before experimenting in ways such as these, acquiring more general knowledge along the way (with a special interest in human nature and other related existential affairs), and later seeking out information specifically on this topic.

It was initially a delight to find at least one book that addressed the question I had been interested in: when to use my intuitive capacities and when to rely on my analytical functions? For example, I was trying to move on from being that kind of person who needlessly spends too long selecting a meal from a restaurant menu. But I also knew that my analytical processes were beneficial for highly complex and impactful decisions. Yet at the same time, I did not want to be like others I had seen, careless and overconfident in my intuition, which had the potential to impact myself and others negatively, despite already recognizing many of its virtues. I hoped to find something that would better guide my decision-making. The first book I saw and picked up on the subject was *Thinking Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011). Although it provided wonderful insight into our information-processing mechanisms and our error-prone human nature, I found it left me with too many questions and an incomplete understanding of intuition as a whole. I realized this would only be the beginning of understanding this enigmatic force within me, one I wanted to better comprehend, so I could learn when to trust it.

As life unfolded, a series of events led me to where I currently am (at the time of writing), in a Master’s program at the University of Ottawa, specializing in Counselling Psychology, as part of a research team orbiting around the central theme of the ‘Safe and Effective Use of the Self;’ and interestingly, returning to this very topic, but from a different perspective and with a different emphasis. My current conceptualizations of the phenomenon of intuition (beyond that described above) are based on the literature I reviewed and the research I have conducted since I began this project. I was surprised and intrigued to find at least a couple of full-length books on the research topic I had proposed for the Master’s Thesis, which I read as I continued to develop my conceptualizations of the project (within the context of Psychotherapy). In my first year of the program, as part of my ‘qualitative’ research course, I was able to put together a mini-research project, which I used as a sort of experimental prototype for this larger project, but in which I was able to get a first glimpse into the intuitive experiences of a

few second-year graduate students, who were amidst their first year of psychotherapy practice (at their internships). These experiences stayed with me, even as I learned the ins and outs of the practice of Psychotherapy. The following year, I could apply some of these concepts experientially to my work with clients as I completed my own internships. After completing all coursework and training, I turned my full attention to this research project. As a result, I had a lot of additional time and flexibility to explore various knowledge sources and incorporate ideas I regarded as complementary to the topic.

Regarding my Philosophical Background

A read-through of the research project will make it apparent that much relates to the Field of Philosophy. I have already alluded to my general background, in terms of my Psychological academic pursuits (an undergraduate degree in Psychology and completing a Master's specializing in Counselling Psychology). However, an elucidation of my parallel, though less evident, Philosophical background is perhaps in order.

First, I may note that my interest in Philosophy mirrors my interest in Psychology. As far as I can remember, I've always been introspective and vastly curious about 'human nature,' or about 'existence' more generally. I have always found that the Field of Philosophy provides more depth in this regard. In some ways, contemporary Psychology feels more diluted and too narrowly focused (the more I studied Psychology, the more I have felt that way). But, of course, there have always been other practical exigencies to consider in terms of what to pursue academically. Although my 'philosophical inquisitiveness' can be traced back to my childhood and adolescence (this 'critical questioning' stance influencing many decisions throughout my life), I only really started the 'study' of Philosophy in my early to mid-20s. At first, I began a daily engagement with a Philosophy podcast I listened to on my commutes to work and during long summer vacations (where I was first vaguely exposed to many of the philosophical ideas constitutive of this project), a habit I continued periodically, even to this day. But for the most part, I only started reading primary-source Philosophy during my undergraduate university program, as part of my general electives (e.g., courses such as Philosophy: Ideas and Arguments, Ancient Wisdom, Existentialism, Philosophy of Mind, etc.) and continued independent learning afterwards. Typically, when I read something, whether for my own self-development or for pleasure, the material tends to be philosophical. My bookshelves predominantly contain

Philosophical literature, followed by Psychology literature. Even when I read fiction, it is often books that explore Philosophical themes (e.g., Dostoyevsky, Camus, Kafka, Yalom, etc.).

The more significant point is that my Psychology degree, given its emphasis on Quantitative and empirical approaches, was insufficient to prepare me for this type of research. Although there were some positive influences at times, for the most part, my academic education and its requirements (especially at the undergraduate level) were contrary to these described tendencies, and largely conflicted with my favoured intellectual pursuits. To mitigate this, I always sought to carve out time wherever I could, such as in summer or holiday breaks, and I pursued some of these ideas in my coursework whenever the flexibility permitted. This general tendency also informed the environment I sought for my postgraduate studies; for example, it guided what I looked for in an internship or a research supervisor, as well as the type of research project or psychotherapeutic orientation I've developed.

Of course, these developments haven't been without their fair share of conflicts, limitations, and difficulties, notwithstanding the obvious ones, such as the delay in completing this project within a typical timeframe (which carries its own problems). But I will focus solely here on the practical constraints most directly impacting the project.

Regarding the Project's Philosophical Content

That Philosophical background facilitated one of my primary tasks of selecting an adequate Qualitative approach for this project through simplifying the parallel task of surveying their underlying philosophical assumptions; that is, noticing and dissecting the sometimes subtle distinctions between similar approaches (at this stage, I had only minimal guidance; for example, occasionally someone would point me to a relevant article to read). In other words, my familiarity with Philosophy gave me an overview of the major movements. I could therefore critically identify what would suitably benefit this project and pursue the relevant venues in greater depth. In practical terms, I eventually boiled my options down to two well-suited philosophical movements: Social Constructivism and Phenomenology; the latter, which I zeroed in on much further, specifically, on 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology.' Reframed in 'Qualitative Research' terms, I found the respective embodiment of these ideas, first in Braun and Clarke's (2006) Reflexive Thematic Analysis, which I roughly piloted in a course-related project, and the

latter in Pietkiewicz and Smith's (2014) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which I used to structure this project.

Of course, this selection of IPA did not happen without due reflection. I had to scrutinize and decide which Phenomenological Research approach to use among many. The criteria I used were how closely they adhered to Heidegger's and Gadamer's underlying principles of a 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology' (which, to me, seemed the most credible in terms of its philosophical tenets). My prevailing sentiment during this inquiry was that too many approaches brought in assumptions I couldn't accept as valid; IPA was far more modest in terms of its overarching claims. Still, I had to address some of IPA's shortcomings because, ultimately, I found that the approach did not adhere closely enough to the principles of 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology,' despite its claims to be guided by them. The specifics of these adaptations are outlined in the Methodology section.

But a few challenges still had to be overcome. When it came to explaining or writing about it all, I had to locate the sources of many general ideas that I was familiar with (more or less), but that I had acquired informally through many years of piece-meal learning; therefore, I also had to retrace the original thinkers and sources, in addition to attributing their ideas to the correct philosophical movements. In other words, there were concepts I knew vaguely and had to learn in more depth, while others I understood well, but didn't know their place in a broader historical context, and thus had to retrace their origins. That is, of course, the kind of rigour required in writing an academic paper (i.e., ideas generally need to be attributed to a specific source). Since Psychotherapy draws on Psychological and Philosophical traditions, it has not always been clear which pieces of information my intended audience would consider to be 'common knowledge.' In the end, I leaned toward over-explanation. That way, readers can opt to skip some material, but it is there for those who want a fuller elaboration.

Secondly, although I typically learn new ideas with relative ease, the concepts I was working with for this project felt exceptionally complex, or rather, the way they were described made them feel that way. It does not help that these ideas are typically unintuitive to modern readers shaped by Enlightenment ideals. The way in which I approached them also added to the challenge. Under the circumstances, comprehensively engaging with all the material from firsthand sources was unfeasible. For instance, *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927/1962), the

backbone of this research approach, has a reputation for being highly inaccessible for many reasons (it could arguably be among the most difficult books to read). I did not have a spare year to dedicate to it and comprehend it in all its minute details. So, I primarily relied on secondary sources to grasp its terminology and core concepts, although these did not always facilitate understanding (particularly as depicted in Psychological Research). I felt that informal sources were often more informative.

Consequently, I undertook an in-depth, piecemeal reconstruction of these ideas across a variety of sources. This was a time-consuming endeavour, involving several extended periods of focused work (i.e., months at a time) and continuous engagement with the material throughout the entire project. Some of this work, for instance, approximately four to six months of research, tabling materials, and drafting focused primarily on depicting Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927/1962); precisely the 'existential content' of his analysis of Being, is not included in these Appendices. Only the portions that remained relevant to Methodological concerns were incorporated into the Methodology section. Decisions such as these, and many others, resulted from practical considerations or shifts in emphasis as my comprehension of the material developed.

Foremost, I became motivated to represent the ideas to myself because I found them valuable and to ensure they could guide my research. Thereafter, I sought to present these ideas to the reader in a clearly organized form, rather than defaulting to what I did. Namely, I could not find a comprehensive account of these ideas, at least not one that covered everything I initially wanted to bring together, so I undertook this task myself.

The end product is that the references in the Theoretical Chapters (and partly in the Methodology) are a mix of formal and informal sources, the latter often providing clearer and more thorough explanations. I did not engage with these ideas solely out of intellectual curiosity, but because I recognize their value and, for the most part, accept their validity. Many of these ideas are neglected in contemporary Psychology, whereas I do not believe they should be.

To conclude, the Theoretical Chapters help guide the reader through the labyrinthine corridors of my research project. They are written for those who, like myself, may not be formally trained in Philosophy but recognize the relevance of these ideas. Along with the Methodology section, the Theoretical Chapters provide the remaining theoretical basis for the

project as a whole. In addition, these sections (and the aforementioned omitted parts) represent my own 'pre-understandings,' namely my current comprehension of 'Being' (as an expansion on my later depiction of the 'Self'), as well as the Phenomenological and Hermeneutical implications, which are relevant to the project overall.

Appendix I - Chapter 2: Evolving Conceptualization of the ‘Self’

The ‘Self’ as a Metaphor for Studying Intuition

How would one go about effectively studying the concept of ‘Self’? On the one hand, it is a universal phenomenon in that it belongs to us all, yet it is also uniquely distinct and personal for each person. It is a phenomenon that appears so instinctual, primordial even, that one feels as if one can immediately grasp it, at least experientially. Yet, when one seriously attempts to delineate and describe it theoretically, one quickly recognizes that it remains an elusive and mind-boggling phenomenon. Passivity, or the abandonment of further attempts to grasp it, may seem all too natural, given that, perhaps uncontroversially, it may be characterized as non-material, non-observable, non-articulate, and maybe even non-intelligible; in essence, a phenomenon that represents that which a ‘Natural-oriented’ scientist (trained in the Logical Positivist tradition) would selectively ignore. Yet, history shows us an alternative at a time when all had become stultified and ossified, when, for thousands of years, the ‘Self’ was unquestionably held to be the ‘Essence’ of the human being. It was viewed as a static, unchanging, well-delimited entity, derived from a culmination of Western traditions that viewed the human being as comprised of an immaterial Soul inhabiting a material Body; furthermore, at the throne of its agency stood the reigning Mind, which was undoubtedly, majestically rational and even moral, at least when conceptualized in its purest and most natural form. But in the last few centuries, a new breed of intellectuals began to appear: consciousness-oriented thinkers (e.g., from the Phenomenological and Existential philosophical traditions), with their bold new Methodologies and novel ways of perceiving. Some of them dared to reverse a long-held formula. They proposed instead that ‘existence precedes essence’ (the existentialist mantra), and, through this lens, a dynamic, relational, relative, subjective, emotional, passionate, and imagery-based image of the ‘Self’ began to emerge; one for which contemporary beings may feel more of an affinity. The ‘Self’ had changed, and so did the people embodying it.

All this is a metaphor for the phenomenon of intuition featured in this study. There are countless striking parallels between the two if one takes the time to reflect on them side by side and creatively play with these ideas. I will share a few evident similarities, nonetheless. Notably, the phenomenon of intuition shares many of the same characteristics as the ‘Self’ and thus, it brings up many similar challenges when attempting to describe, explain, define, categorize,

manipulate, predict, control, or try doing anything remotely ‘scientific’ with it (even as far as ‘undoubtedly’ verifying and validating its existence). All of this despite everyone of us possessing an ‘intuitive’ (experiential) sense of what it is: we all know the ‘lived experience’ of what it is like to have a ‘Self.’ Could there ever be a fully ‘Self-less’ human being, any more than there could be a completely ‘Intuition-less’ one? I suspect not.

If the reader has observed the metaphor closely enough, one might have recognized a historical solution to these challenges, embedded within the study of the ‘Self.’ Thus, I have implicitly alluded to a viable approach for my research project. But I will briefly introduce the connection. Martin Heidegger was a 20th-century philosopher who unapologetically dismantled thousands of years of philosophical assumptions about existence and ‘Being’ and set out to develop his unique mode of inquiry, finally arriving at what is possibly the most in-depth conceptualization of the ‘Self.’ His Methodological process was largely influenced by his mentor Husserl, the father of Phenomenology, and he adapted it to pursue the study of ‘Being’ itself. Thus, he developed ‘Hermeneutic phenomenology,’ which, once applied to his original purposes, resulted in a new understanding of ‘Being.’ In this way, he addressed many difficulties in studying such phenomena and generated valuable insights into the process (which later intellectuals, such as Gadamer, also expanded upon). Similarly, given the evident parallels, his work can adequately guide my study of intuition. For a fuller elaboration of these ideas, see Chapter 5 and the Methodology section.

Furthermore, I consider a therapist’s intuition to be related to the therapist’s ‘Self,’ in that using one’s intuition in therapy likely corresponds with using elements of one’s ‘Self’ for therapeutic purposes (a hardly disputable proposition). That is part of why, despite all the difficulties mentioned above, I took extra time to locate and ground my work in a comprehensive, down-to-earth (though not immediately evident) conceptualization of the ‘Self’ (or Being), which runs parallel to the project as a whole. Therefore, as discussed elsewhere, Heidegger’s philosophy (and Gadamer’s expansions) provide the philosophical roots of my research project: I use similar Methodological principles grounded in the same concept of ‘Being’ (and, by extension, provide a comprehensive view of the ‘Self’).

However, irony runs at its core: intuition is a fundamental part of the process of any Phenomenological inquiry. Its researchers aim to obtain direct, immediate knowledge from the

‘lived everyday experiences’ of participants (or through the introspection of one’s own experiences). Thus, in a sense, in my research project, I am simply reversing the formula: the founding Phenomenologists had to work with an experiential understanding of intuition to arrive at their comprehension of ‘Self,’ and I start with their intuitively based structures of the ‘Self’ to examine the foundations of the intuitive processes that generated such knowledge. This sort of paradox seems intrinsic to these Phenomenological inquiries (for example, Heidegger and Gadamer had to assume ‘a priori’ that their way of thinking about ‘understanding’ and ‘interpretation’ was well-founded, so that they could confidently set out to study the topic from this theoretical basis and eventually arrive at a foundational theory of ‘understanding’ and ‘interpretation’). But again, these contradictions start to dissolve when we recognize that it is, instead, our more ‘distanced’ view through an abstract ‘scientific’ lens, complete with the imposition of arbitrary delimitations between various supposedly rigid and distinct entities, that is illusory; instead, the ‘immediate reality’ suggests that there are no actual boundaries between such phenomena (i.e., in this case, it would imply that ‘Self’ and ‘intuition’ are co-constituting and in flux). Then again, to sense and understand this, one has to be able to view it via ‘immediate knowledge’ (devoid of the usual filters by which we have learned to perceive, organize, and make sense of the world); therefore it can be understood this way ‘Phenomenologically’ and not, for example, through a ‘naturalistic or mathematical lens.’

In my understanding, I see it as counter-productive (and erroneous) to search for a clear and distinct separation between the two phenomena (a separation appears illusory in my Mind). Thus, in this project, I have worked with both constructs from the beginning, sometimes feeling as if I were working on multiple theses simultaneously. Even though, as described in my Chapter 1 section on the project’s early inception (long before I was an ‘academic’ or a ‘researcher’), I had, at first, wanted to understand intuition better as a function within the ‘Self’ (thus, I initially cared about it from a perspective of ‘self-knowledge’ and for the benefit of having new ‘practical knowledge’). Ultimately, all these parallels and their intermingling only grew stronger, and the phenomena remained intertwined until the very end. Thus, the fusing was both voluntary and involuntary, as shown by the serendipitous events above; I had not recognized the earlier irony at the core of my project until I had already selected and invested much time in laying out the Methodology.

But I have already skipped ahead to the end (having laid out the conclusion of these events). I will now take the reader back through the various conceptualizations of the ‘Self’ that informed the project as I developed it, starting with its earliest conceptualizations (when I officially began working on this project at the start of the Master’s program).

Dichotomy of the ‘Self’: A Representation of Two Underlying Currents

I have remarked, using a very crude dichotomy (which has held up surprisingly well even as the perspectives multiply), that the conceptualizations of the ‘Self’ follow two general philosophical or historical currents, despite later deepening the analysis and further expanding on these trends (see Chapter 3). Thus, I share one of my initial ‘framings,’ devised as I sought out potential structures for the project. It is a sort of elementary dichotomy, comprised of two seemingly contrary ways of conceptualizing the ‘Self,’ that serves to illustrate two underlying, conflicting tendencies.

The ‘Western Self’

When I discuss a ‘Western’ conceptualization of the ‘Self,’ I seek to project the idea of something we could call a ‘Narrative Self,’ which is the kind of story we use to describe our ‘Self’ to ourselves or perhaps to others when they ask us about our ‘identity’ (e.g., somewhat like the idea of the ‘Self’ in Social Constructivism). This constructed (or co-constructed) ‘Self’ may be a coherently woven tapestry of experiences and thoughts that encompasses selective memories of past events and imagined projections about our future ‘Self’ (our ideal ‘Selves’) that provide us with that sense of continuity, and even security or direction, as we try to navigate our ever-changing experiences in the moment-to-moment, eternal present tense. This ‘Self’ relies on our accrued knowledge, our learned tools for acquiring it (e.g., our linguistic capacity), and our experiences within the world (itself built on our collective history and the developments of existence), which provide a well of content to draw from. This content is usually represented linguistically in our Minds, but is also developed socially and communicated to others, often via dialogue. This is without discounting other possible modes of representation, such as art or mental imagery, or alternative symbolic forms (such as numbers or tones). We may add that our understanding and relationship to the things and people around us involve making analytical judgments about the values and functions of these things: labelling them and perceiving them as separate, independent entities distinct from other objects. This conceptualization of the ‘Self’ and

the idea of an ‘objective world’ that surrounds us thus relies heavily on our faculty of reason, which constantly seeks to make logical sense of itself and of otherness. It aims to comprehend and better represent the world (including itself) to oneself. Therefore, this ‘Self’ is analytical and theoretical. It exists as a construct in our Mind, available to us as we move between past and future tenses (remembering and imagining), and represents itself in ways that are both creative and personal. At the same time, it is socially constructed from the content and skill sets (abilities) it has developed within its own historically and culturally situated context (its time and place), which we call its ‘environment.’ This ‘Self,’ in Western contexts, is, in most cases, shaped by contemporary rationalistic and empirical ideas, with earlier traditions exerting an implicit influence, even if not overtly adhered to. Of course, some people are drawn to different views of the ‘Self’ (historical models or contemporary alternatives), while the most adventurous, who, like artists, create personalized visions and ‘self-portraits,’ may deviate in small or significant degrees from these pre-existing models. Nonetheless, I unify all these ‘Selves’ because they are all ‘analytical’ representations, meaning that the ‘Self-concept’ is derived linguistically (or symbolically) through conceptual thinking, categorization, value-judgements and labelling. These may include logical and empirical derivatives (e.g., in CBT approaches), individually or co-constructed identities (e.g., in humanistic or social constructivist approaches), or even ‘Selves’ prescribed or described through theological, cultural, ideological, or other frameworks (e.g., a ‘Self’ identified as a Christian, Canadian, Conservative, among others).

The ‘Eastern Self’

An ‘Eastern’ view of the ‘Self’ will be informed by different underlying traditions (e.g., Buddhism or Daoism). For instance, we might call it an ‘Experiencing Self.’ The priority is experiential knowledge, with an immediate focus on the ‘here and now’ and present-moment happenings. The kind of ‘Self’ that one might glimpse when switching into a mode of altered consciousness that we call ‘flow,’ which occurs when one is captivated by activity and loses all sense of time and of being a separate ‘Self,’ leaving only a sense of oneness with the activity. This state of ‘Selflessness’ can be cultivated through various practices and may grow in frequency or intensity, leading to different forms of experiences. But even as a conceptual exercise, by extending the idea of an ‘ego-less’ state of mind across different kinds of artificial boundaries, one eventually finds that the distinctions between oneself and knowledge, concepts,

objects, and more begin to dissolve. Once this exercise of disintegrating the supposedly ‘fixed and distinct’ entities or identities is applied to one’s ‘Self,’ one can begin to move toward the type of experience that people often allude to, or even attain through meditation, mindfulness or other contemplative practices: an experience of ‘nothingness’ (‘no-thingness’), where one eventually recognizes that the ‘Self’ amounts to no more than an emptiness (or groundlessness). In this state, one’s ‘Self’ (as discussed earlier) is reduced to a construct in mind, and the ‘me’ is experienced as a form of conscious awareness, witnessing, as if through a grand kaleidoscope, the phenomenological spectacle of the ‘Self’ and one’s life (e.g., observing thoughts, emotions, behaviours, concepts, etc.). This ‘conscious awareness’ has learned to speak and listen to itself, and tells grand narratives about what it is and the world it seeks to understand; thus, it can perhaps be thought of as ‘process’ (and the content could always be otherwise). That said, that ‘emptiness’ (nothingness or groundlessness) also represents a possible way of experiencing (conceptualizing) one’s ‘Self.’ The experience of mindfulness (as taught in Buddhist teachings) seeks to undermine the influence of our rational Mind’s tendency to label, categorize, and judge the ‘objects’ of our world and our ‘Selves’ (or those of other beings). Instead, this conceptualization of the ‘Self’ seeks to prioritize (or account for) more primitive experiences, such as immediate perceptions or ‘pre-conceptual’ knowledge. Therefore, I prefer to think of it as an intuitive ‘Self’ since it must ultimately be sought and found in felt experiences rather than rational conceptualizations (rationality being only the means to the end in this case).

Unrefined Groupings

As is typical, as complexity increases, products of conceptual thinking are bound to crumble under their own weight. Admittedly, this distinction between an ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ Self is very crude, messy, and barely holds up to our actual historical developments. This is evident in the fact that both Western (e.g., Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger, etc.) and Eastern thinkers (e.g., Nishida, founder of the Kyoto school) have borrowed and recombined these ideas in diverse ways. The problem is further compounded in that it hardly encapsulates many of the possible conceptual divisions of the ‘Self.’ For example, I would not know how to classify a conglomeration of these two tendencies, which are both typically considered in Gestalt therapy literature, as reflected in Roubal and Francesetti’s (2022) theoretical work. As another troublesome example, Höll (2020) presents a table outlining “the levels of complexity of human

existence” (p. 191), featuring numerous levels of analysis and perspectives through which one could explore our being (e.g., cosmological, biological, physical, chemical, evolutionary, historical, sociological, psychological, etc.). But how could such a holistic view be classified within such a simplistic model? Regardless, would it matter if, in its simplicity, the model could still be helpful?

Use for this Dichotomy of the ‘Self’

I suspect that many psychotherapists will be at least somewhat familiar with the ideas shared above, as they have each made their way into Psychotherapy in some form. Alternatively, unfamiliarity with either of these trends may indicate ‘blind spots.’ These sections will hopefully arouse curiosity and point to future possibilities.

Although I eventually moved beyond it, using this crude delimitation, I began to test its utility by classifying various psychotherapy approaches into one of the two ‘tendencies’ (i.e., based on how they ‘approach’ the ‘Self’). To give a few illustrative examples: A CBT approach would likely favour a ‘Western’ view of the ‘Self,’ preferring to work with what is intelligible in the ‘Self’ (dialogical logic and empirical data, etc.). An approach like ACT would have a more ‘Eastern’ (e.g., Buddhist-influenced) view of the ‘Self’ and seek to counteract those over-rationalistic Mind tendencies whenever appropriate. Psychodynamic theories seem to fall partly in both camps, with their acknowledgment of the role of the unconscious combined with a heavily interpretive (analytical) theoretical approach, as exemplified even within Freud’s conceptualization of the ‘Self’ (with the unconscious ‘Id’ representing one tendency, and the conscious ‘Ego’ and ‘Superego’ the other).

Ultimately, reflecting on which ‘Self’ the therapist helps is worth consideration. It could be beneficial to examine one’s own ‘theoretical tendencies’ (whether they are influenced by one’s personality, personal experiences, or educational and professional climate). One might come to recognize an overreliance on either analytical or intuitive proclivities, and become aware of one’s potential limitations as delimited by one’s favoured approach, or even take the time to notice how it either facilitates or obstructs one’s natural tendencies.

To supplement this section, I wrote a related theoretical piece (see Chapter 3) that illustrates how Nietzsche's early thoughts mostly aligned with this dualistic conceptual division of the 'Self.' It also showcases a possible historical origin underlying these opposing tendencies. I attempted to illustrate the various implications and how a psychotherapist might work with these conceptualizations of the 'Self' by portraying a 'young Nietzsche' working as a psychotherapist and applying his psychological insights about human nature, as well as his broader philosophy, to helping a 'hypothetical client' who is suffering from a 'direct' confrontation with the absurd conditions of our existence. It may stimulate general reflections on how conceptualizations of the 'Self' and the preference for either of these opposing tendencies can shape the entire course of psychotherapy, and perhaps raise ethical considerations, such as who decides on this course.

As for its further use, others may be creative with it; I share it with those who might find it useful. As for myself, I eventually moved past it as I turned my attention to a more comprehensive view of 'Being' (which nonetheless embodied most of these ideas), as my project continued to take shape and led me in new directions.

The Cognitive Duality

In Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011), the division between intuitive and analytical processes is already established. The author says: "System 1 operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 20). "System 2 allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations. The operations of System 2 are often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice and concentration" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 21). After explaining that these two systems do not literally exist in the brain and function as descriptive labels in Psychology, he suggests imagining the book as a psychodrama between these two characters (Kahneman, 2011). Alternatively, Kahneman's distinction can be reinterpreted as a tension between two tendencies or forces within oneself. This framing is reflected in his description of one's relationship to the two systems, where he states:

When we think of ourselves, we identify with System 2, the conscious, reasoning self that has beliefs, makes choices, and decides what to think about and what to do. Although

System 2 believes itself to be where the action is, the automatic System 1 is the hero of the book. (Kahneman, 2011, p. 21)

So, I want to re-emphasize the point that, although we like to think of ourselves, especially in Western contexts, as superbly rational, logical creatures, all the while identifying mainly with our sense of agency (our conscious will), here is Kahneman saying that there is another hidden (unconscious) aspect of the ‘Self’ that is even more influential on our decision-making processes and in shaping our lives. To make matters worse for us, Kahneman spends much of his book pointing out how this hidden force can lead us to make systematic judgment errors (Kahneman, 2011). So, it is no wonder that the introduction of these ideas has sometimes been actively resisted by people (and perhaps sounds bitter-sweet to others), especially when received within a culture that has traditionally worshipped its rationality (and its sense of individuality) as the highest good and its defining essence. But to be fair to Kahneman, his work was not some malicious attempt to disparage humanity’s self-image by portraying us all as overly self-confident and irrational creatures guided by our biases (although it can leave that impression). His work serves to help us become more knowledgeable and rational. Or at least more careful and attentive in judgment.

An Intuitive Personality Type

The relation between the therapist’s ‘Self’ (in this case, referring to personality traits and types) and the concept of intuition may have even more significant implications for a specific type of therapist. Carl Jung included the trait of ‘intuition’ within his theoretical development of archetypes, which later informed the development of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a framework that classifies personalities across four scales into sixteen types (Charles, 2004). After presenting a somewhat dated statistic indicating that most therapists (91%) had an intuitive preference, Charles devotes over a page to describing the characteristics of those who corresponded to the “intuitive type” (Charles, 2004, pp. 56-57). While there is ongoing debate regarding the empirical validity of these personality type tests, I have resonated strongly with the material presented in that section, in a similar way to how I have found much value and accuracy in my own MBTI results. These descriptions also overlap heavily with the connections drawn in Marks-Tarlow’s (2012) work on clinical intuition. As Allan N. Schore states in his foreword to her book, she brings focus to “numerous phenomena that have heretofore seemed to be tangential

to psychotherapy—clinical intuition, play, humor, imagination, and wisdom” (Marks-Tarlow, 2012, p. xvii).

Concluding Remarks to This Chapter

This project seeks to give voice to this intuitive side of the ‘Self,’ as it is the most neglected. However, ultimately, I aim to encourage a shift toward a more holistic conception of the ‘Self,’ one that both acknowledges and integrates rational and intuitive processes.

With all these considerations in mind, I opted for Heidegger’s (1927/1962) concept of ‘Dasein’ as the background from which the analysis of intuition, alongside his Methodological approach, can take place (See Methodology). His ideas enable, first, an appropriate Methodology for studying the use of intuition; second, they provide a more nuanced and perhaps more credible foundation for the ‘Self’ (of both therapist and client); and third, they help elucidate its often-neglected aspects. Thus, this foundation for the ‘Self’ (or Being) and the study of intuition remain intimately connected throughout in a bi-directional manner.

Appendix J - Chapter 3: Nietzsche's Dionysian, Apollonian, and Socratic Principles

For brief context, as I continued to ponder ideas relating to the analytical and instinctive tensions within the 'Self,' and deepened my reflections regarding the two dominant and opposing modes of 'self-conceptualization,' I came to recognize that these historical conceptual undercurrents (or dominant tendencies) have reemerged, in one form or another, accross at least a few millennia of human thought. Here, we examine an insightful past attempt to locate and explain their origins.

The Dionysian-Appollonian Duality

In 1872, Friedrich Nietzsche, in his first book, *the Birth of Tragedy* (written at the age of 24), elucidated what he described as a tension between the Dionysian and Apollonian drives of existence; he argued that these were also reflected in the individual and that, according to him, both appeared in equilibrium in the ancient Greek art form of tragedy (Nietzsche, 1967).

To portray the Apollonian, Nietzsche drew on Schopenhauer's poetic imagery of humankind sweetly dreaming behind the veil of illusion (or the veil of Maya):

Just as in a stormy sea that, unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves, howling, a sailor sits in a boat and trusts in his frail bark: so in the midst of a world of torments the individual human being sits quietly, supported by and trusting in the principium individuationis. (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 35-36).

What he refers to here is the 'principle of individuation': those personal myths, or sets of symbols and imagery, that we call the (ideal) 'Self,' which provides us with an individuality (an Ego) and sense of separateness from the surrounding world, and which enables us to view ourselves in an ideal light, to beautify and justify our existence while navigating the underlying chaos, irrationality, and terrors of existence that lie beneath the veil (Nietzsche, 1967). Nietzsche recounts the origins and purpose of this Greek impulse as follows:

The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence. That he might endure this terror at all, he had to interpose between himself and life the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians. That overwhelming dismay in the face of the titanic powers of nature [...] all this was again and again overcome by the Greeks with the aid of the Olympian *middle*

world of art; or at any rate it was veiled and withdrawn from sight. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 42)

To elaborate, Nietzsche remarked that before inventing the Olympian Gods (via their Apollonian drive), the Greeks were aware of a more terrible world existing, so to speak, beneath them, which the Titans had originally occupied (Nietzsche, 1967). According to Greek mythology, the Titans were eventually overthrown in a battle for supremacy by the younger Olympian Gods and relegated to the underworld (Nietzsche, 1967). As a result, Order reigned over Chaos. Nietzsche poetically envisions these ideas: “out of the original Titanic divine order of terror, the Olympian divine order of joy gradually evolved through the Apollonian impulse toward beauty, just as roses burst from thorny bushes” (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 42-43). However, this one-sided impulse, “The Homeric ‘naiveté’ [...] as the complete victory of the Apollonian illusion” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 44), was not the only one to play out in Greek culture and within the individual.

As a counterforce to the Apollonian, Nietzsche posits what he calls the Dionysian impulse, which he represents through the analogy of intoxication:

Either under the influence of the narcotic draught, of which the songs of all primitive men and peoples speak, or with the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature with joy, these Dionysian emotions awake, and as they grow in intensity everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 36)

What he is talking about here is that opposite tendency of people wanting to completely lose their sense of ‘Self’ and merge with something beyond the ‘Self’ (with all of nature, with humanity, etc.), in the same way that an intoxicated person becomes more passionate, less rigid, and openly loving, as they begin to feel less Self-conscious, and start to seek greater connection. Or rather, as Nietzsche puts it: “Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 37). And a few lines later:

Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or ‘impudent convention’ have fixed between man and man are broken. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and

fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of Maya had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity.

(Nietzsche, 1967, p. 37)

In other words, sometimes one feels alienated from the rest of the world, both from nature at large and from fellow human beings, and a desire emerges for the dissolution of these boundaries and a greater sense of connection. In Greek culture (and surrounding cultures), this tendency emerged in a type of Dionysian festival (or cult) featuring Dithyrambic music and dances, which were wildly erratic and ecstatic in form (Nietzsche, 1967). He says: “In these Greek festivals, nature seems to reveal a sentimental trait; it is as if she were heaving a sigh at her dismemberment into individuals” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 40) and also, “the Dionysian *music* in particular excited awe and terror” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 40). Of this Dionysian impulse, he says:

The essence of nature is now to be expressed symbolically; we need a new world of symbols; and the entire symbolism of the body is called into play, not the mere symbolism of the lips, face, and speech but the whole pantomime of dancing, forcing every member into rhythmic movement. Then the other symbolic powers suddenly press forward, particularly those of music, in rhythmic, dynamics, and harmony. To grasp this collective release of all the symbolic powers, man must have already attained that height of self-abnegation which seeks to express itself symbolically through all these powers.

(Nietzsche, 1967, p. 40)

Music, I should clarify, is depicted in his book as the most immediate means of intuiting the ‘True’ Nature of existence, or that which lies beyond ‘mere appearances’ (since, for Nietzsche at the time of writing, Nature expresses itself directly through musical symbolism) (Nietzsche, 1967). I will note here that Nietzsche later distanced himself from any Metaphysical claims regarding existence’s ‘True’ Nature. Nonetheless, what is important is that we can see that, for Nietzsche (1967), there is a direct correspondence between the ‘Dionysian’ impulses and the more immediate forms of knowledge (music, movement, etc.), which provide a means of gaining access to the ‘unveiled’ Nature of things. Thus, he essentially asserts that ‘Truth’ is to be intuited. Regardless of its validity, this theoretical correspondence aligns with some of the ‘conceptual illustrations’ that I offer.

To restate what has been discussed so far more succinctly, we can now understand Nietzsche's introduction to these forces when he says: "In order to grasp these two tendencies, let us first conceive of them as the separate art worlds of *dreams* and *intoxication*" (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 33). The first is, of course, the Apollonian, corresponding to things like order, individuation, clarity, harmony, and beauty (embodied in art forms such as sculpture or the Greek Epic), and the second is the Dionysian, representing things like chaos, deindividuation, passions, instincts, intoxication, and ecstatic feelings (captured in arts like dithyrambic music and dances) (Nietzsche, 1967).

The Third Force (to Substitute the Apollonian)

The picture becomes somewhat muddier afterwards (when he begins discussing the death of ancient Greek tragedy), but I will attempt to incorporate it nonetheless. In the second half of his book (which Nietzsche wrote a little later than the rest), he introduces a third force that would eventually replace the Apollonian 'dream world' while remaining in opposition to the Dionysian (Nietzsche, 1967).

After a long-winded critique of the last of the famous Greek tragedians, Nietzsche says: "Even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn demon, called *Socrates*" (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 82). Immediately afterwards, he adds: "This is the new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic—and the art of Greek tragedy was wrecked on this" (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 82). To understand this, we must consider how Nietzsche perceived Socrates and his immense influence on Western culture:

There is, to be sure, a profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even *correcting* it. This sublime metaphysical illusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into art—which is *really the aim of this mechanism*. (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 95-96)

Followed right after by:

With the torch of this thought in our hands, let us now look at Socrates: he appears to us as the first who could not only live, guided by this instinct of science, but also—and this is far more—die that way. Hence the image of the *dying Socrates*, as the human being whom knowledge and reasons have liberated from the fear of death, is the emblem that, above the entrance gate of science, reminds all of its mission—namely, to make existence appear comprehensible and thus justified; and if reasons do not suffice, *myth* has to come to their aid in the end—myth which I have just called the necessary consequence, indeed the purpose, of science. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 96)

Unpacking some of these ideas, first, we have a description of Socrates, who firmly believed not only that the Nature of reality could be grasped, but also that it could be manipulated. His method was through rationality (thinking) and causal inferences, which, of course, was a sharp contrast with the mythological society of his time. He believed in this way of life so profoundly that he was willing to live and die by his principles and, thus, became a martyr for science. In other words, Socrates provided a model for living that made life bearable by rendering it intelligible and therefore justifiable, which, in turn, sheltered humanity from its death anxiety. Nietzsche is essentially pointing to the emergence of a new ‘character type’ and the ‘scientific instinct,’ which became so influential that it went on to shape the course of Western culture and still dominates our contemporary lives:

Socrates is the prototype of the theoretical optimist who, with his faith that the nature of things can be fathomed, ascribes to knowledge and insight the power of a panacea, while understanding error as the evil *par excellence*. To fathom the depths and to separate true knowledge from appearance and error, seemed to Socratic man the noblest, even the only truly human vocation. And since Socrates, this mechanism of concepts, judgements, and inferences has been esteemed as the highest occupation and the most admirable gift of nature, above all other capacities. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 97)

However, another set of ideas that is perhaps less palatable to a ‘modern’ taste also makes its appearance. Stated succinctly: “But science, spurred by its powerful illusion, speeds irresistibly toward its limits where its optimism, concealed in the essence of logic, suffers shipwreck” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 97). He elaborates on this as follows:

For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points; and while there is no telling how this circle could ever be surveyed completely, noble and gifted men nevertheless reach, e'er half their time and inevitably, such boundary points on the periphery from which one gazes into what defies illumination. When they see to their horror how logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail—suddenly the new form of insight breaks through, *tragic insight* which, merely to be endured, needs art as a protection and remedy. (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 97-98)

Therefore, we go around in a full circle again. That is, let us not ignore the fact that 'scientific output' generally devolves into metaphor and imagery: artistic models, diagrams or illustrations and so on (e.g., the representation of the Body as a fleshy machine with moving parts, cognition as a series of 'computational' processes, psychopathology as dealing with 'medical diseases' of the Mind, etc.). But the whole scientific enterprise, at its heart, also carries a set of myths (a set of ideas that could never be verified, especially not by its own proposed methods). We believe that its mechanisms can provide us with the answers we desire, and we set out endlessly striving for knowledge. Yet, as the brightest, most ambitious Minds have recognized, there comes a time when our limitations become insurmountable, where even rationality itself falters: the processes of logical deduction or empirically derived 'abstractions' are of no use, and we find ourselves gazing incomprehensibly at the unintelligible.

As a few examples, one might 'awaken' to realize that perhaps, by virtue of the type of creature that we are, we have never grown or could never possibly develop the proper kind of fleshy 'apparatuses' that would be essential to comprehend or 'know' any 'truth' at all about the objective state of the world; or that perhaps, in actuality, the universe has no actual order, underlying logic, laws, or principles, that could even be grasped to begin with; or that perhaps, this project aiming for the 'completion of knowledge' may be the result of our human fancies playing themselves out, and that our knowledge is merely the products of our Minds that have projected themselves onto the 'tabula rasa' (blank state) of our indifferent universe. But then again, how could we ever know?

Yet most people still long to hold on to these 'optimistic myths' for the same reasons the ancient Greeks held on to their Apollonian myths (or, that is, until men like Socrates destroyed them with their fierce 'skeptical' rationality and replaced them with something novel).

Nonetheless, at this point, the parallel with the Apollonian myths should now become apparent, which is why one becomes a substitute for the other. What does not alter is their relation in opposition to the Dionysian force, which, although the latter lives underground, due to the sheer dominance of the power of ‘scientific optimism,’ occasionally resurfaces (Nietzsche, 1967).

Before moving to the next part, I want to share one last observation that Nietzsche had about Socrates, which relates to the division and contradictory tendencies of analytical reasoning and intuition, as discussed in Chapter 2:

We are offered a key to the character of Socrates by the wonderful phenomenon known as “the daimonion of Socrates.” In exceptional circumstances, when his tremendous intellect wavered, he found secure support in the utterances of a divine voice that spoke up at such moments. This voice, whenever it comes, always *dissuades*. In this utterly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom appears only in order to *hinder* conscious knowledge occasionally. While in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness acts critically and dissuasively, in Socrates it is instinct that becomes the critic, and consciousness that becomes the creator—truly a monstrosity *per defectum!* (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 88)

Make of it what you will, but this surely contradicts much of what I have read about the creative powers of intuition and the experiences reported by intuitive therapists, and it runs counter to my own creative and life-affirming instincts. Yet this is the organizational basis of the instincts of the man who has perhaps most influenced the state of ‘Western consciousness.’ Should we then be surprised at the heavy emphasis on our conscious, analytical processes and the apparent lack of trust in our more immediate, instinctual wisdom?

If Young Nietzsche Were a Psychotherapist (A Mock Case Study)

Let us start by looking at some of Nietzsche’s early insights into our human nature (he is often considered a proto-psychologist for good reason). We will also keep the opposing forces that were discussed in mind.

In discussing the ‘Dionysian man’ (Nietzsche’s coinage), he says: “having looked boldly right into the terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as well as the cruelty of nature, and being in danger of longing for a Buddhistic negation of the will. Art saves him, and through

art—life” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 59). For context, in his general philosophy, Nietzsche favours Will and life-affirming tendencies (and Self-affirmation) over Will-negating tendencies (elimination of desires, attachments, pleasures, etc.), such as discussed in Buddhist teachings (or in Schopenhauer’s philosophy), which essentially boil down to a process of Self-dissolution. Nietzsche proposes art as an alternative solution to this process. But what is meant by that?

Here, I will showcase Nietzsche’s hypothetical ‘diagnosis and prognosis’ of the ‘Dionysian man,’ in which he compares him to Hamlet:

Both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have *gained knowledge*, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion.
(Nietzsche, 1967, p. 60)

And shortly after: “Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence [...]: he is nauseated” (Nietzsche, 1967, p.60).

Afterwards, Nietzsche forwards this observation, which we shall consider his theoretical basis for a hypothetical treatment plan:

Here, when the danger to his will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *comic* as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 60)

In other words, Nietzsche is suggesting creatively using the power of art (aesthetics) to overcome the terror of our existential conditions by turning one’s self-image and life into something majestic (beautiful) and, secondly, to artfully find humour in one’s life to ease the vertigo felt from facing the ‘absurdity’ of existence.

Conveniently, all these ideas are restated even more concisely in an aphorism in one of his later books, *The Gay Science* (Nietzsche, 1882/1974). Regarding what we have just called the ‘diagnoses and prognosis’ and the basis for his ‘treatment plan,’ he says:

The realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance. (Nietzsche, 1882/1974, p. 163)

In this case, he even explains the ‘mechanism’ of his artful approach: “As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us, and art furnishes us with eyes and hands and above all the good conscience to be *able* to turn ourselves into such a phenomenon” (Nietzsche, 1882/1974, pp. 163-164).

Finally, he elaborates on art’s transformative power, as mentioned earlier, which works to turn the ‘horrible’ into the ‘sublime’ (through the mechanism of artistic distance) and the absurdity of existence into the ‘comic’ (which is related to his archetype of the ‘fool’), and which he relays as such:

At times we need a rest from ourselves by looking upon, by looking *down* upon, ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing *over* ourselves or weeping *over* ourselves. We must discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge; we must occasionally find pleasure in our folly, or we cannot continue to find pleasure in our wisdom. (Nietzsche, 1882/1974, p. 164)

Putting everything we have just covered together, the mock ‘case study’ would resemble something like this: through either an event in a person’s life or their own doing (such as a gifted talent for ‘scientific’ pursuits), this person has reached the outer limits of knowledge (the points at which logic deteriorates), and now they find themselves ‘staring into the abyss.’ In other words, the usual veil of illusion has been lifted, and they have now ‘intuited’ (directly and without the usual filters) the terrifying horrors and absurdity of existence. The Dionysian-Socratic (or Dionysian-Apollonian) arrangement is now heavily skewed to one side (on the Dionysian side). That is, this person now finds themselves in a situation where they no longer have satisfactory images of an ideal ‘Self’ that might project them forward and give direction to their lives; therefore, they are no longer able to act (like Hamlet) (Nietzsche, 1967), are nauseated by existence, and, perhaps, as Nietzsche (1882/1974) suggested, are even considering suicide (if only as a philosophical proposition).

Nietzsche, as the proto-psychologist he is often considered to be, comes along and, being attuned to the darker side of the human condition, has just the solution for this ‘Dionysian man.’ To this person, he recommends art as a possible way forward. That is because he posits that art would provide this hypothetical person with a new way of ‘perceiving,’ the means to act, and a good conscience (and Will) toward creating a brand-new Self-image (an idealized ‘Self’). Additionally, he figures that it would enable this hypothetical person to distance themselves from their immediate surroundings and take refuge in their ‘conceptual Self,’ thereby learning to laugh at their ‘despairing Self’ and their follies, remembering to take themselves less seriously and to be a fool for once. It would enable this hypothetical person to tolerate their existence and elevate both themselves and their life situation in their own eyes.

And, of course, he proposes all this as a preferable attitude to the ‘Stoic’ or ‘Buddhistic’ opposing tendency of suppressing the Will (for example, one’s desires, ambitions, passions, and emotions), which is essentially a hampering of one’s possibility for stronger joyful emotions (anything beyond equanimity or tranquillity) in the pursuit of annihilating ‘suffering’ entirely, and, ultimately, as the process destroying the ‘Self’ (as in the Ego). That is because Nietzsche knows that one cannot experience the most intense joys and passions without opening oneself up to a life plentiful in suffering (since reducing the one also minimizes the possibility or intensity of the other). In this sense, this ‘young Nietzsche’ proposes a form of creative-artistic living in which suffering is inseparable from such intensity, and which involves a healthy dose of Self-deceit (an embrace of illusions). The resulting life, then, is aesthetically justified, characterized by passionate engagement and self-creation, and rich with the inherent challenges of living fully.

Of course, Nietzsche’s philosophy evolved, and some of his early views shifted as he matured, shedding his early influences to arrive at his own distinctive views. In particular, he dramatically distanced himself from the Schopenhauer-Wagner framework that underpins much of *The Birth of Tragedy*, including the idea of the Metaphysical-Music relationship (Nietzsche, 1967). His earlier romantic view of the arts was also tempered, as he came to value the pursuit of knowledge, albeit always through his own joyful, artistic, and rigorous approach, as exemplified in *The Gay Science* (Nietzsche, 1882/1974). It was during this period that Nietzsche increasingly embraced skepticism and critical investigation (ironically bringing him closer to Socratic inquiry), which naturally coincided with a stronger commitment to truth and honesty, and with a

new courage and tolerance for confronting illusions, even when this entailed additional existential challenges and heightened suffering (Nietzsche, 1882/1974).

These developments are encapsulated in *The Gay Science* (Nietzsche, 1882/1974), which marks the transition from the young, aesthetically inspired Nietzsche to the philosophically mature thinker more widely recognized today. This is the Nietzsche who imagined the possibility of the ‘artistic-Socrates,’ and who wrote for a select few, the ‘philosophers of the future’ (or ‘free-spirits’), who would recognize the death of the old Metaphysical system (the death of God) and embrace the possibilities that arise from its ashes: the intrinsic, boundless freedom of a dizzying groundlessness, for those with the courage to grasp it and leap forth independently and light-heartedly, into the terrifying unknown that awaits (Nietzsche, 1882/1974). These are ideas that continue to resonate with many today.

Nonetheless, in this section, I have provided one example of how one’s adopted view of the ‘Self’ may alter the course of therapy, including both conceptualizations and treatment directions. In my view, these considerations are relevant to therapists, and I will highlight some potential connections as I further discuss this chapter’s implications in relation to our discussion in Chapter 2.

Relevance to the Dichotomy of the ‘Self’

If it has not yet been made evident, these ideas relate to the conceptual dichotomy of the ‘Self’ that I presented in Chapter 2. More precisely, the Dionysian impulse, at least in some ways, corresponds to the ‘Eastern’ division of the ‘Self.’ In contrast, the Apollonian and the Socratic tendencies correspond to the ‘Western Self.’ Put differently, I have presented the opposing currents that underlie each of these ways of thinking about the ‘Self.’ These parallels, however, are not exact. As I continued to flesh out these ideas, I began to recognize some dissimilarities, or perhaps contradictions, despite their evident similarities, especially in the ‘Eastern-Dionysian’ equivalence. On the one hand, the strong desire for self-abnegation and complete merger is apparent in both the Dionysian forces and the ‘Eastern’ view of the ‘Self.’ However, as will be recalled, Nietzsche did not endorse the negation tendencies of that approach to living. Yet he valued that ‘ego-less’ state of connectedness, jubilant, immoderate, passionate, light-hearted, foolish, and instinct-driven approach to life, at least to some degree, if only as a counter-balancing force. This raises the question: would a sexually licentious or drug-induced

self-abnegation, which is clearly attributed to the Dionysian impulse, belong in the same category as the ‘Eastern Self,’ with its negation of the Will? Either way, as reflected in the art of ancient Greek Tragedy, returning to or maintaining some equilibrium between these two ‘Selves,’ or opposing drives within the ‘Self,’ may be the most desirable, lest one finds themselves in any of the situations described above. As already mentioned, people in Western culture are most likely to over-rely on their Socratic impulses, such as logic and abstract theory, while neglecting their Dionysian impulses, such as immediate, instinctive knowledge. Either way, this chapter might foster a new awareness or provide a ‘topographic’ map of the territory. Therapists may use this knowledge as they see fit, but a few parting reflections are proposed.

The observant therapist might occasionally face a significant dilemma: which ‘Self’ to help, or rather, what direction to take with this person’s ‘Self?’ Three alternative options have been proposed. First, towards the disintegration of the ‘Self,’ providing respite from the Will and aiming to eliminate suffering. Second, aiming to inflate, beautify, and idealize the client’s ‘Ego-Self’ through artistic devices, such as the creation of new stories or dream-imagery (as might be used in a Narrative approach), which would enable clients to justify themselves and their existence in their own eyes. Third, by borrowing from our collection of ‘scientific myths,’ as Nietzsche viewed them, such as using some empirically validated or logic-based approach (as might be used in a CBT approach) and appealing to clients’ or one’s own ‘scientific optimism.’

We might further ask whose ‘Self’ decides which version of the ‘Self’ is to be enacted, and who ultimately determines the direction of these self-alterations: the client, the therapist, the agency, the regulatory board, or the public and officials through laws.

Appendix K - Chapter 4: The Paradigm Shift: A Historical, Philosophical and Scientific Overview

This chapter situates the research project within its broader historical, philosophical and scientific traditions. It provides a conceptual framework for further theoretical discussion and traces the historical and philosophical developments that contributed to the emergence of Phenomenology, contextualized in relation to the Social Sciences more broadly.

Conceptual Orientation

First, I will provide some key conceptual terminology in a structured way to help orient the reader for all which is still to come. This framework is relevant not only to the remainder of the Theoretical Chapters, but also to the Methodology section.

Paradigm

The term and concept of a ‘Paradigm’ are commonly attributed to Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault (Kafle, 2013). Defined broadly, it is “a framework containing the basic assumptions, ways of thinking, and methodology that are commonly accepted by members of a scientific community” (Dictionary.com, n.d., Definition 1). Kafle (2013) says, “while applied to the tradition of a qualitative research a paradigm consists of four major components. They are: a) Metaphysics b) Methodology c) Quality, and d) Ethics” (p. 193). I will elaborate on each of these categories and illustrate their interconnections, providing a preliminary structure as we develop the orienting framework that will ground our future theoretical discussions.

Metaphysics

First, we look at the broad category of Metaphysics, which is a term that has taken on many meanings over the years, and for this reason, is not simple to adequately define. For instance, the Merriam-Webster dictionary accounts for two valid uses of the word that I use interchangeably. In one context, it is “a division of philosophy that is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being and that includes ontology, cosmology, and often epistemology” (Merriam-Webster, 2025b, Definition 1a) or in another, it is “the system of principles underlying a particular study or subject” (Merriam-Webster, 2025a, Definition 2). When applied to the more specific context of Qualitative Research, we can view it as an overarching category encompassing the philosophical branches of Ontology, Epistemology, and

Axiology (Kafle, 2013, p. 193). I will further break down and elaborate on each of these individual terms.

Ontology. Ontology is a branch of Metaphysics; therefore, it seeks to comprehend reality and existence (i.e., what exists), but more specifically, it concerns itself with the study of ‘Being’ (Kafle, 2013). In the research context, the researcher will have an Ontological stance regarding reality in general. But also, the researcher’s thoughts about specific ‘beings’ will inevitably shape various parts of the research process. For example, in the general sense, in ‘Hermeneutic Phenomenology,’ the Ontological stance is that there are multiple ‘realities’ (rather than one objective reality) generated in the individuals’ Minds; therefore, they are perspectival (Kafle, 2013). In a specific sense, for this research project, I may need to reflect on things such as: Does intuition have actual existence? What kind of existence? Is it a human construct, or is it substantial? Where do I find it? Does it exist in the Mind, the Body, or elsewhere? Should I be the one to qualify its ‘being’?

While Crotty (1998) may be correct in suggesting that Ontological considerations are often overemphasized for most research purposes, since they generally appear alongside their Epistemological counter-part (i.e., they are frequently fused or confounded, or Ontology’s definition is stretched way beyond its philosophical meaning), he argues that considering one’s Epistemological stance, while addressing Ontological issues only as they arise (when dealing specifically with ‘Being’), may be sufficient to structure most research projects. However, he also acknowledges that this approach is impossible with Heidegger’s work, which must be understood through Ontological terms (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, there is no avoiding Ontological considerations in this research project.

As we will see in due course, Heidegger uses the term ‘Ontological Attitude’ (rather than the ‘Phenomenological Attitude’) to refer to a mode of perceiving that is distinct from the ‘Ontic Attitude’ (rather than the ‘Natural Attitude’), and therefore, his Ontological conceptualization of ‘Being’ is fundamental to his ‘Hermeneutic Phenomenology’ research approach (Walton, 2016b).

Epistemology. Epistemology is the study of knowledge, or perhaps best expressed as ‘the theory of knowledge,’ and it concerns itself with what knowledge is, its sources, and the limitations of what can be known (Stroll & Martinich, 2025). In its general sense, Epistemology is the Field of study and the processes within it. Still, the term can also refer to ‘the theory of

knowledge’ in use (i.e., an Epistemology). Therefore, a study’s Epistemology has to account for what it is to know (how it amounts to knowledge) or, put differently, to have an answer to “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). The Epistemological stance thus alters how one conducts the research process and how results are presented (Crotty, 1998). As we will see, ‘the theory of knowledge’ (alongside the Ontological stance) is part of a larger overarching ‘Theoretical Perspective’ (a term which we will expand upon later) and, in turn, is encapsulated within a Methodology (which we will discuss even sooner) (Crotty, 1998).

In Hermeneutic Phenomenology, for instance, the Epistemological stance is that individual experiences and insights are a valid means of generating knowledge (recall that its Ontological beliefs have already grounded knowledge in subjectivity) (Kafle, 2013).

Axiology. So far, I have shown that Ontology and Epistemology, while having different points of focus, share a concern for matters related to ‘Truth’; alternatively, Axiology, while also interdependent, concerns itself with ‘Values’ and ‘Ethics’ (comprising disciplines such as aesthetics, ethics, and pragmatics), which is why it is also referred to as Value Theory (Kafle, 2013). Of course, a standard is needed to appraise Ontological and Epistemological assertions, and Values serve as that yardstick (Kafle, 2013). In a research context, Axiology focuses on the researcher’s influence, highlighting the role of the researcher’s Values in shaping the knowledge-production process (Kafle, 2013).

For instance, in Hermeneutic Phenomenology, the emphasis is on generating practical forms of knowledge (e.g., not merely generating mathematical descriptors and quantifications of phenomena) (Kafle, 2013).

Of course, the researchers’ Values reflect their worldviews. Again, there is an interdependence between one’s chosen Value Theory and the previously discussed Metaphysical assumptions (both Ontological and Epistemological). These three categories together, thus, constitute the researchers’ Metaphysical stance.

Methodology

Now that we have covered Metaphysics, we can move on to Methodology. Of course, one’s beliefs about reality, ideas about the constitution of knowledge, and the influence of normative values will dictate the principles one adheres to when conducting research.

The term ‘Methodology’ also has various meanings in different contexts (for example, it is often used similarly to the term ‘Method,’ either as an imperfect synonym, as a fully distinct but closely related term, or even as a direct contrast to it). In a broad sense, as defined in Merriam-Webster (2025c), Methodology can refer to such things as “the analysis of the principles or procedures of inquiry in a particular field” (Definition 2) or to “a body of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline: a particular procedure or set of procedures” (Definition 1).

However, in a more research-specific context, the term ‘Methodology’ might refer to “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). When used in this sense, we can distinguish it from the Methods: “the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). The Methodology is both a theoretical and practical unifying framework for the inquiry (but is not the Theoretical Perspective, which I will discuss later); it is, thus, distinguishable from the specific, practical steps that we call research ‘Methods.’ The Methodology describes and justifies the choice of Methods (provides the rationale) and structurally organizes them (Crotty, 1998). When used in this sense, we understand that the particular Methods are always grounded within an overarching Methodology.

For example, in this research project (according to these definitions), the Methodology would be ‘Phenomenological Research,’ while the Method would be the ‘interview’ (Crotty, 1998). Of course, these are just labels, and even the descriptions of the Methods have to account for far more details. Suppose we use the interview to access a particular type of knowledge in the participants’ Lived Experience, which would be justifiable in Phenomenological Research. In terms of the Methods, we would still need to elaborate on the settings of the interview (format, length, structure, etc.), as well as on the analysis of its outputs, for example, addressing elements such as the process by which themes are derived, developed, and categorized, as well as expanding on how they are to be used (Crotty, 1998).

Alternatively, the term ‘Methodology’ can be used in another sense, which is also relevant to this project. In this case, a ‘Methodology’ distinguishes itself from a ‘Method’ in that it does not follow a predetermined systematic sequence of steps; instead, it relies on the

researcher's judgement and general principles that reflect its Metaphysical underpinnings, which in turn enable the researcher to creatively apply flexible approaches appropriate to the research subject and specific questions (Laverty, 2003, p.16). In this sense, instead of being embodied in one another, they are contrasted as two distinct ways of approaching research: either by using the Methodological framework as a principle-based guide for one's study, or by implementing some pre-established 'Steps,' that is, by following a Method.

For a concrete example of the former, when Heidegger set out to study 'Being,' culminating in his work *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927/1962), he did not rely on the empirical methods of his day. Instead, his analysis was guided by philosophical principles rooted in Hermeneutic Phenomenology and grounded in his developing theories of understanding and interpretation, emerging from a direct existential engagement with Being (see Methodology).

Quality (Rigour). Of course, the fact that a Methodology reflects its underlying Metaphysics is not a sufficient criterion to ensure that it produces credible knowledge. Some form of 'quality control' is necessary. In a Qualitative Research context, they are referred to as Issues of Rigour (or Quality Assurance) and could potentially include recognizable concepts such as reliability and validity (Laverty, 2003). However, one set of criteria does not suffice to judge all types of studies, as many aim for different objectives or prioritize different Values, as poignantly illustrated in the contrast between Qualitative and Quantitative research processes (for example, producing statistical measures of reliability and validity, which is very different from asking participants about the accuracy of interview transcripts). However, even within the broad category of Qualitative Research, different approaches correspond to different underlying worldviews and, therefore, have different quality-control criteria; they are not all interchangeable. Hence, depending on the research approach, this task is not always straightforward. It requires familiarity with and consistency in areas we have discussed, for example, properly grounding this process within one's Metaphysical stance and research principles.

For instance, in Hermeneutical Phenomenology, there is no consensus on how to address Issues of Rigour (e.g., there is no unanimous terminology for discussion, no universal criteria for assessment, etc.). Still, some researchers, such as Max van Manen, have attempted a systematization, and in his case, he arrived at four criteria: Orientation, Strength, Richness, and

Depth (Kafle, 2013). For a more detailed discussion of these concepts and an exemplification of their application, see the ‘Issues of Rigour (Quality Assurance)’ section within the main thesis body.

Ethics. Finally, just because research excels theoretically and is conducted rigorously does not imply that it is also ethical. As mentioned earlier, when discussing Axiology, Values and Ethics are closely intertwined (for example, would a ‘utilitarian thinker’ be correct in saying that the end justifies the means?). One’s Metaphysical beliefs reflect one’s Values and, in turn, shape one’s Ethical stance. A research project is a microcosm that must also consider these issues; after all, in research, we often deal with other ‘beings.’ At least in this context, there is considerable overlap across the approaches, and many readers will already be familiar with typical research concerns such as privacy, consent, confidentiality, as well as procedures like submitting REB applications. In addition, different research types and specific projects may require adjustments depending on their circumstances.

Theoretical Perspective

We can combine many of these constructs into a more unified structure at this stage. Crotty (1998) defines a researcher’s ‘Theoretical Perspective’ as “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p. 3). One’s Theoretical Perspective (or Philosophical Orientation) is essentially an amalgamation of the assumptions a researcher inevitably brings to the project, which in turn shapes the choice of Methodology (Crotty, 1998). In this way, it bridges the concepts discussed so far: a researcher’s stance on Ontology and Epistemology informs Methodology, providing a coherent structure and bringing those embedded assumptions to the forefront (Crotty, 1998).

Contrasting Positivism and Interpretivism

Coherent frameworks already exist to cover our needs, and I will contrast the most recognizable and the most relevant ones for our purposes. Positivism is likely what consumers of ‘psychological knowledge’ will be most familiar with, as it is the dominant approach in the Field. Psychology, in the Positivist tradition, borrows its assumptions and Methods from the Natural Sciences; it has no qualms about applying them directly into the sphere of the ‘Social Sciences’ (Moon & Blackman, 2017). In contrast, ‘Hermeneutics,’ which focuses on uncovering obscured

or hidden meanings in texts, practices, situations and events, and ‘Phenomenology,’ which focuses on deriving the ‘Essence’ of ‘Phenomena’ within ‘Lived Experience’ by ‘suspending’ one’s own preconceptions, are two movements with distinct origins, yet both fall under the umbrella of ‘Interpretivism’ due to shared underlying assumptions (Moon & Blackman, 2017). Interpretivism holds that reality must be interpreted within cultural and historical contexts; therefore, its adherents reject the indiscriminate application of the Natural Science worldviews and Methods to the Social Sciences (Moon & Blackman, 2017). The compatibility of their assumptions explains how Heidegger could later combine the two distinct movements into his unique ‘Hermeneutic Phenomenology’ (Danmax, 2025). He did this by repurposing, modifying, rejecting, or adding elements to the mix. As a result, the approach differentiates itself from those movements in its own right, which we will explore in due time. For now, we will illustrate and contrast the Positivist and Interpretivist approaches more precisely using Lavery’s (2003) ready-made comparison, which draws on many of the concepts we discussed earlier.

Lavery (2003) states that, Ontologically, Positivists believe in a single reality that exists ‘out there somewhere,’ independent of and wholly separate from us; furthermore, underlying this view is the assumption that various general principles and laws organize the universe in the form of cause-and-effect relationships between things. Epistemologically, these distinct but interrelated entities (objects) can therefore be discovered and described by us (subjects). Methodologically, this worldview assumes that researchers can adopt a neutral, detached, and objective stance, aimed at minimizing their influence, while attempting to describe, predict, control, and manipulate phenomena, with the ultimate goal of capturing and representing the organizing structures of the universe in the form of general theoretical principles; accordingly, the approach also incorporates techniques intended to ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of those discoveries (Lavery, 2003).

Lavery (2003) indicates that Interpretivists, in contrast, believe Ontologically in a multiplicity of realities that are subjectively constructed by the ‘knowers’ and therefore can be altered indefinitely. This means that knowledge does not have an ultimate claim to ‘Truth’ in the Positivist sense, as it is not understood to be representative of what is ultimately ‘real.’ Instead, knowledge is viewed as the most valuable product we have been able to create so far. Accordingly, even in areas such as knowledge validation, rather than relying on measures of

truth-accuracy such as validity and reliability, alternative criteria are used to ensure Quality, for example, trustworthiness, rigour, credibility, and authenticity. Epistemologically, Interpretivism rejects the clear subject-object dichotomy and emphasizes the inseparable relationship between the observer (the subject) and the observed (the object), thereby rejecting the possibility that research, itself a distinctly human activity, could ever be free of values and biases. Finally, Methodologically, these researchers recognize their fundamental role in knowledge generation; as a result, they consider it essential to be transparent about the influences of their subjectivity (e.g., values, biases, and preconceptions) and are willing to embrace these elements, allowing their perspectives to evolve as new insights emerge during the research process (Lavery, 2003).

Historical and Philosophical Precursors to Phenomenology

At this stage, the reader may begin to grasp the concepts and implications of this Paradigm shift, but may still wonder how and why it arose. Beginning with key historical and philosophical background, this section examines the catalyst for this shift: first within the Social Sciences, which ultimately contributed to the emergence of Phenomenology, and later, within Phenomenology itself, prompting its subdivision into further branches.

Dualism (General Sense)

The term ‘Dualism,’ in its general sense, refers to any division of the world into two distinct, irreducible kinds or categories of principles or substances; this can be contrasted with Monism, which assumes that all is guided by or composed of a single principle or substance, and Pluralism, which posits many principles and substances (Robinson, 2023). In practice, it posits another world beyond the Apparent World, often organized hierarchically, with one considered Truer or more valuable (or virtuous) than the other (i.e., the ‘True’ World as distinct from the World of ‘Appearances’). For example, in many religions, a superior, spiritual, and eternal world (i.e., the world as it ‘really’ is) is governed by different principles and composed of different substances than the temporary, material world we experience, often understood as the ‘Apparent’ world. In philosophy or science, it often refers to the ‘True’ state of the world, understood as consisting of imperceptible laws, principles, forms, ideas, and similar entities supposedly existing behind the veil of ‘Appearances’ (i.e., the phenomena of sense perception).

These Dualistic Ontological and Epistemological trends are recognizable throughout the history of Philosophy (and even today, for example, in discussions about artificial intelligence); however, there is considerable variation in the terminology used and in the way these terms are understood. For example, corresponding to the ‘True World’ and the ‘Apparent World,’ Plato described access to the eternal ‘Forms’ (or ideas) in his ‘World of Forms’ through the use of rationality (associated with the domain of the immaterial Soul or Mind); in contrast, the sense-objects constituting the ‘Sensible World’ (the physical world) were understood as imperfect imitations of these higher Forms, as illustrated in the ‘Allegory of the Cave,’ and were accessed through the bodily senses (the domain of the material Body) (Plato, ca. 360 B.C.E./2000; Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). Aristotle used the term ‘Essences’ (Forms) differently from Plato, in that they did not exist in a separate realm but were embedded in all things; he used ‘Matter’ to describe the physical substances that instantiate the ‘Forms’ (or Essences); therefore, in his worldview, knowledge could be gained directly from objects, using perception to gather sense data and rationality to abstract their Essences (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020; Robinson, 2023). Kant distinguished between the ‘Noumenal World’ composed of the ‘Things in Themselves’ (the Noumena), which remained inaccessible to us as they were beyond the reach of the senses, and the ‘Phenomenal World,’ consisting of ‘phenomena,’ which are the Appearances given to the senses, structured by the forms of space and time and the categories of understanding, and thus could be experienced and understood (Kant, 1781/2003).

As these examples illustrate, there has been considerable disagreement over the Nature of the ‘Actual’ world and the means of revealing its ‘Truth,’ which has led to numerous divergent schools of thought and debates throughout history. For instance, I have provided a few examples drawn from the longstanding debate, spanning from antiquity into the modern era, between the Rationalists (who posited reason and innate ideas as the pathway to ‘True’ knowledge) and the Empiricists (who posited sense perception as the means of arriving at ‘True’ knowledge), which Kant later synthesized into one system (Kant 1781/2003). Namely, he emphasized the key role of rationality and sense perception in acquiring knowledge, highlighting their inseparability (Kant 1781/2003). Importantly, for our purposes, that rational-empirical system of knowledge acquisition was to apply to the ‘Phenomenal World,’ comprising all the objects of sense perception and corresponding to the empirical world (Kant, 1781/2003). As an extension of this, while the ‘Noumenal World’ could not be proven to exist, nor could any Method of access to it

be devised, since it lies beyond our perception, it still had a useful delimitative function: it defined the limits of possible knowledge by restricting our current Methods of knowledge acquisition, including rational means, to the realm of sense-data (Kant, 1781/2003). In this connection, it is evident that Kant put forth an Epistemological duality, specifically between Phenomenal and Noumenal knowledge (Kant, 1781/2003). But suppose it is only possible to experience things as they appear to us, and that we can never access how they ‘Truly’ are. Why, then, should we bother attempting to go beyond studying these experiences? This was part of the reasoning of the Phenomenologists who emerged in the post-Kantian era. However, even the original form of Phenomenology (Transcendental Phenomenology) retained many of these Dualistic assumptions, which we will examine later.

As a side note, and of interest to the larger project, it is in this context of his questioning the possibility of accessing ‘Noumenal knowledge’ that Kant speculates about the hypothetical existence of an ‘intellectual intuition’ (i.e., it mirrored the principles of the Noumenal World, in that nothing corresponds to it in our experience, nor can we fathom such a Method) (Kant, 1781/2003). Crucially, Kant’s overarching claim is that intuition is always sensory in Nature, and he argued that it is the mechanism underlying direct perception, combining with other cognitive faculties to form our actual perception (Kant, 1781/2003).

Returning to Dualism, we now narrow the focus to its relevance at the level of the human being, the area that Phenomenologists would eventually home in on while rethinking the foundations of the Social Sciences after scrutinizing long-held assumptions about human Nature. In this connection, we rewind the timeline to focus on René Descartes (17th century), the first to articulate the ‘Mind-Body problem,’ an enduring philosophical impasse that stems directly from Dualistic worldviews. This focus helps clarify the central issue at the heart of these paradigmatic shifts.

Cartesian Dualism

If two worlds, whether conceived in the substantial or explanatory sense, are posited to exist simultaneously, a problem inevitably arises: how do these two worlds interact? In a more local sense, we might ask: if Mind and Body (or the Mental and the Physical) exist independently, distinguished by their fundamental substances or principles, how might they interact? This is the essence of the Mind-Body problem.

To help contextualize Descartes and the problem, we turn to Morton & Mylopoulos's (2020) textbook on the Philosophy of Mind, which includes both their commentary and 'printed' extracts of primary-sourced philosophers' works, including three chapters on Descartes and a dedicated chapter for each of the philosophers mentioned below, which I will use, in conjunction with other sources, to guide our narrative.

Like Plato and Aristotle before him, Descartes was also interested in understanding the Nature of human beings. Notably, Descartes began his inquiry with a conceptualization of human Nature that was nearly identical to what Plato had proposed (Plato, ca. 360 B.C.E./2000; Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). Plato's conceptualization, alongside Aristotle's (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020), went on to shape (via other philosophers) the worldview of early Christianity, which, in Descartes time (namely, 17th-century Western Europe), still had an influential presence. That is, Descartes was a distinguished thinker, a philosopher and a scientist, among other roles, but he was also religious (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). This context explains the fundamental source of his problem: on the one hand, there was the influence of a Christian worldview, which posited a spiritual world as distinct from the natural one, together with Plato's significant impact at the level of the human being, particularly his view, first appearing in the *Phaedo*, that had posited a hierarchical and substantial division between Soul (Mind) and Body (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). This position was ultimately incompatible with Descartes's Aristotelian- and Galileo-flavoured scientific education, which he drew on to describe the mechanisms of the natural world in his scientific pursuits (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). Under these circumstances, Descartes developed a unifying philosophical system (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020), and his resulting Metaphysical position can be summarized as follows: "Descartes was a *substance dualist*. He believed that there were two kinds of substance: matter, of which the essential property is that it is spatially extended; and mind, of which the essential property is that it thinks" (Robinson, 2023, The Mind-Body Problem and The History of Dualism, para. 1.2). More precisely, via his introspective 'Method of Doubt,' after reducing the human being to fundamentally a 'thinking thing,' Descartes argued that there was a clear and distinct separation between the agentic and conscious Mind, that essentially 'thinks' (i.e., including the processes of doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, willing, refusing, imagining and sensing and perceiving, but not the content of these acts) and the Body, which like all other external bodies, is characterized by its extension (i.e., that it occupies space) (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). As a scientific

complement to these ideas, Descartes notably hypothesized that the pineal gland was the seat of interaction between these two separate realms (i.e., where the Mind could interact with Bodily mechanisms) (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). Hence, he highlighted and addressed the Body-Mind problem in this way.

Of course, at this stage, one might concede that his ideas were influential in his time, but in light of that latter observation, one might point out that Descartes's ideas are largely outdated. While this may be true for his scientific output, this recognition does not relegate his profound influence on human thought to a mere 'historical interest.' Namely, the Epistemological assumptions of his philosophical system continue to underpin much of our modern sciences and current thinking (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). For instance, if we look more closely, we see that this view implies that the agentic thinking 'subject' (the 'I') can use its thinking processes and instruments to observe 'mindless' external material 'objects,' which are extended in space, and assumed to operate according to laws that can be natural, mechanical, mathematical, and so on (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020). Recognizable yet? In terms of Axiology, one might also be attuned to the value hierarchy embedded in these imported worldviews and recognize its effect on the various 'objects' being studied (e.g., in this worldview, the research animals, the research 'subjects,' and even the researcher's own Body are considered distinct and independent, and thus, inadvertently perceived as lesser than the 'I'). Evidently, this impact extends beyond the confines of the laboratory. However, these are merely a few examples relating to the topics we have been discussing. The connection will become even more pronounced as we contextualize these ideas within our larger narrative.

The Paradigm Shift in the Social Sciences

The implications of Cartesian Dualism are perhaps most visible when we consider the profound influence these ideas had within the Social Sciences and the tensions they later generated.

Previously, I contrasted two Theoretical Perspectives (Philosophical Orientations): Positivism and Interpretivism. If it has not yet been made evident, Positivism inherits the assumptions of Cartesian Dualism (to recap: Ontologically, it posits an objective reality that exists independently of us; Epistemologically, it posits that, as clearly distinct subjects, we can objectively study its objects). Thus, a Social Science researcher adopting this orientation might

have no objections to these underlying assumptions, import the worldview and all its Methods (e.g., observational, mathematical, standardized procedures, etc.) directly from the Natural Sciences, and apply them to the study of ‘human beings.’ This is precisely what the Field of Psychology has done in its move to establish itself as a legitimate scientific discipline, and it continues to honour this tradition to a large extent (Greer, 2015). However, not all have agreed with importing this approach to reality and knowledge acquisition (at least not into the realm of ‘human’ studies), which has been the focus of discussion so far. Interpretivists have directly challenged Cartesian Dualism and permanently altered their underlying assumptions, which explains the stark contrast (i.e., as mentioned earlier, they believe Ontologically in multiple perspectival realities; Epistemologically, they reject the clear-cut subject-object distinction and the possibility of objectivity due to the inherent subjectivity of meaning).

We can now shift our focus to the premises of the challenge to the Positivist view. Crotty (1998) effectively captures the Ontological issue. After clarifying that it is reasonable to conclude that a universe and its entities could ‘exist’ (in the Ontic sense) without any conscious beings to experience it, he goes on to say this:

But what kind of a world is there before conscious beings engage with it? Not an intelligible world, many would want to say. Not a world of meaning. It becomes a world of meaning only when meaning-making beings make sense of it. [...] The existence of a world without a mind is conceivable. Meaning without a mind is not. (Crotty, 1998, pp. 9-10).

These observations capture the core of the Interpretivist critique. Here, we not only see the emphasis on the subjective and relational aspects of sense-making, but also the immediate collapse of the proposed distinction between object and subject. As subjects observing the world, we depend on our cognitive faculties for it to be intelligible; sense and meaning do not belong to the world itself but instead depend on the Minds of those who make it meaningful (or even perceptible, to press the point further). If this is the case, how can the world be studied objectively?

The Paradigm Shift within Phenomenology

The pernicious influence of Cartesian Dualism extends beyond the Social Sciences. It played a key role in shaping the philosophical tensions that ultimately led to the emergence of Phenomenology and also contributed to later tensions within the movement, eventually giving rise to new branches. The relationship is therefore complex, and additional background is needed to grasp these developments fully.

Even with Husserl's attempts to overcome the problematic elements of Cartesian Dualism, he did not entirely transcend its framework (Lavery, 2003). Despite his critique of the reductionist and naturalistic tenets of Positivism, his early education within that tradition continued, inadvertently, to influence his proposed approach (Lavery, 2003). It was not until Heidegger's interventions (see Methodology) that the boundaries of the subject-object dichotomy, or more broadly the tradition of a Dualistic conception of reality, were largely dissolved (Kafle, 2013). From this perspective, Descartes's intellectual legacy was, for the most part, overcome.

These preliminary remarks will suffice to ground the rest of the discussion as we begin to delve into the specifics of these Phenomenological traditions (see Chapter 5 and Methodology).

Appendix L - Chapter 5: Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology

To briefly orient the reader, Western Phenomenology can be broadly divided into three distinct traditions: Transcendental, Hermeneutic, and Existential Phenomenology (Kafle, 2013). Transcendental Phenomenology is the original form of Phenomenology developed by Husserl and is the primary focus of this chapter. Hermeneutic and Existential Phenomenology emerged from a critical engagement with the tenets of this tradition and are associated with Heidegger's influence, including later major contributors such as Gadamer. These later developments provide the grounding principles for this research project and are detailed in the Methodology section (with emphasis on the Hermeneutic tradition). Thus, this chapter provides the theoretical background within Phenomenology itself that helps ground and deepen the reader's grasp of Heidegger's and Gadamer's later principles and, by extension, the Methodology of this project. It also provides a theoretical substrate for the thesis's content, as it significantly influences many of the interpretations in the Results/Discussion section. This should not come as a surprise, since despite the emphasis on their differences, these movements share common roots.

The chapter begins with a general definition of 'Phenomenology,' followed by a brief historical context of 'Transcendental Phenomenology.' It then turns to its primary focus: examining the key concepts it comprises and the Methodological devices it employs. With this discussion, the Appendices' Theoretical Chapters conclude, and the theoretical reorientation toward Hermeneutic Phenomenology occurs in the Methodology section, focusing on Heidegger and Gadamer.

What is Phenomenology?

The term 'Phenomenology' can have different uses in various contexts; for example, it may refer to a philosophical movement, a discipline within Philosophy, or, in an adapted form, a Qualitative Research Paradigm and Method in the Social Sciences (Kafle, 2013).

The following definition of 'Phenomenology' will be sufficient to ground our discussion:

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience

is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions. (Smith, 2018)

There are a few crucial points here. First, it acknowledges that the world's objects appear in a person's Mind in a particular way, which ultimately depends on the subjective conditions that make them appear as such. Phenomenology makes these 'organizational structures' the focus of its study and, therefore, takes the 'individual's perspective' as the ground for such knowledge (rather than seeking out the study of objects 'as they are'). Second, it recognizes that a person's experience is always about something. In other words, consciousness is always directed at something, and thus, this 'Intentionality' is the fundamental organizational force underlying every particular experience. Each 'object' within a person's consciousness is represented by a combination of its 'content' (i.e., the characteristics that make it recognizable as such) and its 'meaning' (i.e., the Mind's interpretation of it will alter one's experience of it): these are what draw one's consciousness toward the object. However, since consciousness operates from within the world, certain conditions of reality must also be met for particular experiences to occur, or indeed for any experience to occur at all (e.g., visual experience relies on conditions such as functioning eyes and adequate lighting).

To illustrate these Phenomenological concepts, or rather, for a literary example of these abstractions embodied, one may need to look no further than Marcel Proust's first volume, *Swann's Way* (Proust, 1913/2020), from his magnum opus *In Search of Lost Time* (*À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*), to experience firsthand the excruciatingly detailed, page-spanning portrayals of seemingly mundane experiences (such as looking out a window at passersby, longing for a goodnight kiss, savouring a madeleine, or gazing at the architecture of a church). Each of these moments is filtered through the narrator's structures of consciousness (memories, sensations, feelings, aesthetic categories, temporality, etc.), organized by his 'Intentionality' and ultimately culminating in his 'Lived Experience.' The Phenomenological perspective uplifts and brings that kind of descriptive richness to the study of everyday experience.

Historical Context of Transcendental Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) founded Phenomenology, and the term 'Transcendental Phenomenology' captures his original approach (Kafle, 2013). To provide context, Husserl was primarily concerned with Epistemological issues (Lavery, 2003). His work focused on

consciousness and the structures of Lived Experience, and he sought a more rigorous philosophical foundation for their study (Lavery, 2003).

Building on what was discussed in Chapter 4, Husserl, as a post-Kantian thinker, sought to move beyond the Rationalist-Empiricist divide, which Kant had already softened (i.e., the either/or opposition between rationality and sensory experience as the means of arriving at truth) and to address the limitations of what can be described as ‘Kantian Epistemological Dualism’ (i.e., the strict divide between the ‘Things in Themselves’ and the ‘Appearances’) (see Chapter 4).

Because Husserl’s focus was on human experience, he also took issue with Descartes’s ‘Substance Dualism,’ particularly its sharp Mind-Body divide, and with the Positivist movement of his time (see Chapter 4). Although his early education was within the Positivist Paradigm, which would continue to influence aspects of his philosophical thought, Husserl recognized that the Methods of the Natural Sciences, focusing on the external world, largely ignored the role of human subjectivity in constituting one’s experience of that world (Lavery, 2003). For this reason, he viewed the sharp subject-object divide as problematic and rooted in deeper philosophical assumptions that required reconsideration (see Chapter 4). In response to these issues, he developed Phenomenology, representing a new way of engaging in philosophical inquiry (Kafle, 2013).

In simple terms, Transcendental Phenomenology holds that it is possible to ‘go beyond,’ or ‘transcend,’ our everyday experiences of the world in order to examine how phenomena appear in consciousness and the structures that shape these experiences (Kafle, 2013). It revolves around two primary components. First, it requires a shift in one’s overall attitude, from the ‘Natural Attitude’ to the ‘Phenomenological Attitude.’ Second, it employs a Methodological device known as the ‘Phenomenological Reduction.’ To fully grasp these elements, we turn to a closer examination of the central concepts in Husserl’s Phenomenology.

Central Concepts of Transcendental Phenomenology

Lifeworld

Framed differently, Phenomenology could be considered the study of the Lifeworld. Zahavi (2018) defines the term ‘Lifeworld’ simply as “the world we live in, the pre-theoretical

world of experience we take for granted in daily life” (p. 145), or rather the world of pre-reflexive experiences, “which we are all acquainted with, and which we typically do not question” (p. 51). For example, in everyday life, one’s experience of ‘water’ is not that it has a molecular composition of H_2O ; instead, our pre-reflexive understanding might be something like that it provides hydration when thirsty, is wet and uncomfortable in the form of rain, pleasant and warm when coming from the showerhead, cool and refreshing in the summer, or dangerous in terms of drowning.

Of course, these kinds of everyday experiences are substantially different from the specific situations in which we ‘examine’ an object through an ‘objective lens’ to gain a better ‘theoretical understanding’ of it. However, this is the very same ‘everyday’ world of experiences from which Natural Scientists draw as they derive their theoretical abstractions, yet mostly neglect, which is what Phenomenology seeks to rectify (Moran, 2000; Zahavi, 2018). That is, Phenomenology focuses on these primary firsthand experiences while turning to strategies such as ‘suspending’ secondary theories and abstractions, since it is primarily interested in the backdrop against which all else is evaluated (Moran, 2000). In other words, it takes this position as the foundation of its inquiry. But why this shift? We must embark on a Husserlian Epistemological journey to arrive at that answer!

Before moving on, I will quickly note that Husserl’s conception of the Lifeworld is much more complex than defined above. For instance, the concept is altered if we are referring to one’s personal Lifeworld (i.e., it is the background implicit organizational force, comprised of one’s taken-for-granted beliefs, judgements, experiences, etc.) or if we are referring to it intersubjectively (i.e., it is an implicitly shared cultural and historical background, instantiated through the medium of language and its shared meaning-structures) (Beyer, 2022). However, the simple definition will suffice for most of our discussion. Still, we must add a few layers of complexity.

Suppose we break it down into further constructs. In that case, the Lifeworld reveals itself as the fundamental substrate that constitutes the perception of all things, which is to say that the Lifeworld fundamentally grounds all perception (Moran, 2000). In other words, it is the ultimate background against which all experiences can gain intelligibility. The implication is that the Lifeworld provides a new foundation for pursuing knowledge; it underlies this alternative

Epistemological orientation. By extension, the Lifeworld underpins Husserl's critique of the Positivist framework, and thus marks a turning point in the development of the Phenomenological movement (Moran, 2000).

As Moran (2000) states, Husserl was critical of the following Positivist tenet:

Traditional empiricism or sensationalism had attempted to describe the actual nature of our perception in terms of the presence of sensual data but had ignored the manner in which all perception takes place under a number of horizons which are implicit structural aspects of our original experience itself. (Moran, 2000, p. 162).

In other words, these empiricism-based traditions, which hold that knowledge is derived from 'sense data,' have improperly accounted for the ground that makes acquiring any of that sense data possible; they ignored the structures underlying one's experiential perception of the 'sense data.' For example, to make sense of the sense data in this sentence, one must sense in what sense the term 'sense' is being used, and this sense must be sensed in a sensible and sensical context. We will return to these ideas in due time. For now, the emphasis is that these 'Horizons' structure our perception and, taken together, constitute the means through which the Lifeworld shapes our experience (Moran, 2000). Notably, connecting the construct of 'Horizons' back to that of the 'Lifeworld' reveals the Lifeworld as being an overarching Horizon that organizes all local horizons (Moran, 2000). As Moran (2000) notes, Husserl later stated: "There is no question of escaping the world. The world remains as a horizon in all our mental processes, it is always 'pregiven'" (p.165).

Horizon

We now focus on the term 'Horizon' in its perspectival and local sense, which refers to the context of possible content and meaning surrounding any specific object or event that is not immediately given to perception. Moran (2000) presents Husserl's concept of the 'Horizon' as such:

Husserl recognised that in all grasping of objects, there are aspects of the objects which are not directly grasped. Husserl calls this the 'horizon' (Horizont) and it became a crucial element in his account of phenomenology. The 'horizon' is constituted by those

aspects of a thing that are not given in perception but rather are possibilities which can be given in further acts of perception or reflection. (Moran, 2000, pp. 161-162)

That is, each object can be said to have its own horizon, which includes all that exists within an object as ‘potential,’ but that is not immediately visible; or rather, it includes all that could be further explored and understood given the right conditions, a process sometimes described as ‘perspectival viewing’ (Walton, 2016a). Both Walton (2016a) and Zahavi (2003) used Husserl’s original example of an apple tree to relay his Phenomenological concepts, and we will follow their lead and explanation:

When I see an apple tree, it is necessary to distinguish that which appears and the appearance itself, since the apple tree is never given in its totality but always from a certain limited perspective. It is never the entire apple tree, including its front, backside, underside, and inside which is given intuitively, not even in the most perfect intuition, but only a single profile. Nevertheless, it is (normally) the appearing object and not the intuitively given profile that we intend and experience. (Zahavi, 2003, pp. 95-96)

There are a few important concepts to unpack. For clarification, the Appearing/Appearance distinction refers to the difference between what we can perceive directly from the object and the way the object appears to us in consciousness as more than what is directly given to perception. Pure perception is perspectival in that an object is always perceived from a limited point of view, and the object may reveal only certain parts of itself; all the while, the rest remains hidden until one’s relative perspective is altered (Zahavi, 2003; Walton, 2016a). For example, one may shift to look at the back of the tree and perceive it from that point of view, but while the back is revealed, the front would be hidden, and so forth (Zahavi, 2003; Walton, 2016a).

But of course, our experience of perception is not that of ‘snap’ perceptions of singular facets of an object; rather, it is that of a whole phenomenon. As illustrated, our Body (e.g., through locomotion, orientation, sensory experience, etc.) plays a role in how we perceive phenomena (Zahavi, 2003; Zahavi, 2018). We also acknowledge that our experience of phenomena is multi-layered, which is another way of saying that an object has multiple Horizons (e.g., Horizons can be spatial, temporal, contextual, intersubjective, etc.) (Moran, 2000). How, then, do we account for our experiences of perception being dynamic and continuous across

these various dimensions and the fact that we experience any given phenomenon as a meaningful whole despite only perceiving its relative parts?

Zahavi (2003) tells us that Husserl's answer lies in "horizontal intentionality" (p. 96), which is to say, Husserl argued that we experience that which is immediately given to us (the object's profile) at the same time as having an Intentional awareness of that object's 'Horizon' (accounting for the 'potential' profiles that are currently obscured). In other words, there can be no conscious perception of objects based solely on direct perception (Zahavi, 2003). Indeed, even the elements that are momentarily 'absent' (inferred, expected, obscured, etc.) constitute part of our experienced perception. With this 'horizontal' background in mind, we are ready to delve into the core principles of Husserl's Phenomenology.

Shifting from the Natural to the Phenomenological Attitude

To grasp the Phenomenological Attitude, we must understand its relationship to the Natural Attitude, which it seeks to 'suspend.' Since we are all experientially familiar with the Natural Attitude, a simple definition will suffice:

Stated briefly, the natural attitude is, for Husserl, simply the general positing of the world as something out there and independent, and of myself as a being in the world. [...] This thesis of the natural attitude is operative behind the scenes in all our normal activities.

Thus, the natural attitude forms the basis of ordinary life, as well as of the natural sciences. (Teoli, 2023).

As illustrated, the Natural Attitude is closely related to the Positivist (i.e., naturalistic) worldview we discussed earlier, but is much more fundamental to our everyday experience. The Natural Attitude is, in effect, our 'everyday' attitude; it is how we pre-reflexively experience the world daily (Zahavi, 2003). It draws from the content of our personal and collective Lifeworld: from the implicit, taken-for-granted structuring beliefs that shape our experiences (Beyer, 2022).

Notably, the Positivist movement has largely remained uncritical of its underlying Epistemological and Metaphysical assumptions and, consequently, adopts the Natural Attitude (Zahavi, 2003). In other words, the Natural Attitude not only operates in everyday life (e.g., the cars feel exceptionally 'distinct and independent' from us when we cross the street), but it is also

adopted while engaging in formal or informal ‘theoretical observation’ (e.g., when we scrutinize a dysfunctional gadget to reflect on why it may be malfunctioning).

By contrast, the Phenomenological Attitude seeks to temporarily ‘suspend’ the Natural Attitude for a phenomenological inquiry (Zahavi, 2003). Not only does this mindset seek to distance itself from its typical way of engaging with the world, but importantly, it embodies Reflexivity; that is, it becomes aware and makes explicit its constitutive role in shaping its own experiential reality (i.e., through Reflexivity, it seeks to become conscious of its sense-making processes) (Zahavi, 2003). Put differently, this Phenomenological Attitude turns inwardly to examine itself so that it may ‘suspend’ all that it ordinarily takes for granted: instead, it tries to look at phenomena with ‘childlike eyes,’ as if one were encountering them for the first time, without its presupposed understanding (Zahavi, 2003). In this way, at least temporarily, it seeks to enter a state of mind where it has ‘suspended’ its previous mental categories and interpretive filters used to organize its conscious experiences: that is, momentarily, assumptions are no longer taken as valid, so that one may encounter the phenomena more directly (Zahavi, 2003). Namely, it is from this mental framework that Transcendental Phenomenologists aim to describe the world of Lived Experience as it appears within consciousness (i.e., in all its various impressions, intricacies, aesthetic qualities, etc.), with the ultimate goal of abstracting the essential ‘Natures’ from the ‘Appearances’ (Moran, 2000; Zahavi, 2003).

Concretization of These Concepts Through an Example

Perhaps it will be helpful to concretize these concepts by examining the shift from the Natural Attitude to the Phenomenological Attitude in practical terms. Walton (2016a) provides a rendering of the examples Husserl himself used to illustrate the concepts we have touched upon: Lived Experience, Intentionality, Reflexivity, and, immediately after, the Horizons.

In terms of experience, Walton (2016a) explains that, from the Natural Attitude, the apple tree is perceived in terms of being a substance denoted by various characteristics, which are classified according to one’s mental categorization system (or categories): For example, the apple tree might be described as being mature, high-yielding, producing McIntosh apples, etc. In terms of Intentionality (i.e., one’s structuring ‘orientation’ shaped by the object’s content and meaning), the Apple tree is viewed as being completely ‘distinct and independent’ from one’s Mind. In terms of reflection, in the Natural Attitude, it usually only happens when one’s attention

is diverted away from the object and back toward oneself; for example, one's thinking about the type of apples it produces gets diverted to reflect on whether one likes the taste of these McIntoshes.

Alternatively, from the Phenomenological Attitude, Walton (2016a) further explains that, in terms of Lived Experience, one's perception or understanding of the apple tree results from an interplay between the object and those meaning-making processes within the 'Self.' Therefore, it will be felt at a deeper level, as it will be qualified in terms of the impressions it leaves on oneself (e.g., noticing its aesthetic qualities, feelings that it evokes, its uniqueness, etc.); for example, one could see or hear the way its leaves bristle, experience the sense of serenity it evokes, etc. (i.e., one is the recipient of something lively, not some inert object, pre-emptively derived from abstract categories). In the Phenomenological Attitude, the 'intentional' relationship between oneself and the object of study is kept in awareness; it becomes the focal point (e.g., one would recognize its effect on oneself). In the Phenomenological Attitude, one is aware that all consciousness is imbued with tacit reflection; therefore, one is directly attuned to the reflective and meaningful relationship between oneself and the tree (Walton, 2016a).

Finally, we can examine how the concept of the Horizon fits into this picture. In the Natural Attitude, one perceives objects through one's usual implicit structures, unreflectively, and experiences them as if they were appearing 'as they are' (Zahavi, 2003). In the Phenomenological Attitude, one is explicitly aware that one is perceiving the object both in terms of its 'actuality' (i.e., what it directly reveals) and its 'potential' (e.g., integrating all of the hidden profiles of the apple tree, such as its back, top and roots) (Walton, 2016a). One is also explicitly aware that these projected Horizons could be wrong (e.g., a cardboard cut-out of a tree that looks real from afar); if that is the case, descriptions of phenomena are revised to include the new pieces of knowledge (Walton, 2016a).

Implementation: 'Phenomenological Reduction'

The term 'Phenomenological Reduction' refers to the two central Methodological steps in Husserl's Phenomenology: the 'Epoché' and the 'Eidetic reduction' (Moran, 2000).

As we have seen, "Phenomenology is presented as a new, critical, and rigorous science" (Zahavi, 2003, p. 44), which is, "merely an expression of [Husserl's] belief that phenomenology

is committed to an ideal of fully justified knowledge, an ideal that the positive sciences fail to live up to” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 44). In this light, when engaging in Phenomenological inquiry, “our investigation should be critical and undogmatic, shunning metaphysical and scientific prejudices. It should be guided by what is actually given, rather than by what we expect to find given our theoretical commitments” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 44). To fulfill this aim, “it is necessary to suspend our acceptance of the natural attitude” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 45); that is, “we keep the attitude (in order to be able to investigate it), but we bracket its validity” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 45). Finally, to bridge this with the following sections, “this procedure, which entails a suspension of our natural realistic inclination, is known by the name of epoché” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 45). Put differently, the ‘Epoché’ is the Methodological move that initiates the ‘Phenomenological Reduction’: it denotes the first practical step in occasioning the shift away from the Natural Attitude of everyday life, thereby preparing one to adopt the Phenomenological Attitude (Walton, 2016a).

What follows is an examination of the ‘Epoché’ and the ‘Eidetic Reduction,’ in their respective procedural order.

Epoché: The act of Bracketing (Parenthesizing, Suspending, etc.)

In a Transcendental Phenomenological inquiry, the ‘observer’ begins by ‘bracketing’ (suspending) all judgments or preconceptions about the reality of the external world (i.e., everything that stems from the Natural Attitude, including the attitude itself).

We have already touched on this topic briefly, but in addition to anticipating a likely objection, this section will clarify the procedure by highlighting the processes and content that Transcendental Phenomenologists consider necessary to ‘suspend.’ A few illustrative examples will also explain the connections between the various concepts.

Construed negatively, this procedure implies that we ‘bracket’ everything that falls outside the scope of the Phenomenological Attitude. One might object to the paradoxical Nature of this approach: Is Phenomenology not itself based on abstract theory, and would it not also be subject to bracketing its own assumptions?

Phenomenology is indeed acutely aware of its own constitution, namely, that it is itself an abstraction, one that is grounded in a Method of abstraction, the implication being that it simultaneously embodies the very critique it seeks to rectify (Walton, n.d.). It addresses this

paradox by turning toward the Lifeworld (Walton, n.d.). Notably, Phenomenology maintains a reflective awareness of its own theoretical foundations, an awareness that is part of the structure of its Methodology (Walton, n.d.). From this self-critical standpoint, it can monitor its own assumptions and avoid adopting new ones; instead, it aims to remain grounded in primary experiences rather than retreating into further abstractions (Walton, n.d.).

This concern is not unique to Phenomenology. Nietzsche, for example, makes a similar observation about the grounding assumptions of Positivist science. We can now grasp his point when he writes:

To make it possible for this discipline to begin, must there not be some prior conviction—even one that is so commanding and unconditional that it sacrifices all other convictions to itself? We see that science also rests on a faith; there is simply no science “without presuppositions.” (Nietzsche, 1882/1974, pp. 280-281)

Indeed, no matter the approach, it is always governed by presuppositions that cannot be (independently) verified.

Returning to the Method itself, we can now expand on the act of ‘bracketing.’ To do so, we might consider the kinds of judgments or presuppositions that Transcendental Phenomenologists aim to ‘suspend.’ Centrally, it is the whole Natural Attitude: a ‘bracketing’ of one’s entire Metaphysical framework and all its underlying structures and assumptions, including one’s Epistemological and Ontological understanding of reality and its resulting products of knowledge. By extension, this entails a ‘suspension’ of all prior ‘scientific framings’ of reality, whether understood mechanistically, physically, mathematically, etc., as well as the knowledge derived from these conceptual lenses. Moreover, it extends beyond these ‘scientific’ worldviews to include any judgments or presuppositions brought to the observation, including abstract theories derived from sources such as personal experiences or historical, cultural, and social understandings. There is undoubtedly more to cover, but we have enough to grasp the central point: one has to ‘bracket’ anything that might prevent the phenomenon from ‘revealing itself as given’ to consciousness (Moran, 2000; Zahavi, 2003). No small ask!

Suppose one hasn't fully grasped the rationale for implementing such a rigorously demanding procedure. In that case, we might deepen our understanding by vividly illustrating the interconnection between these concepts.

The interdependence between the attitudinal shift and the 'bracketing' of preconceptions, in light of their connection to the 'revealing of phenomena,' may be most effectively communicated through an analogy. Perhaps therapists will find the following illustration relatable: Imagine a client (i.e., the 'object' of study) who wishes to be seen 'as they Truly are.' This request most likely primes the therapist to adopt a kind of 'Rogerian attitude' (i.e., a more 'receptive' therapeutic stance), which is widely understood as a prerequisite for this type of revelation. Adopting such an attitude becomes essential if one wishes to view the other person (in this case, the object of study) in a less biased and more open manner. Under the right conditions, the client might begin to reveal hidden aspects of themselves; that is, they would start to expose previously obscured facets of their inner Nature, revealing themselves 'as they are' for the therapist to observe.

Furthermore, even an 'object' without agency can reveal itself differently when experienced from an alternative perspective. For example, why would one re-engage with a favourite book if it didn't 'give' or 'reveal itself' in a novel manner each time?

These examples also highlight the interdependency between the observer and the observed. When viewed 'Phenomenologically,' where are the boundaries between the subject and object? Where is the stability of Forms? Where are the fixed identities? Where does meaning reside? Where can we find the Truth? Thus, we begin to see that these distinctions are not so clear-cut when examined through a Phenomenological lens.

Eidetic Reduction

Following one's attempt to temporarily 'transcend' the Natural Attitude, the second step of Husserl's procedure involves abstracting the essential 'Natures' from the 'Appearances' within human consciousness.

Explaining this Method in layperson's terms will suffice for our current purposes. West (2017) provides a clear explanation: The idea behind the 'Eidetic Reduction' is to remove, through imaginative variation and abstraction, all non-essential characteristics from a

phenomenon until only its ‘Essence’ remains or is intuited: namely, the fundamental, necessary features without which it could no longer be considered the same thing. Put differently, the Eidetic Reduction is a reflective, introspective process of mentally varying a phenomenon’s features (most of which are accidental or contingent) until one isolates those essential to its identity, as these constitute the phenomenon’s Essence (West, 2017).

West (2024) supports this explanation by illustrating, via a thought experiment, what an ‘Eidetic Reduction’ on a piece of wax might involve. Notably, this is the same object that Descartes used to illustrate his own ‘Method of Doubt’ (Morton & Mylopoulos, 2020), which would later influence the development of Husserl’s Phenomenological Method (Moran, 2000; Zahavi, 2003). Following West’s lead, imagine observing a piece of wax. One might begin by mentally transforming its various properties, such as its shape (e.g., a cylinder, a rectangular shape, or a melted blob), its colour (e.g., red, yellow, or aquamarine), and its smell (e.g., odourless, musty, or bacon-scented). None of these changes would prevent us from recognizing it as wax. However, if its molecular composition were altered from wax to water, could we still regard it as wax? At that point, one would have to determine what property must be retained to continue qualifying as wax. Thus, all the ‘invariable and distinct’ properties are worked out in this way (West, 2017).

However, it is important to remember that Husserl’s focus was not on objects but on experiences, as he aimed to identify the mental structures that constitute them, namely, to delimit and isolate what is Essential (West, 2024). This offers us a glimpse into the complex universe of Phenomenology.

Concluding Remarks

It is from this conceptual and Methodological foundation that later Phenomenologists, namely Heidegger and Gadamer, adopted, critiqued, and fundamentally reshaped Husserl’s Transcendental Phenomenology, giving rise to the Hermeneutic and Existential Phenomenological traditions. The philosophical principles derived from their reorientation underpin this project. Those most central to the research purposes are discussed in the Methodology.

Appendix M: Research Ethic Board Approval Certificate

07/04/2025

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number

S-03-25-11376

Titre du projet / Project Title

The Use of Intuition in

Psychotherapy: A

Phenomenological Inquiry

Type de projet / Project Type

Thèse de maîtrise / Master's

thesis

Statut du projet / Project Status

Approuvé / Approved

Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

07/04/2025

Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

06/04/2026

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher

Affiliation

Role

Mathieu FORTIER

Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education

Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator

Nicola GAZZOLA

Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education

Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

07/04/2025

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'Université d'Ottawa, opérant conformément à l'*Énoncé de politique des Trois conseils* (2014) et toutes autres lois et tous règlements applicables, a examiné et approuvé la demande d'éthique du projet de recherche ci-nommé.

L'approbation est valide pour la durée indiquée plus haut et est sujette aux conditions énumérées dans la section intitulée "Conditions Spéciales ou Commentaires". Le formulaire « Renouvellement ou Fermeture de Projet » doit être complété quatre semaines avant la date d'échéance indiquée ci-haut afin de demander un renouvellement de cette approbation éthique ou afin de fermer le dossier.

Toutes modifications apportées au projet doivent être approuvées par le CÉR avant leur mise en place, sauf si le participant doit être retiré en raison d'un danger immédiat ou s'il s'agit d'un changement ayant trait à des éléments administratifs ou logistiques du projet. Les chercheurs doivent aviser le CÉR dans les plus brefs délais de tout changement pouvant augmenter le niveau de risque aux participants ou pouvant affecter considérablement le déroulement du projet, rapporter tout événement imprévu ou indésirable et soumettre toute nouvelle information pouvant nuire à la conduite du projet ou à la sécurité des participants.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, which operates in accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2014) and other applicable laws and regulations, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above-named research project.

Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and is subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions or Comments". The "Renewal/Project Closure" form must be completed four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval or closure of the file.

Any changes made to the project must be approved by the REB before being implemented, except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) only pertain to administrative or logistical components of the project. Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes that increase the risk to participant(s), any changes that considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project or the safety of the participant(s).

Riana MARCOTTE

Responsable d'éthique en recherche / Protocol Officer

Pour/For **Barbara GRAVES** Président(e) du/ Chair of the **Comité d'éthique de la recherche en sciences sociales et humanités / Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board**

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics