

ALCHEMY FOR INQUIRY: A METHODOLOGY OF APPLIED PHENOMENOLOGY IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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Abstract

This paper presents an original methodology, called Alchemy as Inquiry. It is a methodology grounded in pure phenomenology and made accessible for reflective research into one's own experiences. It is an application of the pure phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. It mandates that the researcher personally experiences the phenomena under investigation, and is able to reflect deeply on that experience. Unlike other first-person approaches that focus on description, such as Autoethnography, Alchemy seeks a definite research outcome in the form of an archetypal object. This is the research essence, or element. Arts practitioners are particularly able to apply Alchemy for Inquiry, as these archetypal insights present themselves intuitively and symbolically, through arts practice – writing, painting, performing, and also through dream analysis. Alchemy for Inquiry methodology is based on three principles:

- that the unconscious mind is far superior to logic and cognition when it comes to seeing patterns and meaning in apparent chaos
- that the main beliefs of psychoanalysis can be wellsprings for reflective research inquiry
- that Alchemy for Inquiry, which is informed by Husserl's pure phenomenological philosophy, can take the researcher from the most subjective reflections to the most intersubjective, universal outcomes

Using analytical tools akin to those of the psychotherapist, the researcher first embarks on an experience of the research in question. Progressing then, through the five phases of the methodology - Experience, Epoche, Explication, Epiphany and Examination - s/he finishes with the answer to the research question in the form of an image, myth or metaphor. This cryptic answer is then analysed, logically, to reveal and explain the research result. Just as, through psychoanalysis, the uncertain and complex dream may provide the dreamer with profound insight, so too may life-world complexities lead the teacher/researcher to universal insights and solutions. The unconscious mind, skilled at making patterns from chaos, can inform research logic.

Alchemy for Inquiry methodology is housed within a philosophically aligned research framework of phenomenology, which can take inquiry from subjective complexity to intersubjective, archetypal research outcomes. This paper presents an introduction to the basic theoretical framework of Alchemy for Inquiry, and its application as pure phenomenology, along with examples of how it has so far been used in educational research.

Alchemy and Archetypes

“My poetic voice is the voice of the soul. The themes I identify from the poetic voice are presented by the analytical voice.” Anna Taifernopoulos (Heywood, McCann, Neville, & Willis, 2005)

How do we know what we know? How do we find our truths? As human survivors, we trust in our hunches, in information from our personal experiences and in our reasoning powers to make sense of the world. So why then, as researchers, do we traditionally recognize only the latter? This paper presents a methodology, which I call Alchemy. It is informed by the philosophy of Phenomenology, written one hundred years ago by Edmund Husserl, and (I will argue) misunderstood by most ever

since. Husserl said that phenomenologists must firstly know a phenomenon through subjective experiences and intuition (Husserl, 1964, pp34-36), before realizing its transcendental and universal quintessence. Modern science could not compute this notion, so although Husserl's terminology somehow retained and plagiarized by Heidegger and others who followed him, Husserl's meaning was traumatized. Phenomenology has come to mean many things to many researchers, and mostly these new incarnations do not logically align with Husserl's original thinking. Alchemy Methodology returns to the original philosophy of Edmund Husserl, and sets out a process for applying it to research. This paper will simply present two arguments and a set of instructions.

I will argue:

- That the philosophical lens of 20th century modernism was too narrow in its scientific perspective to appreciate Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology
- That Transcendental Phenomenology provides a sound theoretical perspective on which to erect the research paradigm of Alchemy Methodology

And I will offer for the reader's appraisal:

- A step by step approach for doing Alchemy Methodology for Educational Research

In the last few hundred years, positivist protocols, directing us to the quantities but not the qualities of matters, have made mud-maps of our results. The trends are clear but the details are obscure. Scientific reasoning champions a way to approach questions about the physical world, which require answers that can be measured. Scientific Method sets out guidelines for research, and still, in some circles it is recognized as the only valid paradigm for research. However, most will concede it is not so well suited to inquiry into less tangible questions about feelings, ethics and values. In order to research the essential questions in Education that require empathy, intuition and emotions, we need to seek other ways. Just as I may use both my intuitive and my analytical skills to make lifestyle judgments, so too may I approach research in a more holistic way, providing my research is informed by an aligned and consistent theoretical framework. The fair criticism levelled at some more ad hoc approaches to qualitative inquiry is that the researcher does not show clear understanding of the philosophical thinking that is meant to inform and justify the chosen methods.

A philosopher and contemporary of Husserl, who questions the limitations of modernist thinking, is Jean Gebser. In his masterpiece on the evolution of consciousness, Gebser (Gebser, 1986) argues that since the beginning of life, consciousness has evolved through various stages:

- Archaic Consciousness— that is, a vague awareness and responsiveness that we might associate with single celled organisms;
- Magical Consciousness – this is humankind's tribal, ritualistic belief-based way of knowing. We believe but we don't know why. We just know things intuitively;
- Mythical Consciousness – when we evolve to understand the patterns of existence through story and parable;
- Mental Consciousness – began about the time of Aristotle, when reason and Scientific Method became the gatekeepers of scholarship. The characteristic of this phase, which still dominates academia today, is that it disregards all other ways forms of consciousness, and asserts itself as the only valid way of knowing;
- Integral Consciousness. This is the future, Gebser says. As we move beyond the modernist, Mental Consciousness of the last few hundred years, we appreciate all ways of knowing as legitimate and useful. Husserl's phenomenology, ahead of its time, asks us to 'intuit' the essence of a phenomenon. Through attention to dreams, feelings and impressions (Magical Consciousness) and story-writing and artworks (Mythical Consciousness) we can harness information that our wonderfully analytical minds can then decipher and analyse (Mental Consciousness). Such is the process of Alchemy Methodology, which is an integral approach to research, informed by Husserl's pure Phenomenology.

Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology was not understood in the early twentieth century, because it asked scholars to think outside of the parameters of mental consciousness. In those days, Science was all. Marxists, Behaviorists and Existentialists, all fashionable at the time, demanded repeatable, rigorous approaches to support the science of research. Fair enough – up to a point. At that time too, Freud (Freud, 1900/ 2010) was introducing the notion of the unconscious, and Jung (Jung, 1966),

taking it further, wrote about a 'Collective Unconscious', which hinged on the idea that there are categories or *archetypes*, with which all humans can identify at some level. The modernists tended to reject any idea that could not be physically proven, so ignored this type of thinking or rejected it outright. But it was not new. Plato's 'universal forms' (Neville, 2005), personified in the Greek Gods, align directly with Jung's archetypes. Far from being the mere stuff of fantasy, they are metaphors for various human states of being.

What is an archetype? Neville (Neville, 2005) explains that archetypes are primary forms which govern the psyche, and transcend time and culture:

For Plato, archetypes were ideas or forms of natural objects held to have been present in the divine mind prior to creation. For St Augustine they were 'principle ideas' which are themselves not formed, but contained in the divine understanding. In the Buddhist-Hindu systems, they are the first forms of manifestation that emerge from Void Spirit in the course of creation. Kant and Schopenhauer were more immediate precursors of Jung in dealing with this idea.

For Jung, archetypes are typical and universal 'modes of apprehension' which appear as images charged with great meaning and power, images which exert a great influence on our individual and collective behaviour.

Jung agreed with his critics that archetypes do not actually 'exist'.

Of course they do not exist, any more than a botanical system exists in nature. But will anyone deny the occurrence and continual repetition of certain morphological and functional similarities? It is much the same principle with typical figures of the unconscious. They are forms existing a priori, or biological norms of psychic activity (Jung, 1963 cited in Neville, 2005. p.125).

Neville (2005) directs us to the Greek Gods as examples of archetypes. Among them are:

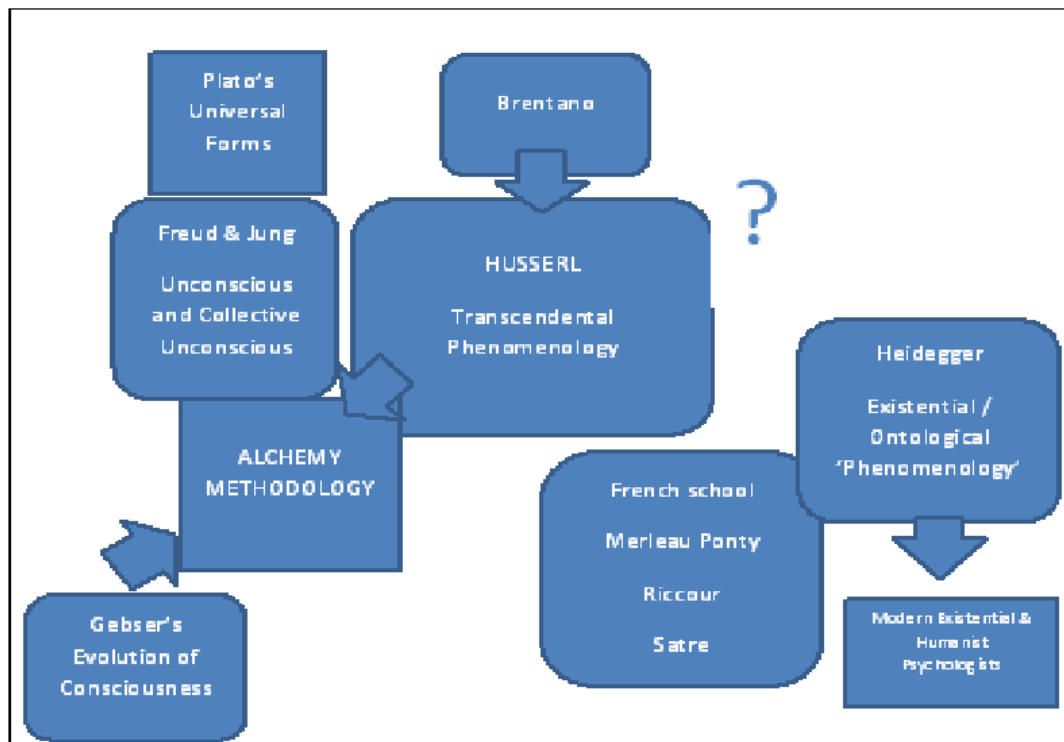
- Golden-Haired Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and sensuality;
- Winged Eros, god of relationship and of the creativity which is generated by relationship,
- Ares, a raging war god (and beaten in battle by Athena);
- Artemis the huntress;
- Hermes the Cowboy, "god of travelers, shepherds, thieves, merchants and scholars" (Neville, 2005, P.292).

The last one is interesting. Such are the forms – images – which may arise from subjective, reflective research data. A skillful, intuitive researcher will know that it takes time for an archetypal image to pass from the unconscious to the preconscious and then emerge and be recognized conceptually by the conscious. Jung (Jung, 1953) offers guidelines for the scholar who wishes to work in collaboration with the unconscious. It is sage advice for the phenomenologist who is prepared to wait for the apparent transcendental, a priori object:

The point is that you start with any image; for instance, just with that yellow mass in your dream. Contemplate it and carefully observe how the picture begins to unfold or to change. Don't try to make it into something, just do nothing but observe what its spontaneous changes are. Any mental picture you contemplate in this way will sooner or later change through a spontaneous association that causes a slight alteration of the picture. You must be careful to avoid spontaneously jumping from one picture to another. Hold fast to the one image you have chosen, and wait until it changes by itself. Note all these changes, and eventually step into the picture yourself, and, if it is a speaking figure at all, then say what you have to say to that figure and listen to what he or she has to say....Thus you can analyse your unconscious but also give your unconscious a chance to analyse yourself, and therewith you gradually create the unity of conscious and unconscious (Jung 1973, cited in Neville, 2005. p.91).

The diagram below shows how the thinking of these contemporary philosophers, Husserl, Freud, Jung, Gebser and Heidegger relates to that of the others, and how they have influenced the emergence of Alchemy Methodology:

Figure 1: The Drift of Phenomenology



One of the key ideas informing Transcendental Phenomenology, which was incomprehensible to modernists such as Husserl's hapless apprentice, Heidegger (Hopkins, 2001), was this notion of archetype, or universal form. Husserl, like Freud and Jung and Plato, accepted the notion of transcendental form. It is the basis of what is now a highly respected branch of psychology, that of psychoanalysis. So how does it work? If, for example, I am asked to paint myself into the landscape of education, and I paint myself walking alongside Aphrodite, then I may go on to explore the possibility that for me, there is beauty in education, as Aphrodite herself is the symbol, or archetype of beauty. Of course the interpretation is vital here, and therein lies the skill of the researcher who applies Transcendental Phenomenology to research, as it is that of the psychotherapist, who may use such mythical symbols to interpret a patient's dream. It will come more easily to some researchers, who exhibit intuitive (Jung, 1953) personality traits. Just as we have different learning styles, we have different research styles, and research outcomes have always been somewhat dependent upon the skill of the researcher.

The psychoanalytic theories that inform psychotherapy, such as those endorsed by Carl Jung (Jung, 1953), Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1900/ 2010) and Milton Erikson (Haley, 1973), are essential to Alchemy Methodology because they inform Transcendental Phenomenology. I do not think that many behavioral psychologists would dismiss the notion of the unconscious these days, but the alchemical researcher would need to accept both the power of the unconscious mind, and a notion that Jung calls the *collective unconscious* (Jung, 1966). It is also the essential notion put forward by Husserl in his writings on Transcendental Phenomenology. Husserl (Husserl, (1964/1929))tells us that to by knowing the most subjective experience, we can access insight into the most intersubjective (universal) knowledge (Husserl, 1964/1929, pp34-36). According to Husserl, Phenomenology must be a study of one's own, personal experience – not a researcher's analysis of someone else's account. These universal insights cannot be thought through. They must present themselves, metaphorically, in their own time. They are shy, so the researcher must quieten the mind for them to be heard. Koestenbaum (Husserl, (1964/1929)) puts it this way:

...Husserl's conception of phenomenology differs markedly from those who claim to have adopted it. To the existentialists, phenomenology is a disciplined, rigorous, sensitive, and imaginative description and analysis of the data of experience... man's being in the world. Husserl's phenomenology is more than that. Not only is Husserl's orientation pre-eminently epistemological rather than axiological, but his technique is more carefully delineated than it is for the existentialists (Koestenbaum in Husserl, 1964, p. XX111).

Husserl needed to create new language to do justice to his new concepts. When I see myself walking alongside Aphrodite – alongside beauty – it is symbolic. My hypothetical painting could have been a literal one showing me walking down a school corridor, but instead it sets aside reality in order to show the meaning metaphorically. Husserl refers to this process as *bracketing*. In my painting, the lifeworld (perhaps the actual school corridor) has been transcended (or bracketed) in order to show a more meaningful overview of what the Landscape of Education means to me – beauty. Artists transcend the lifeworld repeatedly, in order to show their visual statements metaphorically. Writers frequently write using dual levels of meaning, as the simple story becomes a parable for a more profound, transcendental story. So *bracketing*, in Phenomenology, is to suspend disbelief, and allow the fantastic symbols of the soul to show us the big picture. Later, in good time, our analytical selves will make sense of it, and convert the images into comprehensible language. For the unconscious always communicates through image and emotion, not words.

One hundred years ago, Edmund Husserl developed the philosophy of Phenomenology as a way of knowing the essential nature of a personally lived experience. He was out of time. As Gebser has identified, the early twentieth century was entrenched in Mental Mode consciousness, where the only meaningful approach to research was positivist. Young Heidegger, an ambitious academic who had been mentored by Husserl, didn't understand Husserl's philosophy at all, accusing the master of madness. Yet driven by ambition, he stole Husserl's terminology and forged new meanings with it, in an attempt to make it suit his awkward, lifeworld interpretations – his Ontology. Whereas Ontology is about being, Transcendental Phenomenology is about knowing, or Epistemology. We have seen in the quotation above that Koestenbaum (1964) is a likely supporter of this argument.

Heidegger spearheaded the *new* movement in Phenomenology that has come to be known as Existential Phenomenology. He kept the terminology and warped its definition. Nevertheless, he went on to influence a whole French school of phenomenologists, and most of the American Humanists, whose book chapters are quoted by postgraduate students today, as they struggle to understand this Phenomenology, which they claim is so difficult. Of course it is difficult. It must be viewed in the context of Husserl's philosophy in order to theoretically align.

Although Heidegger had been supported by Husserl as an early career researcher, perhaps because of ambition, or perhaps because of political discordancy, Heidegger took to slandering the master. It was pre-war Germany. Husserl was Jewish, and Heidegger was a member of the Nazi Party. Hopkins(Hopkins, 2001) informs us that:

In a letter to Karl Lowith in 1923 he (Heidegger) writes: "I publicly burned and destroyed the Ideas I am now convinced that Husserl was never a philosopher, not even for one second in his life. He becomes ever more ludicrous".....

And, finally, to Karl Jaspers a few months later he writes:

Husserl has come entirely unglued – if, that is, he ever was 'glued,' which more and more I have begun to doubt of late. He goes from pillar to post, uttering trivialities that would make you weep. He lives off his mission as the 'Founder of Phenomenology', but nobody knows what that means (Hopkins, 2001).

In more recent times, as Phenomenology has been adopted by Humanists and Social Scientists, it has shape-shifted into a form that would have been unrecognizable to Husserl. Despite the retention of the original terminology – bracketing, intention, essence – the concept of Phenomenology has metamorphosised. Whereas Husserl's Phenomenology is based on allowing the essences of one's personal experience to rise and give birth to archetypal, *a priori* knowledge, "New" (Crotty, 1996) or

Existential Phenomenology, is about drawing themes from the transcribed research data of others – a kind of Grounded Theory. It is closer to the approach described by Glasser and Strauss (Glasser & Strauss, 1967), who wrote:

Our basic position is that generating Grounded Theory is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses. We shall contrast this position with theory generated by logical deduction from *a priori* assumptions (Glasser & Strauss. 1967. P.3).

Alchemy Methodology aims to present a pragmatic approach to doing Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology. It does not involve interviews, surveys, questionnaires or transcriptions of any kind. It mandates that the researcher experience first-hand the phenomenon in question. It begins with an inclination – a hunch. The eventual phenomenon will manifest. Until that time, it remains elusive. It cannot and should not be predicted. The researcher firstly needs to set aside his Mental Mode reasoning, and make room for the shy and profound Magical and Mythical images, which will finally be interpreted through his reason.

So let us now turn our attention to the methodology, for the scope of this paper will only allow me to linger with transcendental philosophy long enough to show it as the informing context of Alchemy Methodology.

The Theoretical Framework of Alchemy Methodology

I have argued that I think it is important for researchers to be aware of the theoretical framework from which they operate. Much of Alchemy Methodology involves personal reflection and/or visual arts or play writing. How then can I argue that this is research and not creative art? Because I can demonstrate that the art activities are methods, serving the methodology, which exists within a philosophically aligned, theoretical research framework. The difference between research and Art is that in the first situation, the researcher must be able to articulate and justify all of his methodological choices. Art, on the other hand, can speak for itself.

Michael Crotty (Crotty, 1996) points out that the research framework will firstly be informed by the researcher's *epistemology* (way of knowing). He refers to three possible epistemologies for research. I will explain my understanding of each, with examples:

- Objectivism: the idea that there are objects out there, which contain autonomous meaning, whether or not they are discovered and identified. This is the way of Science and Alchemy Methodology and of pure Phenomenology. Science knows that gold and weather and light exist, whether or not they are studied by the scientist. Alchemy knows that universal metaphors representing human states exist, that is, archetypes such as Aphrodite, Narcissus, The Wizard of Oz, whether or not the researcher allows them to present themselves;
- Constructionism: the idea that there are objects out there, but they only take on meaning after the researcher interprets them. This is the way of most Social Sciences, including Ethnography, Post-Structural approaches, Grounded Theory, New (I argue, bastardised) Existential Phenomenology, and other theme-based approaches;
- Subjectivism: the idea that meaning exists in the mind of the individual. Autoethnography seems to sit happily with this, although in Alchemy Methodology, I use written reflection as a method towards finding the universal objects – towards Objectivism.

Figure 2. The Theoretical Framework of Alchemy Methodology

EPISTEMOLOGY	OBJECTIVISM
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY
METHODOLOGY	ALCHEMY
THE METHODS	EXPERIENCE EPOCHE EPIPHANY EXPLICATION EXAMINATION

The methods are the steps involved in the research process. They state what the researcher does. They are not necessarily in chronological order. The process may or may not be linear. Whilst developing these methods last year (Vallack, 2014), I described them as follows:

1. **Experience** – first-hand, subjective knowledge of the researched phenomena. The researcher becomes immersed in the experience to be researched. The *Ah-yes* moments are known before they are mentally categorised. S/he sits with the chaos of data, without the reasoning.
2. **Epoche** – Husserl’s term for the stillness of consciousness. As if in a lucid dream, the self-researcher withdraws from lifeworld chaos, and passively waits for the story to present itself. This silencing of the conscious mind makes way for unconscious images and patterns
3. **Epiphany** – the moment of Ah-ha, and the archetypal form, which is presented to the researcher from his unconscious. It may appear as an image that s/he is drawing, or an archetypal form s/he sees in meditation, or as a story s/he already knows, or as a song in his head... reason cannot access this gift until later – after it presents itself in its own way. One cannot make it happen; it must be allowed to happen.
4. **Explication** – Sometimes entwined with the Epiphany, this is the manifestation of the phenomenon – as art or image or archetype or some other concrete outcome of the Epiphany. The creative process itself will make way for Explication – through creative writing an archetype that was first glimpsed in early free-association scribble may appear, through painting a shadowy image may consolidate on the paper, for example.
5. **Examination** – And here is where the rational mind comes into play. Until now it had politely moved aside to make way for intuition. Now Reason re-enters, no longer as the bully, but as the servant. His role is to translate the new and complex information, so that it can be understood in a logical way. He communicates the connections that have emerged from the unconscious, which might otherwise be unthinkable.(Vallack, 2014)

Now let me clarify this with an example of how I have used Alchemy Methodology in my own research. I will need to backfill the story a bit:

Some years ago I was a research fellow at an Australian university, and part of a team, investigating the potential use of online personal learning environments as pedagogy. I worked with very clever computer programmers, who were leading the research down technical tracks that I would be unable to navigate on my own. They wanted to know why many academics were recalcitrant users of technology. I was told that my role was to act as the ‘reality check’. They said I had been hired as part of the team, because they could not understand academics who do not immediately relate to technology. Clearly, I had been the successful applicant thanks to my lack of capability. I was instructed to introduce myself to new Web 2.0 programs such as *Second Life*, *deLicious*, *My Space*, and to keep a blog about my learning. It was pretty vague, but I suspect that they believed that if I could understand what they were saying, anyone would. Much of the blog vented my frustrations with technology.

In the middle of this half-million dollar project, a university restructure left me soldiering on alone with the entire venture. With my gifted colleagues displaced, I still needed to do justice to the project. The original questions had been about engaging academics with technology, so using my blog data, which had been written incidentally, with no particular agenda, I became absorbed in my own feelings about technology. Without really thinking about it, I had been passing through the Alchemy methods of **Experience**, by working with the technology, and **Epoche**, as I was writing freely about whatever came to mind, using a type of free-association that was essential to Freud's psychoanalysis. The Epoche is the time when all the work is being done by the unconscious, in the background, so you try not to block it with too much thought. One day, while writing, I made reference to Echo and Narcissus. With hindsight, I believe this was my **Epiphany**. I did not realise the significance of the archetypal reference however, until I thought about it later. In Gebser's terms, the notion of Echo and Narcissus had emerged from my Mythical Consciousness. It was then, through **Explication** and **Examination**, or through Mental Consciousness, that I could analyse and make sense of the mythical illusion, crystalizing in response to my research question: Why do some academics find it difficult to relate to technology? Do you know the story of Echo and Narcissus? It is necessary for you to know it in order to appreciate the example. I shall relate it as I recall, ever so briefly, and with apologies to lovers of classics and literature:

In Greek mythology, Echo was a wood nymph whose constant chatter had once offended the goddess, Hera. As punishment, Echo was condemned to wander the mountains alone, unable to say anything, except to repeat the last words of what she hears. She comes across a beautiful young man, called Narcissus. She falls in love with him and she watches him lie down to drink from the lake. She approaches him but cannot say anything. When he addresses her, she only repeats his last words and he becomes impatient with her and thinks her stupid. He gazes again into the lake where he sees an image of the most beautiful creature in the world. It is his own reflection. Transfixed with this beauty, but unable to reach his desire, Narcissus pines away at the water's edge, where he dies beside the lake. Daffodils grow in his place.

Hence, the Epiphany: The reason why some academics are recalcitrant users of technology is contained in the myth of Echo and Narcissus. I am Echo and the technology is Narcissus. Like Echo, I am inarticulate when faced with technology. I don't understand all of the acronyms that my superior colleagues would use. I could barely repeat some of what they said. And like Narcissus, the technology itself is without empathy for my humiliation and isolation. It cares not what I understand, and moreover, like Narcissus, it is self-contained and self-focused. It will not meet me half way, nor be flexible, nor even care if I am failing to engage with it. It is insensitive. I think that the very lack of empathy is the reason why some learners, who need to engage emotionally in order to learn, find it difficult to engage with technology. Perhaps this has implications for the way we teach it.

In this paper I have contended that Alchemy Methodology is a philosophically informed approach to research, which uses both cognitive and intuitive research skills to bring together conscious and unconscious ways of knowing. By allowing the unconscious to incubate information and bring it to the surface, in the form of image or story or myth, the rational mind, our dominant mental consciousness, can then work with insights more profound than it could have thought up by itself. The creative unconscious sees the big picture connections. The rational mind must then work to do justice to the cryptic data, analyzing, interpreting and explaining it, in the same way as a good psychotherapist will interpret a dream. It requires practice, and a willingness to surrender mental control, in the trust that messages from the dark side will surface and illuminate the research. They always do if they are allowed to manifest.

The researcher using Alchemy Methodology, must experience that which the research is about. Here is one final example: When I was working as a theatre director, I wanted to know - phenomenologically - what is essential to Directing? At the time I was directing a play at the Gasworks Theatre in Melbourne. Each night after a rehearsal, on my long drive back to the Dandenong Ranges, I talked freely into a dictaphone. The experience of directing, and the late night ramblings were important first steps on the way to the methods of Experience and Epoche. It is customary in research to transcribe aural data, but such is a conscious activity, suited to more cognitive approaches. Just through doing the Directing activity and talking thoughtlessly, I was setting the conditions for the unconscious to launch its Epiphany. When doing Alchemy Methodology, provide opportunities for the unconscious to be heard. Meditate. Paint. Walk. It doesn't really matter what you do, but you must quieten the mental

chatter and remain open for an image, a symbol of some kind- when you least expect it. I was taking part in a guided meditation when the Wizard of Oz came to me. It was said aloud by one of the people I was conversing with in the meditation. I thought it had meaning, but I did not know why. Watch out for this sort of intuition. Later, when I was writing a play script, one of the characters said that the play Director was the Wizard of Oz. That was the Explication. It made no sense at all at first. It was then time to think about it - to explain it:

The general public may believe the Director of a play to be the sole visionary. They speak of the Director's insight and revelation. But in the rehearsal room the actors build their characters and suggest many things that steer the performance. Like the great and powerful Wizard of Oz, the Director is accredited with too much power. Once the Alchemist has uncovered the myth informing the research – such as Echo and Narcissus or The Wizard of Oz - s/he can then consciously analyze the story for further clues about the phenomenon of the inquiry. The theatre Director is the Wizard of Oz, because like that archetype, he is credited with more creative power than he actually has. Also, in the story it is the Wizard who eventually empowers Dorothy and her friends by informing them that they have unknowingly possessed powers all along. Like the actors who drive the creative performance, Dorothy can master her own destiny. She just didn't know it until the Wizard pointed it out. It is the Director's job to empower the actors who will drive the performance. And it is the rational mind's job to empower the unconscious in Alchemy Methodology. Neville agrees:

Only conscious and unconscious working together can produce a truly creative product.
That cooperation involves the conscious mind's ability to evaluate (Vallack, 2011)p.262.

Some researchers – the dreamers, the artists, the right-brain folk – will be very good with this methodology. They will understand the premise of psychoanalysis, that the unconscious is so much smarter than we are. Using Alchemy Methodology requires the conscious and unconscious minds to work together in a complimentary way. It is informed by the Transcendental Phenomenology of Husserl, and by Gebser's evolution of consciousness. It recognises, synthesises and applies as research methods, all of these insights.

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